



Understanding depression

It is real. It can affect the whole person. Support can help.

You are not a burden. You are not too much. Depression is not a weakness.

Depression is more than a rough patch. It can change mood, thinking, sleep, energy, motivation, relationships and daily functioning.

WHAT DEPRESSION CAN FEEL LIKE

- Persistent sadness, emptiness, irritability or numbness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in things that used to matter
- Hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness or feeling like a burden
- Feeling disconnected from yourself or other people

Your experience is valid, even if it looks different from someone else's.

COMMON SIGNS

- Low mood or loss of interest most of the day
- Low energy, fatigue or feeling slowed down
- Changes in sleep, appetite or weight
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Restlessness, agitation or thoughts of death or self-harm

Symptoms vary. You do not have to experience every sign.

HOW DAILY LIFE MAY BE AFFECTED

- Ordinary tasks may feel overwhelming
- Work, study, self-care and routines may become harder
- Memory, attention and motivation can change
- Relationships and physical wellbeing may be affected
- The future can feel difficult to imagine

Depression affects more than mood - it can affect the whole person.

WHAT MAY CONTRIBUTE

- Loss, trauma, stress or difficult life events
- Loneliness, discrimination, poverty or unsafe circumstances
- Physical illness, pain, hormones or some medicines
- Family history and individual vulnerability
- Often there is no single cause

It is not your fault. Depression usually has several interacting influences.

SMALL THINGS THAT MAY SUPPORT YOU

- Tell one safe person what is happening
- Choose one manageable task rather than the whole list
- Eat and drink regularly when you can
- Try daylight, gentle movement or a simple routine
- Rest with kindness and reduce alcohol or drugs

Small steps are not a cure, but they can create steadiness while you seek support.

TREATMENT AND SUPPORT

- Speak with your GP about symptoms and options
- In England, adults can self-refer to NHS Talking Therapies
- Guided self-help and psychological therapies may help
- Medication may be offered, depending on your needs
- Support should reflect severity, preference and circumstances

Depression is treatable. Finding the right support may take more than one conversation.

WHEN TO ASK FOR PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Contact your GP if symptoms are present most of the day, every day, for more than 2 weeks; if they are worsening; or if work, relationships or daily life are being affected.

URGENT: If you may harm yourself or cannot stay safe, call 999 or go to A&E. For urgent mental health help, contact NHS 111. Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours a day).

KIND REMINDERS

- **You are not lazy.**
- **Recovery is not linear.**
- **Small steps count.**
- **You deserve care and support.**