



## When Depression Enters Your Home



**Depression can affect any family, and it is more common than we think. In fact, depression is the leading cause of suicide in South Africa.**

**GOOD  
NEWS**



Depression = treatable condition

**80-90%**

SHOW A GOOD  
RESPONSE TO TREATMENT

### WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Common factors linked to depression include:



Family  
history



Trauma  
or stress



Major life  
changes (e.g.  
death, divorce,  
loss of job)



Medication



Physical  
illnesses



Loneliness  
and isolation

### DEPRESSION IN THE HOME

**Depression is common** and you **should not shy away from tackling the topic.**

The manner in which depression presents itself can signal to family members that something may be wrong. For instance:

Have you or a family member been exhibiting some of the **below symptoms for at least 6 months? If YES**, then you or your family member may be suffering from depression. Have they begun to **affect your or your family member's social, work or personal life?**

- A sudden change in mood, with feelings of hopelessness.
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed.
- Struggle to leave the bed, the house or to face friends, family or co-workers.
- Either significant increase or decrease in appetite and weight.
- Significant over- or under-sleeping.
- Self-loathing, constant self-criticism and guilt.
- Concentration problems.
- Anger or irritability.

### TALKING TO A DEPRESSED FAMILY MEMBER

Depression **can affect any family**. However, if it is the first time you've come across it, you may be concerned about how to broach the subject.

If you're **worried about someone else's mental health** but you don't want to scare them off, the **following conversation starters may help:**

- "Hey. How are you feeling? I just want you to know that if you ever need to talk, I'm always here, willing to listen and ready to support you."
- "I've noticed that you've been feeling down lately. How about we go outside in the garden for a cup of tea?"

### TALKING ABOUT YOUR DEPRESSION

Sometimes it **can be hard to reach out when you need help**. You don't want to appear weak or be ridiculed.

However, it's important to know that the **first step in treating depression is to let someone know that you are battling with your mental health.**

If you're **unsure of where to start**, try the **following conversation starters** when talking to your family about your mental health:

- "Lately I haven't been feeling like myself, but I'm not sure what's wrong. Physically, I know that I look okay, but mentally, I'm going through a lot."
- "There are times where I just feel sad, and I find it hard to get out of bed. I think I need help."



**REMEMBER:** It's important to discuss mental health issues at home, as this can start the road to recovery.

Polmed has a **Mental health programme**. You can contact the **Mental Health Programme** team on:  
**Tel: 0860 765 633** between 08:30 and 17:00 from Monday to Friday.  
**Email: [polpsych@medscheme.co.za](mailto:polpsych@medscheme.co.za)**

#### References

- [http://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3091&Itemid=483#depression-in-south-africa-2017](http://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3091&Itemid=483#depression-in-south-africa-2017)
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- <https://ewn.co.za/2019/09/10/sadag-depression-is-still-the-leading-cause-of-suicide-in-sa/amp>
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