

DEPRESSION COPING SKILLS

MAKING MENTAL HEALTH
MATTER FOR OVER 28 YEARS



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24 hr Mental Health Helpline |  0800 - 456 - 789

24 hr Suicide Crisis Helpline |  0800 - 567 - 567

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Depression

Causes & Symptoms

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While we all may have feelings of sadness or low mood at times which is completely normal, some people experience these feelings more intensely and for longer periods.



Feeling Depressed Is Not the Same as Having Depression:

Feeling Depressed can feel similar to heavy sadness and may result in expressing emotions through crying. However, feeling Depressed can impact your ability to function in everyday activities such as work, school, at home, in relationships or social situations. When somebody has Depression, they feel a variety of emotions, including sadness, hopelessness, loneliness, helplessness, lack motivation, no energy and may even have thoughts of suicide. If these feelings persists for at least two weeks, there is a need to see a Mental Health Professional.

Depression is more than just a low mood, it is a serious condition that can affect your day to day functioning and both your Physical and Mental Health



Causes of Depression

Depression often has multiple causes, including biological, psychological, and social causes which can include: (Family history – having a family member who has Depression or another mental illness:

- Stressful events – stressful or traumatic events, such as relationship issues (divorce, separation, break-up), illness, bereavement, trauma, financial problems, or environmental stressors
- Medical illness – different diseases, such as thyroid problems, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, or many others, can cause Depression
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse - rug and alcohol use can both lead to and result from Depression
- Biological or Genetic Factors – Changes in brain chemistry or family history can cause Depression

Depression Symptoms

- Depressed mood, feeling down and sad all the time. Which can often also present as irritability, agitation or anger (in children, adolescents and men)
- Not enjoying activities or hobbies that once was enjoyable
- Feeling hopeless or helpless
- Feeling very guilty or having low self-worth
- Fatigue, loss of energy, or feeling slowed down
- Restlessness and irritability
- Changes in eating habits and/or in weight
- Not being able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Difficulty making decisions or concentrating
- Withdrawing from friends and loved ones
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Remember!!!



Everyone is different and it's often a combination of factors that can contribute to developing depression. It's important to remember that you can't always **identify** the cause of depression yourself or change difficult circumstances. The most important thing is to recognise the signs and symptoms and reach out for help and support. **Early diagnosis** and timely intervention with treatment are always critical steps to feeling better, especially in children and teens.

Depression

Treatments & Resources

Treatment for Depression:

Unfortunately, many people leave their Depression untreated thinking it will go away which may result in severe symptoms over time. The good news is that there are several types of effective psychological treatments for Depression. Some people prefer to work one on one with a professional, while others get more out of a group environment. A growing number of online programs are also available. The most effective treatment for Depression is a combination of medication and talk therapy:



Medication:

These are prescribed by a GP or a psychiatrist. They may help relieve some of the physical symptoms, help balance some of the chemicals in your body to help feel better. Depression changes the way your body functions, so the medication can help. Prescribed medication take at least three weeks to begin to have an effect, and may sometimes have side effects, however they can be highly effective. When experiencing distressing side effects, it is best to consult with the prescribing doctor and not stop the medication suddenly. You may need to try a combination or it may take some time to find the most effective medication for you.

Psychotherapy or Counselling:

Talking to a registered counsellor, psychologist, or social worker can help you understand your thoughts and improve your coping skills. There is no one 'right' type of therapy or approach. A therapist works closely with their patients to create a plan to help with their unique needs and concerns. Psychotherapy can help patients learn ways to better cope with stress and manage their symptoms. These strategies can lead to recovery and improve functionality.

Support Groups:

After receiving treatment, a Support Group is an ideal way of receiving continuous support to help you maintain your wellbeing. It also helps you feel less isolated as many of the Support Group members are on a similar journey.



Depression in Youth & Children:

Children and youth, like adults, also suffer from Depression, they may also go through challenges that make them feel overwhelmed. Some of their symptoms may not be the same as adults and their behaviour may differ from adults. Some of the different symptoms you can look out for are extreme sensitivity to rejection or failure, increased irritability, anger or hostility, difficulty with relationships, frequent complaints of physical pain or illnesses (headaches or stomach aches), frequent absenteeism from school, poor performance at school and poor concentration. You may also notice a drastic change in eating or sleeping habits, isolating themselves from family and friends, not interested in doing things that they used to enjoy, feeling tired all the time and just wanting to sleep, and no energy or motivation to do anything. And some of these symptoms may persist over several weeks. Child and adolescent psychiatrists and psychologists are specialised in helping to assess, diagnose, treat and advise parents.

