



There are many signs that might indicate a person is suffering from depression, anxiety and/or alcohol problems. These are the most common mental health problems affecting people in Australia. Depression affects one in five people, and anxiety disorders affect at least one in eight people in Australia at some time in their lifetime. A GP can provide effective treatment for these problems, or can refer a person to a specialist for extra help. Effective treatments are available and early identification and care can reduce harm and improve quality of life.

When a person is depressed and/or anxious they may feel:

- Tired and run down.
- Sad and hopeless.
- Irritable much of the time.
- Confused and not knowing what is happening to you.
- Worried and anxious much of the time.
- Knots and butterflies when faced with a difficult situation, or avoiding situations which cause uncomfortable feelings and anxiety.
- Like withdrawing from normal activities.

Some signs that may indicate alcohol problems include:

- Thinking you drink too much.
- Friends, relatives or a doctor showing concern about a person's drinking.
- Regularly consuming more than four drinks on any one occasion.
- Drinking to cope with stress, loneliness, anger, or sleeplessness.
- Trying to cut down or to stop drinking without success.

Handy Hints

- Let your GP know if you are getting help from anyone else, such as other doctors, self-help groups, family and friends, or natural therapists.
- Remember to provide your GP with a full list of medications (including over-the-counter meds, vitamins and natural therapies).
- If you are uncertain or nervous about speaking to a GP, take along a friend or family member. They can also help you remember information provided.
- Ask your GP for a general health check to see what else might be adding to the way you feel.
- Many general practices can provide a practice nurse to help you with your appointments. You can speak to a practice nurse if you are uncertain or nervous about speaking to a GP.

