

# A GUIDE TO DEPRESSION AND ITS TREATMENT



## DEPRESSION IS COMMON

Depression is common. It affects more than 264 million people worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

## DEPRESSION IS MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLY FEELING "FED UP"

Depression is much more than simply feeling "fed up" – when you're depressed you can feel empty and hopeless for weeks or months, rather than just a few days.<sup>2-4</sup> It can affect how you feel, the way you think, and how you act.<sup>4</sup>

## DEPRESSION AFFECTS DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Depression affects different people in different ways, and the symptoms can include sadness, feeling empty and hopeless, diminished interest or pleasure, problems eating, problems sleeping, restlessness or being slowed down, lack of energy, low self-esteem, guilt, difficulty concentrating and making decisions, or even thoughts about death.<sup>4</sup>

# WHAT IS DEPRESSION?



### KEY POINTS

**A large number of people suffer from depression<sup>1</sup>**

**Depression can affect how you feel, the way you think, and how you act<sup>4</sup>**

**Depression affects different people in different ways<sup>4</sup>**

1. WHO. Depression. Available from: [https://www.who.int/mental\\_health/management/depression/en/](https://www.who.int/mental_health/management/depression/en/). Accessed on: February 5, 2020.

2. NHS. Clinical depression. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-depression/>. Accessed on: December 9, 2019.

3. Government of Western Australia. Department of Health. Depression: Reversing the vicious cycle. Available from: [https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Depression-reversing-the-vicious-cycle](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Depression-reversing-the-vicious-cycle). Accessed on: December 9, 2019.

4. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-5. 5 ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press 2013.



## DEPRESSION CAN EVOLVE OVER TIME

In some people, depression can be progressive with symptoms changing and evolving over time.<sup>1,2</sup> For these people, longer and more frequent episodes of depression might increase vulnerability to further episodes, triggering a progressive course.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore important to seek help early because if left untreated, depression can have a significant negative impact.<sup>3</sup> Mental health specialists encourage early and appropriate treatment to avoid symptom progression.<sup>3</sup>

## REVERSING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF DEPRESSION

Depression can have a huge impact on your life, daily routines, and behavior which can actually make your depression worse and stop you from getting better. When this happens, you have become locked in a "vicious cycle" of depression.<sup>4</sup> But, it is possible to reverse this cycle by seeking appropriate help and support.<sup>4</sup>

### KEY POINTS

**Depression can change and evolve over time<sup>1,3</sup>**

**Depression can have a huge impact on your life, daily routines, and behavior**

**You can reverse the "vicious cycle" of depression by seeking appropriate help and support<sup>4</sup>**

1. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-5. 5 ed. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press 2013.

2. Moylan S, Maes M, Wray NR, et al. The neuroprogressive nature of major depressive disorder: Pathways to disease evolution and resistance, and therapeutic implications. *Mol Psychiatry*. 2013;18(5):595-606.

3. Halfin A. Depression: the benefits of early and appropriate treatment. *Am J Manag Care*. 2007;13(4 Suppl):S92-7.

4. Government of Western Australia. Department of Health. Depression: Reversing the vicious cycle. Available from: [https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Depression-reversing-the-vicious-cycle](https://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Depression-reversing-the-vicious-cycle). Accessed on: December 9, 2019.

# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TREATMENTS?

## THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO REACH RECOVERY

Depression is not a sign of weakness or something you can just "snap out of". But, with the right treatment and support, people with depression can progress towards recovery.<sup>1</sup>

The main goal of treatment will be the complete relief of your symptoms (this is called remission) and when this happens in the longer term, this is called recovery.<sup>2,3</sup> To achieve this, treatment can involve medications, and/or psychological therapies which are sometimes called talking

therapies.<sup>1,2,4-6</sup> Support programs and the sharing of personal experiences can also play a very important role in recovery.<sup>1,2,5</sup>

What type of treatment you receive will be based on several aspects including symptom severity and your preference.<sup>1,2</sup> Your doctor will explain the different treatment options to you, and taking into account your preferences, will decide which is the best and most appropriate for you.<sup>4</sup>

