

Young Person's Guide to Coping with Low Mood and Depression

It is normal for us to experience ups and downs in our mood, we all sometimes feel low. However, if someone has been feeling low for a long time and it is stopping them from doing things they want and need to do they might be diagnosed with a mental illness called depression.



Statistics:

Depression is thought to occur in around 1-3% of children and young people. Anyone can suffer from depression but it tends to be more common in older adolescents and in girls (www.rpsych.ac.uk).

10 TOP TIPS for coping with low mood and depression:

- 1 It is OK not to be OK.** It is OK to feel down sometimes, this could be for a range of reasons. We might feel better quickly or we might need a bit more support, it's all OK.
- 2 Talk to someone you trust.** Someone listening to how you feel really helps. They don't need to know the answers, you can explore what might help together.
- 3 Focus on one step at a time.** You might find it difficult to feel motivated, try to plan your time and come up with small, achievable goals. Write down when you will complete them.
- 4 Be active.** You might feel like you don't enjoy the things you used to, but try to keep doing some of these. It's important to have some fun activities, no matter how small.
- 5 Consider general wellbeing.** A healthy diet, sleeping well, exercising and spending time with others benefits our mental health. Can you improve on any of these?
- 6 Find ways to relax.** You might also feel stressed or anxious. Explore what helps you relax and build a toolbox of activities such as reading, listening to music or colouring.
- 7 Challenge automatic thoughts.** Try to consider negative and self-critical thoughts in more helpful ways. It might help to think about what you would say to a friend.
- 8 Practise positive thinking.** Each day identify things that went well and things you are grateful for. Recognise your strengths, ask someone to help if you are struggling.
- 9 Be kind to yourself.** Be kind and patient with yourself, recognise and reward your efforts, even if they seem small.
- 10 Ask for help when needed.** If you are concerned seek additional help, talk to your family, GP and/or school. Helplines like Childline are also available www.childline.org.uk.

Self-help links:

- www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/152-RU%20Sad-June2018-English.pdf
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/depression-in-children-and-young-people-for-young-people
- www.youngminds.org.uk/media/1514/young-minds-depression.pdf
- www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/Depression.asp
- www.moodcafe.co.uk/

