

Resource Pack One

Information for adults at
risk of self harm or
suicidal behaviour

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RRP CRISIS CARD

If In Crisis...

1) Have I tried a skill! what will help me get through? Eg.

3) Who can I call?

Cheerleaders-

Significant Other-

Family-

Professional-

Other-

If Still In Crisis...

5) Remember: What Are My Reasons To Live?

6) Call my Individual Therapist _____
on Available _____

7) Leave my name and number at Lakeside IF I CAN wait, OR

8) Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

9) Call ACTT 1300 642 255 (24 hours)

10) Attend Gold Coast Hospital

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS (ADULT)

My support person: _____ **Ph** _____

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24 Hrs)

Suicide Support Services: 1800859585 (5pm-9am weekdays, 24hrs weekends)

My Lakeside Counsellor _____ **5562 0466**

Acute Care Treatment Team: 1300 642 255 (24 hours)

MensLine: 1300 789978 (www.menslineaus.org.au) 24 hr professional counselling service for men.

For more help lines / online support, see the "More Information" sheet in this pack

When I just want someone to talk to I can call... My

support person / Lifeline / MensLine

When I am thinking about suicide, and coping strategies aren't working I first call... p. My

support person

If I need more help I can call...

Suicide Support Services / Lifeline / My Lakeside Counsellor

If I have made an attempt, or strongly intend to, I will call...

Emergency Ambulance: 000

Acute Care Treatment Team

...or I will get someone to take me to my nearest hospital Emergency Department

Gold Coast University Hospital: 1 Hospital Blvd, Southport 55198211 (24hrs)

Robina Hospital: 2 Bayberry Lane, Robina 56686399 (24hrs)

Tweed Hospital: Powell Street, Tweed Heads 55067416 (24hrs)

More information on phone help lines and websites (Adult)

If you need to talk to someone, find more information or find out where you can go to see someone, the numbers and websites below may be helpful.

Lifeline

- * 13 11 14 (cost of a local call)
- * www.lifeline.org.au

For urgent assistance call Lifeline 13 11 14 which is a 24-hour telephone counselling service.

The Lifeline Information Service (www.lifeline.org.au/find help/info service) provides access to a variety of self-help tool kits with information about issues such as mental illness, depression, panic attacks, suicide prevention etc.

The Lifeline National Service Finder (www.lifeline.org.au/find help/service finder) is a comprehensive online national database of low-cost or free health and community services offered throughout Australia.

beyondblue info line

- * 1300 22 4636
- * www.beyondblue.org.au

For the cost of a local call, the beyondblue info line provides callers with access to information and referral to relevant services for depression and anxiety-related matters.

MensLine Australia

- 1300 78 99 78
- www.menslineaus.org.au

MensLine Australia is a dedicated service for men with relationship and family concern

- * All men, all relationships
- * Counselling, information and referral
- * Staffed by trained professionals
- * Confidential
- * Anonymous
- * Australia-wide
- * 24/7
- * Cost of a local call (excl.mobiles)

MoodGYM

www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

MoodGym is an online treatment program, where you can learn the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) techniques that are used to prevent and treat depression.

depressioNet

www.depressionservices.org.au

depressioNet is an independent resource for information, help and support. depressioNet offers a 24-hour email service to answer depression-related questions and help locate resources available in your area. There is also the opportunity to communicate with others via their chat room and message board.

The Black Dog Institute

www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

The Black Dog Institute website contains:

- expert information on depression and Bipolar Disorder
- information about causes and treatments
- online self-assessment tools
- a section on getting help for people experiencing depression and their carers
- a page on depression in teenagers and young adults:
www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/public/depression/inteenagersyoungadults.cfm

Anxiety Network

www.anxietynetwork.com.au

Anxiety Network Australia was established as an information, education and support resource for people all around Australia who live with anxiety disorders, their carers, relatives and health practitioners.

The Panic Anxiety Disorder Association (PADA)

www.panicanxietydisorder.org.au

The PADA website provides non-clinical information about panic/anxiety attacks, the five main anxiety disorders, prevention, self-help strategies, treatment options and membership services. A printable order form is available for the purchase of books and tapes.
BluePages

www.bluepages.anu.edu.au

For people living with depression, BluePages provides information about the illness and about its treatments (medical, psychological and alternative). It also has a bulletin board and a state-by-state list about where to get help.

Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria

www.eatingdisorders.org.au

The Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria is the primary source of support, information, community education and advocacy for people with eating disorders and their families in Victoria.

Centre for Clinical Interventions

- www.cci.health.wa.gov.au

CCI has developed a number of resources for consumers, mental health practitioners, and doctors, many of which are freely available through this website..

State-based Alcohol and Drug Information Services

- * ACT - (02) 6207 9977
- * QLD - 1800 177 833
- * NSW - 1800 422 599 or (02) 9361 8000
- * NT - 1800 131 350
- * SA - 1300 131 340 or (08) 8363 8618
- * VIC - 1800 888 236
- * TAS - 1800 811 994
- * WA - 1800 198 024 or (08) 9442 5000

National Cannabis Prevention and Information Centre

www.ncpic.org.au

Cannabis Information and Helpline

- * 1800 30 40 50

Druginfo Clearinghouse

- * 1300 85 85 84

Thinking about suicide does not mean you are a bad person, or weak, or flawed. It doesn't even mean that you really want to die - it only means that you have more pain than you can cope with right now.