**Depression is not a sign of weakness<sup>1</sup>**

**Depression can be treated<sup>1,2,4-6</sup>**

**With the right treatment and support, people with depression can progress towards recovery<sup>1</sup>**

1. NHS. Clinical depression. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-depression/>. Accessed on: December 9, 2019.
2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Depression in adults: Recognition and management. Clinical guideline 90. Last updated April 2018. Available from: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90/resources/depression-in-adults-recognition-and-management-pdf-975742638037>. Accessed on: December 9, 2019.
3. Furukawa TA, Fujita A, Harai H, et al. Definitions of recovery and outcomes of major depression: Results from a 10-year follow-up. *Acta Psychiatr Scand*. 2008;117(1):35-40.
4. Kennedy SH, Lam RW, McIntyre RS, et al. Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) 2016 clinical guidelines for the management of adults with major depressive disorder: Section 3. Pharmacological treatments. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2016;61(9):540-560.
5. Parikh SV, Quilty LC, Ravitz P, et al. Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) 2016 clinical guidelines for the management of adults with major depressive disorder: Section 2. Psychological treatments. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2016;61(9):524-539.
6. Gaseem A, Harris RP, Forcica MA, et al. Clinical Guidelines Committee of the American College of Physicians. Nonpharmacologic versus pharmacologic treatment of adult patients with major depressive disorder: A clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med*. 2016;164(5):350-359.

## TYPES OF TREATMENT

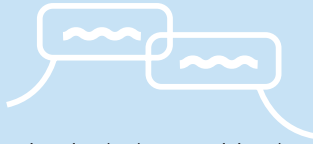
### • Antidepressants:

These are prescribed medicines and there are several different types of antidepressants.<sup>1,2</sup> The choice of the antidepressant prescribed will depend upon the severity of your depression and how long you have been depressed, your age, any other medical conditions you might have, whether you have previously been treated with antidepressants, and your preference.<sup>2,3</sup>



### • Psychological therapies:

These types of therapies include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), electronically-delivered cognitive behavioral therapy (eCBT), and interpersonal therapy (IPT). In some people, outcomes are improved when psychological therapies are combined with antidepressants.<sup>1,3,4</sup>



- Other treatments that aim to stimulate the brain, such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), deep brain stimulation (DBS) or transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) can be useful and prescribed by your doctor.<sup>5</sup>
- Physical activity is increasingly proposed as treatment for depression as well.<sup>3</sup>
- While not strictly classified as a treatment, support programs can play a very important role in recovery for many people.<sup>1,4,6</sup> Support programs are sometimes referred to as peer support and allow people with depression to share their experiences. Peer support can be helpful either alone or combined with antidepressants and/or psychological therapies.<sup>4</sup> Sharing experiences with others in a similar situation can help you to gain a better understanding of your depression.
- Mindfulness can also be proposed and relaxation techniques may reduce depressive symptoms.<sup>1,7</sup>

## KEY POINTS

**Depression can be treated by different means including antidepressants and/or psychological therapies<sup>1-4</sup>**

**What type of treatment you receive will be based on several aspects including symptom severity and your preference<sup>1-4</sup>**

**Support programs allow people with depression to share experiences<sup>1,5</sup>**

1. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Depression in adults: recognition and management. Clinical guideline 90. Last updated April 2018. Available from: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg90/resources/depression-in-adults-recognition-and-management-pdf-975742638037>. Accessed on: December 9, 2019.
2. Kennedy SH, Lam RW, McIntyre RS, et al. Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) 2016 clinical guidelines for the management of adults with major depressive disorder: Section 3. Pharmacological treatments. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2016;61(9):540-560.
3. Qaseem A, Harris RP, Forciea MA, et al. Clinical Guidelines Committee of the American College of Physicians. Nonpharmacologic versus pharmacologic treatment of adult patients with major depressive disorder: A clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. *Ann Intern Med*. 2016;164(5):350-359.
4. Parikh SV, Quilty LC, Ravitz P, et al. Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) 2016 clinical guidelines for the management of adults with major depressive disorder: Section 2. Psychological treatments. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2016;61(9):524-539.
5. Malhi GS et al. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists clinical practice guidelines for mood disorders. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry*. 2015;49(12):1087-1206.
6. NHS. Clinical depression. Available from: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-depression/>. Accessed on: December 9, 2019.
7. Jorm AF, Morgan AJ, Hetrick SE. Relaxation for depression (Review). *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2008 Oct 8;(4):CD007142.

Do not change or stop your treatment without  
advice from a healthcare professional,  
such as your referring doctor.

If your symptoms worsen, please consult  
a healthcare professional,  
such as your referring doctor.

This booklet has been developed specifically  
for people suffering from depression.

It has been co-created by people suffering  
from depression or who have suffered from depression  
who are members of GAMIAN-Europe  
(an umbrella group involving patient organizations in  
different European countries)  
and by Servier.

