



Depression, anxiety and related disorders are treatable conditions from which most people recover.

STAGES OF RECOVERY

Recovery is an individual process with stages that people move through at different rates. However, there are some common emotions that many people may experience.

- 1. Shock** at having to deal with something difficult and scary of which the person has no prior experience.
- 2. Denial** or difficulty in accepting having a health problem, particularly one that many people find hard to understand.
- 3. Despair** and **anger** about why the person has to deal with this condition and the related difficulties.
- 4. Acceptance** of having a condition and the changes it brings, and accepting how others see the person and how he/she sees himself/herself.
- 5. Coping** – Finding new ways to live with and tackle the changes and challenges that having depression, anxiety and related disorders may require.

AVAILABLE HELP

There is no one proven way that people recover from depression, anxiety and related disorders. However, there is a range of effective treatments available and many health professionals who can give advice and assistance while the person is on the road to recovery.

Medical treatment

Medical treatment may be provided by a doctor who is a General Practitioner (GP), a psychiatrist or case manager at a community mental health service, clinic or hospital. This treatment often includes medication such as antidepressants. For some people, medication for a short period of time and psychological treatments and self-help techniques may be sufficient. For others, in order to stay well, antidepressants are needed on an ongoing basis – in the same way someone with diabetes would use insulin or someone with asthma would use respiratory medication.

Psychological treatment

Psychological treatment is what people often refer to as 'talking therapy'. Psychological treatment can help people with depression, anxiety or related disorders to change negative thoughts and feelings and find ways to stay well. This type of treatment is provided mainly by psychologists. To find a psychologist, visit the *beyondblue* website www.beyondblue.org.au and click on Find a Doctor or other Mental Health Practitioner or call the *beyondblue* info line on **1300 22 4636** (local call). For more information see *beyondblue* **Fact Sheet 4 – Types of help available**.

Support

Mutual support groups for people with depression, anxiety and related disorders are conducted by people who have experienced similar problems. They can provide an opportunity to share experiences and find new ways to deal with difficulties. These groups can be found by contacting your local community health centre or the mental health association/foundation in your state or territory.

Family and friends

Family and friends can play an important role in a person's recovery. They can offer support, understanding and help. They can be a source of support by:

- being more caring and less critical
- relieving the person of some of their daily responsibilities
- helping to identify stressful situations at home or work
- assisting the person to find new ways of solving practical and emotional problems
- being aware of changes in the person's symptoms.

WHAT PEOPLE CAN DO TO HELP THEMSELVES RECOVER

While medical and/or psychological treatment can help a person recover, there are many ways people can help themselves.



FACT SHEET 15

Get to know the triggers and find ways to manage them

There are situations or events that can increase a person's chances of having another episode of depression, or 'relapsing' as it is often called. These situations or events are called 'triggers'. Common triggers include:

- family problems
- financial difficulties
- change in living arrangements
- changing jobs or losing a job
- having other health problems
- the loss of a close relationship
- changing treatment
- using alcohol and other drugs.

Trying to avoid these triggers can be an important part of recovering. If the person can't avoid these triggers, they should try to learn how to manage them.

Learn new ways to reduce and manage stress

Simple things can help a person get through the tough times. For example:

- keep a diary of feelings and every now and then take time to look through it and note any progress made
- practise breathing and muscle-relaxation exercises
- learn how to let people know about current feelings.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle

Eating healthily, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and avoiding alcohol and other drugs can help a person manage symptoms of depression, anxiety and related disorders.

Develop a plan

Developing a weekly plan can help the person make sure they get everything done that's important, while avoiding doing too much and becoming stressed. Completing the table below can help develop a balanced routine. When filling it out, it's a good idea to make sure there's enough time for:

- exercise
- sleep
- regular meals
- participating in enjoyable activities
- appointments with a doctor or other health professional.

Get to know the warning signs

Warning signs are signals that the person may be feeling unwell. They may be changes in the way the person thinks, acts or feels. Some common warning signs include:

- getting up later
- skipping meals
- finding it hard to concentrate
- eating unhealthily
- having disturbed sleep
- feeling irritable or stressed often
- cancelling appointments
- wanting to spend a lot of time alone
- feeling teary.

People can learn to identify their individual set of warning signs by reflecting on what signs and symptoms they've experienced when they became unwell in the past.

If a person experiences these warning signs, it's important they seek help early.

Time	Monday	Tuesday
Morning		
Afternoon		
Night		



FACT SHEET 15

Social workers in mental health are specially trained to work with people who are experiencing difficulties in life. Social workers can support people with depression, anxiety and related disorders by helping them find ways to manage more effectively some of the situations that trigger these disorders such as family issues, financial problems, work stress and living arrangements. Mental health social workers can also provide focused psychological self-help strategies.

Occupational therapists in mental health help people who have difficulties functioning because of a mental health problems (such as anxiety or depression) to participate in normal, everyday activities. Mental health occupational therapists can also provide focused psychological self-help strategies.

For a list of psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and occupational therapists with expertise in treating mental health problems, visit www.beyondblue.org.au and click [Find a Doctor or other Mental Health Practitioner](#) or call the *beyondblue* info line on **1300 22 4636** (local call cost from a landline).

MORE INFORMATION

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

www.beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636 or infoline@beyondblue.org.au

Information on depression, anxiety and related disorders, available treatments and where to get help

www.youthbeyondblue.com

beyondblue's website for young people – information on depression, anxiety and how to help a friend

Lifeline

13 11 14

24 hour counselling, information and referral (local call)

MensLine Australia

1300 78 99 78

www.menslineaus.org.au

24 hour confidential telephone support, information and referral for men with family and relationship problems

Moodgym

www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

Online psychological therapy

CRUfAD

www.crufad.org

Information and internet-based education and treatment programs for people with depression or anxiety

Carers Australia

1800 242 636

www.carersaustralia.com.au

Family carer support and counselling in each state and territory

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277

www.relationships.org.au

Support and counselling for relationships

Multicultural Mental Health Australia

(02) 9840 3333

www.mmha.org.au

Mental health information for people from culturally diverse backgrounds

headspace – Australia's National Youth Mental Health Foundation

www.headspace.org.au

Information, support and help for young people

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Telephone support for those at risk of suicide, their carers and those bereaved by suicide

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

Info line 1300 22 4636 or infoline@beyondblue.org.au

www.beyondblue.org.au

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