

Understanding Depression: A Guide for Adolescents

What is Depression?

Depression is more than just feeling sad or down. It's a common mental health condition that can affect how you think, feel, and handle daily activities. Depression is not a sign of weakness, and it's important to know that you're not alone.

Recognising Depression:

- **Persistent Sadness:** Feeling sad, empty, or hopeless most of the time.
- **Loss of Interest:** Losing interest in activities you used to enjoy, such as hobbies or spending time with friends.
- **Changes in Appetite or Weight:** Significant changes in appetite or weight, either eating too much or too little.
- **Sleep Problems:** Difficulty sleeping, either sleeping too much or too little, or having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.
- **Fatigue or Loss of Energy:** Feeling tired or lacking energy, even after resting.
- **Difficulty Concentrating:** Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things.
- **Feelings of Worthlessness or Guilt:** Feeling worthless or excessively guilty, even when there's no reason to.

Tips for Managing Depression:

1. **Talk About Your Feelings:** Share your feelings with someone you trust, whether it's a friend, family member, teacher, or counsellor. Talking about what you're going through can help lighten the burden.
2. **Stay Connected:** Even when you feel like withdrawing from others, try to stay connected with friends and loved ones. Spending time with supportive people can help lift your mood.
3. **Stay Active:** Engage in regular physical activity, even if it's just taking a short walk outside. Exercise releases endorphins, which can improve your mood and energy levels.
4. **Stick to a Routine:** Establishing a daily routine can provide structure and stability, which can be helpful when you're feeling overwhelmed by depression.
5. **Practice Self-Care:** Take care of yourself by eating nutritious meals, getting enough sleep, and engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation.
6. **Limit Stress:** Identify and avoid stressors when possible. Learn to say no to extra commitments and prioritize self-care.
7. **Seek Professional Help:** If you're struggling to cope with depression on your own, don't hesitate to seek help from a mental health professional, such as a therapist or counsellor. They can provide support, guidance, and treatment options tailored to your needs.

Remember:

- Depression is a treatable condition, and there is hope for recovery.
- It's okay to ask for help. Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.
- You are not alone. Many people struggle with depression, and there are resources and support available to help you through it.

If you're in crisis or need immediate support, reach out to a trusted adult, a helpline, or emergency services for assistance. You deserve to feel happy, healthy, and supported.