

Is it Depression or just Sadness?

The words "I feel depressed" are used by most of us at times when life is getting on top of us. But how can we distinguish sadness from medical depression? How do we know when it is the right time is to seek help?

Depression is more like the feeling that everyone around you is happy and you are the only one who is not. You cannot often put a finger on what is causing it. It feels just like it is taking over and your mood is spiralling downwards into a black hole. Your self-talk and thoughts may be negatively directed at yourself. You may feel very alone, may feel like retreating into a permanent shell or be thinking that the only way to escape is to end it all.



Seek help - This is depression – it is treatable and is known to be caused by hormones within the brain. Seek medical help as soon as you can. Let people around you know you are feeling like this and keep people who love you close for support. Lifeline, Beyond Blue and the Black Dog Institute can offer information and support too. See your local service providers too such as Headspace or community health organisations.

Sadness is different – we all experience life events that are incredibly sad – death of loved ones, loss of relationship, loss of pets, children leaving home, job loss, uncertainty, financial hardship etc.

These "things" we can say triggered a feeling of sadness, even anxiety and overwhelm. This feeling is very normal. Just like nice things bring us joy, unexpected or unwanted events can bring us sadness. Most people are relieved to be told that it is ok to feel sad when these things happen and will cry "tears of relief" when told. According to biochemist Dr William Frey, emotional tears help excrete stress hormones and toxins as well as stimulating our pain relieving endorphins! Makes the old statement "have a good old cry" sound like it can help doesn't it?

No one can say how long sadness should last – everyone takes the correct time they need, but if you feel like you are spiralling into a deep black hole, please seek medical help for depression.

Some people dedicate their careers to help others in need – trained counsellors, community organisations, sympathetic practitioners & psychologists are not judgemental of what you are experiencing so never feel like you have to do it alone. We are there to get you over life's hurdles. Naturopathy will help manage the biochemical balance through herbs and nutritional support for your nervous system, but sometimes Your steps to Wellness includes others who can help too!