

YOUNGMINDS

The voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing

**DO YOU EVER
FEEL DEPRESSED?**





**WE ALL HAVE TO DEAL WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS
SOMETIMES WE FEEL HAPPY AND EXCITED
AT OTHER TIMES, WE'LL FEEL SAD AND DOWN**

There are lots of things that might make you worry. But people feel and react to different things in different ways. From time to time it's normal to feel stressed, anxious, lonely or that no-one understands us. But for most people, these feelings come and go. For a small number of people, feeling down or depressed can go on for a long time so they can't get on with their everyday lives. If you are feeling down or depressed in any way, then this booklet is for you.

WHY DO I FEEL LIKE THIS?

There are lots of things that can make you feel down or depressed.

Here are some examples:

- If someone close to you is ill, or dies
- Worrying about how you look
- Feeling guilty or responsible for someone else's behaviour
- Worrying about your sexuality
- Feeling left out and not being part of a group
- Feeling useless and worthless
- Moving or leaving home
- Arguing with friends or family
- Changes in your family or becoming part of a new family
- Thinking things will never get better
- Having trouble with your boyfriend or girlfriend, or even just a close friend
- Worrying about exams or getting disappointing results
- Being bullied at school or elsewhere
- If someone close to you moves away
- Feeling you have no-one to talk to and that no-one understands you
- If you have been abused

"Mum walked out on me and my brother, and dad got a job in another part of the country so we had to move. Mum didn't want to see us any more, because she said she had a new life. Dad started drinking. It's like I lost everything I knew."



HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M FEELING DEPRESSED?

It's ok not to feel positive or happy all the time.

It's always good to talk to someone about how you feel to understand more and feel more in charge. If you feel like harming yourself it's important to get help.

If it is hard to talk to someone you know, there are a lot of places that offer advice and help. Some organisations are listed at the end.

People show they are unhappy in different ways...

- Lying or making up stories
- Feeling life is not worth living
- Worrying about things
- Eating a lot more or a lot less than usual
- Not wanting to go out
- Being moody or irritable or snappy
- Having trouble sleeping or having bad dreams
- Feeling like harming yourself
- Crying a lot
- Stealing things or getting into trouble
- Feeling lazy or bored and tired a lot
- Feeling no-one likes you or people are talking behind your back

WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF

It's important that anyone who feels depressed finds ways to cope.

There are often good reasons why you feel down. So if you're feeling depressed, don't be afraid and don't panic.

And always remember, feeling sad and unhappy will come to an end, even if you sometimes find it hard to imagine.

You might find it good to...

- Make a tape of your favourite music
- Do some drawing or painting
- Write things down in a diary
- Write a poem or song
- Listen to some music

These things may help you understand how you feel.

There are lots of other things which might help you feel better, at least for some of the time.

The important thing is to do something that you enjoy. Here are some ideas...

- Watch something you enjoy on TV
- Get outside in the fresh air
- Try a sport like swimming or jogging or dancing – even just go for walk
- Eat regularly and as healthy as you can

'I couldn't concentrate on my work. I was always daydreaming, and wanted to sleep a lot. I couldn't be bothered to do anything. Sometimes when I felt really low it was scary, and I'd start messing about at school, getting into trouble. Anything not to feel like that...'



'After I felt depressed a few times I knew I'd always come out of it, and just tried to do things to distract myself till it passed. That helped a bit. It was horrible thinking it might come back through. In the end I went for counselling, which helped me feel more in control of my life'.



TALK TO SOMEONE

Talking to someone might help you feel more able to cope. Try and talk to someone you like and trust. This might be a..

- Friend
- Parent or carer
- Brother or sister
- Aunt or uncle
- Grandparent
- Friend's parent

Other people you could talk to could be a...

- Teacher
- School nurse
- School counsellor
- Youth worker
- Social worker

They can help you get the support you need.

Even if you can't control what is making you feel unhappy – for example, if adults close to you are always arguing, or if someone you know is unwell – it's still important to get help.

If you speak to a **teacher** they can listen and may give you some advice. If you want, they can speak to someone to try and help sort things out or arrange for you to see a school counsellor. Or maybe you have a school counsellor you can see without talking to the teacher.

If you speak to a **doctor** they should be sympathetic, listen and offer you some advice. Sometimes doctors prescribe tablets, which can be helpful if you are feeling very depressed. They can also refer you to a specialist who is trained to help young people with problems. If you are under 16, receiving treatment and your health or safety is at serious risk your doctor is legally obliged to tell your parent or carer or authority. Otherwise, if you make it plain to the doctor first – they won't tell anyone what you tell them.



If you speak to a **counsellor** or **therapist**, or someone who is a specialist in young people's difficulties, they will be very sympathetic. They will give you the time to think about what you are going through. They are trained and used to talking to people who have all sorts of worries. They will respect confidentiality and, if you agree, they may offer to meet you, together with other people who matter to you.

You can also find out about places offering help from 'Youth Access' (details at the end of the booklet).

If you are nervous you can always take a friend with you.

45%

of children in care have a mental health disorder.



WAYS TO HELP A FRIEND IF THEY'RE UNHAPPY OR FEELING DEPRESSED

- Listen and try to be sympathetic
- Don't expect them just to snap out of it
- Don't criticise or tease them
- Try and get them to talk about how they feel
- Be patient and allow them time to talk
- Help them get support



1 in **10**

Children and young people aged 5-16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder - that is around three in every class.

“

I didn't think I could talk to anyone I knew. I thought it would just make things worse. I couldn't talk to my friends about it because I didn't think they would take it seriously.

I just felt completely alone.

I wrote to a problem page and they encouraged me to phone a helpline. Once I did that they helped me have more confidence to get help. ”

FURTHER SUPPORT

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. You can also find information on their website about the issues faced by children and young people including bullying, exams, family relationships and friendships.

Helpline: 0800 1111
Living away from home:..... 0800 88 44 44
Website and online chat:..... www.childline.org.uk

GET CONNECTED

Connects young people to organisations that can help them, whatever the problem, including family concerns and support for young carers.

Freephone: **0808 808 4994** (7 days a week, 1pm-11.00pm)
Website: www.getconnected.org.uk

YOUTH ACCESS

Provides information and advice on counselling services throughout the UK for young people aged 12-25 years. Can give details of appropriate local agencies for young people. Go to the 'find your local service' section of the website.

Website: www.youthaccess.org.uk

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE

National UK service providing help for bereaved people of any age through counselling, advice, publications and mutual support.

Helpline: 0844 477 9400
Email:..... helpline@cruse.org.uk
Website: www.cruse.org.uk

HOPE AGAIN

The youth website of Cruse Bereavement Care. It is a safe place, where young people who are facing grief can share their stories with others. Here you will find information about services, a listening ear from other young people, and advice for anyone dealing with the loss of a loved one.

Website: www.hopeagain.org.uk

CARERS UK

Information and advice to carers of any age, has a directory of local carers groups.

Carers Advice Line: **0808 808 7777**
Monday - Friday 10am -4pm
Email: advice@carersuk.org
Website: www.carersuk.org



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