

UNDERSTANDING



The Canadian Mental Health Association is a community based mental health service that provides support to people who have experienced mental health issues and their families and friends. These information sheets have been created by people in the community including individuals who have experienced mental health issues, family members and mental health practitioners. We recognize that there are many different perspectives about mental health issues and encourage people to increase their understanding by learning from a variety of sources. Hopefully, these information sheets will assist in raising community awareness and promote greater UNDERSTANDING of mental health issues.

DEPRESSION

What Is Depression?

Depression affects both the mind and the body. At times, almost everyone feels "down", "blue", or "sad" and becomes discouraged with life, but usually these mood changes are temporary. However, when a depressed mood begins to interfere with everyday living, it is likely to be the sign of a serious depression.

What Causes Depression?

Depression is a common problem and can strike at any age. There is no single cause of depression. Sometimes, stressful and discouraging situations overwhelm us on a continual basis and have the potential to contribute to a serious depression. The onset of depression may be attributed to some of the following factors:

- Death or illness of someone close
- Difficulties with job, or personal relationships
- Financial difficulties
- "Unexpressed" emotional burdens
- Loneliness
- Poor self esteem
- Genetic predisposition
- Physical stress of surgery

How Many People Are Affected?

Statistics indicate that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men can expect to develop depression at some point in their lives. Learning about depression can often create a sense of relief because people realize that depression is not a personal weakness and they are not alone.

What Are The Signs Of Depression?

The following are some of the signs of depression:

- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Continued fatigue or loss of energy
- Persistent or recurring headaches
- Ongoing disturbances in sleeping
- Becoming withdrawn, lacking enthusiasm, or lacking feelings of enjoyment
- Sadness and crying for no apparent reason
- Inability to concentrate or make decisions
- Thought of suicide
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Sudden loss of interest in sex

What Are Some Of The Approaches To Recovery?

Knowledge is key for a person seeking treatment for depression. Depression is often referred to as one of the most common and most treatable mental health problems. Each person's experience of depression is different and may require different methods of treatment.

It is important to understand that depression is not something that people should feel guilty about. Depression is not something that you can always control. There may be things that you can do to help yourself or your loved one recover from depression. Some approaches that may be helpful include:

- Exploring counselling, therapy, or self help groups
- Exploring Alternative Therapies
- Maintaining a healthy lifestyle
- Support from people who are understanding

Listening and understanding can bring tremendous comfort to someone with depression. Support groups can be valuable. Encouraging the individual to put his/her feelings into words can be very helpful.

Source: Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division

This information is of a general nature. More comprehensive information can be obtained through the Canadian Mental Health Association, Durham Region Branch

The Canadian Mental Health Association
Resource Centre For Wellness & Learning
Durham Branch
111 Simcoe Street North
Oshawa, Ontario



Phone: (905) 436-8760
Fax: (905) 436-1569