Self-Help Tips for Depression:

- **Educate yourself:** Ask your doctor or therapist for more information on Depression, or look online (www.sadag.org) to educate yourself regarding Depression and the effects in order to learn more about what you can do to help yourself.
- **Become active:** even if you can't manage an exercise routine, taking small steps daily to become active again can really help to lift your mood
- **Turn to others:** turning to loved ones as a form of support can help you not to be so isolated and to gain fresh perspectives on your thinking
- **Focus on your health:** eating a balanced diet and limiting substances such as alcohol and narcotics is very important in managing your Depression
- **Find a routine:** Getting into a daily routine can help you find a way out of your slump. Include rest, exercise, healthy eating, and social time in your routine.
- **Get a good night's sleep:** Sleep is affected by Depression and, in turn, can make the symptoms worse. Managing your sleep by creating a good sleep routine can help with this.
- **Join a Support Group:** SADAG runs numerous Support Groups nationwide that can provide a safe space to share your journey, experiences with once you are feeling a little bit better



Men and Depression

Male depression is a serious medical condition, but many men try to ignore it or refuse treatment. Depression signs and symptoms can differ in men and women. Men also tend to use different coping skills — **both healthy and unhealthy** — than women do. It isn't clear why men and women may experience depression differently. It likely involves a number of factors, including brain chemistry, hormones and life experiences. For a number of reasons, male depression often goes undiagnosed and can have devastating consequences when it goes untreated.

While there is still the misguided belief that men don't get depressed, this is untrue. Fewer men may recognise their depression and ask for help. One of the main reasons that depression and mental illness in general are under-recognised by men is because of the stigma attached to mental illness. Many men see depression as a weakness and are reluctant to come forward for help. Tragically, four times as many men as women die by suicide. As a result of seeking treatment, men have been able to get back to their jobs, families, friends and activities that they enjoyed before they began the symptoms of depression.

What to say and what not to say to someone who is feeling Depressed

Often we find ourselves finding the right words to show support to someone that is feeling depressed. Below are a few helpful responses to certain things someone may say:

"How long am I going to feel this way? It's as if I'll never get better"

Don't say: "Come on. Nothing lasts forever – you know better than that"

Do say: "I know it's scary to be in so much pain. Feelings come and go. We'll get through this together"

"Nothing I do is any good. I'll never amount to anything"

Don't say: "What are you saying? You're a highly respected engineer, you're a good father. You're blowing everything out of proportion."

Do say: "I know it's upsetting when things don't work out the way you want them to – it's upsetting for me to! Failure feelings are really painful, but we'll get through this together"

"Why bother? Life isn't worth living. There's no point in going on"

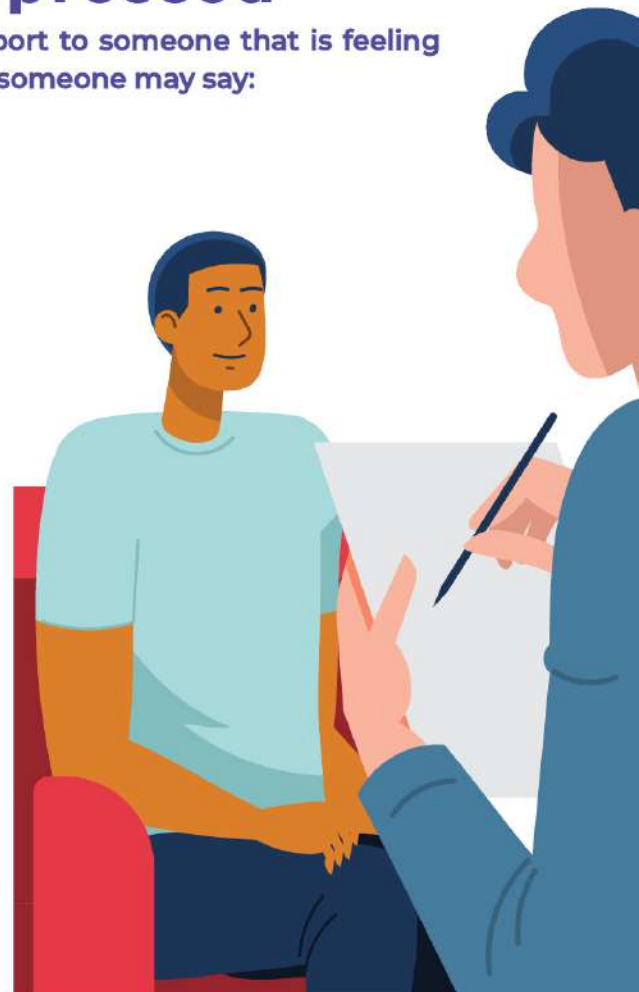
Don't say: "How can you think that? You have a great job and people who love you. You have everything to live for"

Do say: "I know it feels that way to you right now, but I want you to know that you matter to me and you matter to others who love you. We'll get through this hopeless feeling together"

"I'm all alone"

Don't say: "No you're not! I'm sitting here with you right now. Doesn't my caring about you mean anything?"

Do say: "I know that you're feeling alone right now. Is there anything I can do to help? I'm just glad to be with you – together we'll get through this lonely feeling."



Contact SADAG for more information on:



www.sadag.org



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