

Practice 1

You are going to read an extract from an article. For questions 1 to 8, choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

"Don't lose yourself," the old, **bedridden** man said. I was five at the time, and my family was visiting him. I can't remember his name or how we knew him. But two decades later, his words haunted me as I struggled to come to terms with my life. For years, I had suffered from depression. The first incident I can remember happened when I was 14. As I walked home one day, I was overcome with the **urge** to sit in a corner and weep. I barely managed to reach our flat before bursting into tears. These **overwhelming**, unexplained feelings frightened me.

By the time I was 16, these **outbursts** were happening about once a month. Most of the time I lived my life normally, but then my mind seemed to take on a life of its own. Initially they happened for no reason, but now everything became a reason - a **frown** from a teacher, first prize for an essay, a long queue at a canteen stall. It didn't matter whether the incidents were happy, sad or indifferent, all would be twisted by my mind into something horrible.

One incident I recall **vividly** was a call from a friend. After we chatted for a while, she said she had to go because her mum was calling her. I spent the next two days **agonising** over whether she had hung up because she hated me. A little voice in my mind kept telling me how worthless, hopeless and stupid I was. I kept this a secret because I was scared and **perplexed**. I remember once trying to explain to my friend, Alice, what was happening to me but I couldn't find the right words to express myself and eventually gave up.

Not that my friends were completely unaware of my problems. More than once they tried to talk to me about my difficult home life. My father subjected my two younger sisters and me to terrible verbal abuse and my mother did little to support us. I now realise my family problems were a major factor in my depression, but at the time I denied anything was wrong.

When I was 17, I concluded that the only way to stop my suffering was simply not to feel anything. This wasn't difficult because I was overwhelmed with my studies, two part-time jobs and looking after my sisters. I had no time to think, much less feel. At first, the numbness was a huge relief from the mood swings, but it wasn't long before I realised that there was a **vast** emptiness in my heart. I could feel no emotions. It got to a point where I would cut myself just to feel something.

I had become afraid of being by myself. I felt as if I was being chased by a black hole that would swallow me whole. Finally, when I was 25, I decided that I had to end my life. Fortunately, I never got the chance. That night, I bumped into my 16-year-old sister, Isabella outside my room. Her eyes were swollen and she was sobbing. "I don't know why. I can't make the crying go away," she said. I was horrified. I knew that depression could be **hereditary**. This incident **jolted me to my senses**. The desire to help Isabella prompted me to help myself.

I called my best friend, Kath. I told her everything and on her **insistence**, I visited a Family Service Centre and arranged to start counselling. I also joined a support group and started reading self-help books. More importantly, I made a decision to get out of depression. I forced myself to make new friends. I also convinced Isabella to start counselling and made her come out with my friends and me instead of being cooped up at home. Today, two years later, she is much better. She is taking a pre-university course and has a circle of supportive friends.

Depression is neither a choice nor a bad mood you can snap out of. It is an illness with an underlying cause. But no matter how much other people try to help, only the victims can help themselves get better. My depressive **bouts** haven't disappeared, but they are less frequent and less intense. It has not been easy to share my feelings, but it's getting easier all the time. And the best part is, I have been able to help Isabella. I did lose myself, but I managed to find myself again.

(Adapted from: <http://www.rdasia.com/findking-myself>)

1 In paragraph 1, when did the writer begin to suffer from depression?

- A When she was 16 years old and suffering monthly outbursts
- B When she was 5 years old while visiting an old bedridden man
- C When she was 25 years old and struggling to understand her life
- D When she was 14 and had the urge to cry on her way home from school

2 In paragraph 3, how did the writer feel after a phone call from a friend?

- A She felt scared and perplexed.
- B She felt sad and hated herself.
- C She felt worthless, hopeless and stupid.
- D She felt worthless and wanted to give up.

3 In paragraph 4, what was the main cause of the writer's depression?

- A Family problems
- B Difficult home life
- C Unsupportive mother
- D Verbal abuse from her father

4 In paragraph 5, what was the effect when the writer was too busy with her studies?

- A She had mood swings.
- B She felt very empty in her heart.
- C She could not feel any emotions.
- D She had to cut herself to feel something.

5 In paragraph 6, why did the writer use the phrase '*jolted to my senses*'?

- A She was taken aback by Isabella's depressive situation.
- B She realised that she had to help herself to help Isabella.
- C She was surprised to find Isabella crying outside her room.
- D She had to end her life to stop being afraid of a black hole.

6 Why did the writer decide to get help for her depression?

- A She finally accepted her illness.
- B Her friend advised her to seek help.
- C She wanted to be able to help her sister.
- D She wanted to socialise with her friends.

7 How does the writer feel about her struggles with depression?

- A She was glad that she was able to manage her illness.
- B She was relieved that her depression had disappeared.
- C She was happy that Isabella is coping well with her illness.
- D She was sad that she had no choice but to accept her illness.

8 What is the benefit of sharing one's feelings when one is depressed?

- A One will be able to be cured from depression.
- B By sharing emotions, one can release anxiety.
- C By sharing feelings, one can get more friends.
- D One can know how to react to the feelings expressed.

Identify the meaning of the following words.

bedridden	urge	bouts	overwhelming
outbursts	frown	vividly	agonising
perplexed	vast	hereditary	insistence

- a) very strong _____
- b) make a face _____
- c) persistently to persuade (someone) to do something _____
- d) disabled _____
- e) inheritance _____
- f) worry _____
- g) an attack of illness or strong emotion _____
- h) huge _____
- i) a sudden release of strong emotion _____
- j) requirement _____
- k) in a way that produces powerful feelings or strong _____
- l) complicate or confuse _____