Remember, no problem lasts forever. Don't solve a temporary problem with a permanent solution. You are feeling this way for a reason, and there is help available, now and in the long term.

1 Steps to take if you are feeling suicidal

If you feel immediately suicidal and feel you can't hold on:

- ① Tell someone how you feel (e.g. partner, parent, adult son or daughter, friend, school counselor).
- ① Ask them to stay with you until you get help. Being with someone, even over the phone increases your safety.
- ① Contact a medical professional and tell them it is an emergency:
 - Call your local hospital and ask to speak to the Mental Health Team.
 - Go to your GP or hospital emergency. Wait there until you see a doctor.
 - Call 000 - the police or ambulance may be able to take you to hospital.
 - Call your doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor or case worker.
 - Call an appropriate crisis Helpline – see front of the phone book.

2 With help you should start to feel better and be able to keep yourself safe. Until then, there are things you can do to relieve some of the pain and reduce the desire to end your life:

- ① Try to distance your thoughts and actions. Say to yourself, "I will wait 24 hours before I do anything." Even if it's just 24 hours.
- ① Put any items you may think about using to hurt yourself out of reach or ask a trusted friend to look after them.
- ① Do something that has brought you even a small amount of pleasure before, such as taking a walk, listening to music, taking a hot bath, watching a funny movie, reading or some slow deep breathing.
- ① Get together with others, even if you don't feel like it, to prevent isolation.
- ① Reduce drug or alcohol use. These can make it more likely that you may harm yourself, by making you more impulsive and increasing feelings of depression.
- ① Write about your thoughts and feelings. Remember to also write about the things in your life that you value and appreciate, no matter how small they may seem to you.

3 Most suicidal thoughts have an underlying cause such as mental illness (e.g. depression), a trauma or life issues. These can be very treatable with medications, counseling, and support or a combination of these. Remember people do get through this -- even people who feel as badly as you feel now. So get help now, you can survive. Call the SANE Freecall Helpline on 1800 18 SANE (7263), Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm for information on mental illness and for referrals to support agencies in your community.

How do I find out more?

SANE Australia also produces a range of easy-to-read publications and multimedia resources on mental illness. For more information about this topic see:

- ① **SANE Guide to Staying Alive** - Provides practical step-by-step hints and advice for dealing with suicidal thoughts and behaviour when there is mental illness.
- ① **SANE Guide to Depression** - Helps people diagnosed with depression and their family and friends by explaining what it means to have depression, the treatments available and what a person can do to help themselves.
- ① **SANE Guide for Healthy Living** - A comprehensive guide to healthy living for people with a mental illness. The Guide provides information and tips on a healthier lifestyle and where to find support.

Use the Order Form which came with this Factsheet or visit the SANE Bookshop at www.sane.org.

Where to call for help

- ① Immediate assistance
 - Police: 000
 - Local hospital Psychiatric Emergency Team
- ① Telephone counselling
 - Lifeline: 13 11 14
 - Suicide Callback Service: 1300 659 467
 - Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800
- ① Information and referral.
 - SANE Helpline 1800 18 SANE (7263), 9-5 weekdays EST.
 - Request free InfoPack 24 hours.

Survival skills for dealing with suicidal thoughts

Know the thoughts and outsmart them

Suicidal thoughts come in waves. The thoughts will reach a peak and then subside - usually over a few hours



The thoughts try to stay hidden. They discourage you from sharing them with friends and family.

They isolate you.

Often, the thoughts peak at night.

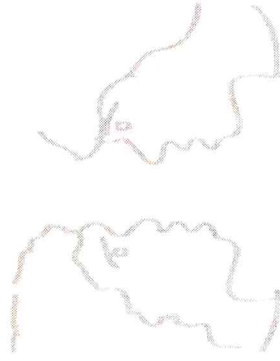
They will try and trick you into the idea that there is no future

Worst of all, they try and trick you into the idea that the family would be better off without you. This is never the case.

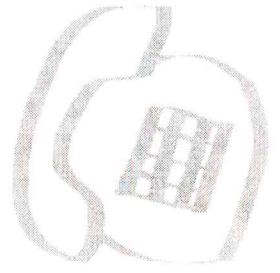
To beat the thoughts and stay alive

When you feel them coming on, be with other people.

People rarely suicide in company. Break the silence and talk.

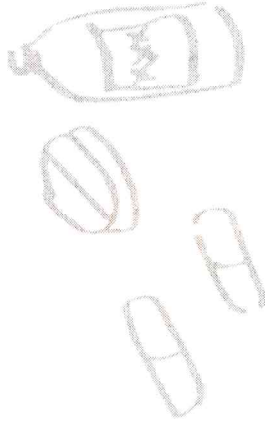


If you are alone, use the phone. Ring a friend, family member or counselling service.

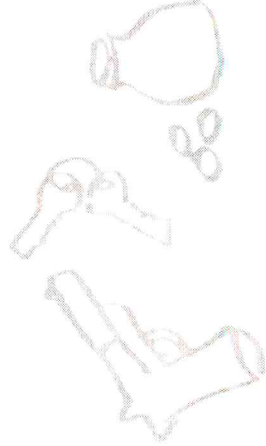


Be aware

Avoid alcohol and illegal drugs. These will often feed negative thoughts that can make you feel sad or bad.



