



## AND ANOTHER THING... \ BEYOND DEPRESSION

Before seeking help for depression, Tony McManus says he remembers he would sit at his desk and hope the phone wouldn't ring.

"I was in property sales, so (not answering the phone) wasn't a good idea," McManus says. There were other signs. He recalls not sleeping and feeling constantly tired. Also struggling with depression, at the time, was his colleague and younger brother, Mick, who committed suicide in 2005.

"When you're close to someone you don't realise how bad they are because they kind of go down in increments. People who hadn't seen him for a long time thought there was something not right," he says.

"But we were kind of a bit conditioned to it or used to it ... his behaviour, his moods."

While McManus had been dealing with his own depression for several years, it was only after his brother's death that he became involved with beyondblue, approaching the organisation with the idea for the beyondblue Cup.

The cup was initially awarded each year to the winner

of an AFL match between Hawthorn and Geelong.

Later, after McManus sold his real-estate business and set up a consultancy, he began exploring ways to help other men wrestling with depression.

That led to him becoming a national ambassador for beyondblue. He says the organisation has empowered him to talk about his personal battle without fear of being judged.

"Beyondblue has helped to destigmatise depression and people are not so concerned about disclosing that they have, or have had, a mental health issue," he says.

McManus says he hopes sharing his story will encourage others with similar issues to seek help.

"When you've had an issue and gotten through it, you want to help others. You know what kind of battle it is to get through and you want to make it easier for them."

McManus finds it difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of his depression. While he believes genetics may have played a role, he says it may also have developed because of his lifestyle.

"It's a long, hard grind to work in real estate for 15 years when you're the sole proprietor of that kind of

"I DON'T  
HAVE TO  
KEEP IT IN THE  
CLOSET"

business. It's tough, competitive, seven days a week ... you can get burnt out."

McManus keeps his health in check these days by regularly assessing all areas of his life. "I would describe myself as managing it (depression). You still have your ups and downs, but I'm good," McManus says.

As well as recommending that men take care to exercise and eat well, he says they should also maintain social links "with other blokes of like mind".

And he's a big advocate of the Men's Shed movement.

McManus has his own shed, which takes the form of a cluttered office and reflects his interest in military history, travel and the Geelong Football Club.

"We (men) like to collect our trinkets, our memorabilia. It's where you can go and recharge. It's something that's your own," he says.

"It's about having a space that reinforces your interests ... a space you can identify with."

**KIM NORBURY**

[kimnorbury@theweeklyreview.com.au](mailto:kimnorbury@theweeklyreview.com.au)

» If you are experiencing depression, contact [www.beyondblue.org](http://www.beyondblue.org)