

Signs that may be associated with depression in adolescents

- Frequent absences from school
- Poor performance in school
- Feeling low
- Talk of, or efforts to, run away from home
- Increased irritability, anger or hostility
- Outbursts of shouting or complaining, unexplained irritability or crying
- Frequent vague physical complaints: headache, muscle or stomach ache
- Tiredness, lack of energy
- Sleep disturbance
- Being bored
- Lack of interest in friends or hobbies
- Difficulty with relationships
- Alcohol or substance misuse
- Social isolation
- Poor concentration, slowed thinking
- Reckless behaviour
- Thoughts of suicide or preoccupation with death

Depression can be a disabling condition affecting mood, thinking and behaviour, and also manifests itself in a physical way. When a young person has depression, some of the above signs may be persistent, and when present for two weeks or more, may indicate that they need professional help.

Crucially, it is through actively listening to young people that we gain an insight into their thoughts and can offer appropriate support.

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Helpline Service 1890 303 302

Aware's loCall Helpline Service is available on **1890 303 302** from anywhere in Ireland for the price of a local call. It provides a listening ear for people in distress and helps individuals with depression and their families explore available options.

Contact Aware at:

72 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 661 7211

Fax: 01 661 7217

Helpline: 1890 303 302

Email: info@aware.ie

Website: www.aware.ie



TEACHERS EDITION

Beat the Blues

information

facts

help



DO STUDENTS GET DEPRESSED?

The simple answer is YES.

We all feel down from time to time - feeling down in the dumps, moody, irritable and not easy to live with. These feelings may last for a few hours or days, and may be a result of some loss or disappointment in life, or may occur for no apparent reason.

However, apart from these normal ups and downs that we all get and can cope with, some people experience depression. This is deeper and more intense than normal low mood, and may render the person unable to cope.

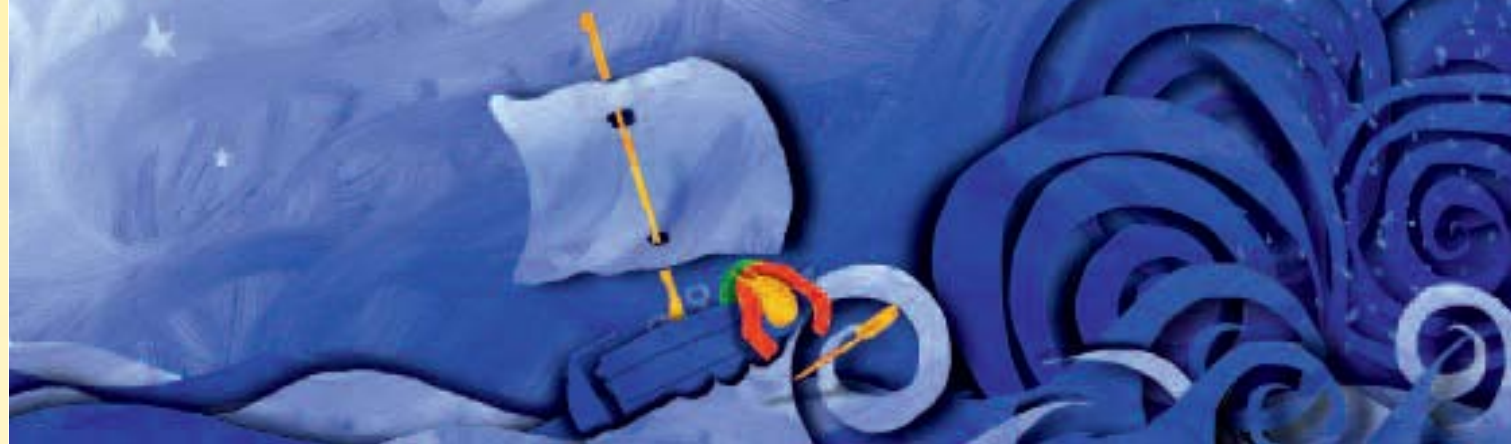
This type of depression is a recognised illness that may require treatment.

- More than 400,000 people in Ireland experience depression at any one time.
- About 10% of adolescents aged between 13-19 experience a depressive episode.

ABOUT AWARE

Aware is a national voluntary organisation which provides vital emotional support and information to individuals who experience depression and their families.

It also works to create greater public awareness of depression and mood disorder, and the impact and consequences of these. Services include support groups in over 60 locations, including groups for relatives, and for young people aged 18-25; a loCall Helpline open 365 days a year; information sessions and depression awareness talks, and a free information service.



BEAT the BLUES

Aware's *Beat the Blues* programme arises from its core objective of raising awareness of depression and providing factual information about the condition.

It is primarily targeted at Transition Year and senior-cycle students. It is delivered in the school, and is of approximately 80 minutes duration.

It aims to: Educate young people about depression and mood disorder, the treatments available, and to nurture a more positive attitude to dealing with the condition and other emotional difficulties.

The programme itself:

- is interactive, encouraging questions amid an open and positive approach to depression.
- emphasises that depression is not a character flaw.
- seeks to heighten students sensitivity to recognising depression in themselves or others.
- informs them of available supports.
- underlines the importance of seeking help early, by talking to an adult they trust, and of getting appropriate professional help.

Following the presentation the students are given a bookmark outlining the main symptoms of depression, and listing Aware's helpline number and website address.

GUIDELINES for SCHOOLS

We feel it is beneficial, either prior or subsequent to the students' presentation, for the school to host **an information session for teachers/parents**. Aware is happy to provide this as a part of the overall programme.

In order for students to obtain maximum benefit from the programme, we recommend it be presented to **groups of not more than 35 students**. The optimum length of time for the presentation is usually two class periods, **approximately 70-80 minutes**.

It is essential for at least **one teacher to be present** for each presentation and desirable that they remain for its entirety. This facilitates a follow-up contact for students after the presentation when Aware representatives have left the school. We consider this to be a very important resource.