

Let's talk about Depression

What is depression?

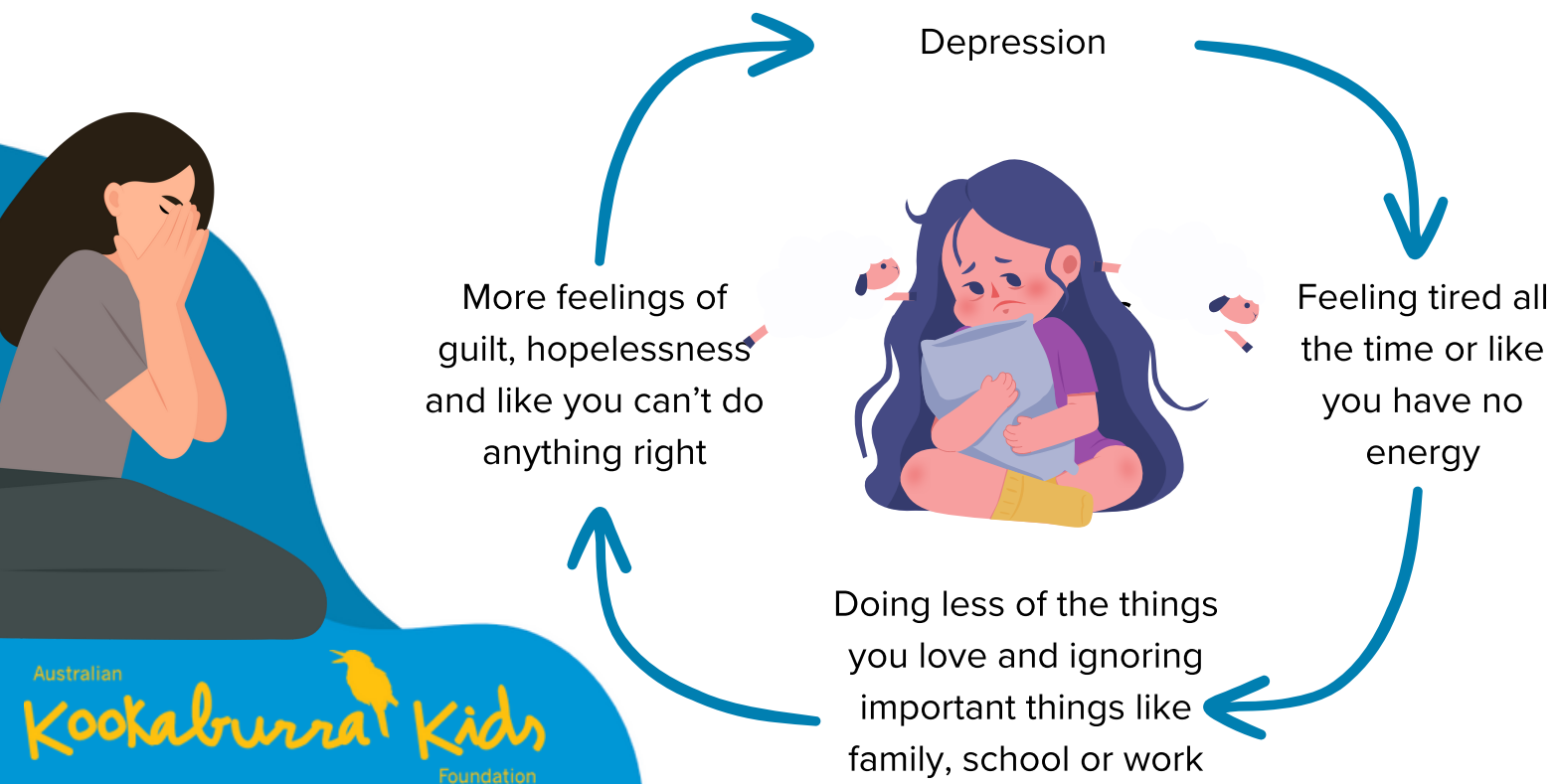
Depression is a common mental health condition that about 1 in 7 Australians get at some point in their life. People may say that they feel 'depressed', because a friend is ignoring them, when they have trouble with teachers or bosses - sometimes people just feel 'down' for no reason at all.



What happens when you have depression?

When people feel depressed, they do less of the things they enjoy - like riding bikes, spending time with family, gaming - and this makes their mood worse.

This causes a vicious cycle where the less they do, the less they want to do. Psychologists call this the vicious cycle of depression or the inactivity cycle.



Let's talk about Depression

How is depression diagnosed?

Depression can be diagnosed by a GP, psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience working with people who have mental health conditions.

