

INFORMED CHOICES ABOUT

# DEPRESSION

## Self-Help Treatments

### Key Points:

- The following information is about programs in self-help books and websites that are widely available. There is information later in this material about support groups for self-help.
- A well-designed self-help program in a book or on a website can treat depression, especially if you work through the program a step at a time. Working on depression without any outside help, however, does not benefit as many people as treatment involving professional help and guidance.
- Self-help programs that involve an assessment of the problem at the start (by a professional or by a web-based program) are more effective. Some form of follow up as you work on the program also makes self-help more effective.
- There are a number of books and websites listed in the read more section below that you can use on your own or with a therapist's help.
- If you are having thoughts of suicide or of harming yourself it is important to seek professional help. Go to the nearest hospital, call 9-1-1 or contact your local crisis line. The following websites provide a list of crisis lines across Canada:
  - <http://www.suicideprevention.ca/in-crisis-now/find-a-crisis-centre-now/>
  - <http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/find-help/>

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## Self-help programs in books or on websites

- Some people prefer to manage problems with depression on their own if they can.
- Self-help programs are widely available and free or low in cost. Books cost in the range of \$20.
- Other well-designed programs are available on the web and are described below.
- These programs teach strategies to manage depression. If you work through the program regularly, a step at a time, you are more likely to see good results.
- Using self-help programs may help you have a better understanding of depression and guide you to make changes in your life.
- How much you get out of a program depends on how much you put into it.
- Self-help materials may also provide more information about the treatments that are available.
- Self-help programs can be combined with therapy and/or medication treatments.

## Support groups for self-help

- In some areas there are self-help groups which provide very useful help. One way to find out about the programs available is to contact the provincial or national Mood Disorders Association or your local Canadian Mental Health Association office.
- Attending groups that provide self-help, education or support, and that are recommended by these organizations, may help you feel more supported in dealing with the problem. They may also help you to work through whatever treatment you choose.
- Your doctor or therapist may have advice about recommended self-help programs you can do on your own or in a support group.

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## Recommended self-help books:

These books may be available in your local library or bookstore and may be ordered through internet book sellers.

*Mind Over Mood: A Cognitive Therapy Treatment Manual for Clients.* By D. Greenberger, & C.A. Padesky. (1995). New York: Guilford Press.

*Your Depression Map: Find the Source of Your Depression and Chart Your Own Recovery.* By Randy J. Patterson (2002). Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Press.

## Web-based self-help:

<http://moodgym.anu.edu.au/welcome> – This Australian website for depression has been evaluated in more research than any other web program available.

<http://www.depressioncenter.net/Default.aspx> – This Canadian website has an extensive program for depression.

<http://www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/> - A step-by-step guide on how to self-manage depression based on the best available research. Based in British Columbia.

## Other web-based resources:

<http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/publications/toolkits> - A variety of workbooks that can be used to help build knowledge and skills to manage depression, anxiety and other mental health concerns; or support a loved one to do so. Based in British Columbia.

[http://www.anxietybc.com/resources/selfhelp\\_home\\_toolkit.php](http://www.anxietybc.com/resources/selfhelp_home_toolkit.php) - Depression and anxiety often occur together. This website has self-help resources that anyone can use to help manage their anxiety. Based in British Columbia.

**Disclaimer:** Information in this pamphlet is provided for educational purposes only. Always consult a qualified health care professional for your specific care.

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For more fact sheets and information about depression and its treatment please visit: <http://depression.informedchoices.ca>

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**Source:** This summary provides scientifically accurate information. It was prepared in a research review by researchers and young adults with the Mobilizing Minds Research Group. The researchers are based at six universities: Manitoba, York, McMaster, Brock, Brandon, and Université Laval. Our core community partner is [mindyourmind.ca](http://mindyourmind.ca) located in London, Ontario. Our young adult team members are located all across the country. Last revised: 24 January 2014.

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