Remove anything in the house that could make it easy to suicide if the thoughts have their way.



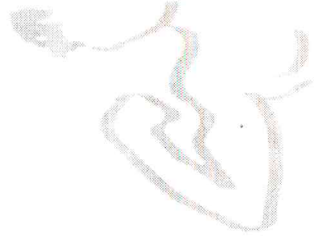
The depression will pass

Sooner or later you will get out of this hole and wonder how these thoughts ever got such a strong grip on you.

Getting stronger

Over time, with help, you will get back your old strength. This strength will put the suicidal thoughts in their place.

But it takes times. Having survival skills buys us time to work on turning things round.



Generating Hope

Table 11.1 Places to Go If You Are Feeling Suicidal and Need to Get Out

- A mall
- A coffee shop
- A restaurant
- A busy park (during the daytime)
- The beach
- The library
- A community center
- A fitness center
- A university's student union building
- The zoo
- A friend's home
- A neighbor's home
- A family member's home

Table 11.2 Reasons for Living / Reasons Not to Commit Suicide

- Beliefs that you will ultimately be able to make your life better and solve your problems in other ways
- Concerns that you could hurt your family by killing yourself
- Concerns that you would hurt your children, partner, friends, pets, or others whom you care about if you killed yourself
- Fears of dying
- Fears of failing in your suicide attempt and being worse off as a result (being paralyzed, damaging your body, and having medical problems like chronic pain, for example)
- Fears of pain
- Moral or religious objections to suicide
- Fears of disapproval from other people
- Fears of something terrible happening to you (like going to hell) if you were to kill yourself

(Chapman & Gratz, 2007).

Table 6.1 Some Reasons You Might Be Engaging in Self-Harm and Suicide Attempts and How to Deal with Them

To escape from my emotions or to make myself feel better

- How else can I make myself feel better?
- Can I just ride this out until it goes away?

To feel something—anything

- What else can I do to be able to feel something intensely without causing harm to my body?

To make others better off

- If I feel like a burden on other people, what can I do to reduce this burden?
- Is there anything I can do to take some demands away from the people I care about?

To punish myself

- What am I punishing myself for?
- What would be a better way of reaching my goals?

To communicate to or influence other people

- What do I want to communicate to other people?
- What do I want them to know or understand?
- What can I do to get the message across without harming myself?
- Whom can I ask for advice about this? (Choose a really good communicator.)

Other reasons

(Chapman & Gratz, 2007).



Fact sheet 24

I am feeling suicidal

If you think you might harm yourself, seek help immediately.

- Call 000 (police, ambulance, fire);
- Call Lifeline 13 11 14;
- Get someone to take you to your local hospital emergency department.

If you have suicidal thoughts, don't try to manage on your own.

This fact sheet provides some ways to help you cope if you are feeling suicidal.

Understanding suicidal thoughts

Remember that thoughts about suicide are just that – thoughts. You don't need to act on them. They won't last forever, and often they pass very quickly. Many people who have had serious thoughts of suicide have said that they felt completely different only hours later. It is normal to feel overwhelmed and distressed during difficult times or when it seems that things will never improve – it happens to many people.

There are many ways that you can keep yourself safe and work through tough times.

Things you can do to keep yourself safe

Seek help early	Talk to a family member or friend, see your local doctor, or ring a telephone counselling service.
Postpone any decision to end your life	Many people find that if they postpone big decisions for just 24 hours, things improve, they feel better able to cope and they find the support they need.
Talk to someone	Find someone you can trust to talk to: family, friends, a colleague, teacher or minister. 24-hour telephone counselling lines allow you to talk anonymously to a trained counsellor.
Avoid being alone (especially at night)	Stay with a family member or friend or have someone stay with you until your thoughts of suicide decrease.
Develop a safety plan	Come up with a plan that you can put into action at any time, for example have a friend or family member agree that you will call them when you are feeling overwhelmed or upset.
Avoid drugs and alcohol when you are feeling down	Many drugs are depressants and can make you feel worse, they don't help to solve problems and can make you do things you wouldn't normally do.
Set yourself small goals to help you move forward and feel in control	Set goals even on an hour-by-hour or day-by-day basis – write them down and cross them off as you achieve them.
Write down your feelings	You might keep a journal, write poetry or simply jot down your feelings. This can help you to understand yourself better and help you to think about alternative solutions to problems.
Stay healthy - try to get enough exercise and eat well	Exercising can help you to feel better by releasing hormones (endorphins) into your brain. Eating well will help you to feel energetic and better able to manage difficult life events.
See your local doctor or a specialist to discuss support or treatment	Discuss your suicidal thoughts and feelings with your doctor, talk about ways to keep yourself safe, and make sure you receive the best treatment and care.
See a mental health professional	Psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors and other health professionals are trained to deal with issues relating to suicide, mental illness and wellbeing. You can find them in the Yellow Pages or visit your GP or contact a crisis line for information.

Finding help in your local area

If you're feeling suicidal, getting help early can help you cope with the situation and avoid things getting worse.

After you recover from a crisis, you need to do all you can to make sure it doesn't happen again.

There are a number of sources of support in your local area.

If the first place or person you contact can't help, or doesn't meet your needs, try another.

General practitioners – look for one in the Yellow Pages, or contact your local community health centre.

