

NO LiMiTS

**Helping Young People
Help Themselves**

DEPRESSION AND FEELING LOW

**Information on depression and tips
to help if you're feeling low**



What is depression?



Depression is a mental health condition where you have constant low mood for a long period of time.

It will be different for everyone and you can experience a wide range of emotions. Symptoms include feeling sad, upset, angry, tired and numb. You may notice yourself starting to avoid everyday situations like going to school, college or work and not wanting to see friends or family.

Is depression different to just feeling low?

Yes. We all have days where we have little energy or feel rubbish, but depression is when we feel like that for days, weeks, or longer.

When we feel low, there may be things that can cheer us up, or get us out of that mood, but it's not the same for depression as it's not something you can snap out of.

What does depression feel like?

There are lots of different things you can feel if you're depressed. These feelings may range in intensity and may come and go.

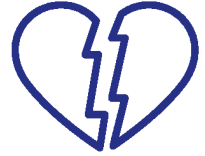
Things you can feel or experience include:

- Extreme sadness over a certain thing, or for no reason in particular
- Fatigue and tiredness
- Anxiety
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed easily
- Feeling like there is a weight dragging you down
- Finding it hard to carry out everyday tasks
- Lacking motivation to do the things you enjoy, or socialise with others
- Feeling numb, as if you can't feel any emotion
- Feeling as if you don't want to be here, or you don't want to live anymore

What can cause depression or feeling low?

Life events

Things like bullying, a break-up, job loss or someone close to you dying will make you feel really down, but they can also trigger reactive depression (depression caused by a sudden traumatic life event). This doesn't mean that it is something that will last forever.



Lifestyle

Not having a balanced diet or eating healthily, and not getting enough sleep can make it difficult for you to function like you should. Addressing any underlying issues around food and sleep can be an important part of improving mental health and wellbeing.



Medication, drugs and alcohol

Depression or low mood can sometimes be a side effect of medicines, and while drugs and alcohol can make you feel good in the short term, they can make you feel worse in the long term.



The seasons - Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

SAD is a type of mood disorder where you feel low due to seasonal changes. Some people will find the effects are worse during the winter, but you can also experience it in the summer.



Family and experiences

If someone in your close family, like a parent, has experienced depression or low mood, you may be more likely to yourself. This could be because of things like having a similar upbringing and shared experiences.



While the tips on the next page may help you in the short or medium term, getting support for the root cause of your feelings, like any trauma or issues you've experienced, is an important part of your long term recovery and growth. Details of how you can talk to No Limits and other helpful organisations are later on in this booklet.

What can I do if I feel depressed or low?

Talk to someone you trust

You should never feel like you have to go through anything alone, especially concerning the way you feel. Talking to someone can help you to unload how you're feeling and is often the first step to tackling your issue.

Talk to someone who you trust and think will support you - this could be a friend, family member, No Limits worker, teacher or someone else.



Take baby steps

When you feel low, everything is 10 times harder than usual. Make sure you take things slowly and feel proud of every small thing you do. Don't beat yourself up if you think you haven't done much - each small step is positive. Even simple tasks like getting out of bed, having a drink or cleaning your teeth can be challenging. However, they are all small, positive steps.

Look after your physical health

When we eat healthily or exercise, we feel good about ourselves. Eating the right food gives our body the right nutrients to be able to function properly, which is important when trying to maintain positive mental health. Your body also releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine when you exercise, which all make you feel better.



If you feel you're not doing these, try gradually making changes in your lifestyle so you are eating healthily and exercising. You'll find it easier to adjust slowly, rather than throwing yourself in at the deep end.

Make sure you're getting enough sleep, too, as not getting enough contributes to feeling low. Try and aim for eight hours a night.



Try mindfulness

Mindfulness is a great way to clear your head and feel calm. Lots of things count as mindfulness, like colouring, a slow walk in fresh air and breathing techniques. It's really just about being present in that moment, noticing the things around you and your body. Think of it like a soft, warm, wet flannel around your head.



