

what causes depression or sadness?

We all have things that take our strength away. Worries from now and worries from the past. Too many worries and troubles can take balance away. When we are out of balance we can get depression or sadness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can feel out of balance as modern life takes them away from what makes them strong:

- Country
- Family
- Culture
- Language

These things can cause depression and sadness:

- Poor physical health
- Loss or bereavement
- Stress
- Too much alcohol or gunja or other drugs
- Family history of mental illness
- Stopping usual treatment for mental illness



getting out of balance

People with depression or sadness can think differently, feel differently and behave differently.

Sad thoughts might be:

- I can't do anything right
- It's all my fault
- No-one cares
- Things will never be better.

Sad feelings might be:

- Feeling nervous and worrying all the time
- Feeling guilty and worthless
- Crying and feeling sad

When we have too many worries we may get out of balance:

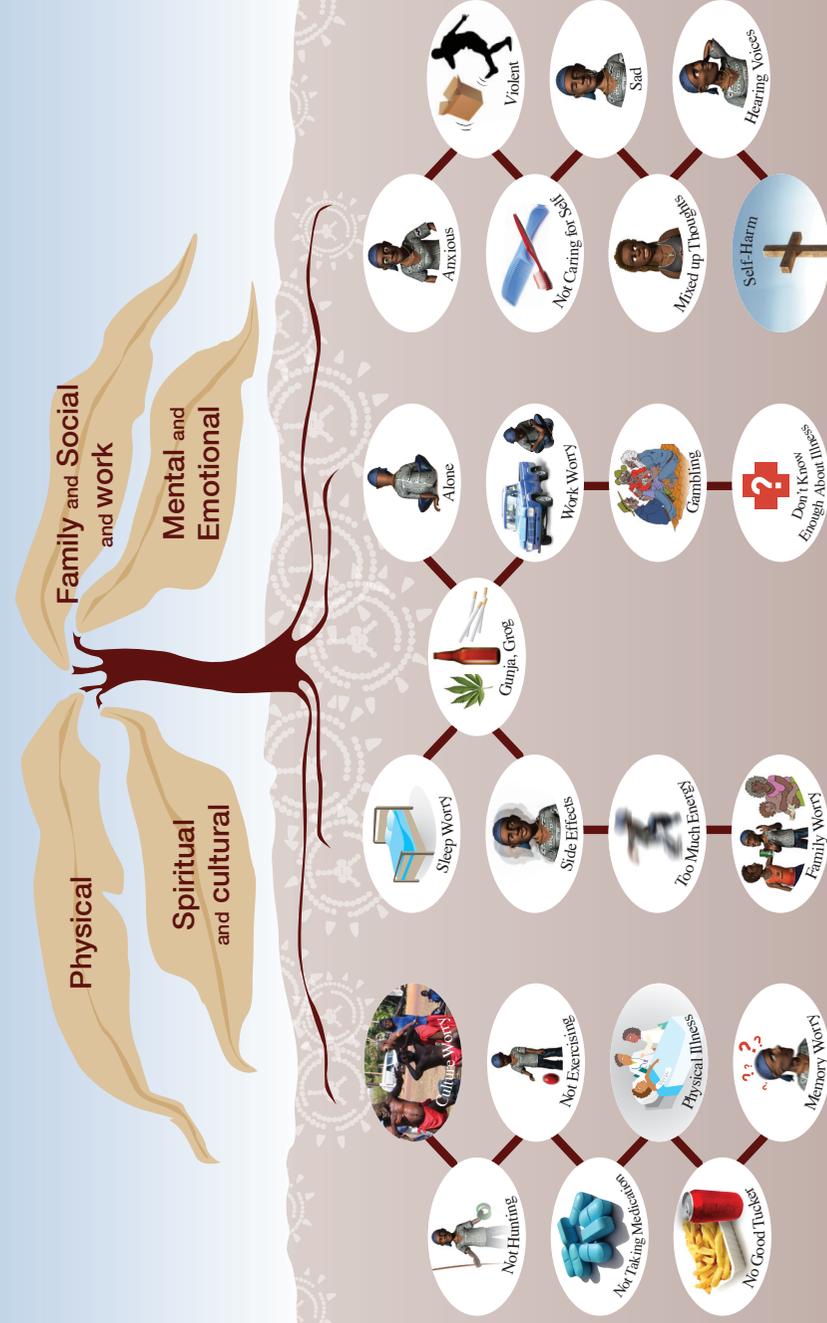
- Can't sleep
- Change of appetite (eat more or less than usual)
- Lose interest (nothing is fun)
- Cry for no reason
- Sit down alone
- Negative thoughts and feelings

If we don't talk to someone it can lead to other problems:

- Violence
- Self harm
- Trouble parenting
- Family worry
- Substance misuse



worries which can take away our strength



We often cover up how we are feeling and sometimes it's hard for others to know there is anything wrong

There are four things to do to treat depression and to get back in balance again:

- Talk to someone - family or friends
- Do more things that keep you strong
- Do less of the things that take your strength away... and if that's not working
- Try talking with a health professional

Growing strong again

There can be many treatments to help people to grow their spirit back to strength

- Education can help change how a person feels and help them make good choices that make their spirit stronger.
- Medications can help improve the symptoms of depression and sadness so people can focus on growing stronger
- Knowing early warning signs of stress can help us be prepared

© Menzies School of Health Research - Yarning about Sadness, a Menzies School of Health Research Stay Strong resource (from the Aboriginal and Islander Mental Health initiative - Aimhi Yarning About Sadness Brochure | Stay Strong), 2006. All rights reserved. For educational use: This material may be used for educational purposes with appropriate acknowledgment. Restrictions: No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission from Menzies School of Health Research.



Where to get help or information

Talk to someone you trust, friend, family member, senior elder, traditional healer or visit your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Service or local health centre

Lifeline 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au

Beyondblue 1300 224 636 or www.beyondblue.org.au

Tamarind Centre NT 8999 4988

Northern Territory Mental Health Line 1800 682 288

www.menzies.edu.au/AIMHI

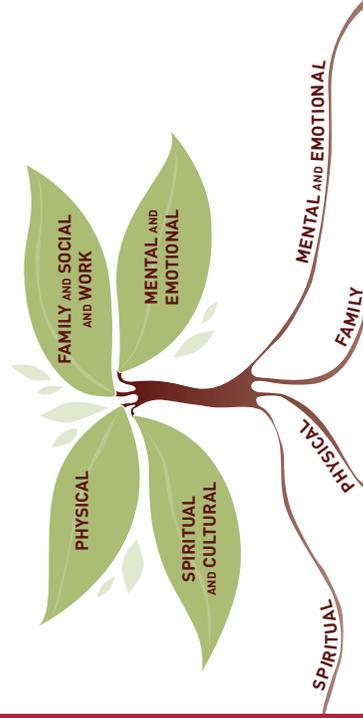
depression or sadness

Our people have strong culture. We are artists and storytellers, we are sporting legends and skilled hunters, we are musicians and dancers and uncles and aunts and grandmothers and grandfathers.

Most of all we are teachers, and we are teaching our children to find their way in a modern world. Our kids need a guide to find their way in the modern world ... they need to take our culture with them... to bring both worlds into one.

What is mental health?

Mental health and wellbeing is like a tree with four branches which needs to be looked after. When the tree is well balanced a person's mental health is strong. What's around us, what we do, what we think and what we feel helps to keep us strong.



Yarning about Sadness