Community health centres – these are listed in the White Pages.

Psychiatrists – If you feel you would benefit from seeing a psychiatrist, you must first see your GP for a referral and to discuss your treatment options.

Psychologists – you can find these through your GP, community health centre, the Yellow Pages or the Australian Psychological Society (APS). The APS provides a referral service on 1800 333 497 or visit their website at www.psychology.org.au

Counsellors and psychotherapists – you can find these through your GP, community health centre, the Yellow Pages or the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia Inc (PACFA). PACFA have a national register of individual counsellors and psychotherapists available to the public. See their website at www.pacfa.org.au

Crisis help lines

Lifeline – 24 hour crisis counselling available across Australia: Ph: 13 11 14; www.lifeline.org.au

Kids Help Line – 24 hour telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25: Ph: 1800 551 800; www.kidshelponline.com.au

Mensline Australia – 24 hour professional counselling service for men: Ph: 1300 78 99 78; www.menslineaus.org.au

Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS) – nationwide counselling and group programs for Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families: Ph: 1800 011 046; www.dva.gov.au/health/vvcs

Salvo Care Line (Salvation Army) – offers a crisis counselling service available throughout Australia: visit www.salvos.org.au for the number in your state.

SuicideLine (VIC) – Confidential telephone counselling, support and referral available 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout Victoria for the cost of a local call: Ph: 1300 651 251; www.suicideline.org.au

Crisis Care – Gay and Lesbian Counselling and Community Services of Australia provides information and links to counselling services for gay and lesbian people throughout Australia: Ph: 1800 18 45 27 (see the website for numbers in your state/territory); www.glccs.org.au

NOTE: Many of these services also offer interpreter services for those people who speak English as a second language.

Other places to get help

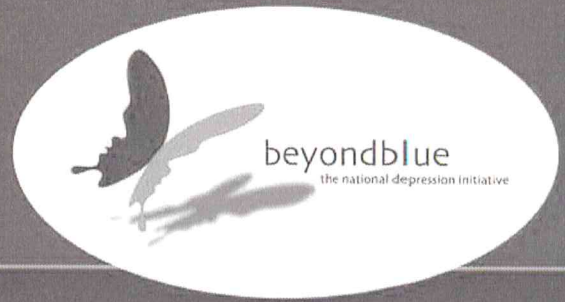
headspace – A mental health website for young people: www.headspace.org.au

SANE Helpline – offers a wide range of information on mental illness and suicide prevention: Ph: 1800 18 SANE (7236); www.sane.org

Suicide Call Back Service – a free national telephone support service for people at risk of suicide, their carers and those bereaved by suicide: Ph: 1300 659 467.

Toughin' it out – survival skills brochure for dealing with suicidal thoughts (Kirinaran): www.kirinaran.com

Reducing stress



FACT SHEET 6

STRESS AND DEPRESSION

It is important to note that stress is not depression. However, acute distress associated with tough times can occur and may be a risk factor for depression if it persists.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is a response to an event or situation. It can be positive or negative. Stress is common in daily life and may be associated with work, family or personal relationships. It usually means that something is happening that's causing worry and affecting how we are thinking and feeling.

Think about what you've been doing and how you've been feeling over the last two weeks. Have you:

1. Found it hard to relax most of the time? YES NO
2. Felt stressed and overwhelmed most of the time? YES NO
3. Felt panicky and anxious most of the time? YES NO

If you've answered YES to one or more of these questions, it might be helpful to use the information in this fact sheet to reduce your stress.

Stress management teaches you about:

- Managing stress and anxiety symptoms
- Breathing exercises to decrease your stress and anxiety
- Relaxing and the importance of physical activity.

WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

Stress is common in daily life and may be associated with work, family or personal relationships. Whatever the cause, there are some simple steps that can help you to reduce stress.

Postpone major life changes

- Making major changes in your life can be stressful at any time. If you're feeling stressed or anxious, it's probably a good idea to try to avoid moving house or changing jobs. Leave them to a time when you're feeling better.

Resolve personal conflicts

- Stress in personal relationships often contributes to depression and anxiety. Talk to a counsellor or psychologist who can help you find ways to address your problems.

Do the things you enjoy

- You may find you are enjoying yourself less and spending

more time worrying. In order to relax effectively, you need to allocate time to do the things you enjoy, such as exercising, meditating, reading, gardening or listening to music.

Control your work

- Take control of your work by avoiding long hours and additional responsibilities. This can be difficult, but small changes can make a difference.
- Learn to say 'No' more often. Create a balance between work and the things you enjoy doing. Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by new commitments.
- Make sure you have enough time to rest, relax and exercise.
- Part of learning to relax requires you to set aside some time in the day to do the things you enjoy.

Exercise regularly

- Physical exercise such as walking, swimming, dancing, playing golf or going to the gym can help relieve the tension in your muscles and relax your mind.
- Try to do some physical exercise every day, even if it's just going for a walk.

Seek help

- Talking to a friend, doctor, counsellor or someone else you trust, can help to relieve your stress. Asking for help and support at home, at work or in your other activities can also reduce stress.

