

Remember ...

If you're concerned for yourself or someone you care about: GET HELP

Don't try to get through this on your own: there are lots of people who understand what depression or other emotional difficulties are like, and there are plenty of options for you to seek help.

- Talk to your GP: once you know what you are dealing with, it's easier to manage it.
- Talk to parents, a sibling, friend or other relative: sharing concerns can help to relieve some of the burden.
- Contact Aware by email (wecanhelp@aware.ie), phone (1890 303 302) or visit our website for self-help tips and other options (www.aware.ie)
- Other helplines which may be of help:

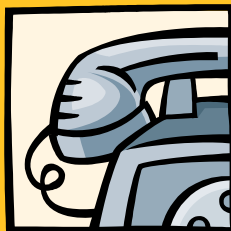
Childline 1800 66 66 66
Samaritans 1850 60 90 90 (24 hrs)

For more support services, you can visit www.headsup.ie or text **headsup** to 50424. This service is free and provides contact details of support agencies which deal with such areas as drugs, alcohol, teen issues, abuse and many more.

- Other websites which may be of interest include:

www.spunout.ie
www.headstrong.ie
www.yourmentalhealth.ie

Contact Aware

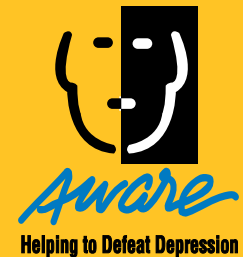


t: Aware loCall Helpline 1890 303 302
e: wecanhelp@aware.ie
w: www.aware.ie

Depression

- *Recognising it* ▪
- *Understanding it* ▪
- *Getting Help* ▪

Beat the Blues Student Leaflet



I feel bad ... How do I know if it's depression?

We all feel low at times in our life. We can feel like no-one understands us, that others are putting too much pressure on us or that our friends are more popular or better than us. It's natural to feel bad sometimes, particularly after some trouble or disappointment in our life. But when we feel like this for weeks at a time, with no real break from it, it's possible that we may have a bout of depression and we need to get help with it.

The key to recognising depression is the fact that it is *enduring*: It lasts for weeks or months at a time with little or no respite. It's a condition that affects how a person **thinks, feels** and **behaves**. The signs and symptoms of depression that we should look out for, both in ourselves and our loved ones, are:

- Feeling – sad, empty, anxious or bored
- Energy – lacking in energy, always tired
- Sleep – over or undersleeping, difficulty getting to sleep
- Thinking – sluggish or negatively, poor concentration
- Interest - loss of interest in food, hobbies, friendships
- Value – not valuing yourself, low self-esteem
- Aches - headaches, chest or other pains associated with stress or anxiety
- Living – seeing no point in living

Remember: you don't have to FEEL depressed to actually BE depressed.

If five or more of the above symptoms are present for more than two weeks, speak to someone who can help, as you may be experiencing a depressive episode. A GP is best placed to diagnose whether depression is the problem.

Paul's Story

At first I had no idea what was happening to me. I just started to feel totally confused, I completely lost interest in everything and I didn't know why. I'm usually quite outgoing, but suddenly I didn't want to be around anyone, not even my best friend or my family. All my usual confidence seemed to evaporate, and the few times I did feel able to hold a conversation I felt so awful I gave up: And once I just ran away from the person.

Depression is very isolating, and I often felt completely alone in the world, even though nothing could have been further from the truth. I began to feel bad about myself, doubting my ability, thinking that nothing I ever did was worthwhile, and wondering if I would ever feel any better again.

After a while my parents noticed how withdrawn I'd become. I didn't feel like talking to them at all but my mum was great, she knew something was wrong and let me know that she and dad were there for me no matter what. In the end, I told her everything, we talked about getting some help, which I did, and I wished I'd done it a lot sooner. Now I feel like I've got my old life back again.

Some Facts about Depression

Depression is a really common condition that affects up to 10% of teenagers at any one time.

It affects how we feel about ourselves and others, makes us feel tired all the time, causes us to lose interest in hobbies, school and friendships, and it can make us want to hide away from the world.

Depression can be a very physical experience, with extreme fatigue in body and mind.

We each have a 1 in 3 chance of being affected by a depressive episode at some point in our lives.

Although depression can be hard to deal with and we can feel scared, it's important to remember that there are many ways that we can help ourselves and many supports that we can access to help us get through it.

If I think I have depression, what can I do?

Exercise and spending time outdoors can help to lift our mood and reduce stress and anxiety levels.

Eating a balanced, nutritious diet is important: sugary foods lead to a sharp drop in blood sugar later and this leads to slumps in energy and mood.

As with any health issue, it's important to see a GP to find out what's going on. Some other physical health issues can cause similar symptoms to depression but no matter what the cause, help is available.

Talking to parents is important. You may think they can't possibly understand how you're feeling, but it's vital that you give them the opportunity to help.

Some people find that writing about how they feel can help.

Above all, don't try to deal with depression on your own: reach out to people you trust, and think about contacting an organisation like Aware too.