

DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS

SUBSTANCE/MEDICATION-INDUCED DEPRESSIVE DISORDER



SA Federation for
Mental Health

What it is:

Substance/medication-induced depressive disorder is characterised by a prominent and persistent change in mood, exhibiting clear signs of depression or a marked decrease in interest or pleasure in daily activities and hobbies, and these symptoms start during or soon after a certain substance/medication has been taken, or during withdrawal from the substance/medication. The individual's mental health history, as well as the nature of the substance/medication taken must be taken into account, to ensure that the depressive symptoms cannot be better explained by a different diagnosis.

The symptoms of the depressive disorder must also be severe enough to cause impairment in the day to day functionality of the individual. Withdrawal times for various substances from the body vary, and so the depressive symptoms may continue for some time after the individual has ceased taking the substance/medication.

Common symptoms:

1. Constantly feeling sad, hopeless or empty
2. Constantly feeling irritated or agitated
3. Excessive weight gain or loss during a short period of time
4. Sleeping too much or too little
5. Low energy levels or fatigue
6. Low self-esteem
7. Poor levels of concentration
8. Decreased sex drive
9. Increased thoughts of death and dying, including suicidal thoughts and behaviour
10. The above symptoms must all have manifested during or after a specific substance/medication was taken or during withdrawal

Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*



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Causes:

Substance/medication-induced depressive disorder is caused directly by a specific substance/medication that is taken or during withdrawal from the substance/medication. There are a number of substances and medications that could cause this, including:

1. Alcohol
2. Phencyclidine
3. Hallucinogens
4. Inhalants
5. Opioids
6. Amphetamines

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