

## How Aware can help

### Aware LoCall Helpline - 1890 303 302

A listening service for those who experience depression and their families/friends, the helpline is available at local call rates from anywhere in the country 365 days a year:

Mon-Wed: 10am - 10pm  
Thurs-Sun: 10am - 1am

## Support Groups

Offer attendees emotional support and the opportunity to learn new ways of coping with the illness from their peers, in a confidential environment. Aware also runs support groups for young people aged 18-25, as well as groups especially for relatives of those affected.

## Information

If you would like to receive a free information pack on depression, as well as further information on Aware services, write to us at the address on the back of this leaflet or call 01 661 7211.

## About Aware

Aware has worked since 1985 to provide emotional support and information to individuals who experience depression or mood disorder, and their families. The organisation also works to create greater public awareness about the nature, extent and consequences of depression.

## Aware LoCall Helpline

# 1890 303 302



A listening ear for people with depression and their families.

## Online

# www.aware.ie



### AWARE SERVICES

- LOCAL HELPLINE 1890 303 302
- SUPPORT GROUPS nationwide
- BEAT THE BLUES secondary schools awareness programme
- BEYOND THE BLUES depression education
- ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)
- Free INFORMATION SERVICE
- Public LECTURE SERIES
- MAIL ORDER BOOK SERVICE
- Quarterly MAGAZINE



### Contact Aware:

72 Lower Leeson Street,  
Dublin 2

Tel: 01 661 7211

Fax: 01 661 7217

Email: [info@aware.ie](mailto:info@aware.ie)

Website: [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)



# Depression *in the* Workplace

## How you can help

## DEPRESSION: THE SYMPTOMS

- **Feeling** - depressed, sad, anxious or bored
- **Energy** - tired, fatigued, everything an effort
- **Sleep** - waking during the night/too early in the morning, oversleeping/trouble getting to sleep
- **Thinking** - slow thinking, poor concentration, forgetful or indecisive
- **Interest** - loss of interest in food, work etc
- **Value** - reduced sense of self-worth/low self esteem
- **Aches** - headaches, chest or other pains without a physical basis
- **Life** – thinking of death or suicide

*An individual doesn't have to FEEL depressed to actually BE depressed. If any five or more of the above symptoms are present for more than two weeks, with little or no respite, professional medical advice should be sought from a GP or other suitably qualified health care professional.*

## DEPRESSION: THE CAUSES

Depression can be preceded by a setback in life, such as bereavement, relationship or financial difficulties, problems at work/school, bullying, unemployment or medical illness. An inherited tendency towards depression can also be a factor. In the case of bipolar disorder (a particular type of mood disorder involving highs and lows of mood, known as elations and depressions respectively) genetic factors can be important.

## DEPRESSION: THE FACTS

- Depression is a treatable condition.
- Depression is often described as an overwhelming feeling which dulls thinking, impairs concentration, saps energy, decreases interest in food, sex, work and daily events, and also disrupts sleep.
- It affects 1 in 3 of us at some point in our lives.
- It is estimated that over 400,000 people in Ireland experience depression at any one time.
- If left untreated depression can prove fatal, resulting in the tragedy of suicide.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP A COLLEAGUE OR EMPLOYEE?

- Get information about depression, so that you have some idea of what the individual is experiencing and how it affects them.
- Remember that depression is a real illness with symptoms affecting concentration, energy, motivation and self-esteem.
- Support and reassure the person unconditionally.
- Listen to them in a non-judgemental way – their experience is real for them.
- If the person is behaving differently remember this is a result of the illness. It is no-one's 'fault' so do not apportion blame.
- If a colleague confides in you, respect their privacy.
- Take references to suicide seriously.
- Where there is absenteeism, reduced productivity, errors and poor concentration, consider whether depression may be the cause.
- Offer practical help where you can e.g. encourage the person to eat well and suggest a brisk walk at lunchtime to ensure fresh air and exercise.
- Check in with them regularly so that you will know if they are having specific difficulties.
- Depression can be isolating, so be sure to include the individual in workplace chat and invite them to join you for lunch etc. Remember that alcohol can have a negative impact on someone with depression, so while you should invite them to social events, do not pressure them to drink alcohol.
- Where someone has been absent as a result of illness, welcome them back to work.
- Negativity and hopelessness can be a part of depression, so encourage the person to be hopeful of recovery. Encourage them to seek support from Aware and from friends and family.
- Even where someone realises they have depression, the negative thinking associated with the condition may prevent them getting help.
- Above all, remember that depression can affect any one of us at any time in our lives.

## HOW TO RECOGNISE DEPRESSION IN THE WORKPLACE

- Absenteeism
- Reduced productivity
- Uncharacteristic behaviour e.g. accidents
- Impaired judgement, resulting in bad decisions or indecision
- Low morale
- Lack of co-operation
- Excessive tiredness
- Complaints of physical aches or pains
- In situations where a person is elated or manic as a result of bipolar disorder, they may be disruptive, interfering or domineering

## WHERE TO GET HELP

- Employee Assistance Programme/Officer
- Staff Welfare Officer
- Occupational Health Dept/Nurse
- Company Doctor
- G.P.
- Aware – helpline, email or local support group

## STAMPING OUT STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE

Stigma in the workplace, whether real or perceived, means that many workers will avoid telling colleagues about their illness for fear of being labelled or discriminated against.

Aware offers talks and seminars on depression to companies nationwide. This creates awareness of the illness, help that is available, and also encourages workers to accept that depression is something which we are all at risk of. For further information call 01 661 7211.

