

## Where to seek help

In an emergency, call 000.

Your chain of command is a primary resource that can provide advice, referral and support.

Other than in an emergency situation, contact your local ADF Medical Centre or Psychology Section. Navy personnel can seek help through their divisional system, local Alcohol and Drug Program Advisor (ADPA) or can directly contact their local Alcohol and Drug Program Coordinators.

## Mental Health Resources

**Local Medical Centres** Your local medical officer can provide immediate assistance and referrals as required.

**Psychology Support Section** All Psychology Support Sections offer after-hours, critical incident support through the local Duty Officer/Officer of the Day.

### Defence Community Organisation

<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dco/> or [www.defence.gov.au/dco/](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco/)

The DCO provides services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all year round including public holidays. During normal business hours the first point of call is the Duty Social Worker or Military Support Officer. Outside these core hours and on Public Holidays, calls should be directed to the National Welfare Coordination Centre (NWCC) on 1800 801 026 or if calling from overseas +61 2 93594842.

**Chaplains** There are Chaplains connected to all units in Australia who can provide support and appropriate referrals.

### The Family Information Network for Defence (FIND) (1800 020 031)

FIND is a phone service that provides easy access to personnel information on matters of everyday interest and concern. It is a confidential service that is available to every Service person and family anywhere in Australia.

**Lifeline (131 114)** If you, or a friend, need to talk to someone about a problem immediately, you can call Lifeline for the cost of a local call.

**Veterans and Veteran's Families Counselling Service (VCS)** This service is available to veterans of all deployments and their families. VETLINE – 24 hour emergency line (1800 011 046).

**ADF Mental Health Strategy All-hours Support Line (ASL)** The ASL is a confidential telephone triage support service for ADF members and their families that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. (1800 628 036) (FREECALL within Australia) and (61 2 9425 3878) (outside Australia)

### Australian Defence Force Mental Health Strategy (ADFMHS)

Defweb Address <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/dsg/sites/dmh/>  
Internet Address [www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/i-dmh.htm](http://www.defence.gov.au/health/DMH/i-dmh.htm)  
Email [DMH.mentalhealth@defence.gov.au](mailto:DMH.mentalhealth@defence.gov.au)



Australian Government  
Department of Defence

# ADF Mental Health Strategy DEPRESSION

be  
well

work  
well

live  
well

Z00 31520-15



Depression is a word we often use to describe our feelings or moods. Most of us will feel 'down', 'blue', 'fed up', or 'sad' from time to time—such feelings are a normal part of the emotional ups and downs of everyday life. In fact, feelings like these are useful because they may help you realise that you need to do something constructive to deal with the feelings or to change the situation.

Depression is quite different to these types of feelings. It lasts longer than sadness or a case of the 'blues', and is accompanied by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness of an intensity that has a strong negative effect on your day-to-day life. Depression is not only about feelings or emotions, it also affects the way you think and behave.

It is important to understand the difference between depression and the feelings of sadness that we all may experience when we have been through a painful or difficult time (like the death of a loved one). The feelings associated with grief can also be intense and long lasting but they can help the person adjust and develop new meaning in their life after the loss. Depression on the other hand does not do this. Depression does not provide us with personal growth and development – it can actually rob us of those very things.

Family, friends and colleagues may seem frustrated and critical, suggesting that you just 'snap out of it'. This probably won't be helpful, but your family and friends, just like you, need to know that depression can be treated successfully and that they can help you in your recovery.

Depression is not a mood that you can just 'snap out of'. Don't be afraid to talk about your feelings; letting people know how you feel can be the first step on the road to recovery from depression. Remember – 'depression is an illness, not a choice'.

## What are the signs?

Depression can present with a range of signs or symptoms, some of which can include:

- loss of interest in pleasurable and fun activities
- a lack of joy in your life
- feeling sad or irritable most of the time
- changes in sleeping patterns – trouble falling asleep or waking up too early
- worrying
- negative thinking
- feeling unworthy or helpless, as if you are a burden to others
- feeling tired all the time
- everything seems like a major effort.

It is probably the relentless feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, guilt and anxiety that accompany depression that make it so difficult to cope with. Some of these signs can be frightening, particularly if you think about death or suicide. It is important to make sure you talk about these feelings and find a different solution or answer to your pain.

## Website resources

<http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/>

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx>

<http://www.health.gov.au/mentalhealth>

## What to do?

If you or someone you know can identify with these signs or feelings, please seek help straight away. See your local Medical Centre, Chaplain, Social Worker, Psychologist, or the Duty Officer/Officer of the Day. Talk to these people and be open and frank about how you feel. In a crisis you can contact the All Hours Support Line on 1800 628 036.

Depression can be treated, help is available, and you do not have to go through this alone. There are a variety of ways to deal with depression. Speak to a professional and find out what type of treatment can be tailored for your own situation.