

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

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Find out more Online or Call

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.

Support Groups

Aware support groups are available at various locations throughout Ireland for anyone who experiences any form of depressive or bipolar disorder.

The groups are confidential and are facilitated by individuals specially trained by **Aware**. They help to bring together people with similar experiences, so that they can share their feelings, improve their coping skills, give and receive emotional support and learn about the illness.

We emphasise that the groups are in addition to the standard treatments available for depression. Our research has shown them to play an important role in relapse prevention, and to be effective in helping the person with experience of mood disorder recover from their illness and manage its disruptive effects.

**LoCall
Helpline**



1890 303 302

The Aware loCall Helpline can be contacted from anywhere in Ireland for the price of a local call on 1890 303 302 and is available:

10am - 10pm, Monday - Wednesday

10am - 1am, Thursday - Sunday

The helpline provides a listening ear for people with depression and their families.



Aware Support Groups

*Supporting
you through
Depression*

DEPRESSION by its very nature creates a sense of loneliness and isolation. Yet, if you are depressed, you are *not* alone. Aware support groups bring together individuals who experience any form of depression, and provide a confidential, safe and non-judgemental place where people feel accepted as they are. In some locations support groups for relatives and friends of those with depression are also provided. People who attend our groups find them to be a unique experience where they can talk openly about how they feel to others who have an understanding of dealing with depression.

SUPPORT THROUGH DEPRESSION

Confidentiality is a central aspect of Aware support groups. Through ongoing attendance, the group will give you information about depression and elation, about how it can affect the way you think and feel and about how you relate to others.

The caring and supportive nature of the group will help you find the courage and confidence to identify mood changes in their earlier stages, and so take the steps necessary to stop the condition disrupting your life.

Coming to terms with a depressive illness is not easy. Attendance at a support group, sharing with and learning from others is certainly the easiest and most effective way to do this.

SO, WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET THERE?

- People are welcomed on arrival by the group facilitator who is specially trained by Aware.
- Punctuality is important to avoid disruption caused by late arrivals.
- The groups are confidential so that what is discussed at a meeting is not to be spoken about outside the group. This confidentiality also requires that people do not disclose to others the identity of those who attend the group.
- Ideas on different issues are freely given, although ultimately each person makes up his/her own mind about such matters.
- It is important to remember that you can be of great help to others in the group by sharing your experience and the coping skills you have developed.
- We encourage you to attend at least three meetings before you decide whether or not they are for you.
- There is a cup of tea/coffee after the meeting and the chance to get to know each other in a more relaxed atmosphere. This time is for social conversation and not continuing the previous discussion of the meeting.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long is the group meeting?

The group usually lasts for an hour to an hour and a half, and is then followed by tea/coffee.

How many will be there?

It is impossible to predict how many will attend any group. On average, attendance will usually be from five to ten, and will be a mixture of men and women.

Do I have to say anything when I get there?

Usually everyone at the group is asked to introduce themselves on a first name basis. After that, you don't have to speak if you don't want to, you can sit back and listen. However, you may be invited to share if you wish.

Can someone come with me for support?

Many people coming to a group for the first time bring a friend or relative for moral support. However, it is best if the person accompanying you leaves once the group starts, and returns for the tea/coffee. People are usually more open with strangers than with those they know. Your group facilitator will be able to advise you further.

There is no charge for attending an Aware support group.

Details of all Aware support groups are available from our website www.aware.ie or by contacting the relevant local office on the reverse side of this leaflet.

