

# **Self help matters.**

Helping you to find your solutions

## **Depression**

# Depression

Feeling low or sad is something we all feel at times. It's our body's natural retreating response to certain difficult situations. Normally, this doesn't last long and we'll soon be back to our old selves.

Depression and low-mood is different for everyone – it can also be triggered by recent or past distressing events or a combination of circumstances. In more acute situations, it's recommended that you speak to your GP who may be able to help with treatment available to you through the NHS. Depression can come in many forms; feeling over-emotional, hopeless, apathetic, overly tired, withdrawn and irritable with poor sleep and eating patterns.

## Top Tips

**Identify the cause.** Is there an obvious trigger for how you feel? Often, feeling down is a normal response to something sad. Just knowing why you're feeling depressed can help. Perhaps there could be a series of interconnected causes?

**Exercise.** Physical exertion releases endorphins in the brain that can help to improve mood. Exercising with others can provide social contact, which can reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness.

**Stressors.** Identify what stresses you out and explore options to mitigate, manage or reduce your exposure to these.

**Decisions.** Resist, for now, making any long-term commitments or changes until you are in a better position, or clearer-headed, to make more balanced decisions.

**Diet.** Having a balanced, healthy diet can make you feel good and improves your sense of well-being. But eating loads of fatty, sweet or salty food forces the body to work much harder and can contribute to an increase in weight, illness, apathy and general sluggishness.

**Plan.** Depressed people don't like to do anything much, so it might help to construct a daily plan or diary, taking small steps, one at a time.

**Weight.** Being overweight/underweight can put a strain on the body. Not only can this make it difficult to maintain a normal level of functioning, but you may trigger associated feelings of low self-confidence and self-worth.

**Work.** Part-time job, volunteering or societies can provide routine and purpose, social contact with others and structure to your life.

**Alcohol.** Many of us drink alcohol to relax. But alcohol's also a depressant. So if you're drinking because you're already depressed, it won't help. It'll not only make you feel more depressed, but it could become something you rely on more, both physically and psychologically. Managing depression can be tough enough without adding an addiction to it.

**Drugs.** There's a link between recreational drug use and depression. Drugs might alter your mood for the short time of the "high", but there will always be some "down" response. What goes up, must come down. The craving can increase in an effort to seek a greater effect. It can lead to addiction.

**Counselling.** Sometimes you may not understand why you're depressed or you won't know what to do about it. Talking to a counsellor can help to find the source or just to find ways to help you cope better with it. Also, talking to others who share similar struggles can reassure you that you're not on your own.

**Praise.** You might not feel it, but your body, mind and soul will value any praise or appreciation you can give yourself.

**Avoid blame.** Don't be hard on yourself. It's rare that depression is actually anyone's fault. You are not to blame. Don't feel guilty about it.

**GP.** Your Doctor's in charge of your mental and physical health and may be able to offer you some options to help you manage it better. Sometimes a combination of medication, counselling and self-help can work well.

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## Resources

### MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx)

### LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.livinglifetothefull.com](http://www.livinglifetothefull.com)

### DEPRESSION UK

A national self-help group.



**Opening Hours:** Online

[www.depressionuk.org](http://www.depressionuk.org)

### TOGETHER ALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>

### MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



**Opening Hours:** Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

### UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



[www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support)

#### **If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following**

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - [www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling)