

## **Depression: Plain English**

- Depression is more than just feeling sad. It is a medical illness.
- People with depression find it hard to see life in a positive way and feel cut off from the world.
- When people feel depressed even simple things like getting out of bed in the morning can feel too hard.

### ***Why do people get depressed?***

- There is no single cause for depression. It can be from a combination of genetics; brain; environment; culture; life experiences and stress.
- Depression can also happen because of stressful life events like losing someone close to you or seeing/experiencing something awful that you can't forget.

### ***What does depression feel like?***

- Depression is feeling sad most of the time, without reason, for at least two weeks. When we feel sad there is usually a reason and, with time, we start to feel better. When someone is depressed they can't cheer up no matter what they do. This feeling can last a long time and can become a barrier to enjoying life.
- Feel extremely sad, anxious, stressed or tearful: Depression makes us feel a very strong sadness

that might not match what is happening in our lives. Someone may feel very nervous or worried, can't calm themselves down, numb and can't or don't want to talk about how they're feeling.

- Hard to focus or make decisions: Depression can make us so sad that simple things can feel too hard. Things like having a shower or deciding what to have for dinner can seem so hard that people don't even want to try.
- Lose interest/motivation and become withdrawn: Things that make us happy, like family, friends or fun activities don't feel the same when we're depressed. You can do something fun and still feel sad. Some people feel they have very low energy and just want to be alone.
- Move and talk/sign slowly: People feel very sad but also very tired. Sometimes this means they will communicate more slowly.
- Not enough/too much sleep: Some people can't get to sleep or stay asleep through the night. Others may sleep many hours but still feel tired/low energy when they wake up.
- Gaining/losing weight: Some people don't feel like eating, skip meals and lose weight over time. Others eat too much and start to gain weight over time.
- Lose sexual interest: Sexual or intimate activities that used to make us feel good don't interest us.

This includes things like not wanting to be touched or not wanting to be close to your partner.

- Thinking about ending your life: Strong sadness mixed with feeling there is no hope leads some people to think about ending their lives. People feel like they are broken inside and will only ever feel sad and alone.
- Worry about aches and pains: Can get worried that small aches and pains in the body are signs of more serious medical issues. No proof anything is wrong, but may worry a lot and find it difficult to stop.