

What is Depression?

Depression is a common illness, which will affect one in five people during their lifetime. It can involve feelings of hopelessness, tiredness, low self-esteem, sleeping problems and physical aches and pains.

What is Self Help?

Self help involves a number of different approaches and techniques which may alleviate all types of depression or even prevent mild depression. These techniques are complementary to professional treatment, and should not be seen as an alternative to it. It is important to be realistic when you begin trying out self-help options. Don't expect too much of yourself but do persist and you will begin to notice the difference. Ask your library if they can order you a copy of the Authoritative Guide to Self-Help Resources in Mental Health (ISBN 1-57230-506-1)

Sharing Experiences

Depression can often be alleviated by talking to other people in similar situations. Depression Alliance co-ordinates a national network of self-help groups where members can meet on a regular basis to share experiences and coping strategies. Going to a self-help group for the first time can be challenging so don't worry if you only make it as far as the door! Everyone who attends a self-help group understands how you might be feeling and you can be sure of a warm welcome. We also co-ordinate a pen-friend service, an email group and offer a correspondence scheme.

Gathering Information

Finding out more about depression can reduce the misconceptions, guilt and fear which are often associated with the condition. A wide range of leaflets, videos, and tapes on depression are available from Depression Alliance; you could also look in your local library or on the Internet. Contact Depression Alliance for our Depression Reading List, which suggests useful books, tapes and websites on depression.

Relaxation

Depression is frequently associated with tension, stress and anxiety. There are many ways to relax - yoga, reading, listening to a relaxation tape, going away for a short holiday- find out what works for you and give yourself time to wind down.

Exercise

Many people with depression experience a loss of energy and constant feelings of tiredness. Taking some form of gentle exercise may seem like an impossible task but it will make you feel more positive and strengthen your body against the illness. Try starting off slowly by doing some gardening, going for a walk round the block or, if you feel a little more adventurous, seeing what your local leisure centre has on offer.

Changes To Your Diet

Depression can affect your appetite so try to make sure that you eat regular, appropriate amounts. Missing out valuable nutrients can also make people feel tired and run down, so try to include fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet. Recent research suggests that a balanced diet is vital in helping people affected by depression get well and that certain nutrients, like Omega 3 (found in fish, flax seed, walnuts and olive oil) can be especially beneficial. Always consult your GP or a nutritionist for sensible advice on how to include more of the things you need in your diet. If you are finding it especially difficult, try eating little and often. A few mouthfuls of nourishing soup is better than nothing and will make a difference to how you feel.

Pursuing Interests

Try to continue with any hobbies or interests you have. It may be difficult whilst you are depressed, especially if you have difficulty concentrating. It may feel like you're just 'going through the motions' but keeping up with things you would usually enjoy doing will help you to feel better.

Alternative Therapies

There are many different types of alternative therapy from acupuncture to reflexology, aromatherapy to Reiki. Alternative treatments can complement traditional medicine but they can also be harmful if not properly practised. Always check with your GP before you try any alternative therapies. Also ensure that the therapist is insured and belongs to the relevant organisation (if there is one) that regulates and sets standards. It is also useful to find out how long the practitioner trained for. Ask your library to order you a copy of the British Register for Alternative Practice (ISBN 1-903782-01-5) for comprehensive information about the different therapies available.

Contact Us

I would like to support the work of Depression Alliance.

Please accept my gift of £

I would like Depression Alliance to claim the tax back on this donation, and on any subsequent donation I make.

For every donation you make to us, we can now claim back the tax paid (equivalent to 28p in every pound), provided you pay an equal amount of income tax or capital gains tax. Please tick the box above if you would like to make your money go even further at no extra cost to you.*

I would like to become a member of Depression Alliance and enclose my membership fee of (please tick relevant box):

£10 (full-fee) £5 (unwaged/OAP/student)
 £20 (company rate) £15 (European rate)
 £20 (International rate)

I would like to find out more about Depression Alliance

I would like to pay

By cheque**/postal order for £

By card, please deduct £ from my:
 MasterCard CAF card
 VISA card

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name as written on card

Card No

Exp date

Signature Date

Title

Forename

Surname

Address

Postcode

E-mail

Please return this form in an envelope to: Depression Alliance, 35, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7JB

Data protection: From time to time, we will write with details about our work. Please tick this box if you would prefer not to hear from us. Your details will never be passed onto to any third party without your prior consent.

* You must pay an amount of income tax (and/or capital gains tax) which is at least equal to the value of what we claim back in that tax year (currently 28p for every pound you give in that tax year). If you pay tax at a higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self Assessment return.

** Please make cheques payable to Depression Alliance

- Self-help options should be part of your treatment plan
- Always talk to your GP before trying a complementary treatment
- Depression is an illness and you need to look after your body to help it fight it.

Useful Organisations

British Herbal Medicine Association
01453 751 389

Saneline
08457 678 000
www.sane.org.uk
(open 12pm – 2am every day)

British Holistic Medical Association
01273 725 951
www.bhma.org
(open weekdays, 9am – 5pm)

Depression Alliance

Depression Alliance is the leading UK charity for people affected by depression. We work to relieve this treatable condition by providing information, support and understanding. We also campaign to raise awareness amongst the general public about the realities of depression.

Depression Alliance coordinates a national network of self-help groups so that people with depression can share experiences and coping strategies with others in similar situations.

For more information about self-help groups in your area, as well as our other services for people affected by depression, please complete the form overleaf.



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Depression affects one in five of us at some point in our life

If you have depression, don't worry – you are not alone.



If you are worried about a friend or relative who is depressed, Depression Alliance can help.