

Aware Services

SUPPORT GROUPS

Online and Nationwide

BEAT THE BLUES

Secondary Schools

Awareness Programme

INFORMATION SERVICES

Free, Online and from

Local Health Centres

LECTURE SERIES

Enabling the Public

MAIL ORDER BOOKS

Also Online

About Aware

For the past two decades, **Aware** has worked to provide vital emotional support and information to those who experience depression and their families. The nationwide organisation also seeks to create greater public awareness of the nature, extent and consequences of depression.

Aware provides services throughout the country. For details on what's available in your local area call Aware on 01 661 7211 or see www.aware.ie

**A listening ear
for people
with depression
and their families**

**LoCall
Helpline
1890 303 302**

**Online
www.aware.ie**

**Email Support
wecanhelp@aware.ie**

Contact Aware at
72 Lower Leeson St,
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 661 7211
Fax: 01 661 7217
email: info@aware.ie
website: www.aware.ie



*Continuing your Recovery
from Depression*

*A Guide to
Staying Well*

More than 400,000 people in Ireland experience depression at any one time. For some the experience may be mild or moderate, for others it may be more severe. Depression can last from weeks to several months. The common thread for all is that recovering from a period of ill-health takes time, and it is important to remember this. Returning to 'normal' life brings many challenges. This leaflet offers practical advice and tips on how to cope with the transition.

TAKING TIME

It is important to acknowledge that getting back to old routines will not happen overnight. Dealing with a period of illness is difficult. If you have withdrawn from family and friends as a result of illness, it will take time to rebuild these relationships. Similarly if you have had to take leave from work/school/college, it will take some time to adjust to being back in these day-to-day routines.

Do not put pressure on yourself to get back to 'normal' straight away. Recovery times vary from person to person: you must go easy on yourself and not put yourself under undue pressure. Do your best to get adequate sleep/rest and eat a nutritious diet. Remember that sugary foods lead to a sharp drop in blood sugar levels later on, and this leads to slumps in energy and low mood.

FACING CHALLENGES AND FEARS

It is entirely normal to feel nervous, frightened about the challenges ahead, and anxious about returning fully to family life and/or work after a period of ill-health. If you are experiencing such feelings, remind yourself that they are normal and very common. Accessing support at this time is crucial. Consider attending an Aware support Group or using the Aware loCall Helpline. More information on these services is included later in this leaflet.

TIPS FOR CONTINUING RECOVERY AND STAYING WELL

- Acknowledge that this is a period of transition and will take time.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Focus on progress you have made so far and remember that recovery always takes time.
- Stay in touch with your doctor or health professional and attend all appointments. If you are required to continue medication, it is important that you comply with directions - otherwise you may risk relapse.
- Ask family and friends for support. Most will be happy to do what they can to help you through your recovery. Don't be afraid to reach out to them, and don't expect them to read your mind either. If you cannot rely on family support, use the support services Aware offers: the loCall Helpline and support groups.
- Learn what you can about depression so you can monitor improvements more readily. Knowing what you are dealing with makes the situation easier to manage.
- When you feel ready, examine old routines and lifestyle choices that may have an impact on your condition. Alcohol and recreational drugs have a detrimental effect on mood, and this is especially true for individuals prone to mood disorder. If this was the case for you in the past, make a conscious effort to stay away from these substances, and to find alternative social outlets where you won't feel under pressure to use them.

- Accessing support services such as those offered by Aware can prove vital, both during recovery and also once full health is regained. Aware Support Groups offer the opportunity to share concerns and coping skills with others who have personal experience of depression.
- The Aware loCall Helpline is a confidential listening service, and offers the opportunity to talk through concerns with a trained volunteer. Even when an individual has fully recovered from a period of illness, it is normal to have concerns from time to time, and you should talk these through with someone who understands rather than allow them to develop.
- Many people experience one-off incidents of depression. However, there will be some instances where a subsequent episode will occur. If you are especially concerned about this, consider keeping a mood diary, to plot your mood level on a daily or weekly basis. A sample mood diary is available for download from www.aware.ie. If you think that you may be relapsing, don't worry about this on your own: talk to someone you trust and see your treating doctor to discuss your concerns. If you haven't already spoken to your GP or health professional do so now.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

