

# Depression/Hākerekere

Adapted from [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

This resource is for people wanting to understand depression/hākerekere and actions to help improve their wellbeing. It includes links to other information and resources available.

One in four people will experience depression in their life. The causes are complex and unique for different people. Childhood experiences, biological make up, and reactions to life events can all contribute.

There are many things people can do to look after themselves. This includes lifestyle changes, physical activity, meditation, eating healthy kai, and taking time to do the things they enjoy. It is also okay to ask for help.

You don't have to do this alone. Seeking support from your whānau, friends, GP or health professional can help you get through. Remembering good times and stories with other people helps them feel closer. If you feel overwhelmed or just want to talk, call or text **1737** or check out support options at the end of this document.

## How does depression affect us?

Depression affects people in many different ways. Along with feeling sad or hopeless, depression can affect people's thoughts, physical health, and actions.

### Thoughts

People often have negative thoughts when experiencing depression. The world can seem very dark or hopeless. Common thoughts include "nothing will change", "I'm worthless/useless", "it's my fault", "the world is terrible", and "everything goes wrong".

People can lose interest in things they normally enjoy, like hobbies, activities, or sex.

### Physical wellbeing

People may experience:

- › tiredness/ngenge, fatigue/ruha, or lethargy
- › difficulty concentrating or remembering
- › increased or decreased need for sleep/moe or kai.



## Activities

Activities and exercise can help improve mood. Find out what works for you. Getting physically active may be the last thing you want to do, but it can help. Set some realistic goals and build your activity level up over time. Here are some ideas.

- › Exercise – swim, walk, cycle, go to the park or gym.
- › Put on music that makes you happy – sing and dance along or listen attentively.
- › Express yourself through performing, waiata, carving or art.
- › Practice relaxation techniques such as yoga, mindfulness, and progressive muscle relaxation.

Other activities can give you a sense of enjoyment, achievement, and feeling close to others.

- › What activities are meaningful to you?
- › What hobbies or other interests do you do, or have you thought about doing?
- › What creative activities do you enjoy? Art, performing, cooking, poetry, or writing?

## Nurture yourself

- › Regularly eat healthy kai and drink plenty of water. Soup or other soft nutritious kai can be a great choice if you have no appetite.
- › Develop a good sleep/moe routine. Go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even when not sleeping well. Limit time in bed and sleeping during the day.
- › Pamper yourself. Have coffee with a friend, a haircut, massage, or do something fun and relaxing.
- › Avoid caffeine, alcohol and drugs.

## Social connection

- › Connect with friends and whānau you feel comfortable with.
- › Help others.
- › Talk to someone. If going out is difficult, contact a helpline or website and talk to others who will listen and support you.

## Think differently to change your thought habits

Thinking strategies help to understand and change thinking habits. STOPP is a technique that can help you gain some control over your thinking.



- S Stop** - pause for a moment.
- T Take a breath** - notice how you are breathing and try slowing it down.
- O Observe** - notice what you are thinking, focussing on, and reacting to.
- P Pull back** - think about the bigger picture.
- P Practice what works** - what is the best thing for me to do right now in this situation?

Everyone has times when they have negative or sad thoughts. Sometimes these can become habitual and deepen low mood. Below are questions and ideas to help break the cycle of depression.

## Reflect on your thinking

What are you reacting to? A good way to keep track of how you are feeling is to write your thoughts and feelings down. Take 10 minutes in the morning or evening to keep a journal of your thoughts and feelings.

- › Are your thoughts helpful?
- › Are your expectations realistic about yourself, this person, or situation?
- › Are you exaggerating other people's good aspects and putting yourself down?
- › Are you jumping to conclusions about what another person meant or reading between the lines?
- › Are you spending too much time thinking about the past or worrying about the future?