CONTROLLED BREATHING EXERCISE

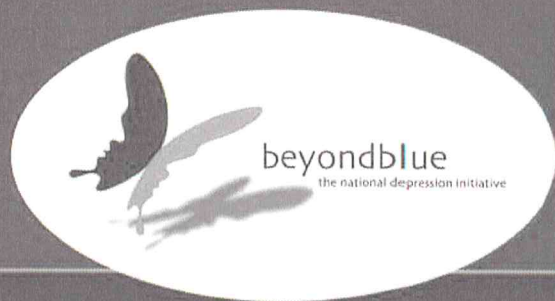
Have you noticed that you're breathing too fast? Stress and anxiety can affect your heart rate and breathing patterns. A relaxed breathing rate is usually 10 to 12 breaths per minute.

Practise this exercise three to four times a day when you're feeling stressed or anxious so that you can use this as a short-term coping strategy.

1. Time the number of breaths you take in one minute. Breathing in, then out is counted as one breath.
2. Breathe in, hold your breath and count to five. Then breathe out and say the word 'relax' to yourself in a calm, soothing manner.
3. Start breathing in through your nose and out slowly through your mouth, in a six-second cycle. Breathe in for three seconds and out for three seconds. This will produce a breathing rate of 10 breaths per minute. In the beginning, it can be helpful to time your breathing using the second hand of a watch or clock.

continues overleaf...

Reducing stress



FACT SHEET 6

- Count to yourself.
- Continue breathing in a six-second cycle for at least five minutes or until the symptoms of overbreathing have settled.

After practising this exercise, time the number of breaths you take in one minute. Practise the controlled breathing exercise each day before breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime. Use the technique whenever you feel anxious. Gradually, you'll be familiar enough with the exercise to stop timing yourself.

Practise this exercise three to four times each day, so that it becomes easy to use as a short-term coping strategy when you feel anxious.

MUSCLE TENSION EXERCISE

When you are feeling stressed and anxious, your muscles become tense. When your muscles remain tense for long periods, you can start to develop aches and pains, fatigue, headaches and difficulty breathing.

Take a few minutes to do this exercise. It will help you understand how muscle tension can cause pain and fatigue.

- Hold a piece of paper in your hand and stretch your arm out in front of you.
- Keep holding the paper for a few minutes without moving your arm.

You will probably notice that your arm feels tired after only a few minutes and may even start to ache in some places. Imagine how your arm would feel if you continued to hold that piece of paper for a number of hours. Although the paper is not heavy, keeping your muscles tense for any length of time can cause pain.

MUSCLE RELAXATION EXERCISE

This exercise helps to reduce physical and mental tension. Practise this exercise regularly and at the first signs of muscle tension.

- Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet room
- Put your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands in your lap
- Close your eyes
- Do the controlled breathing exercise for three minutes

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PO Box 6100, Hawthorn West VIC 3122
T: (03) 9810 6100
beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636
F: (03) 9810 6111
E: bb@beyondblue.org.au
W: www.beyondblue.org.au

- After three minutes of controlled breathing, start the muscle relaxation exercise below
- Tense each of your muscle groups for 10 seconds, then relax for 10 seconds, in the following order:
 - Hands:** clench your hands into fists, then relax
 - Lower arms:** bend your hands up at the wrists, then relax
 - Upper arms:** bend your arms up at the elbow, then relax
 - Shoulders:** lift your shoulders up, then relax
 - Neck:** stretch your neck gently to the left, then forward, then to the right, then backwards in a slow rolling motion, then relax
 - Forehead and scalp:** raise your eyebrows, then relax
 - Eyes:** close your eyes tightly, then relax
 - Jaw:** clench your teeth, then relax
 - Chest:** breathe in deeply, then breathe out and relax
 - Stomach:** pull your tummy in, then relax
 - Upper back:** pull your shoulders forward, then relax
 - Lower back:** while sitting, roll your back into a smooth arc, then relax
 - Buttocks:** tighten your buttocks, then relax
 - Thighs:** push your feet firmly into the floor, then relax
 - Calves:** lift your toes off the ground, then relax and
 - Feet:** gently curl your toes down, then relax.
- Continue controlled breathing for five more minutes, enjoying the feeling of relaxation
- As you become better at relaxation, it can be more interesting to combine these exercises with memories of relaxing situations eg. lying on a beach or doing a favourite activity.

A full session of relaxation takes about 15 to 20 minutes. Once you are good at relaxing your muscles, start relaxing tense parts of your body during the day while you are going about your daily activities.

MORE INFORMATION

Coping strategies for depression and anxiety:

beyondblue Fact sheet 7: Sleeping well
beyondblue Fact sheet 8: Keeping active
beyondblue Fact sheet 9: Reducing alcohol and other drugs

Other treatments for depression and anxiety:

beyondblue Fact sheet 10: Changing your thinking
beyondblue Fact sheet 11: Antidepressant medication
beyondblue Fact sheet 14: What other treatments are available for depression and anxiety?

Relaxation - Reach Out.com



Relaxation can help put things into perspective

Relaxation is so important for mental health and wellbeing. Everyone needs some time out to themselves to do something they enjoy. It is easy to forget to make time for yourself when things get stressful. Sometimes we are just so pre-occupied that days can go by without doing anything for ourselves.

Many forms of relaxation, like walking or sitting quietly, are very simple and easy to do. Others, like yoga or meditation, require some training or discipline. Going fishing or playing sport can be a great way of relaxing. You might want to write a list of other things you find relaxing.

