

# THE MYTHS ABOUT DEPRESSION

THE WORD DEPRESSION SHOULD NOT BE THROWN AROUND NONCHALANTLY, WRITES MELANIE MCGREGOR



MELANIE MCGREGOR  
Column

## traumatic experience

The causes of depression are a complex interplay of genetics, biology, and experience, and we can't always say what triggers or contributes to the symptoms. We hear all the time, "What does that person have to be depressed about?! Their life seems perfect!" Depression is an illness, not a choice or a sign of weakness, and even those who seem to have happy lives can and do experience it.

**Myth: Everyone is sad sometimes, so depression is normal**

There are differences between sadness and depression. Sadness is time-limited, while depression goes on much longer and has more of a disruptive effect. That person who says "I'm depressed

about my hockey team losing" probably means "sad" rather than "depressed" since the mood will most likely pass relatively quickly. And people experiencing depression are not always sad - many describe it as feeling empty, numb, or emotionless.

**Myth: Depression is a phase and will go away on its own**

While the symptoms of depression tend to occur in episodes, meaning that there are times when people will experience them and times when they won't, they can last for a long time, and just waiting for them to pass will have a major impact on people's lives. Support is needed to manage the symptoms and help people improve their wellness. Even with treatment, the symptoms may not go away entirely, but they can become much more manageable.

**Myth: People with depression need medication for the rest of their lives**

Medication is one option for treating depression. Some will take it, some won't, some will take it for a shorter period, some will take it for the rest of their lives - it all depends on the individual and what they choose.

People may be reluctant to talk about having symptoms of depression because they are unsure about medication, but it's important to remember that there are many choices that can help make things better.

If you want to learn more about mental health and how to provide support, consider taking a mental health first aid course. Visit [www.halton.cmha.ca/programs-services/](http://www.halton.cmha.ca/programs-services/) for more details.

*Melanie McGregor is the communications and advancement specialist at the Canadian Mental Health Association Halton Branch, which provides mental health/addiction community support and education. Visit [www.halton.cmha.ca](http://www.halton.cmha.ca) for more information and follow @cmhahalton on Twitter.*

Ever hear anyone say the day after a hockey game, "I'm so depressed that my team always loses?" The way that words like "depressed" are used every day goes a long way to either continuing or challenging myths associated with mental health. These myths need to be cleared up for people to feel they can talk openly and get the support they need.

What are some of these myths about depression and what are the truths behind them?

**Myth: Depression happens after a difficult or**



By Cory Soal  
R.H.A.D.

## ...Lend Me Your Ears

**CAN I HAVE A TRIAL PERIOD!**

Members of the Association of Hearing Instrument Practitioners of Ontario recommend a 30 day time period in which they may return their hearing aid(s) if they are not completely satisfied. (There may be a service fee charged if an aid is returned). The criteria for satisfaction of the hearing aids is that you find them beneficial. You have the final word.

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**Q:** My boy friend is always angry. I know he didn't have a great childhood but does that explain it? Can it have any negative effects? Is there hope for change?

**A:** Many individuals who have anger issues did have difficult childhoods. Sometimes a parent was ill and not available. Sometimes a parent abandoned the child and sometimes parents are violent and domestic assault is common in the child's life. Racism, bullying and other acts of aggression can also result in an angry individual. The key is that the individual must learn to stop blaming others for his or her anger, deal with the issues from the past and take responsibility for their present behaviour.

Assessments can measure an individual's anger and anticipate their reactions. Frequently someone with excessive anger is likely to express that anger outwardly either verbally or physically. These reactions often mean that the individual finds themselves in a difficult situation with relationships and sometimes in conflict with police.

Anger can be dealt with in anger management groups and in individual counselling sessions with an experienced therapist. If the court is already involved, the individual may suddenly find him or herself motivated to make changes. Even though I hope that any participants in an anger management program will want to make the changes for their own personal growth, if you are hoping to lessen court charges, be sure that the program or individual therapist you chose will be accepted by the courts after completion. Most private groups or individuals are not accepted. I am accepted unless a specific program is mandated. Check with your lawyer. I do not do PARS.

Finally, if anger is not dealt with through counselling and relaxation skills, the individual might develop anxiety and depression issues. They are also more likely to develop high blood pressure, cardiovascular (heart) issues and hypertension problems. Obviously, it is better to deal with anger before it has brought you into conflict with the law or damaged your health. And yes, it is my belief that people can change.

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**Zachary Fiddes**  
B.ENG., O.L.S. President

**Q:** I'm selling my house and I am being told I should have a survey of my property available. Why? What do I do?

**A:** The purpose of a survey is to provide the prospective owners with information about the property including the size and shape and any improvements made within the limits— paying particular attention to improvements built near the boundary such as fences, sheds, and easements that may affect the use of the land.

A new survey is the only way to guarantee the status and existing conditions of a property and, therefore, is the only way purchasers can know what they're buying. Old surveys are sometimes used but beware as they may not include building additions, new road widenings, severances, and any other changes that may have occurred on the property.

If you're planning on selling your property in the next six months or so, get a head start and have your property surveyed now! Depending on the size and age of the property, new surveys can take a few weeks so it's best to have it done early so that closing dates aren't missed.

As a licensed Ontario Land Surveyor I will be happy to discuss your particular situation with you and help you determine if a survey of your property is recommended for your needs.