

For more information

If you think you or someone you know is suffering from depression, contact:

<http://www.vch.ca/mentalhealth>
or CONTACT:



Aboriginal Mental Health Program

604-675-2551 x 22240

Mental Health

Adults - Intake
Access and Assessment Centre (AAC)
604-875-8289

Children and Youth - Intake
604-675-3895

Older Adults - Intake
604-709-6785

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www.vch.ca

Depression

A Guide for the First Nations Community



This guide answers some questions about depression

What is depression?

People sometimes talk about feeling depressed when they feel sad. It is normal to feel sad sometimes, but people with the mental illness called depression have symptoms that make it hard to do things like other people. Depression can make people feel hopeless, worthless, and empty. Depression can be treated. They need help from a mental health professional.

Do aboriginal people get depression more than others?

No. It affects everyone the same. People from all races and cultures get it, and it doesn't matter how much money you have.

What causes depression?

We do not know why people get depression. We think there is a problem with chemicals in the brain along with things like:

- Stressful events and situations in a person's life
- Trauma, such as from the residential school system
- Alcohol and drug abuse

Depression can also run in families.

What are the symptoms of depression?

Depression is more than just not feeling happy. A person with depression can also suffer from these things:

- Low energy
- Sleeping not enough or too much
- Feeling sad almost all of the time
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling guilty for no reason
- Not feeling good about themselves
- Having bad, negative, thoughts almost all of the time
- Feeling anxious
- Crying a lot
- Having a hard time making decisions
- Having problems with memory
- Having a hard time concentrating
- Eating more or less than they usually do
- Feeling like they can't sit still or like they can't move much at all
- Not wanting to do things they usually like doing
- Thoughts of suicide.

Is there something that helps a person with depression?

Yes, depression can be treated.

There are different ways to treat depression. A medicine called an anti-depressant can help most of the time. Counseling can also help. A person can learn new ways to think and deal with things in their life with help from a counselor. It works best to use both medicine and counseling. People can also get support from family, friends and self-help groups.

What can family and friends do?

Family and friends can help in many ways:

- They can learn to see when someone is depressed.
- They can ask the person to get help.
- They can help the person do everyday activities like going for a walk. They need to keep in mind the depressed person might not be able to do as much as usual.
- They can listen to what the depressed person has to say.
- They can try to treat the person as they normally would and make them as comfortable as possible.

They can also help by asking for advice.

