

## Where can I find help if I am depressed?



If you feel unable to cope on your own you can seek professional help from your GP who might suggest:

### Seeing a counsellor

This will help you to better understand your difficulties, challenge your negative thoughts and work out ways to get out of depression.

### Anti-depressant medication

They help to stabilise the chemical imbalance in your brain.

### Useful websites

- [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- [www.thesite.org.uk](http://www.thesite.org.uk)
- [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)
- [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)



## For More Information:



If you would like more information, please visit our website.

If you have been affected by any of the issues described in this leaflet you can talk to a Counsellor or a Youth Worker at a Streetwise drop-in.

**Advice is FREE and CONFIDENTIAL.**

Produced by: Streetwise Young People's Project:

Young People's Information, Advice, Counselling, Sexual Health and Support Service for 11-25 year olds.

## Streetwise

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# The Streetwise guide to Depression



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# What is depression?



Depression is a mental health disorder that can affect the way you eat and sleep, the way you feel about yourself, and the way you think about things.

Most people, feel low or down occasionally. Feeling sad is a normal reaction to experiences that are stressful or upsetting.

A depressive disorder is more than a passing mood. The thoughts and feelings can last for a long time.

Depression is not a sign of personal weakness, and it cannot be willed or wished away.

## How can i find out if i am depressed?

The symptoms of depression vary. The following ones are some that people experience:

### Emotions

- Feeling sad, gloomy, upset, guilty, numb, irritable or despairing.
- Losing interest and enjoyment in things.
- Crying a lot or feeling unable to cry.
- Feeling alone, even when in the company of others.

### Physical or bodily signs

- Tiredness.
- Restlessness.
- Sleep problems, and irregular sleep patterns.
- Feeling worse at a particular time of the day (usually the morning).
- Changes in appetite, eating and weight.



## Thoughts

- Losing confidence in yourself. Viewing yourself in a negative way.
- Expecting the worst.
- Thinking that everything seems hopeless.
- Wanting not to be here, or to die.
- Poor memory or concentration.

## These feelings, physical signs and thoughts may affect your life in the following ways:

- You find it difficult to do even simple things, like taking care of your appearance.
- You cut yourself off from your friends.
- You lose interest in the things you used to like.
- You may become inactive, just doing nothing for long periods of time.
- You may feel that you have to double-check everything.

# What causes depression?

Depression is usually caused by a mixture of things, rather than any one thing alone. At times it can happen without any obvious reason.

### Events or personal experiences

Things such as loss of a loved one, abuse, bullying and physical illness can cause depression.

Depression can also be triggered if too many changes happen in your life too quickly.

Sometimes life events, which are often seen as 'positive' changes such as getting a new job or having a baby can also cause depression.

## Biological Factors

Depression may run in families. It is also more common in females than males.

## Risk Factors

These include things such as being under a lot of stress, having no-one to share worries with and a lack of practical support.

# What can I do to get better?

- **Talk to someone** - this can really help let out all those feelings you're holding inside. Tell your friends or someone you trust how you feel and you'll feel better for it.
- **Look after yourself** - eat well, sleep well and you'll feel well! Avoid using alcohol or drugs to cope as they can actually make you feel worse.
- **Don't be ashamed to cry** - it can really help to relieve some tension.
- **Do something active** - it can improve self esteem and releases chemicals that trigger a positive feeling in the body.

