



Guide to Depression

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:
healthyu@umanitoba.ca

Depression

What is it?

Depression is much more than simple unhappiness. Clinical depression, sometimes called major depression, is a complex mood disorder caused by various factors... While it can suddenly go into remission, depression is not something that people can get over by their own effort.

- Canadian Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

What causes it?

- Genetics
- Psychological or emotional vulnerability to depression
- Imbalances in brain chemistry
- Major stress, trauma, or complicated grief.

Stigma

Stigma is a negative stereotype and discrimination is the behaviour that results from the stereotype. People with mental health conditions are often depicted as dangerous, violent, unpredictable, weak, attention seeking, or lazy but [this is not true](#).

Just like when you get the flu or suffer from a physical illness, your brain can get sick, too. [There is nothing wrong with asking for help](#) if self-care and relying on friends isn't enough. It takes great strength to ask for help and to take care of yourself. Medication, therapy, or a combination of both can really help you if you struggle with depression. Make a plan with your family doctor.



Symptoms

- The main symptom of depression is a sad, despairing mood that is present most of the time, lasts for more than two weeks, and impairs the persons' performance at work, school, or in social relationships.
- Loss of interest in things like work, school, hobbies, or sex.
- Withdrawal from friends and family.
- Changes in appetite, weight, and sleep.
- Fatigue and trouble concentrating.
- Feeling useless, hopeless, guilty, pessimistic, or having low self-esteem.
- Thoughts of suicide.



Men and Depression

Since men are often expected to act "tough" and to not display emotion, depression can present differently. Here are a few symptoms you may notice in a man who is living with depression:

- Works compulsively
- Aggressive behaviour
- Isolate themselves
- Drinks more than normal
- High risk activities & reckless behaviour

Substance use baselines will differ from person to person but in general, you may notice excessive alcohol consumption or consumption of alcohol in replace of other coping strategies that promote displays and discussion of emotions

Supporting someone with depression

- Call out stigma when you see it
- Be careful not to be judgmental
- Talk to the person about what you've noticed and why you're concerned
- Explain that depression is a medical condition, not a personal flaw or weakness, and that it usually gets better with treatment.
- Suggest seeking help from a professional - a medical doctor or a mental health provider, such as a licensed counselor or a psychologist.
- Offer to help prepare a list of questions to discuss in an initial appointment with a doctor or mental health provider.
- Express your willingness to help by offering to set up appointments and to go along to them.
- If your loved one's illness is severe or potentially life-threatening, contact a doctor, a hospital, or emergency medical services.

Getting help

Make a counselling appointment with the Student Counselling Centre or Klinik. Talk to your family doctor about depression and find out your treatment options. Be kind to yourself - depression is both physically and mentally exhausting, and you deserve to feel better.

Ask yourself:

- Do I have someone I trust to talk to?
- Do I make time to relax?
- Do I get enough breaks?
- Am I getting regular exercise?
- Am I eating nutritious meals?
- Am I getting enough sleep?



Practice emotional validation

Emotional validation is not the same as agreeing with what we are hearing, rather, is to understand, learn, listen, and accept the emotional experience from another person without diminishing their experience.

Validation can come from our safety net or from within through self-validation, both of which require practice. Recognize that there is no “right” or “wrong” way of feeling and showing yourself or others compassion can be helpful in accepting this.

To validate someone else’s emotions:

- Be mindful of your body language. Try to avoid body signals that convey rejection such as crossing your arms or avoiding eye contact. It is important to note that respectful body language may vary across cultures. It is okay to ask someone what they are comfortable with.
- Show active listening, such as paraphrasing what they say, nodding, and saying words conveying understanding such as “I see” or “I get it”.
- Express empathy and avoid judgement, even if it is a situation you cannot relate or fully understand. Try to show support by acknowledging everyone has the right to make their own decisions. Try to offer reassurance and hope by expressing statements such as “thank you for telling me this”, “there is a way through this”, or “I am here for you”.
- Offer your presence and if possible, try to ask open ended questions such as “how are you feeling?” or “why do you think that?”. Asking someone to clarify what they mean can allow you better understanding to support as well as offer them a further opportunity to reflect.