Read through this list of suggestions. Put aside some time in the day and try some out to see which ones you find relaxing:

- go for a walk
- take time to notice the things around you
- listen to some music you really like
- go fishing
- sit quietly in a park and look at the things around you
- play your favourite sport
- take a bath - lie back, shut out everything else and relax
- go to a movie or watch a video
- visit a friend
- go for a swim
- do a puzzle
- read a book
- learn yoga or meditation.

Breathing techniques

When you are anxious, your breathing can be quick and shallow, which reduces the amount of oxygen going to your organs. Learning how to breathe efficiently can help reduce some of the physiological symptoms of anxiety.

To become aware of your breathing place one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach. Take a breath and let your stomach swell forwards as you breathe in, and fall back gently as you breathe out.

Try to get a steady rhythm going, take the same depth of breath each time. Your hand on your chest should have little or no movement. Try and take the same depth of breath each time you breathe in.

When you feel comfortable with this technique, try to slow your breathing rate down by putting a short pause after you have exhaled and before you breathe in again.

Initially, it may feel as though you are not getting enough air in, but with regular practice this slower rate will soon start to feel comfortable.

It can help to imagine that you are blowing up a big balloon in your stomach when you breathe in, and then when you breathe out that balloon will deflate. This exercise helps you to breathe more oxygen into your stomach rather than restricting the amount of oxygen by breathing into your chest.

You can find out more about breathing exercises through learning Yoga, Pilates and Tai Chi.

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- Last updated 17 Jun 09

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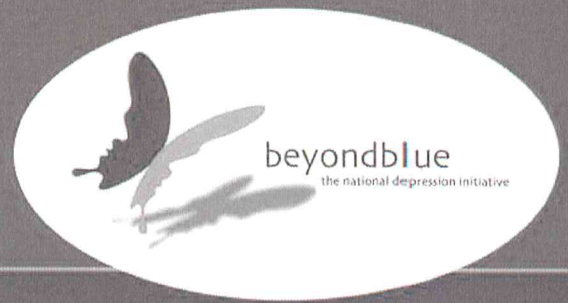
misty

10 days ago

Thanks for the good ideas for relaxation. :)

(<http://au.reachout.com/find/articles/working-through-it-myself>)

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Keeping active is a good way to help prevent or manage mild to moderate depression and anxiety. Getting started or motivated to exercise and staying active can be difficult for people with depression.

HOW DOES EXERCISE HELP WITH DEPRESSION?

There are many views as to how exercise helps people with depression. Exercise may block negative thoughts or distract people from daily worries. If a person exercises with others, exercise may increase social contact.

Compared to people without depression, depressed people generally have lower fitness levels. Increased fitness may lift mood.

Exercise may bring about changes in brain chemistry which improve mood.¹

IS IT EFFECTIVE IN HELPING DEPRESSION?

A number of studies have found that exercise helps depression. Jogging, weightlifting, walking, stationary cycling and resistance training (pushing or pulling weights with arms and legs) have all been found to be helpful in preventing or treating mild to moderate depression. In older people, exercise has been found to be as helpful as antidepressant medication or social contact in treating depression.¹

The benefits that can be attained from exercise depend on the amount of exercise that is undertaken. One study² has reported that total energy expenditure is a key factor in the remission of depression, leading the authors to recommend that individuals should be encouraged to achieve at least the minimum recommended levels of energy expenditure of 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity on most and preferably all, days of the week.³

WHY IS KEEPING ACTIVE IMPORTANT?

Keeping active can help a person stay *physically* fit and *mentally* healthy. Research shows that keeping active can:

- help lift mood
- help people get a good night's sleep
- increase energy levels
- help block negative thoughts and/or distract people from daily worries
- help people feel less alone if they exercise or socialise with others
- increase well-being.

KEEPING ACTIVE

People with severe depression may find it hard to do simple things such as getting up and dressed in the morning. They may also find it difficult to become motivated or stick to a plan.

Tips to get started

Start simple

It's important to increase activity levels gradually. Start by planning simple daily activities such as shopping, driving, gardening, writing letters or completing simple household tasks. Completing these activities can increase a person's self-confidence and build the motivation needed to take on more energetic activities.

Do what is enjoyable

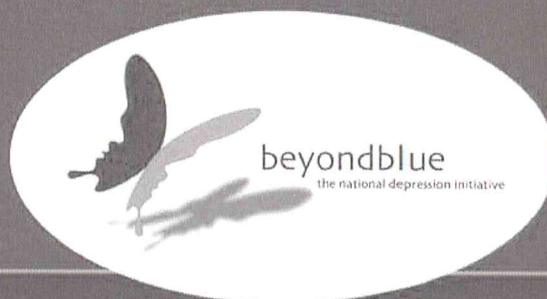
People with depression often lose interest and pleasure in doing things they once enjoyed. This loss of pleasure and enjoyment in life can make symptoms worse. To reverse this negative cycle, plan activities that are enjoyable, interesting, relaxing or satisfying. These activities are important in overcoming depression. At first, they may not feel as enjoyable as before, but with persistence, the pleasure should eventually return.

1 Jorm AF, Christensen H, Griffiths KM, Korten AE, Rodgers B. *Help for depression: What works (and what doesn't)*. Centre for Mental Health Research: Canberra, 2001.

2 Dunn AL, Trivedi MH, Kampert JB, et al. Exercise treatment for depression: efficacy and dose response. *AM J Prev Med*. Jan 2005; 28(1):1-8.

