

Placing a lens on depression

A look at key statistics, the probable causes of depression and the role of culture in depressive mental health conditions.



Unpacking depression: what are the numbers?

264,000,000

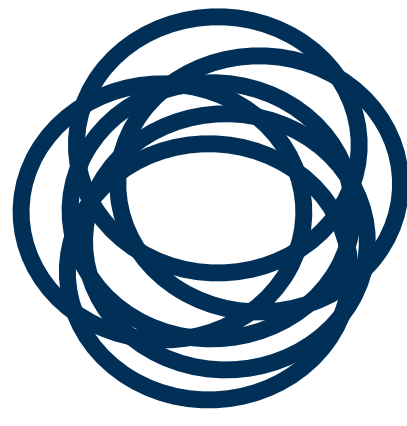
Over 264 million people are affected worldwide by depression



One in five Australians aged between 16-85 experience a mental illness in any year.



Up to 40% of the risk for developing depression is possibly due to genetic factors.



More than 40% of Australian year 12 students report symptoms of anxiety and depression.



Suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 5-17 years old.



Research indicates mental health is a growing concern for Australia's youth.

What causes depression?



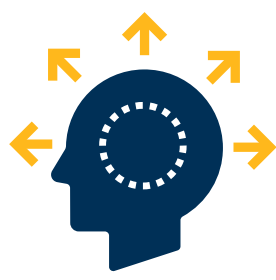
Extended unemployment



Prolonged work stress



Physical or emotional abuse



Continued isolation or loneliness



Family history of mental illness



Recent and other longer-term personal factors

What role does culture play in depression rates?



Western countries have very high rates of depression and suicide, due to mental health being stigmatised, leading to outcomes where people are less likely to seek support.

Additionally, presenting a surprising dichotomy, Western countries have shown to have both the highest happiest levels, and the highest depression rates. Experts makes sense of this by highlighting the widespread working culture that is rewarding in the short term but presents high stress scenarios in the long term.

And according to a Harvard Study of Adult Development, people may struggle to become happier because they are targeting material rather than social goals. Ultimately, the earlier mental health professionals assess and intervene, the better.