

Sadness

Staff Wellbeing Access Program

Sadness (feeling depressed)

We can often feel sad during various stages in our life and there can be many reasons for feeling sad. It may be the loss of a loved one, moving from the family home, football team losing the grand final etc. The sad feeling may linger but it does not impact on your normal activities of daily living and you are still able to go to work, engage with the family and continue to do your normal activities.

The current COVID 19 Pandemic has impacted and changed our lives in ways we never anticipated. It has impacted how we socialize, our sporting commitment, how we shop, the way we work and how we support each other. We are currently having to adjust to this new way of living, and these changes we experience can occur quickly with no warning.

Our workplace is responding to how we now work so that the impact of COVID is limited. Within our workplaces we are continually responding to various changes as we step in and out of lockdown, whilst ensuring we continue to provide care to our residents.

We have found ourselves in an incredibly stressful and difficult position of turning families away from seeing their loved one, supporting residents who are unable to socialize with their RACF friends and community, and providing care to residents who are passing that is different to how palliative care is normally provided. These and other experiences may create a feeling of sadness and depression that at times may feel overwhelming. It is when the feeling of sadness becomes overwhelming and you are having difficulties managing your day-to-day life that you may need some extra help to cope and work through these feelings.

When this occurs, it may be that you are experiencing signs of depression. Working through the COVID 19 Pandemic has required an extraordinary response to an unprecedented event which may compound with past events that may have occurred in your life and these also may start to resurface.

If you feel that your experience is overwhelming, and you are unable to shake the feeling of sadness, it is important that you seek support. Please remember that you are not on your own in your experience. We are all responding to this Pandemic in our own different ways, and many are experiencing an overwhelming sense of sadness.

You may be depressed if, for more than two weeks, you have felt sad, down, or miserable most of the time, or have lost interest or pleasure in usual activities, and have also experienced several of the signs and symptoms that are outlined on the following page across in at least three of the categories listed.

Sadness



Signs of depression (when sadness gets more complicated):

It is important to remember that we all experience some of these symptoms from time to time, and it may not necessarily mean you are depressed. Equally, not everyone who is experiencing depression will have all these symptoms.

Behaviour: not going out anymore, unable to get things done at work, withdrawing from close family and friends, relying on alcohol and sedatives, not doing usual enjoyable activities, unable to concentrate

Feelings: overwhelmed, guilty, irritable, frustrated, lacking in confidence, unhappy, indecisive, disappointed, miserable, sad

Thoughts: of failure, self-blame, doom, worthlessness, uselessness, and self harm

Physical: exhaustion, run-down, headaches, muscle pains, nausea, sleep problems, change of appetite, weight gain or loss.

Helpful Tips

- Healthy eating
- Minimise alcohol
- Create a regular sleep routine
- Increase exercise or walking
- Connect with loved ones
- Take time to breathe
- Learn mindfulness.

Coping with sadness and depression:

Reach out and stay connected: Getting support plays an essential role in overcoming depression. On your own, it can be difficult to maintain a healthy perspective and sustain the effort required to beat depression.

Do things that make you feel good: It is important that do things that relax and energise you. This includes following a healthy lifestyle, learning how to better manage stress, setting limits on what you are able to do, and scheduling fun activities into your day.

Get Moving: Exercise is a powerful depression fighter – and one of the most important tools in recovery. To get the most benefit, aim for at least 20minutes of exercise per day. This does not have to be all at once. A 10-minute walk or doing mindfulness can improve your mood for hours.

Eat a healthy sadness fighting diet: reduce caffeine and alcohol, do not skip meals, minimise sugars and eat healthy meals.

Get a daily dose of sunlight: Sunlight can help boost serotonin and improve our mood. Try and get at least 15 minutes a day outside in the sunlight.

Challenge negative thoughts: When feeling sad, we are overwhelmed by pessimistic and negative thoughts. When you notice this, reframe the thinking by telling yourself to “just think positive”. Our aim is to change our learned automatic negative thinking and start a new conversation with ourselves.

Where to get help:

- Talk to your G.P. who will be able to connect you to a counsellor.
- Contact HeadtoHealth on **1800 595 212** or: <https://headtohealthvic.org.au/>
- Reach out to your support network of work colleagues, friends, and family.
- Access your workplace’s Employee Assistance Program
- Call Lifeline **13 11 14**

Website links & resources:

1. Beyondblue: <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/>
2. Smiling Mind: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside>
3. Mindspot: <https://mindspot.org.au/>
4. MoodGym: <https://moodgym.com.au/>