3 Pate RR, Pratt M, Blair SN, et al. Physical activity and public health. A recommendation from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine. *Jama*. Feb 1 1995; 273(5):402-407.

Keeping active



FACT SHEET 8

Include other people

People with depression often don't feel like socialising with others. However, spending time alone can make a person feel cut off from the world, making it harder to recover. That's why it's important to participate in activities with family members and close friends – and to accept social invitations, even though it's the last thing the person may want to do. Keeping connected with people helps increase levels of well-being, confidence and opportunities to participate in physical activities.

Make a plan

Planning a routine can help people to become more active. Make sure some form of exercise is scheduled each day. Try to stick to the plan as closely as possible, but be flexible. If an activity runs overtime or cannot be completed, shorten or skip it and move onto the next one at the appointed time.

Ideas for activities to include in a personal schedule:

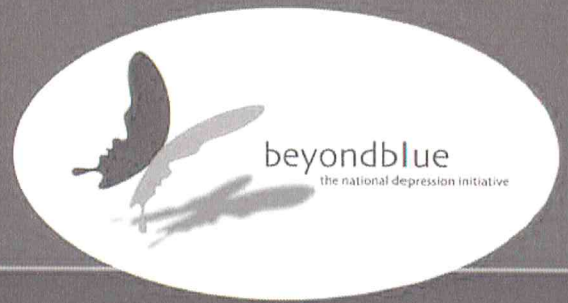
Keep fit

- Go for a walk
- Ride a bike
- Do some gardening
- Go bushwalking
- Go to the gym
- Go swimming

Entertain yourself

- Read a newspaper/book/magazine
- Write a letter/email
- Surf the internet
- Play a solo card game
- Do a crossword or sudoku

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			



Socialise

- Invite a friend around for coffee
- Organise a video evening
- Visit a neighbour
- Phone a friend for a chat
- Take children and/or pets to the playground or park

Pamper yourself

- Have a bubble bath
- Buy some flowers
- Lie on the beach and read a book

Around the house

- Cook something new
- Listen to music/radio
- Do some gardening
- Play in the backyard with children or pets

Away from home

- Visit a friend or family member
- Join a club
- Go to a market
- Visit a museum
- Visit an art gallery
- Visit the library
- Go to a movie.

Opposite is a blank table for you to practise scheduling your activities.

WHO CAN HELP WITH ACTIVITY PLANS?

While there are many things that can be done to help people become active, some people may need help to get moving and stay on track. There are many organisations and people in the community who can help.

General Practitioner

A doctor who is a General Practitioner (GP) will be able to provide advice and information about depression and exercise. He/she will also be able give referrals to a qualified exercise physiologist, covered under Medicare.

Exercise Physiologists

Exercise physiologists are health professionals who have graduated from a certified university course in exercise science and provide services relating to health, fitness and exercise. People who have ongoing health conditions are now able to access services from exercise physiologists at subsidised rates through Medicare. For more information visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au

Council Recreation Centres

Many councils offer free or cheap sport and recreation facilities such as swimming pools, walking circuits, tennis courts and skating ramps. Check with the local council to see what's available in the area.

Gymnasiums/Sports Clubs

Like recreation centres, gyms don't all have the same facilities, but most offer a range of classes including aerobics and Pilates, have equipment such as rowing and walking machines and many have swimming pools. Gyms often have instructors who can develop personal fitness plans and help with the motivation needed to stick with it!

Community Centres/Neighbourhood Houses

Community centres or neighbourhood houses host a variety of groups which focus on staying active and have affordable membership fees. These may include aerobics, yoga, tai chi, dancing and walking groups. For information on how to find community centres or neighbourhood houses, contact the local council or mental health information or awareness agency.

Keeping active



FACT SHEET 8

MORE INFORMATION

beyondblue: the national depression initiative

www.beyondblue.org.au

Information on depression, anxiety and related alcohol and drug problems, available treatments and where to get help

beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636

Information on depression, anxiety and related drug and alcohol problems, available treatments and referral only (local call)

www.youthbeyondblue.com

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

Go For Your Life

www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au

Information on how to become active and stay healthy

Australian Association of Exercise Sports Science

www.aaess.com.au

Information on exercise physiologist services and how to find an exercise physiologist

SANE Australia

1800 187 263 or www.sane.org

Information and referral on a range of mental health issues, including living healthily

Kinect Australia

www.vicfit.com.au

Information on fitness

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Depression and anxiety are manageable. With the right treatment most people recover from depression and/or anxiety.
- Keeping active can help manage or prevent mild to moderate depression.
- There are many things a person can do to keep active, at little or no cost.
- Help and information is available for people with depression who want to keep active.
- Up to five visits to an exercise physiologist are now covered under Medicare if the person has a referral from a GP.

