



# Understanding low mood and depression

The signs, and when to get help

Everyone has low days. Feeling flat after a hard week is common, and it often lifts. Depression is different. It is more than a low mood, and it affects how you think, feel and cope.

## How to tell the difference

Beyond Blue says you may be depressed if, for more than two weeks, you have felt sad, down or miserable most of the time, or have lost interest or pleasure in things you usually enjoy, along with other signs. Only a health professional can tell you whether it is depression.

## Other signs to look for

- Feeling tired all the time, even after rest
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling worthless, guilty or hopeless
- Pulling away from friends, family or colleagues
- Aches and pains with no clear cause

## How it can show up at work

Dreading the day, feeling numb with patients and colleagues, making more mistakes, or calling in sick more often. It can be easy to hide, so colleagues may not notice.

**Burnout and depression can overlap. Burnout is linked to work, while depression affects your whole life. If your low mood goes beyond work, talk to a health professional.**

## What can help

- Talking to someone you trust, and to a doctor, counsellor or psychologist.
- Keeping small routines: a walk, regular meals, sleep, seeing one person.
- Taking one small step at a time. Recovery looks different for everyone, and many people do get better with support.

## If you are thinking about harming yourself

Please reach out now. Call Lifeline on **13 11 14** at any hour. If you are in immediate danger, call **000**.

### If you need support

|                                    |                     |                                                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lifeline</b>                    | <b>13 11 14</b>     | 24-hour crisis support                             |
| <b>Beyond Blue</b>                 | <b>1300 22 4636</b> | support by phone and online                        |
| <b>Dental Practitioner Support</b> | <b>1800 377 700</b> | registered practitioners; free, confidential, 24/7 |
| <b>In an emergency, call 000</b>   |                     |                                                    |

*Look after yourself, and each other.*

*Reference: Beyond Blue. A guide to what works for depression: an evidence-based review (beyondblue.org.au).*