

Make the pledge to find out the signs of depression – You could save a life.

World Suicide Prevention Day – September 10, 2012

Every day in Australia, 65 people will end up in hospital as a result of self-harm. Six will die as a result of suicide.

Twice as many young people die from suicide than as a result of road accidents.

Mental illness and untreated mental illness in particular, is a risk factor for suicide. Research shows mental illness is present in at least 90 per cent of completed suicides and more than 80 per cent are untreated at the time of death.

On World Suicide Prevention Day, beyondblue CEO Ms Kate Carnell AO urges people to get to know the symptoms of depression and to seek help both for themselves and others if they think there's a problem.

Ms Carnell said: "Many injuries and deaths could be prevented if people got help earlier.

"Around a million Australian adults live with depression at any one time. It's alarming that less than half of these people get the help they need – so this puts thousands of people with untreated depression at greater risk of suicide.

"It would help people with depression immensely, if today everyone pledged to find out what the symptoms of depression are – and to seek help for themselves or someone else if the warning signs are there."

If people feel sad for a prolonged period and lose interest in work, hobbies or things they usually enjoy, it could be a sign of depression. Other symptoms include sleeping problems, lack of energy, irritability, difficulty concentrating and managing day-to-day activities. If these symptoms persist for more than two weeks, the person should talk to a GP or other health professional.

Ms Carnell said: "There are treatments that work effectively, so you don't have to put up with feeling like you're living in a black hole. Even if life seems hopeless, treatment can give you your old life back. Thinking that life's not worth living is not the answer.

"If you or someone you know is having a tough time, it's important to talk about it. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help... and people shouldn't be embarrassed or feel ashamed to talk about how they are feeling. A doctor can help get the right type of treatment for you. The sooner you seek help, the sooner you're on the road to recovery.

"On World Suicide Prevention Day, if everyone recognises the importance of getting help for themselves or someone else, then perhaps there would be fewer bereaved families and more people would be able to get their lives back on track," Ms Carnell said.

To find out more about depression and anxiety, and where to get help, call the beyondblue info line/1300 22 4636 or visit the beyondblue website www.beyondblue.org.au

Contacts

Julie Foster

0409 433 501

mailto: media@beyondblue.org.au