

factsheet 2: recognising depression

Everyone feels sad sometimes, but if sadness lasts too long it may be depression.

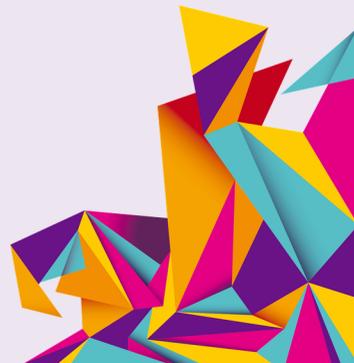
Signs of depression

Depression is a very common condition which affects more than one person in ten at any one time. Any one of us, irrespective of age, gender or background can be affected.

Feeling low or sad is not the only sign of depression. Depression usually has eight main symptoms, and the advice is to speak to a GP or mental health professional if you notice five or more of these symptoms, lasting for a period of two weeks or more. The symptoms are:



- Feeling sad, anxious or bored.
- Low energy, feeling tired or fatigued.
- Under or over sleeping, frequent waking during the night.
- Poor concentration.
- Loss of interest in hobbies, family or social life.
- Low self esteem.
- Aches and pains with no physical basis e.g. chest/head/tummy pain associated with anxiety or stress.
- Loss of interest in living, thinking about death, suicidal thoughts.



learning to cope...

Speak out

If you haven't already done so, speak to your GP or another health professional. Getting a correct diagnosis is key to recovering from depression.

Give it time

Remember that medication can take some time to work. Counselling and the other talking therapies can also take time to work.

Access support services

Keep helpline numbers close to hand and consider attending a support group.

Exercise

Remember that exercise and spending time outdoors can bring benefits: fresh air, a sense of achievement and a break from usual routines which may be aggravating the depression.

Eat well

Try to eat a balanced and nutritious diet. Food does have an impact on mood. Sugary foods lead to a sharp drop in blood sugar later on and this leads to energy and mood slumps. Caffeine also has a negative impact, causing increased heart rate and interfering with sleep.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a depressant and can prove a potent trigger to low mood, especially in individuals prone to depression.

Sleep well

Try to get adequate rest and sleep. Sleep problems can be a symptom of depression.

REMEMBER: The most important thing to do is speak to a doctor or mental health professional in order to get a correct diagnosis.

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