



## Depression / Low Mood

### Contacts for support

Two heads can be better than one for finding solutions. UNSW's qualified and experienced counsellors are available Monday - Friday during business hours for free, confidential appointments.

## What is depression?

We can all feel down from time to time. Feeling depressed is a bit different in that it tends to last longer than a couple of weeks, and is marked by low mood, significant decrease in enjoyment or interest in activities, feeling worthless or guilty, memory and concentration problems, and changes to your appetite, sleeping patterns, or libido.

## Associated thinking patterns

- Negative outlook – about themselves, their future, the world in general
- Unchangeable – lose hope that things will never get better
- Internalise – believe the situation is their fault
- Black and white thinking – seeing things in absolutes
- Catastrophising – making things appear worse than they really are

## The cycle of depression

You may already know that people who are experiencing depression show characteristic patterns of low self-esteem, pessimism, feelings of hopelessness and disinterest in most things. Unfortunately, these things tend to feed on each other and intensify the depression, creating a vicious cycle of depression.

- Avoidance (of people, activities they usually enjoy). This leads to feeling worse
- Feeling worse leads to avoidance of people and enjoyable activities



- **Break the cycle.** Even if you don't feel like doing anything, make an effort to do something. Even the smallest thing.

## How can you help yourself?

For an easy-to-remember yet effective guide to recovering from mild to moderate levels of depression try the tips below. In addition, it is also recommended that you seek professional assistance. For severe depression, definitely seek professional assistance.

If you have not resolved the cause of the depression than it is important that you deal with this issue as well.

<p><b>Take Action</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't sit around and do nothing. Have coffee with a friend, retail therapy, or play soccer with friends.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Make Plans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise a holiday etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Be Social</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social support helps, If not face-to-face, email, phone, Facebook chat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achieve</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do things that give you a sense of achievement. Start small (e.g. clean your wardrobe).</li> </ul>

## Pleasure

- Try to do things that do (or once did) bring you pleasure. Ask others if you can't think of anything.

## Videos

Everyone experiences sadness. However, sometimes this sadness does not go away and affects our functioning. This video describes some of the common symptoms of depression and anxiety, and what you can do if you feel you or someone may be down.

## Documents

Do you prefer to access this content in a document? You can download a written version of this information here.

- [Low Mood / Depression](#)  
One psychology technique to help depression is the use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
- [ACT for Depression](#)

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Document Version Date 13/03/2014

UNSW CRICOS Provider Code: 00098G

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/depression-low-mood>