



SANDHILLS PCN

## Depression and low mood

Information and self help leaflet.



### What is depression?

Depression is a common mental health condition where you experience symptoms for weeks or months and it affects your daily life. There are some early signs you can be aware of including feelings of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, hopelessness, anger or irritability and a loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities.

If you experience these please consult your GP or other medical health professional for diagnosis.

### Symptoms:

Depression symptoms can be complex and everyone experiences them differently.

They can be classified in different areas but are not limited to these as follows.

### Physical

- Weight loss or weight gain
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Lethargy and lack of energy
- Loss of libido (sex drive)
- Sleep disturbances
- Changes to monthly cycle in women

### Psychological

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Having low self-esteem
- Feeling tearful
- Feeling irritable
- Lack of interest in things
- Finding it difficult to make decisions
- Guilt
- Having suicidal thoughts
- Thoughts of self-harm

### Behavioural

- Avoiding contact with friends and taking part in fewer social activities
- Neglecting self-care
- Neglecting activities of interests
- Having trouble concentrating and having difficulties in your home, work or family life
- Isolation
- Comfort eating or loss of appetite

## Diagnosis

Formal diagnosis of depression can be made by your GP or another medical health professional.

Once a formal diagnosis has been made you can look and begin treatment options. These can include:

Self management

Medication

Talking therapies.

## Treatments

### Talking therapies:

There are plenty of options for talking therapies available including counselling, group mindfulness therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)

You can self refer to therapy or your medical professional can complete a referral for you to be placed on the relevant waiting list.

### Medication

Your GP may offer medication as a treatment alone or alongside other treatments and it can depend on the severity of the depression to if and what medication is offered.

## Treatments continued

Anti-depressants can take several weeks to get into your system and work so be patient and if concerned then consult with your GP.

**Always consult your GP before stopping medication.**

### Self management:

To self manage depression there are several options that can be considered and sometimes you have to try more than one to find what works for you. These include:

Guided self help programme

Physical activity programme

Talk to someone

Mindfulness

Creative or alternative therapies



## Examples activities for better mental health

- ◇ Do something you enjoy such as art, music, travel, exercise, cooking
- ◇ Self-care such as massage, relaxing bath, pamper days
- ◇ Complementary therapies such as reiki, reflexology, etc.
- ◇ Keeping a mood diary
- ◇ Self-care box: keep items of comfort in a box or bag so you can use it when you need to.

## Resources

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/>

<https://www.depressionuk.org/>

### Crisis numbers

NHS 111 option 2 for mental health

Samaritans 0330 094 5717

**Crisis café** - The Lawns Resource Centre, The Baulk, Biggleswade, SG18 0PT – open Thursday and Friday 5.30-11pm.