

## HOW CAN WE HELP?

If you suspect a child or young person's unhappiness is more than a passing phase, getting professional help early on can avoid the problems of long-term depression. It is always useful to contact your GP first of all, they can discuss the different kinds of help available and refer you to a specialist if necessary. Some doctors have counsellors on their staff.

There is a lot that can be done to help children and young people who show signs of feeling very depressed. Different kinds of individual and family therapy can be helpful. Medication is sometimes useful, but only for those who are seriously depressed and only after other forms of help have been tried.

Children and young people need a caring adult or family member to help them understand and deal with their feelings over time. If not their problems can become worse and affect the rest of their lives. If they don't want to talk to someone they know, telephone helplines offer confidential support (see 'further sources of help' section at the end of this leaflet). You can help by:

- Listening
- Taking them seriously
- Be encouraging
- Offer help but don't react if they reject it – they may take it at a later time.



## FURTHER SOURCES OF HELP

### YOUNGMINDS PARENTS HELPLINE

We offer free, confidential online and telephone support, including information and advice, to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Helpline ..... 0808 802 5544  
(Mon - Fri 9.30am-4pm)  
Email ..... [parents@youngminds.org.uk](mailto:parents@youngminds.org.uk)  
Website ..... [www.youngminds.org.uk/parents](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/parents)

YoungMinds also produces a range of booklets specifically for young people, including one entitled 'Do you ever feel depressed?' See our website .... [www.youngminds.org](http://www.youngminds.org)

### CHILDLINE

The UK's free 24 hour helpline for children and young people, providing a confidential telephone counselling service for any problem. It comforts, advises and protects. Their website gives information about the issues faced by children and young people including family relationships and being a young carer.

Helpline: ..... 0800 1111  
Living away from home: ..... 0800 88 44 44  
Website and online chat: ..... [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### MIND

Mind supports parents and helps people take control of their mental health. They provide high quality information and advice, and campaign to promote and protect good mental health for everyone.

Mindinfoline: ..... 0300 123 3393  
Website: ..... [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### SAMARITANS

Confidential emotional support for anyone who is in crisis, 24 hours a day, every day.

Helpline: ..... 08457 90 90 90 UK & NI  
..... 116126 Republic of Ireland  
Email: ..... [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
Website: ..... [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Registered Charity No: 1016968  
Company No: 02780643  
OCSR No: SC39700

**YOUNGMINDS**  
The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing

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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET DEPRESSED TOO

# WE ALL FEEL DEPRESSED SOMETIMES.

ALL OF US HAVE TO FACE DISAPPOINTMENT AND DEAL WITH THINGS GOING WRONG.

ALL OF US MOURN THE LOSS OF PEOPLE WE HAVE LOVED OR FEEL SAD, FED UP OR HELPLESS SOMETIMES.

## DO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE GET DEPRESSED TOO?

Yes - if anything, more so than adults. They are more dependent, vulnerable and more sensitive to what is happening to them and around them.

### They care deeply about:

- losing their parents - whether because of divorce or separation, or through death
- not being loved or listened to, feeling left out
- losing their pets or favourite toys or possessions
- changing school, moving home, losing friends

### They worry about:

- their parents arguing or becoming depressed
- their bodies, getting ill, being abnormal
- sex
- exams, not doing well

or

- being bullied
- being abused physically, sexually, emotionally



## BABIES AND TODDLERS TOO?

Babies and toddlers show their feelings in other ways. They are quick to pick up the mood those around them and may become fretful, clingy - unable to settle and sleep if they are worried. They can have nightmares, or become withdrawn and unresponsive, or go off their food. Sometimes their general development slows down and there may be toilet training problems like bed wetting.

## WHEN SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD?

School-age children who are very depressed can find it hard to concentrate and may lose interest in work and play. Some may even refuse to go to school, while others complain of feeling bored or lonely, even when they have friends.

Some children become irritable and difficult to manage, others lose confidence. Some children can talk about feeling unhappy, but others are only able to show how they feel through their behaviour. Many children blame themselves if things go wrong. A child who is feeling bad may do things that lead to them being punished, for example, by being disruptive, stealing or not going to school.

## WHEN SHOULD WE BE WORRIED ABOUT A TEENAGER?

Teenagers are often moody and uncommunicative. This is part of normal adolescence. However, some teenagers get stuck - they seem to get overwhelmed by despair. The following are some of the signs to watch out for:

- being extremely moody and irritable
- giving up interests but not finding new ones
- losing interest or not doing well at school or work, and finding it hard to concentrate
- becoming withdrawn and losing touch with friends
- not looking after themselves
- not eating enough or eating too much
- being very self-critical
- sleeping badly or sleeping too much

Some teenagers may express or escape from these feelings and thoughts through acting recklessly - taking drugs, drinking too much or getting into dangerous situations. Teenagers who are very depressed can become preoccupied with thoughts of death. They may attempt to kill or harm themselves (for eg, by taking an overdose or cutting their arms).

NEARLY  
**80,000**

children and young people  
suffer from severe depression