

# Living with and caring for a person with depression



## FACT SHEET 2

Caring for or living with a person who experiences depression isn't easy. Knowing what to say and what to do may be hard. It's not uncommon for a carer to experience anger, guilt or fear. Below are some practical tips to help you care for someone with depression and to look after yourself.

### THINGS YOU CAN DO

#### 1. Learn about depression

Learning about depression may help you understand why a person with the illness behaves in a certain way. This may help you to separate the illness from the person and to realise that their mood or behaviour may not be directed at you.

#### 2. Take time out

As a family member or friend of a person who is experiencing depression, it's important to look after yourself. Make sure you spend time doing things you enjoy.

#### 3. Ask questions

In talking about depression, use a casual and open approach. Try asking about what helps when they're feeling depressed. By talking openly, you're letting the person know that you're supportive and you care. You may like to share what you've learnt from your reading, to see if it's helpful.

#### 4. Talk to someone

It may be helpful to talk your friends or family about how you're feeling. If you're having trouble coping and don't feel comfortable talking with people you know, talk to a counsellor.

### ORGANISATIONS FOR CARERS

If you're living with or caring for someone who is experiencing depression, you may sometimes feel isolated. Friends or other family members may not understand. Talking to people who are in a similar situation may be helpful.

There are services that provide education and support for carers of people with mental illness. Through information sessions and support groups, you can talk to people who are in a similar position.

#### ARAFMI

Association for Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (ARAFMI) offers a range of services for carers of people experiencing mental illness. These include support groups, information materials, a library, telephone and home-based outreach support.

- Australian Capital Territory  
[www.arafmi.org](http://www.arafmi.org) T: 02 6231 6530
- New South Wales  
[www.arafmi.org](http://www.arafmi.org) T: Sydney 02 9805 1883  
NSW country areas – Toll free 1800 655 198
- Northern Territory  
[www.ntarafmi.org.au](http://www.ntarafmi.org.au) T: 08 8948 1051
- South Australia  
[www.users.senet.com.au/~panangga/mhrc](http://www.users.senet.com.au/~panangga/mhrc)  
T: 08 8221 5166
- Tasmania  
[www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/mhrc](http://www.tased.edu.au/tasonline/mhrc) T: 03 6236 9251
- Queensland  
[www.arafmiqld.org](http://www.arafmiqld.org) T: 07 3254 1881
- Victoria  
[www.arafemi.org.au](http://www.arafemi.org.au) T: 03 9810 9300
- Western Australia  
[www.arafmi.asn.au](http://www.arafmi.asn.au) T: 08 9389 9888

# Living with and caring for a person with depression



## FACT SHEET 2

### CARERS AUSTRALIA

Carers Australia is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of carers. Carers Australia is the national, peak carer organisation with eight member organisations – the Carers Associations in each State and Territory. Carers Australia works to promote the important role of carers in our community and to assist them with better information and resources.

Carers Australia  
[www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au) T: 02 6122 9900

Carers Association of the ACT  
[www.carersact.asn.au](http://www.carersact.asn.au) T: 02 6296 9900

Carers NSW  
[www.carersnsw.asn.au](http://www.carersnsw.asn.au) T: 02 9280 4744

Northern Territory Carers Association  
[www.ntcarers.asn.au](http://www.ntcarers.asn.au) T: 08 8948 4877

Carers Queensland  
[www.carersqld.ans.au](http://www.carersqld.ans.au) T: 07 3843 1401

Carers Association of South Australia  
[www.carers-sa.asn.au](http://www.carers-sa.asn.au) T: 08 8271 6288

Carers Tasmania  
[www.carerstas.org](http://www.carerstas.org) T: 03 6231 5507

Carers Victoria  
[www.carersvic.org.au](http://www.carersvic.org.au) T: 03 9396 9500

Carers Western Australia  
[www.carerswa.asn.au](http://www.carerswa.asn.au) T: 08 9444 5922

Counselling and after hours  
T: 1800 007 332

### ORGANISATIONS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS WHO HAVE A PARENT WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

**COMIC** (South Australia)  
[www.howstat.com/comic](http://www.howstat.com/comic) T: 08 8221 5160

Children of Mentally Ill Consumers is comprised of a group of adults who share a common interest for children of parents with a mental illness.

**Cyclops** (ACT)  
[www.cyclopsact.org](http://www.cyclopsact.org) T: 02 6262 8892

This is the ACT's website for young carers. This site provides information about mental illness, disability, caring and where to get help when things are tough.

**NNAAMI** (Victoria)  
[home.vicnet.net.au/~nnaami](http://home.vicnet.net.au/~nnaami) T: 03 9889 3095

National Network of Adult and Adolescent Children who have a Mentally Ill Parent(s) (NNAAMI) is a group of people who've experienced life with a mentally ill parent. They established NNAAMI to provide assistance to one another, via self-help support, discussion and counselling groups. They also inform the community and Government of their needs and their experiences.

**COPMI**  
[www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

The Children of Parents with a Mental Illness website is a resource for workers and young carers.

### MORE INFORMATION

#### blueVoices Network

Click the 'Join Us' button at [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) to sign up for email updates from *beyondblue's* consumer and carer reference group.

#### Mental Health Association, NSW

[www.mentalhealth.asn.au/downloads/info/caring.pdf](http://www.mentalhealth.asn.au/downloads/info/caring.pdf)

To learn more about living with a person with a mental illness download this fact sheet from the Mental Health Association, NSW.

© *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, 2006.  
PO Box 6100, Hawthorn West VIC 3122  
T: (03) 9810 6100  
F: (03) 9810 6111  
E: [bb@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:bb@beyondblue.org.au)  
W: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)