



Depression

Communities in
Transition

BY
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CHANGING LIVES EVERY DAY

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What is depression?

Depression is a term that is commonly used when feeling down, sad and low. However, as an illness, depression is where you have symptoms that are persistent and are having an impact on your everyday life. These persistent symptoms may tend to last for months, which in the long term isn't healthy.

Depression can affect anyone and presents at different levels - mild, moderate and severe.

Symptoms of depression

There are many symptoms of depression which may include:

- Excessive tiredness
- Prolonged sadness
- Lack of interest/careless
- Withdrawal/isolation
- Avoidance
- Hopelessness/despair
- Guilt, shame and remorse
- Lack of confidence and self-esteem
- Suicidal thoughts
- Stress and irritability

Causes of depression

There's no single cause of depression. It can occur for a variety of reasons and it has many different triggers. However, you can also become depressed for what may seem like no obvious reason.

The following could be triggers or causes of depression:

- Life-changing events, such as bereavement, relationship breakdown, losing your job, financial difficulties or giving birth
- If someone else in your family has it (that does not mean you definitely will get the illness, but you are at a greater risk)
- Your environment, home life, the community in which you live, living with an abusive relationship, isolation



Good news - there is help available!

Depression can and does have a significant impact on your life. However, the good news is that people can make a full recovery, and most do with the right treatment and support.

If you think you may have depression, it is first of all important to speak with your GP. They will ask you some questions, and if this leads to a diagnosis, they may offer some treatment options.

This could be:

- Medication
- Counselling
- Exercise referral
- Referral to community mental health team
- Referral to voluntary and community services

Other things you can do to help yourself

- Attend local support groups
- Counselling, either formal or informal
- Helplines such as Lifeline 0808 808 8000
- Healthy eating
- Exercise – ideally something you find fun and enjoy
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Re-establishing routine
- Staying connected with others
- Volunteering or developing new skills – this keeps the mind active and increases confidence
- Practice breathing – there are various apps that can help you do this e.g. “What’s Up” App (available in Play Store).
- Library – self-help books, including the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Recovery College NI – each trust area has a recovery college, check out more details on the website by googling Belfast Recovery College.



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