

Depression

What is depression?

Everyone has spells of feeling down, but depression is more than just spending a few days feeling sad or unhappy. Depression can make you feel persistently sad and down for weeks or months at a time and affects around one in 10 people over the course of their lives. With the right support and treatment, most people recover fully from depression.

What are the signs & symptoms of depression?

These are some of the signs or symptoms that you may experience if you are depressed:

Emotions or feelings -

- Feeling sad, guilty, upset, numb or despairing
- Losing interest and/or enjoyment in things
- Crying a lot or unable to cry when a truly sad event occurs
- Feeling alone even if you are in company
- Feeling angry and irritable about the slightest thing

Physical or bodily signs -

- Tiredness
- Lack of energy
- Restlessness
- Sleep problems, especially waking early
- Feeling worse at a particular time of day - usually mornings
- Changes in weight, appetite and eating

Thoughts -

- Losing confidence in yourself
- Expecting the worst and having negative or gloomy thoughts
- Thinking that everything seems hopeless
- Thinking you hate yourself
- Poor memory or concentration
- Thoughts of suicide

Behaviour -

- Not making decisions

- Can't be bothered to do everyday tasks
- Putting things off
- Not doing things you used to enjoy
- Avoiding seeing people

What causes depression?

There are many reasons why you might feel low at some point in your life. Any sort of difficult event or experience could lead to sadness or low self-esteem. Sometimes it's possible to feel low without there being an obvious reason.

If you know what's causing your low mood it might be easier to find ways to manage it.

Some examples of things that may cause a low mood include:

- work – feeling pressure at work, unemployment or retirement
- family – relationship difficulties, divorce or caring for someone
- financial problems – unexpected bills or borrowing money
- health – illness, injury or losing someone (bereavement)

Even significant life events such as buying a house, having a baby or planning a wedding could lead to feelings of sadness.

You might find it hard to explain to people why you feel this way, but talking to someone could help you find a solution.

Treating depression

Treatment for depression can involve a combination of lifestyle changes, talking therapies and medicine. Your recommended treatment will be based on whether you have mild, moderate or severe depression.

If you have mild depression, your doctor may suggest waiting to see whether it improves on its own, while monitoring your progress. This is known as "watchful waiting". They may also suggest lifestyle measures such as exercise and self-help groups.

Talking therapies, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), are often used for mild depression that is not improving, or moderate depression. Antidepressants are also sometimes prescribed.

For moderate to severe depression, a combination of talking therapy and antidepressants is often recommended. If you have severe depression, you may be referred to a specialist mental health team for intensive specialist talking treatments and prescribed medicine.

Many people with depression benefit by making lifestyle changes, such as getting more exercise, cutting down on alcohol, giving up smoking and eating healthily.

Reading a self-help book or joining a support group are also worthwhile. They can help you gain a better understanding about what causes you to feel depressed. Sharing your experiences with others in a similar situation can also be very supportive.

Community support

Local Mental Health Services

[Let's Talk IAPT](#) - provides psychological therapy for common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety.

[Mind in Haringey](#) - provides information, advice and support to people affected by mental health problems, primarily in Haringey.

[Open Door Online](#) - specialise in the mental health and emotional wellbeing of adolescents and young adults aged 12-24, providing easy access to a range of free evidence-based therapies delivered by an experienced team of therapists.

[Nafsiyat intercultural therapy centre](#) - is an intercultural therapy centre committed to providing effective and accessible psychotherapy and counselling services to London's diverse religious, cultural, and ethnic communities. Nafsiyat provides short-term intercultural therapy in over 20 different languages, via referral, to individuals, groups, and couples.

Other Support Services

[Solace](#) - aims to prevent violence and abuse as well as providing services to meet the individual needs of survivors particularly women and children. They work alongside survivors to achieve independent lives free from abuse.

[Haringey, Here to Help](#) - provides information about the services available to help residents of Haringey through difficult times and beyond.

Click [here](#) to learn more about depression.

This guide is intended for people with mild-to-moderate symptoms of depression and is adapted from [this](#) NHS self-help guide.

If you're feeling distressed, in a state of despair, suicidal or in need of emotional support you can phone NHS 24 on 111.

For an emergency ambulance phone 999.