

DEPRESSION

TALK TO US

OFF
THE RECORD

WHAT IS LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION?

Often people may say they are feeling depressed, but if you have depression you are not 'just' sad or upset; instead you are probably feeling hopeless and that life is not what it used to be.

Sometimes people confuse low mood with depression. We can all experience low mood for a variety of reasons, symptoms can include low self-esteem, worrying, tiredness, frustration and sadness. Low mood can improve by resolving any issues that might be of concern, getting enough sleep and talking through problems.

I'm tired of being me

WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE

Symptoms of depression are distinct in the way that they affect our ability to carry everyday tasks for a long period of time. When a low mood does not improve over a long period of time, it can be a sign of depression.

- Feeling sad or tearful.
- Low on energy, feeling tired or exhausted.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Changes to your weight and appetite.
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Feeling disconnected and wanting to withdraw from the world.
- Feelings of low self-worth combined with a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Loss of interest in things that are normally fun or enjoyable.
- Persistent negative thoughts and pessimistic outlook.
- Thinking about suicide and death.
- Thoughts about self-harm.
- You go on autopilot; all our everyday stuff just 'happens' as our body operates on autopilot and gets stuff done despite our minds shutting down.
- It can be difficult to have conversations, which can lead to us isolating ourselves from others.

CAUSES

Depression can be brought on by lots of things, including:

- Physical illness
- Experiences dating back to childhood
- Unemployment
- Bereavement
- Family problems
- Other life-changing events

However, sometimes depression can creep up on you and it can be hard to know why you feel this way or where it all began.

I don't remember what happiness feels like anymore

WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE FEELING LOW

- Talk it out with someone in your support network.
- Make an appointment to see your GP.
- Get it out on paper by keeping a journal in whatever way makes sense to you. It can be as simple as bullet points – it's up to you.
- If writing feels complicated, try other creative outlets such as drawing or listening to your favorite artist.
- Try to spend time outdoors, even if just for a walk around your area or your local park.
- Access online resources from platforms such as Young Minds and The Mix.
- Download the Mindshift or MoodTools app to help you monitor and improve your mood.
- If you're feeling very low and need someone to talk to, you can get in touch with 24/7 support services such as Samaritans (116 123) and Childline (0800 1111).