

Imagine, living in a world where no one was there for you, no one cared, no one even gave you the time of day to even say hi or how are you? When you're trapped in isolation, thoughts begin to swell in your mind, all those disapproving stares from people walking by replay over and over. Your parents just think you are going through a "phase" and you'll "grow out of it." Your friends begin to lose contact with you and they become distant because you start wagging school.

You don't want to go to school because if you do you have to enter into awkward conversations with your teachers about why you are failing.

Imagine you were in the shoes of young Jess. At just 17 years of age she fell into a downward spiral. Her parents thought that she was just under a lot of stress with school and didn't think anything of it. However, this was not the case. Jess was not only under a lot of stress from school, but also fell victim to cyber-bullying-which is a common cause of depression, and took a turn for the worst.

Within a month of experiencing depression Jess sadly turned to self harm and was rushed to hospital because she had cut one of her main veins. Just one week later she committed suicide.

Ladies and gentleman, situations just like Jess' are happening on a day to day basis.

Depression is one of the most commonly diagnosed mental illness' in Australia and there is simply not enough funding allocated to preventing depression in teenagers in the government's new budget this year.

Currently the Government is funding \$55 million dollars over three years into further studies of preventing depression. This is around \$18 million dollars a year, and may sound reasonable-however it is simply not enough. The Government has no hesitation in forking out a huge \$290 million dollars for this year alone to invest in Gillard's great immigration plan, which is simply not necessary. The government needs to reassess their funding budget and priorities.

Clinical depression is an illness/ medical condition. It significantly affects the way someone feels, causing a persistent lowering of mood. Depression is often accompanied by a range of other physical and psychological symptoms that can interfere with the way a person is able to function in their everyday life.

Depression has a variety of symptoms and will affect everyone in different ways. Symptoms include: feeling extremely sad or tearful; disturbances to normal sleep patterns; loss of interest and motivation; feeling worthless or guilty; loss of pleasure in activities; anxiety; changes in appetite or weight; physical aches and pains; impaired thinking or concentration; self-harm.

Depression can be caused by many outside influences such as bullying in the school yard, fighting with your friends or family members, breaking up with a girlfriend or boyfriend, failing at school, hearing rumours about you or even death of a loved one but one of the most increasing causes of depression is that of cyber- bullying.

Cyber-bullying is when people use technology to torment or bully others. This form of bullying has only developed as technology has developed and become more accessible to the general public. Through cyber-bullying a person can be victimised outside of school because of the access to sites such as facebook, msn and twitter. Although only recent, a survey conducted by the Melbourne University found that cyber-bullying has increased from 14% in 2007, to 48% in 2008, to 58% in 2009 to 68% in 2010.

Because of such a drastic increase in numbers of those affected by cyber-bullying, a proportion of government funding must be allocated to further educating not only parents but also kids in the school yard about the dangerous affects of cyber-bullying and how it can be prevented. If we, as a society, are able to pinpoint major influences, such as cyber-bullying, that cause depression then we will be able to come that much closer to preventing depression.

There are also many affects that depression has on an individual; that may include excessive sadness, breaking down into tears, lack of motivation and loss of contact of loved ones. However, even though these are all serious outlets that must be sufficiently dealt with in the correct manner another affect due to depression is engaging in self harm.

One of the main outlets of depression is self inflicted harm. In 2008-2009 there were over 7 299 people admitted to hospital as a result of intentional self harm. This is a statistic we should not be proud of. The main age group affected is 15-25 year olds, the majority being teenagers. However, ladies and gentleman, these statistics only show those that have actually admitted to having self inflicted harm upon them. What about all the other people who suffer that do not tell anyone? What about those who are not included in these statistics? And what about those who have been suffering just as much as these people, due to depression, but can't find a way to tell someone about it?

These are the questions that enforce the most upsetting reality of those who are not counted in these statistics. Therefore, it is blatantly obvious that the government **needs** to be aware that these statistics **do not** in any way sufficiently represent the whole population of those with depression.

This funding is needed immediately. The sooner we have access to this money, the sooner we will be able to tackle depression and make fast improvements in the way of

educating people of the affects, symptoms and what they can do if such signs are evident.

Another drastic affect of depression, that causes physical pain, besides self inflicted harm, is suicide. A death is classified as a suicide by a coroner based on evidence that a person died as a result of a deliberate act to cause his or her own death.

The Australian Bureau of statistics states, that last year alone there where over 26 per 100 000 deaths as a result of suicide. Therefore if Australia's population has about 22 million people, that means that 22 million divided by 100 000 times 26 equals to roughly 5 800. Therefore there were approximately 5 800 deaths as a result of suicide within Australia last year.

A solution to reducing depression in teens is to better educate people, by doing so we will be able to decrease such terrifying statistics of suicide within Australia.

Currently in Australia there are support programs such as *beyondblue* and *Hope for Depression*. Through these foundations awareness is able to be promoted about causes, symptoms, affects and how you can help. Also, the foundations that are dedicated to depression make themselves contactable to those that don't feel as though they have anyone to talk to. This is the most valuable support that any foundation can offer because if those suffering from depression feel as though they can't talk to anyone at home, then they have someone to talk to for help through the websites.

There are many benefits involved in allocating more funding to depression in teenagers. Resources will be able to be vastly improved and made readily available for all. For instance, there are many foundations that are established on donations from the general public in order to continue on helping those affected by depression.

This funding will also be able to be used towards educating parents, teachers and children about depression including the causes, symptoms, affects and help that is available. Through increasing awareness in the population then those affected by the disorder will be able to seek help in an effective manner and those around will also know what to do in tackling depression.

Also, creating awareness in people about some specific causes of depression, like cyber-bullying and bullying in the school yard, can also help aid the decrease of depression.

Ladies and gentleman, even though there are so many valid reasons as to why the government should allocate more funding into the prevention of depression in teenagers, there are still some issues I have not addressed. Some people may question where the money will come from to provide more funding for depression? and if it will come from the tax payers pocket?

The answer is simple. No one can put a price on human life because depression is directly linked to the cause of suicide in our society, and with suicide rates being high as it is, the funding is vital to be able to decrease these statistics. Also, the Government is currently investing over \$290 million dollars on a yearly basis towards Gillard's immigration scheme. Surely the government can afford to prioritise and see that preventing depression is a significant cause in desperate need for more funding.

Depression is one of the most commonly diagnosed mental illness'. It is widely spread and it affects teenagers the most within society. From the points I have raised today you can clearly see that the government **should** invest more funding into preventing depression in teenagers.

Thankyou ☺