Depression can be diagnosed when someone:

- has symptoms for a long time,
- has a severely depressed mood state
- is struggling to get by at home and/or work.



What are some signs of depression?

Depression can look different for everyone.

Here are some signs of depression:

- depressed mood for most of the day, nearly every day
- not as interested in things that they usually enjoy
- feel like they're moving in slow motion or feeling restless
- sleeping more often (hypersomnia) or less often (insomnia) than usual
- feeling fatigued or like they have no energy
- feeling worthless or guilty
- having trouble concentrating, remembering things or making decisions
- thinking about dying or having thoughts of suicide

Can depression be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have depression. For some people these treatments can help get rid of depression, but for other people it can make it easier to live with depression.

Some treatments for depression are: therapy to understand how their mind works, lifestyle changes like exercising more or avoiding alcohol or even trying medication.



Let's talk about

PTSD

What is PTSD?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD is a mental health condition that can develop in people who have been through one or more traumatic events in their life.

What is a traumatic event?

A traumatic event is when someone experiences or sees someone else go through a scary experience that threatens their life or safety.

Traumatic experiences can include:

- severe bullying at home, school or work
- natural disasters like bushfires or floods
- human disasters like injuries or car crashes

What happens when people get PTSD?

People with PTSD can experience the same feelings of panic or extreme fear as they felt during the traumatic event. Sometimes they might not even react when experiencing the trauma but experience the emotions when they have a flashback.

People with PTSD usually experience four main difficulties:

- **Being super alert or on edge** - sleep difficulties, easily annoyed, constantly on the lookout for danger
- **Re-living their trauma** - vivid memories, nightmares, sweating, panic
- **Avoiding reminders of the trauma** - such as people or places where it happened
- **Feeling emotionally numb** - like you are disconnected from your life and not really living it



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Who gets PTSD?

Anyone can get PTSD, but it tends to be more common in Emergency Services or Defence Force workers. This is because they are more likely to experience or see many traumatic events than the average person.

Let's talk about

PTSD

How is PTSD diagnosed?

PTSD can be diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience working with people who have mental health conditions.

PTSD can be diagnosed when someone:

- has symptoms for a long time,
- has a severely depressed mood state
- is struggling to get by at home and/or work.

What are some signs of PTSD?

Some signs of PTSD include:

- panicking when they are reminded of the trauma
- being easily upset
- having a short fuse or becoming angry quicker than usual
- being jumpy or easy to scare
- being super aware of what is happening in their environment (hypervigilance)
- difficulties with sleeping too little or sleeping too much
- feeling worthless or guilty
- having aggressive behaviour
- finding it difficult to concentrate on simple tasks - even on washing the dishes
- taking unsafe risks - like driving too fast or drinking too much



Can PTSD be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have PTSD. For some people these treatments can help get rid of PTSD, but for other people it can make it easier to live with PTSD.

Some treatments for PTSD are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or meditation, lifestyle changes like exercising more or avoiding alcohol or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Bipolar Affective Disorder

What is Bipolar Affective Disorder?

Bipolar Affective Disorder is a mental health condition where people have episodes where their mood can be extremely low (depression) and episodes when their mood is extremely high (mania).

Bipolar is different for everyone and some people might have episodes that last for a week or even a few months. Some people might even experience hypomania instead of mania. Life can feel like a bit of a rollercoaster for people with Bipolar.

