

**What is Depression?**

Everyone can feel sad or have a low mood when bad things happen or life feels hard. This can be short term and the feelings can pass. However, when these feelings last for at least 2 weeks and start interfering with your life this is known as clinical depression. Depression is a common but serious illness and can be recurrent.

**Symptoms:**

* Loss of confidence in themselves or poor self esteem
* Feeling guilty when they are not really at fault
* Wishing they were dead/suicidal thoughts
* Negative view of themselves, the world and the future
* Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
* Moving more slowly or sometimes becoming agitated or unable to settle
* Having difficulty sleeping or having too much sleep
* Loss of interest in food or eating too much, changes in eating habits may lead to either weight loss or weight gain

Not everyone will have all of these symptoms and those with more severe depression will experience more symptoms than those with mild. A person with depression may also be able to hide the effects of depression from others, making it harder to recognise and support. A person may have developed coping strategies and present as outwardly happy, referred to a ‘smiling depression’. Men and women also present different warning symptoms.

**Treatment:**

* Talk to someone you trust, this could be a friend, family member, colleague, line manager. If you feel you can’t talk to someone you know, there are lots of helplines available or your GP (see below).
* Look after your physical health by ding exercise you enjoy, try and maintain a balanced diet and get enough sleep.
* Alcohol is a unhelpful coping mechanism which could have negative long term effects.
* Individual guided self-help with books, online CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) or group sessions.
* Mindfulness and other relaxation techniques
* Complementary therapies like acupuncture or massage therapy
* Psychological one on one therapy/ CBT
* Your GP may also discuss drug treatments or refer you to a specialist mental health service.

**Websites/Hotlines:**

NHS health in mind: 0300 330 5455 [www.healthmind.org.uk](http://www.healthmind.org.uk)

Samaritans: 08457 909090

Silver cloud- free online CBT if you’re feeling worried, stressed or low <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/silvercloud.aspx> .

Employee Assistance Programme, supplied by Validium: Speak to HR/ Line Manager or staff portal for more info

CALM – Campaign against living miserably for men aged 15-35. 0800 58 58 58

Depression UK- Email [info@depressionuk.org](mailto:info@depressionuk.org) or visit [www.depressionuk.org](http://www.depressionuk.org)

PANDAS Foundation- support for perinatal depression and psychosis. [www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk)

Mind: Provide advice and information on mental health -0300 123 3393