

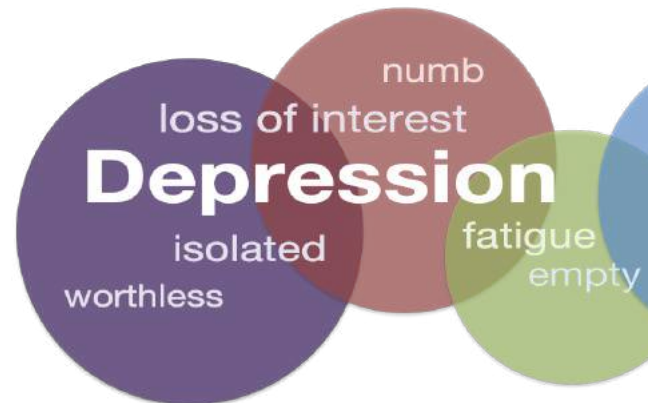
Depression information sheet

*Depression is among the **leading cause of disability worldwide** and fewer than 25% of those with depression have access to treatments (World Health Organisation).*

What Is Depression?

- Depression is a common but serious mental health issue, classified as a mood disorder. It affects the way a person thinks, feels, and behaves so can have implications not only for an individual themselves, but also within their work and personal relationships.
- Depression is characterised by a persistent low mood. It goes beyond the usual sadness or frustration that we all occasionally experience when facing the challenges and setbacks of everyday life. It is not something that a person can easily 'snap out of'.
- Depression can range from mild to severe. It typically limits a person's capacity to enjoy life and see hope in their future. When more serious, it can detract from their ability to look after themselves and function day-to-day, sometimes leading to thoughts of suicide.
- A number of factors may contribute to any one person suffering from the condition. These may be genetic (coming from a family where one or more other family members have experienced depression) or linked to adverse childhood experiences such as abuse or neglect. Difficult experiences such as bereavement, relationship breakdown, job loss can also contribute to depression, as can social factors such as poverty, prejudice and discrimination.

Many people with depression never seek support due to feelings of shame or stigma.



- Depression can take different forms, for example SAD (seasonal affective disorder, where people commonly experience symptoms of depression during the winter months) or post-natal depression (where women experience symptoms of depression after giving birth).

What are the common symptoms for Depression?

The DSM-V (Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) states that five or more of the following symptoms need to have been present during the same two-week period on a daily or almost daily basis for a person to be diagnosed with depression. At least one of the symptoms must be either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure.

- Depressed mood.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities.
- Decrease or increase in appetite, often resulting in weight loss (when not intentionally dieting) or weight gain.
- Slowing down of thought processes and a reduction in physical movement.
- Fatigue or lack of energy.
- Feelings of worthlessness and excessive or inappropriate guilt.
- Diminished ability to think or concentrate, often manifesting as indecisiveness.
- Recurrent thoughts of death and suicidal ideation.

Self-help tips for managing Depression

If you feel you may be suffering from depression, there are a number of things you can do to help manage your condition. If you think someone you know may be suffering from depression sharing these ideas with them may also be of benefit.

- **Recognise and accept what you cannot change.** Depression often arises following events that are outside an individual's control, such as bereavement or redundancy.
- **Try to make things easier for yourself.** If there are stressors in life that you can adjust (such as asking for increased flexibility at work or help with childcare) do so. As with physical illness, recovering from, or living with, a mental health issue usually requires a degree of rest and the removal of additional pressure.

Find ways of looking after yourself each day. Physical and mental health are closely linked so steps you take to look after your body will have a positive impact on state of mind.

- **Eating regular and reasonably healthy meals.** Try to make your food appetizing and simple to prepare. Also, although it's important to eat in a balanced way, ensuring you're getting all the nutrients you need, comfort and self-soothing are important when depressed so this is not a time for strict dieting.
- **Take daily exercise.** Try to find something enjoyable, which doesn't necessarily have to be strenuous. Outdoor exercise is particularly beneficial as it will expose you to fresh air and natural daylight, which helps regulate your sleep-wake cycle.
- **Ensure you have sufficient and good quality sleep.** Being aware of the importance of good [sleep hygiene](#) helps here.

- **Be mindful of how you use alcohol.** Whilst using alcohol to enhance your mood or numb out difficult feelings may be tempting; this is best avoided. Alcohol is ultimately a depressant which can create a 'vicious cycle' of exacerbating low mood and disrupting sleep.
- **Foster self-compassion.** Whilst self-critical and self-blaming thoughts are a common feature of depression, try to catch and reframe these thoughts when they arise. It can help to remind yourself that you're not to blame for your depression and that you're doing all you can to address it. Maybe imagine how you'd speak to someone you really care about who was feeling low and see if you can apply this to how you think about yourself?
- **Putting your thoughts in context.** If self-compassion feels hard to achieve, try to simply take any negative or self-critical thoughts for what they are – thoughts that may be influenced by your current frame of mind rather than based on lasting fact.
- **Stay connected.** Maintaining social connections prevents isolation which can compound depression. When depressed, you may not feel like socialising in busy, high-energy environments, nor like sharing your mental health issues widely. However, finding a trusted friend, family member, colleague or health professional to stay in touch with and share how you're doing is important.
- **Find further support.** Consider seeking professional support if your symptoms persist or worsen, particularly if you are thinking of suicide or self-harm. There are various treatment options for depression, including talking therapies and medications. A health professional may also be able to support you in requesting time off or other reasonable adjustments with your employer.

Professional resources for Depression

- MIND www.mind.org.uk is the UK's main mental health charity and provides information on symptoms and treatment options regarding depression and other common mental health issues.
- NHS www.nhs.uk main website features information on clinical depression including an online self-assessment.
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists www.rcpsych.ac.uk provides a range of leaflets on depression, including depression in men and older adults. These can also be accessed in different languages.
- The Mental Health Foundation www.mentalhealth.org.uk has an in-depth leaflet on managing mental health at work and supporting those with mental health difficulties in the workplace.

Further useful information for those experiencing Depression

- Depression UK www.depressionuk.org provides information for people suffering from depression and can help them access a private Facebook group or penfriend scheme in order to connect with others living with the condition.
- Samaritans www.samaritans.org is a UK charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in crisis or at risk of suicide. Their telephone helpline (116 123) operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year and there are other means (text, e-mail, letter) through which they can offer support to anyone who may be struggling.
- Suicide Stop International Help Center www.suicidestop.com provides details of similar helplines in other countries.

FD Consultants

Individual support

At FD Consultants we can help individuals recover from depression. We are a network of accredited therapists. We specialise in stress, anxiety, depression, burnout and trauma care.

Organisational support

For organisations looking for employee psychological support, FD Consultants are the well-being service who will best deliver a reliable, quick, and bespoke support system in the workplace. FD Consultant's team of accredited specialists will offer ongoing support to help manage stress, prevent burnout and provide specialist trauma care where required, enabling your staff with the tools to cope, and recover more quickly.