

MAINTAINING MENTAL WELLNESS WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGHER...

The farming community face stressors that townies don't...weather often doesn't do what it needs to; work issues such as loss of employment, too much work, unfair/unequal returns for investment and effort, too much responsibility and/or too much uncertainty... to mention just a few.

It's easy to let it seriously get to you. You can become depressed.

Anyone can become depressed. Depression is not a sign of a weak character. Nor can a person simply 'snap out of it'. Just as John Kirwan says... two of the most disturbing symptoms of depression are that it 'saps the will' and is extremely stressful.

Depression is an illness. It can become much worse without proper care. If depressed feelings last for more than two weeks, or if you feel suicidal, you must seek help from your GP.

Understanding depression, may not solve problems. Depression can turn your sense of order in life on its head, making the process and progress of regaining control of life and personality an uphill struggle.

One in five patients seeing their GP has experienced depression in the year of their visit. Women present twice as often as men and Maori three times more than Non-Maori. People are becoming depressed at an earlier age and more often, if single, in middle age.

Signs of depression may vary between individuals - and over time, including:

- Feeling miserable with feelings persisting despite some good things happening
- Loss of interest, motivation and pleasure in usual activities, including sexual activity.
- Loss of appetite and energy – even when not physically active.
- Sleeping difficulties despite feelings of exhaustion.
- Persistent worrying about trivial things, agitation, irritability and forgetfulness.
- Recurrent feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and guilt – for no apparent reason.
- Fears about people, places and events – often leading to social isolation
- Thoughts of the attractiveness of death and suicide.

Men, especially, often do not wish to acknowledge their symptoms... yet GPs and other complementary health professionals are generally experienced in understanding and helping overcome depression. A combination of counselling, medication and support is recommended.

You may wish also to seek support/information from:

Like Minds National HELP LINE – ph 0800-101-107

Depression Helpline ph 0800-111-757

Mensline ph 0800-636-754

Two of the most important things to do are share your feelings with someone you trust and who will take the time to listen - and to seek professional help as soon as possible.

Gordon Hudson is manager of Like Minds Taranaki - promoting mental wellness and overcoming discrimination. Call (06)759-0966.