



ASSOCIATION DES
MÉDECINS PSYCHIATRES
DU QUÉBEC

Press release
For immediate release

Depression and mental illness: reminder from the Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec

Recognising symptoms so as to provide help for those who need it.

Montréal, January 24 2017 – On the occasion of Bell's special day *Let's Talk*, the Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec (AMPQ) wishes to remind the public about the nature of depression, and the solutions that are already available to help either the sufferers or their loved ones.

"It is crucial for us to demystify psychiatric illnesses, we need to cultivate an open social dialogue so as to bring an end to taboos surrounding mental illness. This is the only way that we'll be able to help those who suffer from depression," said Dr. Karine J. Igartua, President of AMPQ.

AMPQ reiterates the fact that major depression is a mental disorder characterized by the loss of pleasure and by sustained sadness that can last for several weeks. Moreover, major depression involves several of the following symptoms:

- Sleep difficulties
- Changes in appetite and weight
- Loss of concentration
- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Lack of interest or motivation
- Feeling of restlessness or being slowed down.

A person affected by major depression will have many negative thoughts, associated with poor self-esteem, disproportionate sense of guilt, a tendency towards pessimism, seeing everything as bad, and hopelessness for the future.

Depression *is not* normal sadness that results from a tragic event such as a romantic break-up, the loss of a job, or the death of a loved one. Depression *is not* a moral defect nor is it simple laziness. The person suffering from major depression can become totally incapacitated, unable to perform any function.

What to do when experiencing depression?

Seventy to eighty percent of depressions can be cured with psychotherapy or anti-depressant medication or a combination of both. When symptoms of depression last for several weeks, it is important to consult a family doctor. It's also possible to go to a *Guichet d'accès en Santé Mentale (GASM)* in your area. If the situation is degrading rapidly, or suicidal thoughts begin to creep in, go to one of the crisis centers of Québec or, if it's really serious, to an emergency room.

Here are useful hints for victims of depression:

- Go outside, get some natural light;
- Cardio-exercise 30 minutes at least three times a week;
- Maintain a daily routine;
- Seek the company of persons you can talk to, don't stay alone;
- Avoid alcohol;
- Go easy with caffeine;
- Try to eat food that's rich in vitamins and nutrients;
- Reserve enough time for appropriate amount of sleep;
- Recognise what's good in your life, and feel gratitude about it;
- Temporarily, lower expectations about yourself.

AMPQ's website (<http://ampq.org/>) offers resources and information for those who are affected by a mental illness and also for their family and friends. The website presents fact sheets on anxiety, eating disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorder, and dementia.

The Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec

The Association des médecins psychiatres du Québec (AMPQ) includes more than 1 150 psychiatrists who practice in Québec. The organization focusses on mental health care, and it's the framework of the professionals it brings together. As part of its mandate, the AMPQ promotes the most rigorous professional and scientific standards for the practitioners of psychiatry. It also works at providing the public with the best possible information on psychiatry and mental health. Finally, its aim is to foster optimal access to psychiatric services for the entire population of Québec.

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