

# YOUNG MINDS



## Depression

Your guide to depression  
and finding the help and  
support you need

# 80,000

Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from depression in the UK. Depression is one of the most common types of mental illness.



[youngminds.org.uk/depression](https://youngminds.org.uk/depression)

# What is depression?

Most people go through periods of feeling down, but when you're depressed you feel persistently sad for weeks or months, rather than just a few days.

Depression can happen as a reaction to something like abuse, bullying or family breakdown, and it can also run in families. Depression often develops alongside anxiety.

It's not the same as manic depression, which is another term for bipolar disorder.

# How do I know if I'm depressed?

Everyone has different emotions and it's normal to experience highs and lows throughout life. But when the lows go on for a long period of time and feel almost constant, that's when it becomes depression.

Symptoms can include:

- not wanting to do things that you previously enjoyed
- avoiding friends or social situations
- sleeping more or less than normal
- eating more or less than normal
- being self-critical
- feeling irritable, upset, miserable or lonely
- feeling hopeless
- maybe wanting to self-harm
- feeling tired and not having any energy
- poor concentration and attention
- crying a lot

“Mum walked out on me and my brother, and Dad got a job in another 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.”



# What you can do: helping yourself

Finding ways to cope with your mood is important when you're feeling depressed. So don't panic and remember, feeling sad or unhappy will come to an end. It could be useful to:

- Make a playlist of your favourite music to listen to
- Try painting or drawing
- Write down how you feel in a diary
- Try a sport – it's been shown that exercise can help to fight depression
- Eat healthily as a healthy diet is essential for good mental health
- Volunteer
- Go for a walk
- Try meditation or yoga
- Do what makes you feel more relaxed

# What you can do: getting help

## **The first step is to talk about it.**

Talk to someone you like and trust, like a teacher, relative, counsellor or friend.

You could also talk to your GP. They will listen and offer advice and sometimes refer you to a specialist or prescribe medication to help improve your mood.

## **Can't talk to someone you know?**

Talking about it is hard. Sometimes it helps to talk to someone you don't know – that's where helplines can be really useful.

You'll find details of some organisations who can help at the back of this booklet.

# How is depression treated?

If your GP thinks you're suffering from depression, they may prescribe therapy, anti-depressants or a combination of both.

Therapy, such as speaking to a counsellor or therapist can be a good long term solution. They'll listen to your problems and be very sympathetic.

You'll be able to talk through your problems with them and if you're nervous about it you can usually take a relative or friend along too.

Anti-depressants work by artificially lifting your mood and while they can help with the feelings in the short term, they won't help solve the root cause of your depression.



“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.”



# For more support



[youngminds.org.uk/depression](https://youngminds.org.uk/depression)

## childline.org.uk

The UK's free helpline for children and young people – it's a confidential service and provides telephone counselling for any child with a problem.

**Helpline:** 0800 1111

**Textphone:** 0800 400 222

*Mon-Fri 9:30am-9:30pm | Sat and Sun: 11am-8pm*

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## themix.org.uk

Offers free support and advice for under 25s through a confidential helpline, online chat and discussion boards.

**Helpline:** 0808 808 4994

*7 days a week 2pm – 11pm*

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## youthaccess.org.uk

Information and advice on counselling services for people aged 12–25. *Visit the website and click 'Find a service'.*

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## hopeagain.org.uk

Bereavement charity helping young people come to terms with bereavement and deal with their feelings.

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