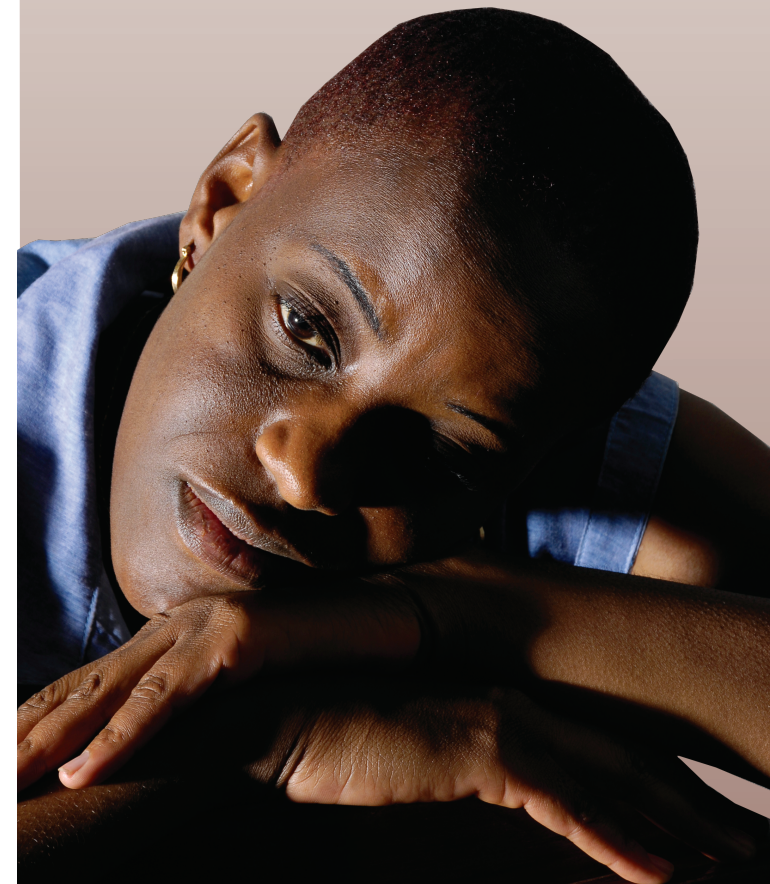


# DEPRESSION

what people need to know



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MINISTRY of HEALTH



Republic of Botswana

## What is Depression?

It is an emotional disorder in which there is prolonged sadness lasting for two weeks to months.

## What are the risk factors of Depression

There is no specific cause for depression, but there are those situations that can lead one to being depressed which include the following.

- Family history of depression
- History of physical, emotional or sexual trauma in early life increases the risk
- Chronic illness
- Use of substance and alcohol abuse
- Loss of loved ones
- Loss of a job or valuables
- Stressful life events such as financial or relationship problems.
- Being a victim of crime
- Pregnancy; some women may be at an increased risk of depression during pregnancy especially if pregnancy is with some complications or has had previous loss of pregnancy.

## What you need to know about Depression

- Depression can occur at any age, ethnic or economic group.
- People with depression can be successfully treated if diagnosed early.
- Due to stigma only 1 in 3 of those associated with the disorder will seek help.
- About 80% of all suicides are carried out by persons who have a depressive illness.
- Thoughts of committing suicide is so common in mood disorders, they are considered a symptom of the disorder.

## What are the signs and symptoms of Depression

- Feelings of sadness, anxiety, and hopelessness
- Feeling of guilt, worthlessness and low self-esteem
- Restlessness, irritability
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of energy, feeling lethargic or tired all the time.
- Increased or decreased sleep
- Excessive weight gain or weight loss
- Persistent thoughts of suicide or hurting self.
- Loss of sexual desire
- Persistent body aches including headaches
- Thinking or memory impairment or poor concentration.

## What you can do to help a depressed person

- Show respect
- Acknowledge their feelings
- Avoid critical comments like “act like a lady/man”, “pull up your socks”
- Encourage them to seek professional help
- Encourage them to talk. Listen and give them warm support
- Assist them communicate their feelings in a healthy manner.
- Acknowledge and complement small steps towards recovery.
- Encourage them to avoid stressful situations while dealing with depression.

## What you can do to cope with Depression

- **Avoid alcohol and drugs as ways of coping.** Alcohol and drugs suppress your ability to listen, understand and appreciate your feelings.
- **Attend support groups.** In the support groups you share your views with group members, give and receive some feedback. It helps discover self fully.

## • Get involved in team work activities:

This will build self esteem and create gratitude in others, but start small, don't be extravagant or extreme.

## • Attend professional counseling regularly.

Such sessions help to identify effective coping mechanism and function effectively whether or not challenges exist.