

The Treatment of Depression for Older Adults

Feeling sad and lonely is not a necessary part of getting older. There are many ways to treat depression and it's important to find what works for you. You can start today.

Mild Depression



Healthy Living (psychosocial treatments)

Leading a healthy lifestyle is the first step for preventing and treating the symptoms of depression. Eating well, staying as active as you can, getting enough sleep, spending time with people, and doing the things you love are the key to lowering the risks and starting the path to recovery.



Self-help

Self-help tools can bring awareness, provide practical strategies and help you make changes to improve your life. There are many options for self-help such as books, videos, mindfulness, online cognitive behavioural therapy, and much more. Your local library can be an excellent source for information about depression.



Community support

Many clinics and community services offer programs, workshops, and other supports for people with depression. You often don't need a diagnosis and many are offered for free. You can also reach out to crisis and mental health information services through phone, text, or email.



Talking to a health professional

Talking to an expert can help you understand your options. If you've been trying to do it on your own and still feel like you need more, consider reaching out to a doctor, nurse, social worker, psychologist or other health professional.



Group Counseling (psychotherapy)

Group counseling is among the best treatments for depression. There are many different types of groups run by trained professionals, both online and in-person. Many are available for free. It can be scary to talk about your problems with strangers, and it is also a very successful method for recovery.



Individual Counseling (psychotherapy)

For many people talking with a psychotherapist, social worker, or psychologist is an important part of feeling better. Both online and in person options are widely available. You might have access to free counseling through your family doctor or community clinics and many workplace insurance plans will pay for it.



Medication (anti-depressants)

There are many medications for treating depression. Each one has its own pros and cons. Your doctor can talk you through the options. Remember it usually takes 4-6 weeks for you to notice a change and they work better when you are also making lifestyle changes and doing counseling.



Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) involves using magnets to stimulate your brain. It is a promising newer treatment and is most often used when anti-depressants have been ineffective. A psychiatrist can determine if this approach is right for you, and you'll need a referral to a clinic that provides this service.



Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

Electroconvulsive therapy is mostly used in cases of severe depression or bipolar disorder that have not gotten better with other treatments. It involves applying controlled electrical currents to the brain. A psychiatrist can determine if this approach is right for you.



Hospital Stay

Sometimes depression gets bad enough that you might need to stay in a hospital. This is usually reserved for people who are at risk of suicide or aren't taking care of themselves anymore.

Severe Depression

