



# Understanding depression



While it's common to have days where you feel sad or blue, depression is more pervasive and ongoing. If you're depressed, you may not only feel sad, but also hopeless, irritable or worthless. You might also lack motivation or energy, have difficulty sleeping and concentrating, or experience changes in appetite and weight.



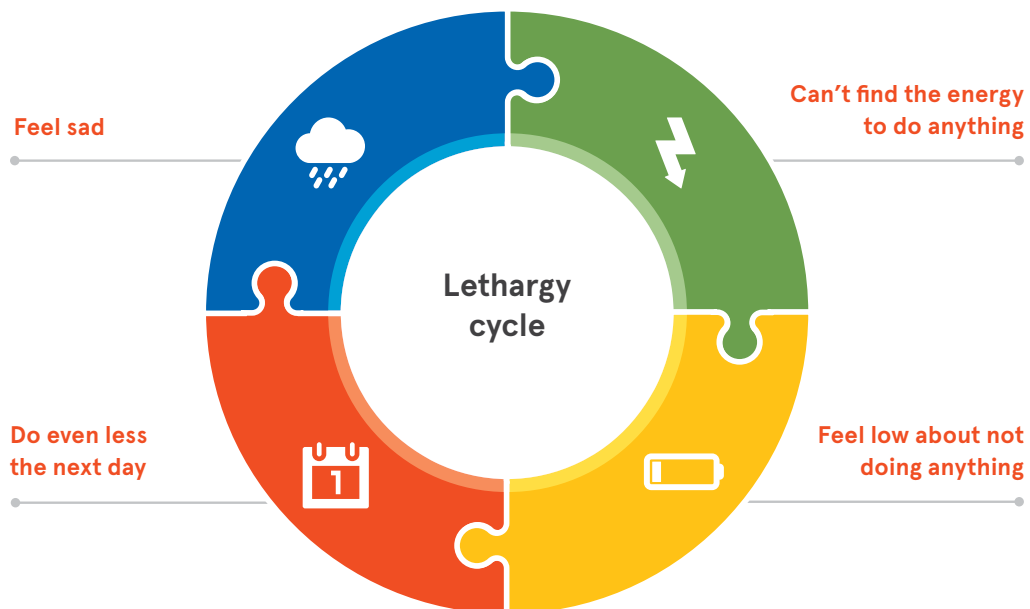
## What is depression?

The symptoms of depression can interfere with your ability to perform at your best. It can impact on many areas of your life, and can make it difficult for you to fully participate in your campus community. You may struggle with simple daily activities and feel reluctant to reach out for support.

### Understanding depression\*

As you can see, it's easy enough to get stuck in the lethargy cycle when feeling low. To break the cycle we need to start engaging in activities. This allows us to feel a sense of accomplishment. It doesn't have to be a huge goal, just an achievable one.

\*The diagram on the next page shows the "lethargy cycle" of depression.



## What can I do?

To get on top of the lethargy cycle try the following techniques:

- Start increasing your daily activity. This can just be something as small as going for a walk, but by taking action we disrupt the lethargy cycle.
- Monitor your mood. There are mobile apps that can help with this, or you can print a 'monitoring form' to help you identify any patterns of mood fluctuations ([blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/psychological-toolkit/19-dailymoodchart.pdf](http://blackdoginstitute.org.au/docs/default-source/psychological-toolkit/19-dailymoodchart.pdf))
- Try this 'mindfulness recording' to help you step away from automatic reactions and give yourself an opportunity to choose how you react ([sydney.edu.au/content/dam/students/media/mindfulness-mix.mp3](http://sydney.edu.au/content/dam/students/media/mindfulness-mix.mp3))
- Come have a chat with one of the CAPS Counsellors for one-on-one help. Make a booking on +61 2 8627 8433

## Suicide

When we feel low it is not unusual to experience thoughts about suicide. Suicidal thoughts are any thoughts that involve you ending your life. These thoughts arise because we feel hopeless, however there are many services to help you find a way through despair and depression.

If you are considering acting on your suicidal thoughts, immediately:

- Contact emergency services on 000, and ask for an ambulance or the police, or
- Go to the emergency department at your nearest hospital

If you are having suicidal thoughts but are not in immediate danger, you can contact:

- The University's Counselling and Psychological Services and talk to a psychologist
  - +61 2 8627 8433
  - 1800 SYD HLP (1800 793 457)
  - [sydney.edu.au/counselling](http://sydney.edu.au/counselling)
- The University's Health Service and make an appointment with a general practitioner
  - +61 2 9351 3484
  - [sydney.edu.au/unihealth](http://sydney.edu.au/unihealth)
- Lifeline and talk to a 24/7 telephone counsellor
  - 13 11 14

## Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

+61 2 8627 8433  
 caps.admin@sydney.edu.au  
[sydney.edu.au/counselling](http://sydney.edu.au/counselling)

Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building  
 Opening hours: 9am to 4.30pm,  
 Monday to Friday

### Crisis contacts

Ambulance/Fire/Police: 000  
 Lifeline (24 hours): 13 11 14  
 Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511