



Help and Information print document

What is depression

The word 'depression' is used to describe everyday feelings of low mood which can affect us all from time to time. Feeling sad or fed up is a normal reaction to experiences that are upsetting, stressful or difficult; those feelings will usually pass.

If you are affected by depression, you are not 'just' sad or upset. You have an illness which means that intense feeling of persistent sadness, helplessness and hopelessness are accompanied by physical effects such as sleeplessness, a loss of energy, or physical aches and pains.

Sometimes people may not realise how depressed they are, especially if they have been feeling the same for a long time, if they have been trying to cope with their depression by keeping themselves busy, or if their depressive symptoms are more physical than emotional.

Here is a list of the most common symptoms of depression. As a general rule, if you have experienced four or more of these symptoms, for most of the day nearly every day, for over two weeks, then you should seek help.

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Persistent sadness
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Difficulty concentrating
- Not being able to enjoy things that are usually pleasurable or interesting
- Undue feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Sleeping problems - difficulties in getting off to sleep or waking up much earlier than usual
- Avoiding other people, sometimes even your close friends
- Finding it hard to function at work/college/school
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of sex drive and/ or sexual problems
- Physical aches and pains
- Thinking about suicide and death
- Self-harm



DepressionAlliance

www.depressionalliance.org