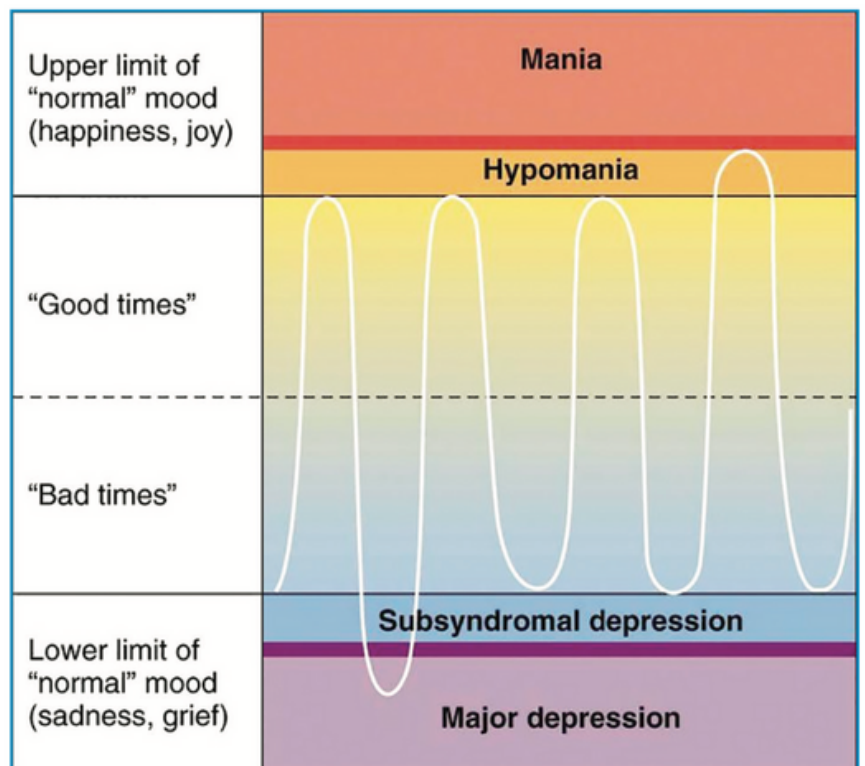


What is a manic episode or mania?

A manic episode or mania is the words people use to describe a time when people's emotions are higher or more irritable than usual.

Manic episodes usually last longer than hypomania and can cause bigger problems in someone's life because it may lead to psychotic experiences.

Psychotic experiences are when someone has hallucinations or thinks things are real when they're not.



Let's talk about Bipolar Affective Disorder

How is Bipolar Affective Disorder diagnosed?

Bipolar Affective Disorder can be diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience working with people who have mental health conditions.

Bipolar Affective Disorder can be diagnosed when someone:

- has symptoms for a long time,
- experiences changes with mania or depression
- is struggling to get by at home and/or work.



What are some signs of Bipolar Affective Disorder?

Some signs of mania and depression in Bipolar Affective Disorder include:

Mania

- feeling like they are on top of the world and over the top happy
- being easily annoyed or irritated
- having more energy and coming up with lots of projects or plans
- sleeping less than usual
- not caring what people think
- taking unsafe risks like driving too fast or drinking too much
- having hallucinations or thinking unreal thoughts

Depression

- sleeping more than usual
- not being interested in things they used to enjoy
- eating more or less
- feel like they're in slow motion
- feeling worthless, guilty or suicidal

Can Bipolar Disorder be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have Bipolar Affective Disorder. For most people the goal of treatment is to help people to learn how to live with their symptoms of Bipolar Affective Disorder.

Some treatments for Bipolar Affective Disorder are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or meditation, lifestyle changes like having a regular routine, spending time in hospital or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Anxiety Disorders

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is part of the stress response that all humans experience. It is our body letting us know that there is a threat we need to be aware of.

A little bit of anxiety, like just before a sports game or an exam can increase our alertness and help us to perform at our best.



What are some signs of anxiety?

Anxiety can look different for everyone. Here are some signs of anxiety:

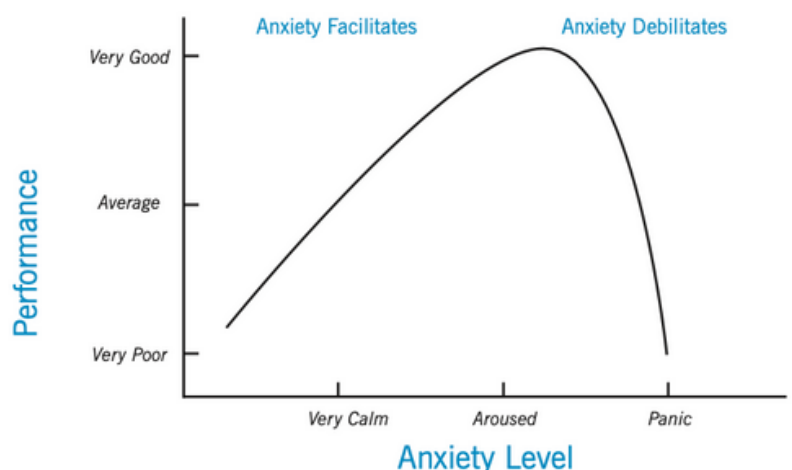
- Constant worrying and over the top fears
- Being unable to relax or looking 'highly strung' to others
- Having trouble concentrating and paying attention
- Having difficulty sleeping
- Feeling easily annoyed or uneasy
- Difficulty with work, school, friends or family
- Being isolated from friends or family
- Avoiding certain places or situations
- Having physical symptoms like heart palpitations, sweating, shortness of breath, headaches and nausea without any medical cause

When does anxiety become a problem?