## Reality check

- › What is the worst (and best) that could happen? What is most likely to happen?
- › Are you putting more pressure on yourself and setting unrealistic expectations?
- › How important is this really? Will it be important in 6 months?
- › Are you thinking in terms of black and white or in shades of grey?
- › Is this a reminder of the past? That was then, and this is now. Remember, even though this memory makes you feel upset, it is not happening again right now.

## Think of helpful alternatives

- › Is there another way of looking or dealing with this? What advice would you give to someone else in this situation?
- › What is the most helpful and effective action you can take right now to make you feel better (for you, the situation, or other people)?
- › What do you want or need from this person or situation? What do they want or need from you, and is there a compromise?

## Use your nurturing mind

- › Talk to yourself positively and be encouraging with messages like "I can do this"; "I am strong and capable".
- › Use affirmations or positive and realistic statements about yourself and your abilities. Write down supportive statements, memorise them, and say them often - even if you do not believe them at first.
- › Practice mindfulness. Check out apps and websites to learn mindful breathing. Try breathing in orange (for positive energy) and breathing out blue/black (for negative energy).
- › Show appreciation, aroha, and gratitude. Notice the good things around you, like small acts of kindness by others, a joke with a friend, or beautiful sunset. Keep an appreciation diary and add entries each day.

## Keep going

It takes time to manage and overcome depression. When you are concerned that it might never end, keep using these ideas even if things do not seem to resolve quickly. Do not be afraid to reach out to someone you trust, your GP or a health professional for help.

## Further support and information

If you think you, or someone you know, may be thinking about suicide, call the Suicide Crisis Helpline **0508 828 865** for support 24/7.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call emergency services on **111**.

### Support

- › If you are feeling stressed, anxious, overwhelmed or just want to talk to someone, call or text **1737**.
- › The Lowdown offers information on anxiety, self-help resources, and a free 24/7 helpline | **0800 111 757** or text **5626** | <https://thelowdown.co.nz>
- › Staying on Track is an e-therapy course that teaches practical strategies to cope with stress and disruption of day-to-day life | <https://www.justathought.co.nz>
- › Aunty Dee offers an online tool to help work through problems to generate ideas and find solutions. Although aimed at young Pacific and Māori people aged 14 to 25 years, anyone can use the tool | <https://www.auntydee.co.nz/>
- › Whakatau Mai – the Wellbeing Sessions are free, virtual, community events aimed at supporting wellbeing by helping people connect with others, learn and practice new skills, and start looking at things differently | <https://www.wellbeingsessions.nz/>
- › Depression.org.nz offers advice, support and information on depression and anxiety | [depression.org.nz](https://depression.org.nz)
  - » For Māori | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/maori/>
  - » For Pasifika peoples | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/pasifika/>
  - » For Deaf or hearing-impaired people | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/deaf/>
  - » For people who live rurally | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/rural/>
  - » For men's services | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/men/>
  - » For LGBTTQIA+ people | <https://depression.org.nz/get-better/your-identity/lgbti/>
- › OUTline provides free confidential and specialist phone counselling for people who identify as LGBTTQIA+. | **800 688 5463**
- › If you are worried about how your mood or depression affects your life, talk to your GP or health professional for help and information.

## Information

- › Health Navigator NZ offers information, advice, and self-help resources for people experiencing depression | <https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/d/depression-overview/>
- › The Ministry of Health offers a directory of general wellbeing information and tools | <https://www.health.govt.nz>
- › The Ministry of Health allows access to certain health websites without incurring mobile data charges. | <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/digital-health/other-digital-health-initiatives/sponsored-data>
- › MH101 by Blueprint for Learning is a one-day workshop for everyone designed to increase awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges. They offer both online and in person workshops | <https://www.blueprint.co.nz/workshops/4-mh101/>
- › Te Hikuwai – Resources for wellbeing provides information on a range of topics from anxiety, depression, cannabis, and alcohol to sleep, stress, relaxation, and wellbeing | <https://www.tepou.co.nz/tehikuwai>

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***Iti nei, iti nei***

***Take smalls steps to achieve your goals***