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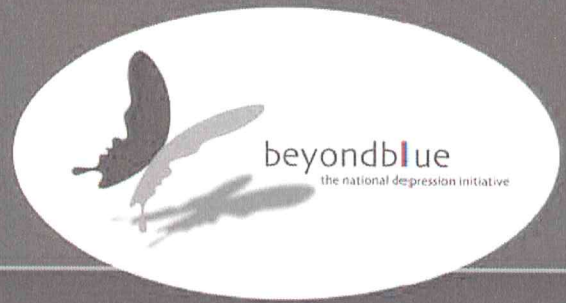
beyondblue info line 1300 22 4636

F: (03) 9810 6111

E: bb@beyondblue.org.au

W: www.beyondblue.org.au

04/09



Having a good night's sleep is important for maintaining good health. The body needs the opportunity to recharge from the day's activities. Experiencing difficulty sleeping, however, is a common problem. Lack of sleep can lead to:

- Irritability
- Lack of energy
- Poor concentration.

Good quality sleep isn't necessarily a long sleep – it's having what doctors call 'deep sleep' and 'dream sleep'. Most 'deep sleep' occurs during the first five hours after falling asleep. Even if you sleep for only four or five hours, you can still get about the same amount of 'deep sleep' as someone who sleeps for eight to ten hours.

Illness or pain can disrupt sleep. Depression, particularly, can lead to:

- Difficulty in getting to sleep
- Poor quality sleep
- Less sleep
- Frequently waking during the night
- Waking very early in the morning and being unable to get back to sleep.

Poor quality 'deep sleep' can lead to:

- Tiredness during the day
- Poor concentration
- Irritability
- Aches and pains in the muscles and bones
- An immune system that doesn't work well, leading to more frequent illness
- Longer periods of depression.

Our ability to get good quality sleep can be disrupted by physical illness, infections, pain during the night and psychological stress.

Depression disrupts your sleep patterns and as you recover, your sleep will improve. It is also helpful to work towards restoring a regular sleep pattern as this will help you make a full recovery.

THE SLEEP-WAKE CYCLE AND YOU

Think back over the last two weeks. Have you:

- Felt tired all the time?
- Spent more time in bed than usual?
- Had poor quality or fewer hours of sleep?
- Napped during the day?
- Cut down on physical activities?

If you've answered YES to one or more of these questions, the information that follows can help you get the sleep you need.

TIPS FOR IMPROVING YOUR SLEEP

There are a number of things you can do to improve your sleep.

When you wake up in the morning

- Get out of bed as soon as you wake. Don't go back to sleep or try to make up for 'lost sleep'.
- Try to get up at about the same time each morning, perhaps around 7am to 7.30am.
- Go outside into the fresh air.
- Do some physical activity, for example, go for a walk.

During the day

- Do not nap. If you nap, you'll be less tired when you go to bed and you'll probably take longer to fall asleep.
- If you're worrying about things during the night, set aside some time for problem-solving during the day. Identify problems that are causing you stress and solve them using Structured Problem-Solving (SPS) – see *beyondblue* Fact sheet 10: Changing your thinking.
- Keep a sleep-wake diary.
- Review your sleep-wake progress with your doctor at each visit.
- During the day, try to be physically active.
- Avoid drinking caffeine after 4pm and try not to drink more than two cups of caffeine-type drinks each day eg. coffee, strong tea, cola or energy drinks.

continues overleaf...

Sleeping well



FACT SHEET 7

Before going to bed

- Avoid going to bed too early. It isn't the right time for 'deep sleep'.
- Go to bed at around 10pm to 10:30pm.
- Avoid using alcohol to help you sleep. As the alcohol is broken down in your body, it causes you to sleep less deeply and to wake more frequently.
- Don't smoke within an hour or two of going to bed. Smoking stimulates your nervous system.
- Don't go to bed hungry or with a full bladder.
- Regular exercise can improve your sleep, but avoid vigorous exercise late in the evening.
- Allow yourself time to wind down before going to bed. If you are working or studying, stop at least 30 minutes before bedtime and do something relaxing.
- Use your bed only for sleep and sex so that you learn to associate your bed with sleep.
- Avoid taking sleeping pills. If you do need to take sleeping pills, try not to take them for longer than a week because they can be addictive.

While you sleep

- Try to make your bedroom quiet, dim and cool.
- Avoid too many blankets and electric blankets. If you're too hot, you won't go into 'deep sleep'.

OVERCOMING LONG-TERM SLEEPING PROBLEMS

For some people, sleeping problems may last for weeks, months or even years. Not surprisingly this may lead to anxiety about getting to sleep, which in turn makes the problem even worse. It can be helpful to take specific steps to break the cycle of feeling anxious and restless in bed. Below are some steps to follow when you can't get to sleep.

1. Get up if you can't sleep after trying for 15 to 20 minutes. Staying in bed when you're feeling restless and anxious is unlikely to result in sleep.
2. Do something quiet and distracting, for example play cards, read, knit or enjoy a warm bath. If your mind is very active or you can't stop worrying, it may be helpful to concentrate on something else, such as doing a crossword or watching television. By distracting yourself from your worries, you may find it easier to wind down and become sleepy.
3. Go back to bed when you feel more relaxed and sleepy.
4. If you're still awake after a further 15 to 20 minutes, get out of bed again. Repeat this process until you fall asleep shortly after returning to bed.

MORE INFORMATION

Learn about other coping strategies for depression and anxiety

beyondblue Fact sheet 8: Keeping active

beyondblue Fact sheet 9: Reducing alcohol and other drugs

Learn about other treatments for depression and anxiety

beyondblue Fact sheet 10: Changing your thinking

beyondblue Fact sheet 11: Antidepressant medication

beyondblue Fact sheet 14: What other treatments are available for depression and anxiety?

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