Anxiety can be considered a mental health condition when it becomes more intense, causes the person to feel upset or distressed, lasts for a long time and makes it hard for them to live their life. The diagram below shows how when anxiety increases people can start to panic and perform more poorly.



The relationship shown between anxiety and skill is shown in the diagram.



Let's talk about Anxiety Disorders

What is Generalised Anxiety Disorder?

Generalised Anxiety Disorder or GAD tend to worry more than is expected about things. They also tend to worry about many different things in their life and experience physical symptoms (like fast-beating heart or feeling restless) with their worry.

For example, it would be normal to worry about money if you have just lost your job however, someone with GAD might worry about money even when they are not having money problems.



What is Specific Phobia?

Specific phobia is an intense fear of certain objects, things or situations.

People with a phobia will experience intense feelings of anxiety and might even have a panic attack where they have shortness of breath and trouble breathing.

Some common phobias are:

- **Social Phobia:** Fear of being the centre of attention because they are worried that other people will judge them negatively.
- **Agoraphobia:** Fear of being in a situation where they can't escape or where they might have a panic attack.
- **Arachnophobia:** Fear of spiders
- **Acrophobia:** Fear of heights

Can anxiety be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have anxiety. Everyone does experience anxiety, so the treatments are focused on helping people to reduce their high levels of anxiety.

Some treatments for anxiety are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or relaxation techniques, gradually exposing themselves to things they are anxious about or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Obsessive Compulsive Disorders

What are obsessive compulsive disorders?

Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders are when people experience distressing or upsetting obsessions and/or compulsions for at least one hour a day.



What are obsessions?

An obsession is a persistent thought that pops into your mind and no matter how hard you try, you just can't get rid of it. These thoughts can invade people's minds making them feel uneasy, worried and anxious.

Some people might have obsessions about:

- cleanliness or things being contaminated by germs
- symmetry or things not being lined up right
- flaws in their appearance

- bad thoughts, like worrying that they are going to hurt someone or someone will hurt them
- hoarding and not wanting to throw things away, even when they're not important

What are compulsions?

Compulsions are actions or rituals that people repeat to try and make them feel less anxious or worried about their obsessions.

Some people might have compulsions where they:

- clean excessively - even when things are already clean
- constantly check their appearance in the mirror
- repeating phrases or mantras to themselves

- washing their hands obsessively until they're red and raw
- repeatedly counting
- pulling their hair out to the point where it causes hair loss
- picking at their skin resulting in scabs or scars

Why do people have compulsions?

When people have obsessive thoughts, these can be very scary and people often do their compulsions without thinking because they are too focused on their thoughts. For example, they might not even notice that they have hair loss until after their thoughts go away.



Let's talk about Obsessive Compulsive Disorders

There are many types of Obsessive Compulsive Disorders. These are two of the most common ones.

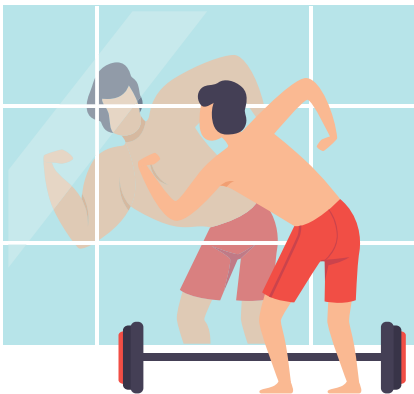
What is OCD or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder or OCD is a mental health condition where people experience obsessions and compulsions about a range of different things.

Some common obsessions in OCD are worrying about cleanliness, symmetry or bad thoughts.



What is Body Dysmorphic Disorder?



Body Dysmorphic Disorder is a mental health condition where people experience obsessions and compulsions about their body.

Some common obsessions in Body Dysmorphic Disorder are worrying about being unattractive, not having muscles or having too many muscles.

Can obsessive-compulsive disorders be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have obsessive-compulsive disorders. These treatments are focused on helping people to challenge their thoughts and reduce the time they spend on their compulsions.

Some treatments for obsessive-compulsive disorders are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or relaxation techniques, gradually exposing themselves to things they are anxious about or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Schizophrenia

What is schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a complex mental health condition that affects a person's brain. It causes changes to how people think, feel and act. A big symptom of schizophrenia is experiencing psychosis.

What is psychosis?

Psychosis is the name given to a set of symptoms where people have trouble understanding what is real and what is imagined or made up in their mind. People experiencing psychosis can have hallucinations or delusions.

What are hallucinations?

Hallucinations are experiences where they see, hear, smell, taste or feel something that isn't really there. They might believe that they are 'hearing voices' or 'seeing people' who aren't really there.



What are delusions?

