

# Depression: What is it and How is it Treated?

Depression is a common problem among people living in a stressful and fast-paced environment.

The word depression is commonly used to describe many feelings, such as being sad, 'blue', miserable or upset. However, a person can feel all these emotions without suffering from clinical depression. The difference lies in the duration and severity of the feelings. Clinical depression is a mental, emotional and physical state that is intense, long-lasting and significantly affects daily life. It is a pervasive psychological condition, not just a mood that someone can snap out of easily.

## Depression differs from grief

It is also important to distinguish depression from the sadness naturally experienced after the loss of loved ones. Although the momentary grief associated with loss is often intense, such emotions are normal and functional. They allow people to mourn and then adjust to their new life after the loss. Depression, on the other hand, is not functional or healthy. Instead of providing people with new avenues for development and growth, depression often robs them of finding meaning in their lives and inhibits their daily functioning at work or at school.

## Depression is not something to be ashamed of... and it is highly treatable

Depression is not something to be ashamed of or guilty about, nor is it a character flaw or a sign of weakness. Most importantly, depression is not permanent. The chances for complete recovery are excellent. A number of psychological and drug treatments are effective and readily available.

## What are the signs to look for?

Depressed people can experience a couple or many of the following symptoms:

- Feeling sad or empty
- Sleeping problems
- Worrying and negative thinking
- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- Irritability and agitation
- Loss of interest and energy
  - Poor concentration
  - Change in appetite
  - Loss of confidence
  - Feeling guilty and worthless
  - Reduced libido
  - Suicidal thoughts



## How is depression treated?

There are two major forms of treatment for depression that may be used individually or in combination, depending on the type and severity of depression.

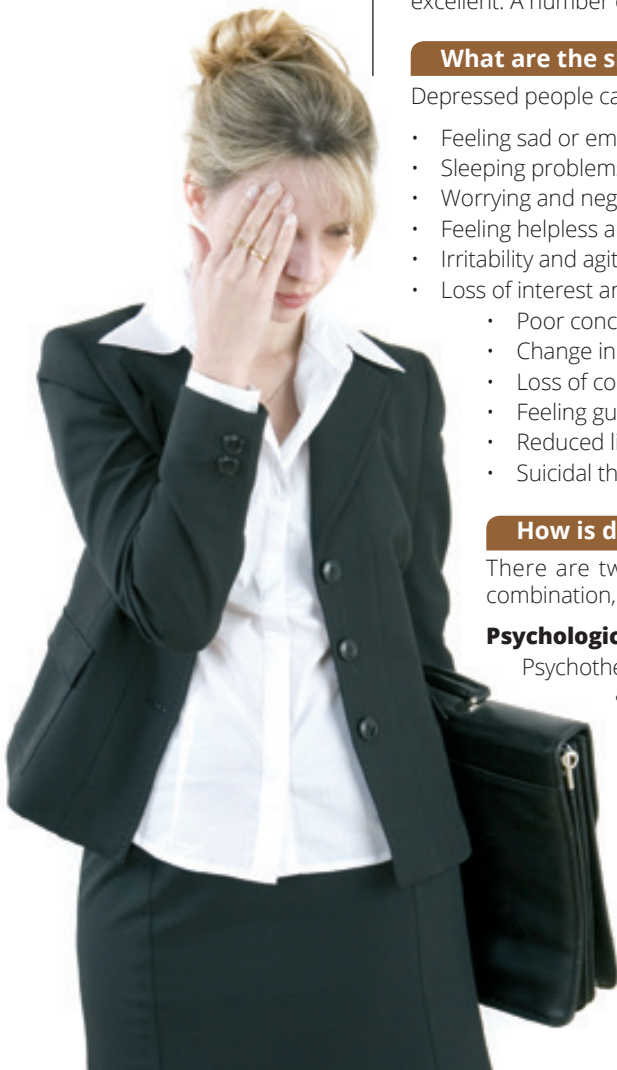
### Psychological treatment

Psychotherapy provides the opportunity to share and work through difficulties in a supportive and confidential environment. It offers skills and strategies to alter thinking patterns, behaviours, lifestyle choices that contribute to depression.

