

# Answers to Commonly Asked Questions on Depression

Find answers to your mental health questions from Ramsay Health Care specialists

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## Managing Depression

### **What should a patient expect from visiting a psychiatrist for the first time?**

**A:** *When patients first see a Psychiatrist for the first time, I think they usually pretty anxious because a psychiatric illness carries a fair bit of stigma in the community and therefore psychiatrist also share that stigma or share that view where the people have that stigma of Psychiatrists.*

*So people are usually fairly anxious, but I think people need to understand that it's just like seeing any other medical specialist, that the Psychiatrist is going to be interested in them, is going to be interested in trying to understand what it is that they're going through and what they're experiencing so they going to ask a lot of questions about how they feel, they get to ask a lot of questions about their background, and their families and their work, and their recreation and so on to get a bit of an idea. So people would feel reassured that number one, Psychiatrists are not mind readers, they're not able to sort of, by looking at you, or talking to you, get into your deep dark psyche and know all about you with your first meeting, that's not the way things work. We can only assess people on what they tell us, and what we are able to ask them and what their responses are.*

### **What roles can family and friends of people with depression play?**

**A:** *The role of the family and friends is vital, really to someone's recovery. People who are depressed usually feel very negative about themselves, they feel quite worthless, they feel they're a burden to the family, they feel that people don't understand them and often unfortunately that's true. I think the community is getting better at understanding Depression, but it's enormously important for family and friends to learn as much as they can about Depression and its treatment and to be as supportive as they can to a patient who's going through that treatment.*

### **What advice do you give people who don't suffer from depression in dealing with those who do?**

**A:** *Stigma is an issue and stigma in the workplace I think is probably still more of an issue now than stigma amongst family and friends. I think the community in general are better educated about Depression now, but in the workplace I think there are still issues because often of course people with Depression will not be able to perform the job as well and usually the first approach of the employer is to say you're not doing well enough, pull up your socks. Education in the workplace about Depression is enormously important, and I know that is occurring in a number of places some of the larger corporations are actually doing that and I think that's a great forward step but education I think is the key, learning what Depression is, learning how it affects people, learning that people aren't responsible for the fact that they're depressed and that there are successful treatments, this is the key to reducing stigma.*