

# DEPRESSION

TALK TO US

OFF THE RECORD

## WHAT IS LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION?

Often people may say they are feeling depressed, but if you have depression you are not 'just' sad or upset; instead you are probably feeling hopeless and that life is not what it used to be.

Sometimes people confuse low mood with depression. We can all experience low mood for a variety of reasons, symptoms can include low self-esteem, worrying, tiredness, frustration and sadness. Low mood can improve by resolving any issues that might be of concern, getting enough sleep and talking through problems.

*I'm tired of being me*

## WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPERIENCE

Symptoms of depression are distinct in the way that they affect our ability to carry everyday tasks for a long period of time. When a low mood does not improve over a long period of time, it can be a sign of depression.

- Feeling sad or tearful.
- Low on energy, feeling tired or exhausted.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Changes to your weight and appetite.
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Feeling disconnected and wanting to withdraw from the world.
- Feelings of low self-worth combined with a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Loss of interest in things that are normally fun or enjoyable.
- Persistent negative thoughts and pessimistic outlook.
- Thinking about suicide and death.
- Thoughts about self-harm.
- You go on autopilot; all our everyday stuff just 'happens' as our body operates on autopilot and gets stuff done despite our minds shutting down.
- It can be difficult to have conversations, which can lead to us isolating ourselves from others.

## CAUSES

Depression can be brought on by lots of things, including:

- Physical illness
- Experiences dating back to childhood
- Unemployment
- Bereavement
- Family problems
- Other life-changing events

However, sometimes depression can creep up on you and it can be hard to know why you feel this way or where it all began.

*I don't remember what happiness feels like anymore*

## WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE FEELING LOW

- Talk it out with someone in your support network.
- Make an appointment to see your GP.
- Get it out on paper by keeping a journal in whatever way makes sense to you. It can be as simple as bullet points – it's up to you.
- If writing feels complicated, try other creative outlets such as drawing or listening to your favorite artist.
- Try to spend time outdoors, even if just for a walk around your area or your local park.
- Access online resources from platforms such as Young Minds and The Mix.
- Download the Mindshift or MoodTools app to help you monitor and improve your mood.
- If you're feeling very low and need someone to talk to, you can get in touch with 24/7 support services such as Samaritans (116 123) and Childline (0800 1111).