



About depression.

Depression is a serious clinical illness. Health professionals use the terms 'depression', 'depressive illness' or 'clinical depression' to refer to something very different from the common experience of feeling miserable, or fed up, for a short period of time.



About depression.

We all feel unhappy and down from time to time, but these feelings usually go away. Depression is different from just feeling down or sad. A person who is depressed will experience very intense emotions and feelings that don't go away.

Depression can have many different triggers. For some people an upsetting or stressful life event, such as bereavement, divorce, illness, work or money worries, can be the cause. Often it can be a combination of a number of things that overwhelm our usual ability to cope.

Depression is fairly common, affecting one in 10 people at some point during their life (www.nhs.co.uk). It can happen to anyone, from all walks of life and ages.

Types of depression.

The Mental Health Foundation indicates that there are several types of depression:

Mild depression – depression is classed as mild when it has a limited negative affect on your daily life for example you may have difficulty concentrating at work or motivating yourself to do things you'd normally enjoy.

Major depression – this is when depression affects your daily life. Eating, sleeping and participating in everyday activities becomes difficult. It can lead to hospital admission, if an individual is so unwell they are at risk of harming themselves.

Bi-polar disorder – mood swings in bi-polar disorder can be; from highs, where the individual feels extremely elated and indestructible, to lows, where they may experience complete despair, lethargy and suicidal feelings.

Post-natal depression – this is more than just having the 'baby blues' a few days or weeks after giving birth. Post-natal depression is more intense and lasts longer. It can leave new mothers feeling completely overwhelmed, inadequate and unable to cope.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) – is associated with the start of winter and can last until spring. SAD can make the sufferer feel anxious, stressed and depressed. It may interfere with their moods and with their sleeping and eating patterns.

Symptoms of depression.

Depression affects people in many different ways and you can experience a wide range of symptoms which may include:

- Persistent feelings of unhappiness
- Losing interest in life and can't enjoy anything
- Finding it harder to make decisions
- Feeling tired, restless and agitated
- Losing appetite and weight loss or gain
- Disturbed sleep
- Losing self-confidence and feeling inadequate or hopeless
- Avoiding other people
- Having suicidal thoughts

We may not realise how depressed we are, because it has come on so gradually. We may be determined to struggle on and can blame ourselves for being lazy or feeble. Other people may need to persuade us that it is not a sign of weakness to seek help. Sometimes these symptoms can be the first sign of depression.

When should you seek help?

- When your feelings of depression are worse than usual, and don't seem to get any better
- When your feelings of depression affect your work, interests and feelings towards your family and friends
- If you find yourself feeling that life is not worth living, or that other people would be better off without you

If you think that you're depressed, it's important that you seek help from your GP. Many people wait a long time before getting the help they need. The sooner you see your GP, the sooner you can be on the way to recovery.



With the right treatment and support, most people with depression can make a full recovery.