

# newsletter

Eldercare Programme

40th Edition | September 2023

medical  
aid  
society  
*there when you need us.*



## DEPRESSION LATER IN LIFE

*This newsletter is for your general information and is not a substitute for medical advice. You should contact your doctor with any questions about your health, treatment or care.*

Depression is a prolonged state of sadness and low mood that may be accompanied by loss of self-esteem and lack of interest in activities that would normally be enjoyable. It affects the way you eat and sleep, how you feel about yourself, and how you think.

Although depression in the elderly is a common problem, only a small percentage get the help they need. Untreated depression poses serious risks for the elderly, including illness, alcohol and prescription drug abuse, a higher mortality rate and even suicide. It is therefore important to look out for the warning signs and seek professional help when you feel depressed. The good news is that no one – whether you're 18 or 80 – has to live with depression. With treatment and support, most people with depression can feel better.

### What causes depression?

Certain life challenges faced by the elderly may lead to depression, for example:

- a reduced 'sense of purpose' in life due to retirement or physical limitations
- fear of death or anxiety over financial or health issues
- the recent death of loved one or pet
- loneliness and isolation due to living alone or death of a loved one(s)
- loss of independence by no longer being able to drive.

### Symptoms of depression

- Sadness
- Loss of appetite progressing to loss of weight
- Social withdrawal
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Feelings of worthlessness and loss of interest in personal care
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Fatigue
- Loss of interest in hobbies or other activities that were once enjoyed
- Suicidal thoughts or attempts

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## What can I do to help myself?

A person suffering from depression may not wish to see anyone or do anything. Isolation, however, worsens the depression as it causes you to focus on your negative feelings. You can improve your mood by trying one or more of the following:

**Maintain a healthy diet:** Avoid junk food and choose a well-balanced diet that will prevent you from feeling tired and run down.

**Volunteer your time:** Helping others may cause you to regain perspective and feel better about yourself.

**Learn a new skill:** Choose a hobby or craft you've always been interested in, e.g. bowling or painting. It is important to schedule time in one's day for rest and recreation.

**Exercise:** Choose safe exercises that can build your strength and boost your mood. Even taking a walk in the park can be refreshing.

**Limit the time you spend alone:** Meet up, call and invite over your friends, grandchildren or other family.

**Treat yourself to a holiday or short break:** If this is possible and something you would enjoy doing, travel may bring some relief by interrupting the daily routine.

**Seek professional help:** See a doctor or report to your local clinic if you are feeling depressed. They may prescribe medication or refer you to a specialist for further management.

## Society benefits

Please note that the Society has an integrated care programme that assists our members to actively manage their chronic conditions and mental health. Application forms are available on our website ([www.bpmas.co.za](http://www.bpmas.co.za)). Ask your treating doctor to complete it and return it to us so that you can be enrolled on the programme. Participation is free and offers many benefits.

Consult the *Society's Member Guide* or website ([www.bpmas.co.za](http://www.bpmas.co.za)) for more information.

HOSPITALISATION AND RELATED BENEFITS		
SERVICE	BENEFIT	ANNUAL LIMIT
<b>IN-HOSPITAL MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT</b>		
Accommodation	<b>PMB:</b> 100% of cost <b>Non-PMB:</b> 100% of Society rate	Limited to 21 days per beneficiary per annum
Medicines, materials and hospital equipment	100% of cost (TTO medication limited to seven days' supply)	
Consultations at medical practitioners	100% of Society rate	

PRIMARY CARE		
SERVICE	BENEFIT	ANNUAL LIMIT
<b>OUT-OF-HOSPITAL AUXILIARY SERVICES</b>		
Psychological treatment: social workers and registered counsellors	80% of Society rate	<b>Limits:</b> M R7 860 M+1 R10 510 M+2 R13 100 M+3+ R15 770
<b>MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL REHABILITATION</b>		
Psychologist: consultations and treatment	<b>PMB:</b> 100% of cost <b>Non-PMB:</b> 80% of Society rate	<b>Combined limit:</b> Limited to R9 280 per family per annum
Psychiatrist: consultations and treatment	<b>PMB:</b> 100% of agreed tariff if a network or non-network service provider is used  <b>Non-PMB:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of agreed tariff if a network service provider is used</li> <li>80% of Society rate if a non-network service provider is used</li> </ul>	

**PMB:** Prescribed minimum benefits

**TTO:** To-take-out (take-home medication)