

What to do when you can't stop being worried, sad or scared



Everyone is sad, worried or scared sometimes. But if you can't stop feeling like that for weeks, you could be 'depressed' or 'anxious'. This fact sheet will give you help to get better.

This information is for people with intellectual disability, their carers, friends and families.

This fact sheet links to the internet. If you do not have the internet, ask your support worker or friend to print the information. You can also use the internet at the library or a friend's house.

What do depressed and anxious look like?

You are depressed when you are sad a lot, tired all the time and don't enjoy things you used to like. You may also have no energy.

You are anxious when you are worried all the time and think bad things are going to happen. You may also be scared and stressed, and panic a lot.

Anxiety and depression are called **mental health issues** because they are illnesses of the mind, not the body. They are very common and a lot of people have them.

Why are you depressed or anxious?

- You have a lot of stress – you feel too much is going on for you to cope with.
- Something in your life changes you don't like – you may move from a house you liked or someone you love moves far away.
- You feel lonely and think that no-one understands you.
- Other people in your family have been anxious or depressed in the past.
- You have an illness that means you are in pain a lot.
- Someone you love has died – this feeling is called grief and it can last a long time.

Click [here](#) to read a fact sheet that helps you understand why you feel the way you do.

How can you help yourself?

Talk to someone you like or trust. This could be someone in your family, a friend, a support worker or a doctor.

- It can be hard to talk about your anxiety or depression. For help, click [here](#).
- If you want to talk to someone about their mental health, click [here](#) and [here](#).

Do something to help you feel better

There are things you can do right now, on your own or with a friend. These are:

- Go outside where there is nature – this may be in a park, by the sea or in the bush. Fresh air is good for you. It's nice to see birds and animals too.
- Get a good night's sleep.

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- Do some exercise – go for a walk, move to music or go to the gym. Exercise is very healthy and can be fun.
- Eat healthy food like fruit and lots of vegetables.

There is more information on these tips [here](#).

Do a fun program online

You can do this fun program [here](#) on your own, or with a friend or carer. There are videos to watch and things to do about:

- breathing and relaxing
- turning thoughts that don't help you into thoughts that make you feel better
- having more fun
- understanding your feelings and why you get angry.

Who can help you?

Your doctor can help with your anxiety and depression. For advice about going to see the doctor, click [here](#). You can get help with what questions to ask the doctor [here](#).

You can take a folder with you to the doctor that has pictures and information about what you like and how you feel. You can fill out this folder [here](#) with a carer or friend.

Going to see a mental health professional

Your doctor may send you to a '**mental health professional**'. They know a lot about anxiety and depression. They will ask you questions about how you feel. This is called an '**assessment**'. Find out about assessments [here](#)

After the assessment, the mental health professional will talk to you about how they can help you feel better. This is known as '**treatment**'. Treatments include:

- making a plan with a list of things that can help you
- medicine or tablets that can make you feel better
- talking to professionals about changing how you behave so you feel happier.

Find out about treatments [here](#).

If you are caring for a person with intellectual disability, find information about support and strategies for them and you [here](#).

More information

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

<https://www.sane.org/about-sane>

<https://www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/resources-people-lived-experience/people-intellectual-disability>

<https://www.13yarn.org.au/> - a chat line and support for First Nations people.