

# Myths about Depression

## 1. Depression is not an illness

Fact:

Depression can be a serious illness. It affects not only an individual's mood and thoughts, but also physical health. Like other illnesses, it is fine to ask for help. Persisted depression will affect the individual's social and work capacity. Severely depressed patient will consider self-harm and commit suicide. Let your family doctor help you regain your life.

## 2. Only certain people will get depressed

Fact:

Possible causes of depression include: physical (changes in function in certain specified region of the brain), psychological, environmental and genetic factors. In some depressive patients, the exact cause of their illness cannot be found. Anyone can suffer from depression. So, you are not alone. Reach out and let your family doctor help you.

## 3. Depression is normal with ageing

Fact:

Depression is not a part of normal aging. However, older adults will experience more life events that can trigger depression; for examples, loss of family members and friends, illnesses and financial worries. Yet, it is preventable and treatable. Older adults are encouraged to share their feelings with their trusted ones.

## 4. Depression only affects women

Fact:

More women were reported suffering from depression than men. However, depression in men should not be overlooked. Depressed men tend to be reluctant to seek help due to cultural beliefs. In fact, seeking help and talking about depression is not a sign of weakness, it is a crucial step to alleviate mood problems.

## 5. Depression does not affect children or teenagers

Fact:

Children and teenagers may not express their feelings like adults. Therefore, parents and guardians should pay attention to changes in their children's emotions and behaviours. If in doubt, they should seek advice from teachers, social workers or health care professionals. Children and teens are encouraged to talk it out with their trusted family members or friends.

## **6. People with family history will get depression**

Fact:

People with family history will have a higher chance to have depression, but not inevitable. If you suspect that you have symptoms of depression, talk with your family doctor or trusted person as soon as possible.

## **7. All depressive patients suffered the same symptoms**

Fact:

People suffering from depression may have different symptoms. Some patients do not feel that they are in a low mood initially. Rather they may have sleep problem, feeling irritated, helpless and/or hopeless. Talk it out with someone you trust, such as your family doctor who can offer professional help.

## **8. It is possible to fight against depression with one's own will**

Fact:

Lots of self-help information can be found in newspapers, books, internet and social media. However, such information can be overwhelming, inaccurate and not tailored to the individual's needs. Relying on these without guidance may worsen one's emotional state. Seeking help from professionals to combat depression is a smart move.

## **9. Only severely depressed patients should seek professional help**

Fact:

Persisted depression will affect the individual's social and work capacity. Severely depressed patient may self-harm or even commit suicide. If you think that you may have depression, talk with someone you trust and seek help from professionals such as your family doctor. They have professional experience in helping depressive patients and refer to specialists if necessary.

## **10. Depression cannot be cured**

Fact:

Depression is treatable. The World Health Organization reported that 60- 80% of individuals positively responded to a combination treatment with medication and psychotherapy. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that treatment for depression takes time and the recovery may take months.