To validate your own emotions:

- Identify and acknowledge the way you are feeling.
- Show compassion through validating statements. For example, "I acknowledge and accept that I am feeling sad today. I will give myself permission to move slower today and meet myself where I am at".
- Take a moment to reflect the source of the emotion. If you cannot identify anything, that is okay, be patient with yourself.

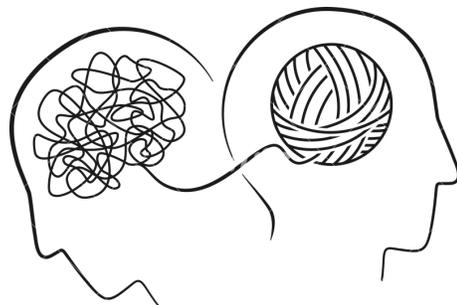


Here are some examples of validating statements by Very Well Mind (2022)

- "I can see how you would feel that way."
- "That must be really hard."
- "I feel the same way."
- "How frustrating!"
- "I bet you're frustrated."
- "I'm here for you."

Invalidating Statements to avoid

- "What's the big deal?"
- "You should feel lucky."
- "You are too sensitive."
- "Just snap out of it/suck it up"
- "Don't be such a wimp."
- "If you hadn't done that it wouldn't have happened."
- "I don't want to hear it."
- "It will just go away, don't be so dramatic"
- "You are bothering me with your problems"



Being depressed can be an isolating and difficult experience, sometimes having a supportive friend group or someone who listens can go a long way. When you're feeling down, knowing that people are thinking of you can really lift your spirits.

It is important to remember that is OK to experience and feel depressive symptoms, even if you struggle to find the reasons why.

There is nothing wrong with you and you deserve to be heard, loved, and helped. Give yourself time to heal and know that seeking out for help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength.



UM Resources

Depression

[Student Counselling Centre \(SCC\)](#)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

[Health and Wellness](#)

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

[Console](#)

Console is a mental health service available to UM students who have insurance through the university. Console offers 24-hour crisis support, daily journal, wellness assessment quizzes, mental health literacy training, and self-guided therapy. Console also connects students with mental health professional support VIA telephone.

https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_Console_Console

[Indigenous Student Centre \(ISC\)](#)

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development. They also provide opportunities for students, staff and the wider community to learn about First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

isc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

[Healthy U](#)

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

[Sexual Violence Resource Centre \(SVRC\)](#)

Provides support, resources, information and referral services for any student, faculty or staff member who has been affected by sexual violence

537 UMSU University Centre

svrc@umanitoba.ca

204-474-6562

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>

Off Campus Resources

Depression

Klinik Community Health

Klinik, is a community health provider offering a wide variety of services including medical care, counseling, and education accessible to all individuals regardless of their financial situation or background.

167 Sherbrook Street

General line: 204-784-4090

Crisis line: 204-786-8686

klinik@klinik.mb.ca

klinik.mb.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

The CMHA is a national association promoting mental health, resilience, and recovery of mental illnesses through services and resources available nationwide.

General Line: 204-982-6100

office@cmhawpg.mb.ca

<https://cmha.ca/brochure/depression-and-bipolar-disorder/>

Bounce Back

Skill-building program designed to help individuals manage low mood, mild to moderate depression and anxiety, stress or worry.

General Line: 1-855-873-0013

bounceback@cmha.ca

<https://bounceback.cmha.ca/welcome/>

Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba

The Mood Disorders Association is a Manitoban non-profit organization supporting everyone impacted by a mood disorder directly or indirectly. They provide educational resources about identifying and treating depression, as well as online and support groups.

General Line: 204-786-0987

info@moodmb.ca

<http://www.mooddisordersmanitoba.ca/contact/>

- <http://www.mooddisordersmanitoba.ca/resources/depression/>
- <http://www.mooddisordersmanitoba.ca/services/support-groups/>

WRHA: Cognitive Behavioural Therapy with Mindfulness (CBTm)

CBTm is an education program designed to help build resilience and improve mental health and wellness. It is recommended as first-line treatment for anxiety and depression.

<https://wrha.mb.ca/groups/cbtm/>