Two of the most well-researched treatments are called Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy and Interpersonal Therapy. These approaches are structured, goal-oriented and solution-based. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy is particularly effective in helping to reduce and control thoughts associated with depression and to develop long-term coping skills to minimise future episodes.

### Medication

One aspect of depression is a change in the balance of chemicals in the brain, which impact on mood and can contribute to feeling low, sad and fatigued. Antidepressant medications are drugs that help restore the chemical balance and to alleviate biological symptoms especially in severe cases of depression.



## Combination treatments

A combination of medication and psychological treatment may be the most helpful treatment modality. In the long term, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy is found to be as effective as anti-depression medications.

A review of current research shows that a range of well-defined psychological treatments:

- are effective at treating the most common mental health conditions;
- are effective in treating anxiety and depression disorders;
- are the treatment of choice for most childhood problems;
- reduce relapse rate because people receiving medication only have not learned necessary skills and lifestyle changes to prevent recurrence.

## How Psychologists Can Help?

Everyday problems, such as work stress, relationship troubles, coping with illness, grief and other negative life events, can seriously affect your health and quality of life. Addressing these concerns is vital to enjoying life and good relationships.



Clinical psychologists can help with these situations. They equip individuals with the skills needed to function better and to prevent problems. Some of the common reasons why people visit psychologists include:

- Mood Disorders
- Adjustment Difficulties
- Relationship Problems
- Eating Disorders
- Impact of Lifestyle Issues on Health
- Child-rearing Difficulties
- Behavioral Difficulties among Adolescents and Children
- Trauma, Grief and Losses
- Preventing Suicide

Research shows psychological treatments are effective in managing many common mental health related problems. Find out more about the effectiveness of psychological treatments: [www.psychology.org.au/community/effectiveness](http://www.psychology.org.au/community/effectiveness)

## Consulting a Psychologist

Registered Psychologists follow guidelines about professional conduct, responsibilities and confidentiality that are set and monitored by the Hong Kong Psychological Society and International Societies such as the American Psychological Association (APA), British Psychological Society (BPS) and Australian Psychological Society (APS) Code of Ethics. Registered Psychologists with professional memberships involve meeting academic and practice standards in addition to overseas board or local registration requirements.

### Psychologists can help you in different areas, including:

- Stress
- Fears, phobias, anxiety and panic attacks
- Depression
- Loss and grief
- Sexual difficulties
- Sleeping difficulties
- Eating and weight control problems
- Children's learning & behaviour
- Addictions
- Marital, family and relationship problems
- Improving relationships
- Parenting skills
- Personal growth
- Career planning
- Improving work efficiency
- Enhancing academic performance
- Training and developing staff
- Occupational health & safety



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### Reference:

Australian Psychological Society

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# 抑鬱症簡介及治療方法

抑鬱症對於壓力大和居住在節奏急促環境的人士來說，乃是十分常見的。

抑鬱一詞常用來形容多種情感，如哀傷、藍色抑鬱、悽慘或心煩意亂等。然而，一個人可以感受上述的所有情感而沒有患上臨床所指的抑鬱症。兩者的分別在於，情感的長短和感受強烈程度。

臨床的抑鬱症是一種強烈、持久的精神、情感和身體狀態，並會顯著地影響日常生活。這也是一個普遍的心理狀態，並不是一種容易揮之則去的情感。

## 抑鬱症有別於悲傷

區別抑鬱症與悲傷是十分重要的。儘管痛失至愛的短暫悲傷感覺十分強烈，但該情感是正常的，並可以宣洩情感，讓我們哀悼親朋，幫助我們慢慢適應生活上的改變，悲傷的過程亦有助我們成長和開啟生命的另一扇大門；然而抑鬱症則沒有為我們的生命尋求新的意義，並阻礙我們日常的工作和學業。

## 抑鬱病能根治 不要羞愧

您不需要為患上抑鬱病而羞愧，或認為這是性格上的缺陷又或是弱者的象徵。最重要的一點是，抑鬱症絕非恆久。完全復原的機會很大，現時亦有多種頗有成效的心理和藥物治療方法。

