



**MENTAL HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

For Anyone. For Everyone.®

Breaking down depression

In Australia, depression affects 1 in 7 people their lifetime. Chances are, we will know several people with either diagnosed or undiagnosed depression. By understanding and talking about this, we can better support friends, family, colleagues and others in the community experiencing depressive disorders.

When supporting someone with depression, it's important to consider:



Looking for signs

that someone may be experiencing depression or not be coping and take steps to act and offer support (you can find more about the signs and symptoms here).



Approaching the person and connecting with them – start the conversation in a safe place at an appropriate time. This could mean taking a walk, having a coffee, or going someplace else that is private.



Giving support – don't jump to solutions or try to minimise the problem but offer active emotional support and then help the person to consider options.



Encouraging the person to seek help if they haven't already or consider new options for support if old ones are not working.



Considering ways to connect the person with other things that might help in addition to formal supports – things that make them feel more connected or brings joy or relief from their stresses.



Being mindful of language, cultural norms, and values, and spiritual and religious beliefs of the person.



Following up if appropriate and let the person know you are available to talk when they need. With this in mind, you should not become the person's only means or support.



Offering hope and positivity about their future and recovery journey. Understanding that depression is complex and that recovery can be a challenge

Starting the conversation shouldn't be scary...

Many people often feel afraid to start these conversations simply because they don't know how. Initiating a conversation with someone who is experiencing depression should not be feared and can have the power to save a life.

Examples of conversation starters:



For more helpful tips when providing MHFA to someone experiencing signs of depression, you can read articles here:

Talking about depression

<https://community.mhfa.com.au/talking-about-depression/>

Compassionate language for mental health -

<https://community.mhfa.com.au/words-matter-compassionate-language-for-mental-health/>

Considerations when providing mental health first aid

<https://community.mhfa.com.au/considerations-when-providing-mental-health-first-aid-to-others/>

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