



Depression

Section Summary

- Major depressive disorder is a psychiatric condition that is diagnosed by a professional.
 - Having depression has been associated with a greater risk of dementia.
 - Symptoms of depression and dementia can overlap.
 - Some theories suggest that depression directly increases the risk for dementia, while other theories suggest that depression is an early symptom of dementia.
 - Depression may be *both* a risk factor and an early symptom of dementia.
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Activities

Activity One: Depression Misconceptions and Truths

- Create flashcards using the Misconceptions and Truths listed under the “Additional Resources” section of this guide.
- You can then read the Misconception and Truth flashcards out loud, or hand them out to individuals in the group to read Side A.
- Encourage participants to answer either for themselves or out loud (if they feel comfortable). Once everyone has decided their response, have the reader read Side B of the card, revealing whether the point was a Misconception or Truth.

Activity Two: Infographic

- As a group and using a virtual or IRL white board create a poster about the symptoms, misconceptions and risks of depression in older adults.
- What kind of information do you think would be important to include on this poster?
 - See an [example](#) poster in the “Additional Resources” section of this guide.

Discussion Questions

Consider running this as a writing exercise as people may not feel comfortable discussing this topic out loud.

- How has your culture, community or surroundings impacted your perception of depression?
- Do you believe you have ever suffered from depression?
- What are your own personal risk factors for depression?

Additional Resources:

Misconceptions and Truths Flashcards

1. Side A: It's all in your head | Side B: Misconception: Depression isn't just "in your head" or something you can "get over". Finding the right approach to treating depression is an individual journey and may take time and a combination of treatment types.
2. Side A: Talking about it makes it's better. | Side B: Truth: Talking and talk therapy can be a very effective treatment for depression. And although it might feel like discussing depression will only keep you focused on negative feelings, being alone with your thoughts can be much more harmful than hashing them out.
3. Side A: You have to take medication to treat depression. | Side B: Misconception: Not all people have to take medicine to treat their depression. Some people feel better by just doing talk therapy. That being said, where needed, medication is a perfectly acceptable way to manage depression.
4. Side A: Depression is caused by sad situations. | Side B: Misconception and Truth: Everyone has sad thoughts or feels unhappy sometimes. For example, you may feel upset following a break up or the death of a loved one. These kinds of events can raise your risk of depression. But a negative event isn't always the cause of depression.
5. Side A: Men are less likely to be diagnosed with depression. Side B: Truth: Men are less likely to be diagnosed with depression but that does not mean that they are less affected by it. Due to social pressures men might be less likely to talk about their feelings and are more likely to exhibit symptoms like irritability, anger, or restlessness instead of the symptoms like sadness or melancholy which we may think of more often in relation to depression.
6. Side A: Depression is not a real illness. | Side B: Misconception: Depression is a real medical condition and a top cause of disability in Canada. Unfortunately, due to stigma and lack of education it is not always taken seriously, despite plenty of research to show that depression can negatively impact normal functions of the body and brain.