

Depression and Low Mood - a partner's guide - Easy read information

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Introduction



A member of staff or a carer can support you to read this guide. They will be able to answer any questions that you have.

About this guide

- This guide will help you to understand your partner's depression and low mood.
- It will tell you what you can do to help your partner when they are depressed and in a low mood.
- It will help you to understand why a good relationship is so important for good mental health.

What is depression and how is it different from low mood?



Most people can have a low mood or feel unhappy sometimes.

This feeling sometimes goes away when we talk to a friend or just do something that cheers us up.

In time most people feel OK again.



Depression is a very common problem but is more serious than a low mood. It feels worse and lasts longer.

There can be many reasons why people get depressed. Sometimes lots of sad things have happened or someone may have lots of worries and stress.



Some of the things people worry or stress about are money, housing, relationships, or when someone you love dies.

Depression affects our body, our mind, and what we are able to do, so it really gets in the way of daily life. In time, most people feel OK again.

But it may be hard to do this without help.

These are some of the things you might see if your partner is depressed



Your partner has been in a low mood for more than two weeks. Their negative thoughts will just not go away.

Your partner is very tired all the time and has no energy.

There are changes in your partner's weight or appetite.

Your partner feels worthless and hopeless.



Your partner is forgetting things and can't concentrate.

Your partner has stopped doing things that they used to enjoy.



How might depression affect you as a couple?



You might feel like your partner is not interested in you anymore and that you are not loved.

You might wonder if you have done something wrong or are to blame for your partner's depression.

It is important not to blame yourself for your partner's depression.

Your partner may feel very tired and just not want to do things together that you used to enjoy. This can include sex.



Your partner's depression may cause them to eat too much or not eat very much at all. They can lose or gain weight. If you like cooking this might be difficult for you.



How you can support your partner

Being a supportive partner can help your partner to get better.

This can be things like listening to your partner, doing nice things together, and learning about the best way to offer support.





Encourage your partner to do activities that they like.

Do things that can make a difference like a short walk or other activities that make them feel good.



Being around other people is good for them. Remind your partner it's worth seeing their friends, even if it's only for a short time.

Try to encourage your partner to avoid over eating, smoking and drinking alcohol too much because these are not great for keeping well.

How you can get support for your partner



You are not alone. There are people and organisations that can help you.

You and your partner can visit the doctors together. Your doctor can give you advice and put you in touch with people who can speak to you and give you support around mental health issues.



This is called talking therapy. You can talk to people who can help you in a face-to-face meeting or on the phone or internet.

You and your partner can talk to people who can support you either by yourself or as a couple.



You can get support and advice from self-help support groups, family carers support groups and other voluntary organisations.

Will my partner get better?



Most people with depression can be treated and most people do get better. Sometimes this can take a long time.

You can see improvements in how your partner feels.

They may start eating like they used to.



They may start going out more.

It is important for your partner that you encourage them to keep doing the activities that make them feel good.

Sometimes people write down how their partner is feeling and the activities they do in a mood diary. This can show you and your partner how things are getting better.



What about me? What should I do to help myself?



People whose partners have depression can become very worried and stressed.

It is important to look after yourself.

- Meet with friends, family and neighbours.
- Join in activities.
- Take some exercise each day.
- Do things you enjoy



Together with your partner there are many things you can do to help overcome depression such as:

Improving communication. This means making sure you really listen to your partner. Let them know you will be there as support whenever you can.



Making a plan about what you are going to do to keep well. This could include where to get support and what activities to do that make you happy.



You can work with your partner to help cope with stress. Look for things that make your partner feel better. Let your partner know how much you care about them.



Making little changes can make a big difference.

Make a list of small changes with your partner that can help you both in your relationship. This could be something like how to listen to each other.



Try a small positive step like going for a walk or cooking a healthy meal together.

Where can I get help?



These organisations can give you help and advice:

Depression Alliance

Information and support for people who suffer with depression and for relatives who want to help.

www.depressionalliance.org (<http://www.depressionalliance.org>)



Mind Infoline

Help, information and support.

Telephone: [0300 123 3393](tel:03001233393)

Email: info@mind.org.uk (<mailto:info@mind.org.uk>)

www.mind.org.uk (<http://www.mind.org.uk>)



Samaritans

Support for people in a crisis.

Telephone: [116 123](tel:116123)

Email: jo@samaritans.org (<mailto:jo@samaritans.org>)

www.samaritans.org (<http://www.samaritans.org>)



You can also get help and information from your doctor or nurse.

Acknowledgement



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