

Counselling Services

DEPRESSION

Depression is a serious condition having both physical and mental symptoms. Depression is more than just fluctuations in mood or feeling irritable occasionally, which are normal reactions. People who become depressed normally experience prolonged periods of feeling down or sad which may lead to physical and behavioural symptoms as well.

Common Causes:

The causes of depression are not 100% clear. Depression can arise following stressful emotional or physical life events or it can just “appear out of the blue”. Most likely depression arises from a combination of many factors, which may include:

- An imbalance of chemical substances in the brain (called neurotransmitters)
- The kind of thinking processes that people use to interpret their environment
- Learned patterns of behaviour that one uses in organizing and responding to perceptions of life

Symptoms:

- Feeling sad, depressed most of the time
- Lacking energy
- Loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities
- Changes in sleeping pattern – more or less
- Appetite changes and weight gain/loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in sex
- Suicidal thoughts
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs

What Can Help:

- Seeking help from a professional health practitioner such as a psychologist, psychiatrist or GP
- Talk with friends, family or relatives
- Use appropriately prescribed medication
- Learning how to challenge negative thinking
- Deliberately making an effort to engage in pleasurable activities including exercise

Other Sources of Help and Information:

- Community Mental Health Services
- “Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy” by David Burns
- Beyondblue - <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?>
- DepressioNet - <http://www.depressionservices.org.au/>

QUT Counselling Services offers professional assistance with this and other issues

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