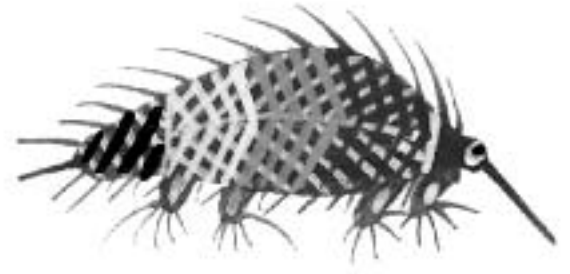


“Help when you're feeling down”

- Been feeling sad or miserable for a while?
- Feeling like you can't cope, fed up, or agro?
- Feeling like you don't enjoy anything anymore?
- Not eating properly?
- Not sleeping well?
- Don't want to get out of bed?
- Feeling like you don't want to be around other people?
- Feeling like crying for no reason?
- Feeling like hurting yourself?
- Thinking about dying?



You may be suffering from depression.

Depression is an illness that can affect you in any of the ways listed above. There are many types of depression and many different ways to help get you back to your old self again.

You don't have to put up with feeling like this! It is important to talk to your doctor, counsellor, Aboriginal Health Worker, or someone at your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health Centre, so that you can get the help that's right for you.

Even if it turns out that you are not suffering from depression, they can still help you get back on top of things.

Tool Kit

1. Get a full check-up from your doctor:

Make sure you tell your doctor about how you have been feeling, as well as what has been happening in your life that might be causing you to feel this way. Sometimes depression can be affected by your physical health. Some medical conditions such as diabetes are associated with depression. It is important for the doctor to check if there is a medical reason for the way you feel.

2. Talk to someone:

Talking to other people has been shown to be helpful when you are feeling down. It can be as easy as talking to a friend, family, an elder, your doctor, counsellor, or an Aboriginal Health Worker. Other ideas are joining a community group or getting involved in something you are interested in.

3. Daily exercise:

A little exercise goes a long way when you're feeling down. Ask your local Aboriginal Health Centre about any exercise groups and activities they might be running. Activities might include walking, swimming, fitness or relaxation classes, or even going fishing or hunting if that is part of your lifestyle.



“working together to get you back on top”

4. Do something that makes you feel good:

It is easy to forget to do things you enjoy when you are feeling down. Doing more things you enjoy can help make you feel better. Try to make yourself do something that makes you feel good at least once every day.

5. Try to get a good night's sleep:

A good sleep is important, and is often hard to get when you are feeling down. Try to get into a regular pattern of going to bed and getting up at around the same time each day. Try to avoid drinking caffeine drinks like coffee, cola or other energy drinks after 4pm.

6. Try to solve problems that stress you out:

Solving problems is an important part of getting back on top of things. This can be a big job, as not all problems have easy solutions. Have a talk to your family, friends, elders, a counsellor, Aboriginal Health Worker or doctor – someone you feel comfortable with. They can help you see the problem from different angles, and help you find possible solutions.

7. Learn skills to help you cope better:

Sometimes the way we think about things can affect the way we feel. For example, when you're



feeling down you tend to notice things that go wrong rather than things that go well. Your doctor, psychologist or counsellor at your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health Centre can teach you skills that can help you to be more reasonable in your way of thinking, to help you cope better.

8. Medication:

Anti-depressant drugs can help. Ask your doctor, as there are many different types, which may affect you differently, may have different side effects, and some might work better for you than others. If your doctor gives you anti-depressants, make sure you let your doctor know regularly how they are making you feel while you are taking them.

9. Limit alcohol and other drugs:

These are not the answer. Any good feelings that they can give you do not last long. When you get up the next day the problem is still there. If you are feeling down, alcohol and other drugs can make you feel worse, and can often cause even more problems for you in the long run.

10. Treatment options:

If you find that these tips are not working for you, go back to your doctor, counsellor or Aboriginal Health Worker to discuss other treatment options. Remember, **there is always help** – you don't have to be alone.

Lifeline's
Just ask
1300 13 11 14
Your rural mental health
information service

This Tool Kit has been produced by Lifeline's **Just ask** as a public service for the Shoalhaven and Illawarra Aboriginal communities. You are welcome to reproduce it without alteration. Please contact **Just ask** if you would like this Tool Kit to be adapted to specifically suit your community.

We invite your feedback and comments. Call 1300 13 11 14



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