

# Facts about young New Zealanders and depression

fact sheet

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## Did you know...

- It's common for New Zealanders to experience a mental health problem during their lifetime. One in five will have a serious mood disorder, (including depression), at some time in their life
- Approximately one in seven young people in New Zealand will experience a major depressive disorder (and one in five will experience some kind of serious mood disorder) before the age of 24
- Females report higher rates of depression than males (one in four females, compared with one in six males)
- While females are more likely to think about suicide than guys, males are more likely to make a serious suicide attempt.

## What causes depression?

We don't know. Sometimes it can be triggered by a difficult situation in your life, or it can build up over several years. Sometimes there's no obvious reason.

But certain factors can put you at higher risk.

These include:

## Losing someone close to you...

- such as a close friend or family member dying
- breaking up with a partner
- or falling out with someone you care about.

## Trouble at school or work...

- if you feel you're doing badly at work or school
- you're being bullied or abused
- feeling you don't have anyone to talk to.

## Your home environment...

- unhappy experiences within your family, including violence
- bad things that happened when you were a child.

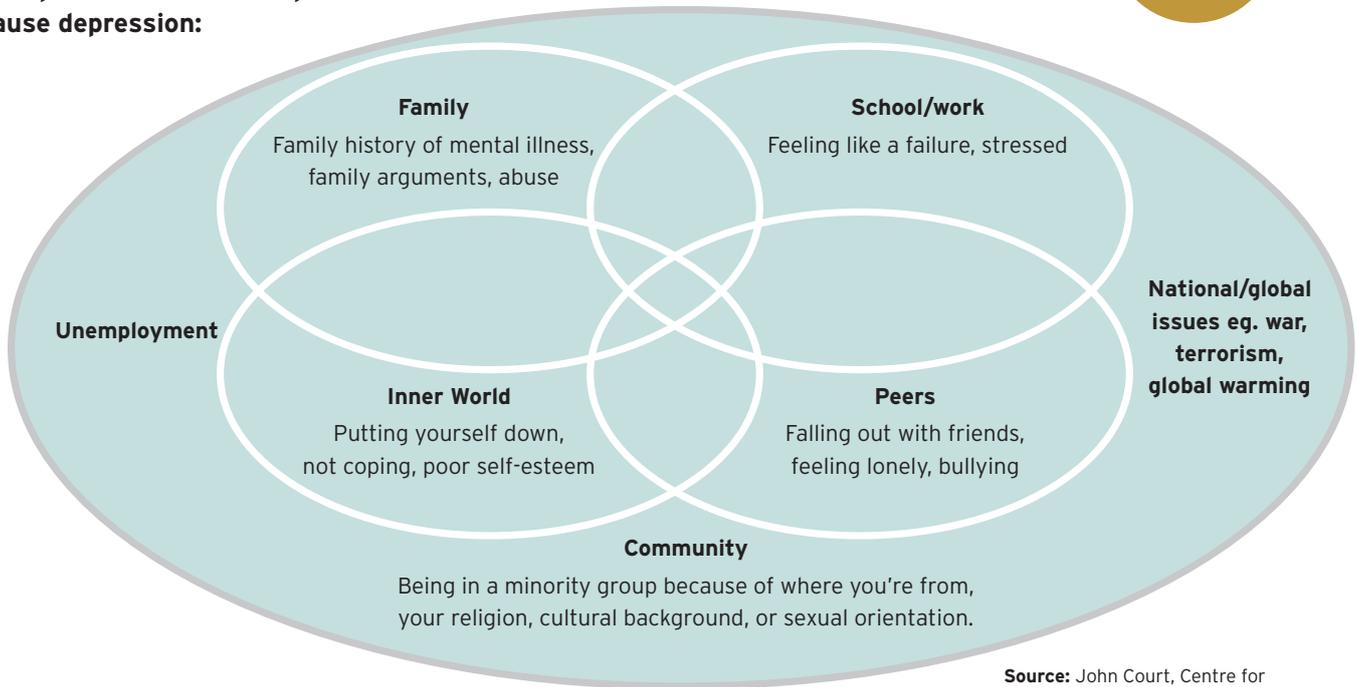
## Personal risk factors...

- a family history of depression
- using drugs or alcohol
- having a head injury, epilepsy, or cancer.

As the diagram over the page shows, depression can be caused by a whole lot of things going on in your world - at home, at school or work, with your friends, in your social networks, and what you believe about yourself.

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## How problems can overlap to cause depression:



Source: John Court, Centre for Adolescent Health, University of Melbourne.

## How can you protect yourself from getting depressed?

There are things you can do that will help prevent depression. Some strategies include:

- Stay fit and healthy
- Get enough sleep
- Aim to have balance in your life
- Spend time with people you like and trust
- Focus on developing skills like problem-solving and communication.

Check out Fact Sheet 6 for more self help strategies.

## What can you do if you are depressed?

Young people often don't seek help from health professionals when they have depression.

Research has shown this is because:

- They think they should be able to manage their own problems
- They don't think there's anything that will help
- They don't know where to get help
- They're worried about what other people would think.

But depression can be diagnosed and dealt with. It's important to remember there is help available.

### Where to get help:

If you want to chat about how you're feeling, or you've got any questions, you can:

**Text** The Lowdown team for free on 5626.

**Email** The Lowdown team in the Chat section of [www.thelowdown.co.nz](http://www.thelowdown.co.nz). You can also ask them to give you a call back if you want to talk on the phone.

**Call** the Depression Helpline on 0800 111 757