

Diabetes and emotional wellbeing



"Diabetes distress is the personal, often hidden side of diabetes where patients become distressed about being able to manage their disease, obtaining the support they need, managing the emotional burden of diabetes and accessing needed care."

As this quote from *Gonzales, Fisher & Polonsky* in *Diabetes Care* (2011 – Jan: 34 (1) 236-9) suggests, the demands of living with diabetes can be overwhelming as it requires a multitude of daily self-management activities and decisions. People can experience a range of thoughts and emotions as well as physical and behaviour symptoms:

Emotions:

- Fear
- Anxious / overwhelmed / stressed
- Sadness / isolation
- Anger / resentment
- Guilt / regret
- Frustration / defeated / disappointed

Behaviour / Physical:

- Withdrawn from family / friends / social activities
- Unproductive / lack of concentration
- Reliance on alcohol / substances
- Constantly tired / no energy / run down
- Sleep disturbances
- Digestive upsets / weight changes / sick feeling

Thoughts / Questions:

- What is my blood sugar level?
- Where is my meter?
- Do I have strips?
- When did I last eat?
- What do I eat?
- Are carbs bad or are fats bad?
- Why does my blood sugar vary so much when I eat the same foods every day?
- What happens if I hypo in front of people?
- Do I have any appointments today?
- What are people saying about my diabetes? Are they judging me?
- Am I doing my best?
- It's my own fault! I'm a failure! I'm hopeless!
- Will I ever get my diabetes right?



Below is a short list of resources that you may find helpful. They cover a range of information, as there is no one support / counselling style that fits all. Please speak to your GP to discuss your symptoms along with accessing the right support that suits your individual needs.

Resources	Contact details
Diabetes community support groups for type 1 and type 2 diabetes	Web: www.diabetesvic.org.au/support-groups Phone: 1300 136 588 Hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm
GP management plan (mental health plan)	Web: http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-fact-pat Contact: Speak to your local GP
Diabetes counselling online	Web: www.diabetescounselling.com.au
The Diabetes Lifestyle Book: Facing Your Fears & Making Changes for a Long & Healthy Life	Authors: Jennifer Gregg, Glenn Callaghan and Steven Hayes
Behavioral Diabetes Institute	Web: www.behavioraldiabetesinstitute.org
Beyond Blue	Web: www.beyondblue.org.au Phone: 1300 224 636 (24 hours / 7 days a week) Chat online: 3pm - 12am (AEST) 7 days a week
DepressioNet	Web: www.depressionet.org.au
Lifeline	Web: www.lifeline.org.au Phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours / 7 days a week) Chat online: 7pm - 4am (AEST) 7 days a week
Black Dog Institute	Web: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au Phone: 02 9382 4530 Email: blackdog@blackdog.org.au (general enquires)

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