

A Transcultural approach to honouring the mind and body: A self-management program with multicultural communities



What is depression?

The word depression is very common. People use it to express unhappiness, low mood, sadness or even anger. Every now and then, you can feel sad, angry or unhappy, for example, when you lose a relative or when you don't get the job you applied for. That sadness or unhappiness is NOT depression.

Depression is more than that. Depression is a chronic condition that affects your thoughts, feelings and behaviour making it difficult to cope with everyday life events. It has serious consequences on your physical and mental health, which negatively impact on your quality of life.

Due to depression, you may find that you stop enjoying life: you stop playing your favourite sport, you don't go to the movies any more or you don't spend time with your family. It is very important that you understand what depression is and learn to recognise some of its symptoms.

The role of depression in chronic diseases

Chronic diseases are characterised by having many causes, a gradual onset, are long-term and persistent, and compromise quality of life. Examples of chronic disease are diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

There is a clear relationship between depression and chronic diseases:

- A person who suffers from depression has a higher chance of developing a chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma.
- Individuals with chronic disease are more likely to develop some form of depression.

What are the causes of depression?



There is no single cause. Environmental factors interact with personality factors making a person more at risk of developing depression or not.

Some common risk factors are:

- Hereditary factors
- Isolation or loneliness
- Family conflict
- Stress
- Trauma
- Chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, renal disease
- Unemployment
- Settlement difficulties
- Pain

Remember, each person is different and it is often a combination of factors that makes the risk of developing depression higher.

Do I have depression?



One in five people will experience depression in their lives, and despite the fact that one million Australian adults live with depression each year, depression is often not recognised or treated.

Depression affects your **thoughts** by making you think things like 'I am a failure', 'it is my fault', 'nothing good ever happens to me'. It affects your **feelings** by making you feel guilty, irritable, frustrated, sad or lacking in confidence. It also affects your **behaviour** by preventing you from going out, doing things that you used to enjoy, concentrating or withdrawing from family. Finally, depression can affect your **physical** status when it makes you feel tired, you experience pain or when it disturbs your sleep or appetite.



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Please answer 'Yes' or 'No' to the following questions:

1. During the past month, have you often been bothered by feeling down, sad, miserable or hopeless? _____
2. During the past month, have you often been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things? _____

Note: If you answered yes to question 1 or 2, please contact us or your GP.

What are the treatments for depression?

Different types of depression require different types of treatment, although, they share some common characteristics. For example, physical activity may be recommended for preventing and treating mild depression. Medication and psychotherapy is recommended in cases of severe depression. One emerging approach that is becoming more common for any form of depression is self-management.

It is important that you discuss different treatment options with your doctor or case manager.

What is self-management?



Self-management refers to strategies people use to deal with their conditions. Doctors are experts in treating disease but you are the expert in dealing with the hassles of everyday life.

People are self-managing their condition when their decisions involve actions, attitudes or goals. Self-management is defined as "the engagement of individuals, in activities and practices that sustain and promote health and wellbeing".

A depression self-management program for multicultural communities

The Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre runs a free 12 week self-management program for people with depression and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma.

The program includes the following sessions:

1. Understanding depression	7. Identifying our unhelpful beliefs
2. Action plans	8. Challenging unhelpful beliefs
3. Relaxation and automatic thoughts	9. Assertive communication
4. Challenging cognitions	10. Being active
5. Increasing pleasant activities	11. Maintaining gains
6. Problem solving	12. Plan for relapse prevention

This program will help develop your knowledge, confidence and skills to make healthy lifestyle choices!!!

What do I need to do?

- If you want to participate in this program, or you want to refer somebody else, please contact us on Ph. (07) 3167-8333.
- The program is free and confidential.
- The program will be delivered in your preferred language.
- Material will be provided in your preferred language so you can practice the skills at home.

