

Depression

Everyone occasionally feels sad or “blue”. We can often use the expression “I’m feeling depressed” or “not myself lately” when we are feeling sad or miserable. Usually these feelings pass in time over a couple of days or less.

However, if such feelings are interfering with your day to day living and they don’t go away after a couple of weeks, or if they come back, over and over again, it could be a sign that depression is beginning to set in. If this is the situation it is advisable to seek professional help. People can get better and recover with treatment.

Although there are several types of depression there are a number of common symptoms which can include:

- Persistent sad, anxious or “empty” feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities, hobbies or friendships
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early–morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating, or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts

Not every person who has depression will have all of these symptoms. Some people with depression can cover up and ‘mask’ their symptoms.

Depending on the number and severity of symptoms, a depressive episode may be specified as mild, moderate or severe.

It is important to remember that depression is a health problem and needs to be addressed in the same way as a physical health problem.

Appropriate and effective treatments are available for depression and can be accessed through your GP. These include medication and other treatments such as counselling or other talking therapies.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be showing signs of depression it is important to get support.

Where to get help

Your own GP

Rural Support

Provides a listening and signposting service for farmers and rural families across Northern Ireland through its confidential helpline. Freephone Helpline: 0800 138 1678 (Mon- Fri 9am to 9pm)

www.ruralsupport.org.uk

Samaritans

The Samaritans helpline provides a safe space for people to talk when things are getting to them.

Freephone: 116 123 (24/7 365 days a year) or email: jo@samaritans.org

Aware NI

Support groups for people with depression and bipolar disorder as well as carers for people with the illness.

<https://www.aware-ni.org/>

There is a wide range of voluntary sector groups and organisations that offer support and information on a range of specific problems

– please refer to the appendix at the back of this resource for a full list of services in your local health trust area.

If you, or anyone you know is in distress or despair you can call Lifeline for free on 0808 808 8000 24 hours a day.