



THE BLACK DOG OF DEPRESSION

Imagine this...

You're locked inside a box, it is dark, there are no breathing holes as you begin to feel the air running out. Your chest feels heavy and your body weak.

The box you're in is thrown into the deepest ocean, as you feel the sensation of sinking deeper and deeper you realise you are alone with no way out. You can hear the whooshing sounds of the outside world, but nobody can hear you... you feel a few sharp jolts on your way down, could be sharks.

Then finally, you hit the seabed of the deepest ocean. There is panic in the silence. There is only you, with no way out.

This is how depression can feel. It is a horrifying experience

which affects 1 in six Australian women and 1 in eight men. Depression on a global level is the leading cause of disability.

As you've just imagined, depression is a serious and debilitating condition which affects both your mental and physical wellbeing. Just as any other disease it can appear when you least expect it. The illness may be brought on by life events such as a failed or abusive relationship, financial loss, work stress or the loss of a loved one.

Depression can be hereditary too, and you are at a higher risk of suffering depression if it runs in your family.

Some of the symptoms may include;

- Low mood over an extended period of time
- A general sense of sadness
- Difficulty in concentration
- Withdrawing from family and friends
- Self-medicating with alcohol or other drugs
- Inability to complete tasks
- Thoughts of self-harm
- Low self-esteem

You may experience invasive or self loathing thoughts which inhibit you from completing tasks or even holding a basic conversation. As well as the physical manifestations of this disease such as tiredness, sleep problems, significant weight gain/loss, headaches and muscle pain.

Each person who suffers from depression will experience their own version of the disease. And each will have their own version of recovery or treatment.

There are plenty of options when it comes to effective treatment of depression and staying well. There are different