

Speaking from Experience Living with Depression

Transcript for Chapter 1 of 6: Recognising symptoms

Fiona, 17 years since diagnosis: I was 18 going on 19 years of age, I'd just left home to go down to Canberra to go to University. And I was down there probably, oh, for about six months, and things weren't right. I wasn't quite sure what was wrong. Umm, I just felt sick all the time. I just struggled to get out of bed. I, uh... just didn't feel Fi.

Claire, 2 years since diagnosis: I was working very long hours. I was quite isolated. I was living about an hour and a half away from my family. Um... and things just became quite overwhelming and... to the point where I wasn't really able to cope.

Barry, 4 years since diagnosis: I was really going around to these obscure whistlestop libraries, feeling really good, until one particular evening when I guess the depression, or the anxiety, simultaneously snuck up on me and it was like being hit with a feather. I just... I was speaking in a large library. All of a sudden, I lost my history. I lost my way. I lost my voice.

Denielle, 11 years since diagnosis: My depression came on through circumstantial things that happened in my life. My dad committed suicide. I broke up in a long-term relationship, I was accused of stealing money and I was chugging along OK until I did a knee injury. And up until that point, exercise had been, I suppose, my way of coping. And when that was taken away from me, I floundered very badly. I, um, just wasn't able to sleep. I wasn't able to eat. I didn't want to do things that I normally did. Um... I was crying a lot. But still saying there's nothing wrong with me.

Kevin, 20 years since diagnosis, and Kris: I didn't notice until people pointed it out to me that I was having socializing problems. I was getting angry. I didn't realise that either. It was just, um... I just thought that was... it was just life.

John, 18 months since diagnosis: After a while, I realised it wasn't normal to wake up in the morning and have these sorts of feelings of helplessness, and you know, this blue sort of cloud that would envelop me. And then realise that, you know, I should start speaking to someone and only then did I start speaking to family and friends and started to realise that, "Hang on a minute, this is not normal behavior and there are other people out there that are in the same situation."

James, 15 years since diagnosis: By the time I sought help, I was, um... hardly able to function effectively. I was, um, scared to go outside, scared to go to, you know, to work. I didn't have the confidence to get a job, to study. I couldn't keep my thoughts together enough to read or to write.

Barry: And they said, "You've got clinical depression and serious anxiety." And they gave me a referral to a city clinic.

Denielle: Then I was hospitalized, and that, um... that and my mum just saying, “No, we’re not gonna... You can’t push me away. You can’t keep pushing me away. We’re gonna talk with this, we’re gonna deal with it.” That started my road to recovery. So I then had to admit to myself that, yes, I did have depression and then I started, in conjunction with medication, I also had some counselling as well and that started me on my road to recovery.

Claire: And it wasn’t until I... my depressive symptoms reduced and I was able to engage in therapy that I actually then accepted the diagnosis and acknowledged that I did have an illness.

Fiona: They diagnosed me with having depression and I was in counselling for a long time and on medication. And that’s how it all started.