

Depression

Contents:

[About depression](#)

[Symptoms of depression](#)

[Dealing with depression](#)

[Finding help](#)

[Other sources of information](#)

[Helping a friend, family member or partner](#)

About depression

You may be uncertain whether or not you are depressed. Everyone's experience of depression is different, and there is a wide variety of symptoms which are listed below. Many people feel down occasionally, or go through bad patches, but have areas in their lives that make them feel good, and like things about themselves. For some people though, life is more of a struggle. They feel bad about themselves and their lives in most ways. At times they feel complete despair. If you feel like this, then you are probably depressed.

Symptoms of depression

- Being restless and agitated.
- Waking up early, having difficulty sleeping or sleeping more.
- Thinking negatively: always seeing the worst in everything.
- Finding everything a terrible effort.
- Being very irritable.
- Difficulty remembering things.
- Eating too little or too much.
- Heavy dependency on alcohol or drugs.
- Cutting yourself off from other people including loss of interest in sex.
- Unable to stop crying or unable to release tears.
- Feeling numb, empty & despairing.

Dealing with depression

Depression spans a spectrum. At one end you can struggle on, leading a more or less normal life, but feeling awful; at the other end the depression may be life-threatening and you may feel suicidal. How can you help yourself?

With moderate depression:

- Keep as occupied as you can with things that really interest you.
- Get physical - play sport, jog, dance - do anything that stops you brooding.
- Do anything which makes you laugh.
- Look after yourself physically. Eat healthily and avoid drugs.
- Pay attention to your appearance to make yourself feel good.
- Treat yourself from time to time.
- Try to make your living environment as pleasant and comfortable as possible.
- Ask for help. Others are usually very willing to listen.
- Don't hold your feelings in. Cry and get angry if you need to.
- Practise challenging some of your negative ideas - especially about yourself. Are you really a worse person or are you just judging yourself too harshly?

For severe depression you need to consider getting help. Severe depression is when

- You cannot function normally e.g. you are not going to lectures/eating/getting out of bed.
- You are actively considering suicide.

Finding help

It may be difficult to put any of the above suggestions into action if you are very depressed. If that is the case, then it is important that you seek help. There are several sources of help:

- Contact the [Counselling Team](#) who are very used to dealing with depression. If they cannot help you, they will be able to refer you to someone who can. Otherwise you can contact the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.
- Contact the [Mental Health Support Team](#) for advice and support around the impact of your depression on academic studies.
- You will have a dedicated [Wellbeing Adviser](#) for your school who can provide guidance, advice and support on wellbeing issues.
- Don't be afraid to see your GP if you are depressed. Your GP may refer you to appropriate help or may offer medication in the form of anti-depressants. Medication does not necessarily take away the cause of the depression but may give you enough of a lift to take action to deal with the depression yourself as suggested above.

Around 75% of the population suffers from depression at some time in their lives. If you learn to recognise your own particular set of symptoms which tell you you're depressed and acquaint yourself with the coping mechanisms for trying to deal with them, you can often learn how to manage your depression. It is very important not to think you are weak or inadequate because you are depressed, but to marshal your resources for finding a way out of your depression. Many people find it helpful to read and learn more about the management of depression. There is a wealth of literature on the subject available from most large bookstores.

Below are a couple of the titles you may find helpful:

- *Depression: The Way Out of Your Prison* - Dorothy Rowe - Routledge 1983
A very human and readable explanation of depression and ways to deal with it.
- *Depression* - Paul Hauck - Sheldon 1990
A very short and easily read book which helps challenge depressive thinking.
- *Understanding Depression (leaflet)* - Mind Publications 1997
Briefly covers what depression is and how to get help. Gives useful addresses and help lines.
- *The Noonday Demon* - Andrew Solomon - Vintage 2001
- *Dealing with Depression* - Trevor Barnes - Vermillion 1996
This self-help book draws on Samaritans 40 years of experience.
- *Depression (leaflet)* - [Royal College of Psychiatrists](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk)

Also see www.befrienders.org for support and advice in other languages and English

Other Sources of Information

[Students Against Depression](#)

This is a brilliant website with lots of good information. See also their situation on 'food and mood'.

[Depression Alliance](#)

35 Westminster Bridge Rd, London, SE1 7JB, Tel: 0845 123 2320

[Depression UK](#)

Depression UK, Self Help Nottingham, Ormiston House, 32 - 36 Pelham Street, Nottingham, NG1 2EG, Tel: 0870 774 4320

[Samaritans](#)

Helpline (24hr): 116 123

jo@samaritans.org

[Mental Health Foundation](#)

[NHS Student Mental Health](#)

[Big White Wall](#)

Online community for help with Depression and Anxiety. Free for University Students.

Helping a friend, family member or partner with depression

- Keep in mind that depression is an illness and that they cannot help suffering from it.
- Encourage them to consult their GP and consider seeing a counsellor. (Person centred and cognitive behavioural both show good results)
- Talk with them about the things on this list and what they think will help. Listen to them.
- Encourage them to take exercise - perhaps offer to arrange something with them as initiating things is harder when depressed.
- Encourage them to eat a balanced diet.
- Listen to what they have to say and be there for them - maybe at short agreed times.
- Tell them every day that you care about them.
- Encourage them to do things - small steps are fine. Praise them. Even making a pot of tea is a triumph when in clinical depression. Help build self-esteem by praising any success.
- Share the support with friends.
- Find out about other support services, (see list at end).
- Encourage them to do things that help them to relax but do not include alcohol in this as alcohol is a depressant and will make it worse.

DO NOT:

- Tell them to snap out of it and cheer up. If they could they would.
- Tell them about all the things they should be glad about.
- Feel you have to listen to everything all the time - sitting and really listening for 30 minutes may be more helpful than half listening for 4 hours.

Take care of yourself

- Remember that you are not responsible for them and you cannot cure them.
- You can be responsible to them by offering some of your time and by looking after yourself too.
- Continue to live your own life. It is essential that you carry on going out and doing things that you enjoy.
- Where possible share the contact with the depressed person, with a network of friends who can take turns.
- Be yourself - don't try to be relentlessly cheerful either!
- The depressed person may say things that are hurtful because they do not believe they have any significance and they feel so powerless. Keep this in mind if you start to feel upset.
- Make sure you have a good friend to confide in for your own support or a counsellor / chaplain etc.
- Depression can be extremely draining so do not try to empathise with the depressed person all the time. If you are moved by their sadness continually you will become exhausted and low yourself. (Most therapists offer a 50 minute 'hour' because they also need a break after that). It is vital to have space to switch off / listen to your own music / go out / chat to a friend etc.

[Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity team](#): 01509 228338

studentwellbeing@lboro.ac.uk

To book an appointment with any of our services within Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity (including the Counselling Team, Mental Health Support Team and the Wellbeing Advisers), please complete [the referral form](#).

2019-2020