## 抑鬱症有什麼徵兆？

患有抑鬱症的人士可能有以下的徵兆：

- 感到哀傷或空虛
- 睡眠問題
- 憂慮和消極思考
- 感到無助和沒有希望
- 容易發怒和激動
- 失去興趣和精力
- 難以集中精神
  - 食慾改變
  - 失去信心
    - 有罪疚感和感覺自己毫無用處
    - 性慾減低
    - 萌生自殺的念頭



## 有什麼治療抑鬱症的方法？

抑鬱症的治療主要有兩大類，須按病症類別和嚴重程度決定是否單獨或一併進行。

### 心理治療

心理治療為患者在支持和保密的環境，提供一個共同分享和克服困難的機會，並給予一些技巧和策略，以改善構成您抑鬱的思考模式、行為和生活方式。

其中兩種經廣泛研究的治療分別是認知行為治療和人際關係心理治療。這兩種治療都有系統地建立、著重目標和以解決問題為本。認知行為治療尤其可以幫助減少和管理與抑鬱相關的思想，並建立長遠的處理技巧，以減少未來不悅的事件發生。

### 藥物治療

抑鬱會令患者腦部的化學成分出現變化而失衡，這會影響情緒、或令您感到失落、不快和疲累。抗抑鬱的藥物可幫助您回復化學物的平衡及減輕生理上的徵兆，尤其對於嚴重的抑鬱症患者而言。



## 綜合性治療

綜合藥物和心理治療，或許是最能幫助您的治療方法。長遠而言，認知行為治療可以有如抗抑鬱藥物般有成效。

現時的研究顯示，多項已明確界定的心理治療可以：

- 有效治療大部分患者的精神健康狀況；
- 有效治療大部分患者的憂慮和抑鬱的問題；
- 治療大部分與兒童成長相關的問題；
- 可減少復發率，因服食藥物的患者可學習一些所需的技巧和生活上所需的改變，以預防復發。

## 心理學家如何可以幫助您？

許多日常遇到的問題，如工作壓力、關係的問題、應付疾病、悲傷和其他生活不如意的事件，都會影響您的健康和生活質素。勇於面對問題，對於享受生活和建立良好的關係乃是十分關鍵的。

當自助的方法不奏效或問題持續，您可諮詢臨床心理學家，協助您應付問題。他們能夠幫助有需要的人士裝備自己和學習一些技巧，以取得更佳的表现和預防問題發生。以下是諮詢心理學家的常見原因。

- 情緒病
- 焦慮
- 適應問題
- 婚姻和關係問題
- 飲食問題
- 影響健康的生活方式
- 育兒難題
- 青少年和兒童的行為問題
- 創傷、悲傷和痛失友伴
- 自殺的預防

研究顯示心理治療對於許多精神健康的問題頗有成效，而大眾亦越來越對優質的精神健康治療有著需求。您可瀏覽[www.psychology.org.au/community/effectiveness](http://www.psychology.org.au/community/effectiveness)，閱讀更多有關心理治療成效的資料。



## 諮詢心理學家

香港註冊的臨床心理學家須遵從由香港心理學會及國際專業組織如美國心理學會、英國心理學會和澳洲心理學會所訂立及監管的專業守則、責任和病人資料保密的指引。已註冊成為專業心理學會會員的心理學家除了要符合本地或海外法定委員會的註冊規定，並須達到其所要求的學術水平和執業標準。

## 心理學家可以幫助您面對以下的情況：

- 受壓
- 受驚、恐懼症、焦慮和受恐慌性襲擊
- 抑鬱
- 失去親友或悲傷
- 性障礙
- 睡眠問題
- 飲食和體重控制問題
- 兒童的學習、行為和管教問題
- 上癮
- 婚姻、家庭和關係的問題
- 改善關係
- 管教子女技巧
- 個人成長
- 計劃事業
- 改善工作效率
- 改進學業表現
- 培訓和發展員工的潛力／技能
- 企業選才
- 檢討公司／組織之架構和實務
- 職業健康與安全

### 編寫：

註冊臨床心理學家陳慶滿博士

### 參考資料：

澳洲心理學會

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