

## FACT SHEET

# Depression

Whilst feeling 'down' or 'sad' at times is a completely normal part of our journey as human beings, there are times when being depressed becomes a serious and debilitating mental illness. Clinical depression is characterized by a persistent low mood that affects one's ability to function in an everyday capacity. It affects an individual's relationship with themselves, their health, their family and friends, their work or school life and the greater community.

**Over 1 million people are diagnosed with clinical depression every year in Australia**

### Symptoms

- Feeling extremely sad and tearful
- Experiencing a lack of pleasure in activities that were once enjoyable
- Feeling of worthlessness
- Feeling hopeless or numb
- Feeling of guilt
- Feeling of worried or tense
- Inability to concentrate and make decisions
- Decreased self-confidence
- Decreased self-esteem
- Feelings of frustration
- Tiredness, lack of energy and motivation
- Disturbance of sleep patterns
- Reliance on alcohol and/or drugs
- Changes in appetite
- Weight loss or gain
- Low immune system
- Socially withdrawing from family and friends
- Moody and irritable
- Dark thoughts, including death and suicide



### Managing

- Seek help from a health professional
- Learn ways to reduce stress
- Put in place support, let your family and friends know
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through exercise and diet
- Create balance in your life
- Try to get a good night sleep
- Learn to recognize triggers and episodes

### Causes

- Chemical imbalance in your brain
- Stressful situations e.g. Retirement, family breakdown
- Traumatic events e.g. Violence, death in family
- Genetic inheritance, if someone in your family has had it
- Other mental illness
- Chronic medical conditions/disorders
- Past depressive episodes
- Alcohol and other recreational drug use

Zonta House Refuge Association provides support services to women who have experienced family and domestic violence, mental health issues, homelessness and other crises enabling them the opportunity to make safe and sustainable life choices. For more information or support, visit our resource page at [www.zontahouse.org.au](http://www.zontahouse.org.au)