Find out more about mindfulness from Mind: [mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/about-mindfulness)

Make a self-care list

Think of the things that you love and you can go to when you're feeling down. Write them down and keep the list somewhere so you know what to do and what to get when you don't feel great. It could be things like your favourite film or TV show, a cosy hoodie and slippers, or your favourite hot chocolate.



Use our wellness journal

The journal includes a selection of mindfulness techniques, coping mechanisms and practical lists that will help guide you through your thoughts and feelings, helping you to be more in control of your health and wellbeing. There's also space to jot down your thoughts and map out your goals, some top tips on how to keep fit and healthy, as well as some creative space for drawing and reflecting on your week.



Download the journal here: [nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/no-limits-wellness-journal](https://www.nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/no-limits-wellness-journal)

How can I help someone who is depressed or feeling low?

Let them know you're there

Making sure that they know they're not alone is really important. When you feel low, you can feel really isolated from everyone, even if you're surrounded by people, so telling them they have someone they can go to will help keep them connected.



Keep checking in on them

Regular contact means they have a regular place to say how they're doing and how they're feeling. If someone feels they don't have anyone to talk to, they may bottle up their feelings which could make things worse.

Reassure them that their feelings are valid

They may be feeling embarrassed because they're finding things difficult, or be worried about being judged. It might help to remind them that the way they are feeling is okay and that they shouldn't feel ashamed. This may also help them to open up about how they're feeling.



Support them to get further help

If you're worried about them, try and support them to reach out for further help from a professional, like their GP or a No Limits worker. Getting support from somewhere can be daunting, even if it's the right thing to do, so helping them with practical things like making contact or booking appointments can be a big help.

Be patient

It may take them a while to get better, but that is okay. Some people feel better after days, while for others it could take months or years. They might have ups and downs along the way, but every good day they have is a really positive step and on their bad days, you can remind them of this.



Look after yourself too

You can feel a lot of responsibility for looking after someone, especially if that person is close to you, so it can weigh down on you. Make sure you give yourself time to breathe, relax, de-stress and talk to someone if you need to. Sometimes you might need to prioritise yourself over others, but that is okay. Remember, you can't look after someone well if you're not looking after yourself.

Want to talk to No Limits?

We offer free, confidential information, advice and support for young people under 26 in Southampton, Hampshire, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

Advice Centre

Open six days a week, come down and talk to a trained youth worker about any issue you have, without needing to make an appointment.

Address

13 High Street
Southampton, SO14 2DF

Opening times

Mon 10am-5pm | Tue 10am-5pm
Wed 1:30pm-8pm | Thu 10am-8pm
Fri 10am-5pm | Sat 10am-1:30pm



Advice Centre

nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-wellbeing-hub/advice-centre

Mental Health Support

We offer a broad range of mental health and wellbeing support, covering our whole area.

Support includes:

- Counselling
- One-to-one or group work with a youth wellbeing practitioner
- Three out-of-hours Safe Havens across our area
- Mental health transition support for 16-25 year olds
- Social prescribing



Mental Health Support

nolimitshelp.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing

Find out more

nolimitshelp.org.uk | 02380 224 224 | enquiries@nolimitshelp.org.uk

Other organisations

If you want to talk to No Limits, our information is on the previous page, but you can also contact these organisations for support.

All support is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Papyrus

Phone service for people under 35 experiencing suicidal thoughts. Call the Hopeline on 0800 068 4141.

Samaritans

Phone line on **116 123**. This is a listening service and they won't offer you advice or information.

Shout

Anonymous text service for people experiencing a mental health crisis. Text 'HANTS' to 85258.

I want to find out more



CAMHS

hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/help/young-people/depression-yp



YoungMinds

youngminds.org.uk/young-person/mental-health-conditions/depression




Mind

mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/about-depression



YoungMinds

youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/down-and-unable-to-cope/



**It's okay to
not be okay**