Delusions are fake beliefs about unusual things that they believe are true - even when other people don't share them or tell them they aren't real.

Some common delusions are:

- believing that their body is being controlled by someone or something else
- believing they are rich or famous
- believing that other people can hear their thoughts
- believing that messages in a TV show are meant for them to hear
- believing that they are going to be hurt or killed by someone else

Let's talk about Schizophrenia

How is schizophrenia diagnosed?

Schizophrenia can be diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience working with people who have mental health conditions.

Schizophrenia can be diagnosed when someone:

- has symptoms for a long time,
- experiences psychosis and
- is struggling to get by at home and/or work.

What are some signs of schizophrenia?

Some signs of schizophrenia include:

- experiencing psychosis with hallucinations or delusions
- having difficulty showing their emotions at the right time
- having trouble with remembering things or concentrating
- losing their motivation to look after themselves - like to shower
- speaking in a jumbled up way where people can't understand what they're thinking or saying
- having trouble understanding what is real



Can schizophrenia be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have schizophrenia. For most people the goal of treatment is to make it less likely that they experience psychosis.

Some treatments for schizophrenia are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or meditation, lifestyle changes like having a regular routine, spending time in hospital or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Borderline Personality Disorder

What is Borderline Personality Disorder?

Borderline Personality Disorder is a mental health condition that affects someone's personality and how they relate to people around them.



What happens when you have Borderline Personality Disorder?

People who experience Borderline Personality Disorder often have difficulty relating to other people and the world around them.

This can cause people to feel extremely distressed and emotional, which may result in people being impulsive and trying risky things like trying to hurt themselves.

It also causes problems in relationships, with many people who have this condition being called dramatic or difficult.

Why do people say that people with Borderline Personality Disorder are dramatic?

People with Borderline Personality Disorder are not dramatic, difficult or bad.

They can sometimes become overwhelmed, distressed and angry when they feel like they are being rejected. This can cause other people to think that they're dramatic, being manipulative or trying to be an attention-seeker.

Other people say this because they can feel confused or hurt when someone with Borderline Personality Disorder responds negatively to them. It is important to remember that all people are trying their best and that when people react in this way, they often need more kindness and compassion from others.



Let's talk about Borderline Personality Disorder

How is Borderline Personality Disorder diagnosed?

Borderline Personality Disorder can be diagnosed by a psychologist or psychiatrist who has experience working with people who have mental health conditions.

Borderline Personality Disorder can be diagnosed when someone:

- has symptoms that continue over a long period of time
- is struggling to get by at home and work.



What are some signs of Borderline Personality Disorder?

Some signs of Borderline Personality Disorder include:

- having a fear of being rejected or abandoned by others
- having difficulty coping with the end of a relationship or friendship
- believing that others are out to hurt them
- constantly seeking reassurance - even for small decisions
- blaming others for their feelings and directing their anger at them
- deliberately hurting themselves (self-harm)
- engaging in unsafe or impulsive risk-taking behaviours - like spending excessively or drinking too much
- being confused about who they are and what their goals are
- thoughts about dying or suicide

Can Borderline Personality Disorder be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to look after themselves when they have Borderline Personality Disorder. For most people the goal of treatment is to support them to manage their emotions.

Some treatments are: therapy to understand how their mind works, mindfulness or meditation, lifestyle changes like having a regular routine, spending time in hospital or even trying medication.



Let's talk about Substance Use Disorders

What are substance use disorders?

Substance use disorder is a mental health condition where people use a substance even though it is causing them problems with their thoughts, behaviour or physical health. A substance could be alcohol, cigarettes/vapes or drugs.



What are some signs of substance use disorders?

Some signs of substance use disorders include:

- drinking more alcohol, vaping more or taking more drugs than you had planned to
- trying to drink, vape or take less drugs but being unable to (addiction)
- spending most of your money on alcohol, vapes or drugs
- craving alcohol, vapes or drugs
- needing to drink, vape or use drugs when you wake up in the morning
- skipping class or work because you need to drink, vape or use drugs or because you have used them
- not being able to keep up at work or school because of drinking, vaping or using drugs
- drinking, vaping or using drugs in a way that means you need medical care from your doctor or need to go to hospital
- drinking or taking drugs until you black out and can't remember what happened
- needing to drink, vape or take more drugs than you used to - so that you can still get the effects

Can substance use disorders be treated?

Yes. There are many treatments that can help people to stop using or use less substances.

Some treatments are: counselling, mindfulness or meditation, lifestyle changes like going to restaurants to socialise instead of the pub, spending time in hospital or a rehabilitation facility or even trying medication.



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