

Stressed out or feeling low

How to cope

Depression, stress and anxiety are serious and common problems. The first step to getting help is to be able to recognise the problem. Sometimes it is easy to put ourselves under too much pressure; we can worry about how we look, about exams or about what other people think of us.

“People are more at risk of becoming depressed if they are under a lot of stress and have no one to share their worries with.”

Depression is commonly caused by a mixture of things rather than any one thing alone. Some people have experiences that lead to depression including family breakdown, the death or loss of a loved one, stress, abuse, bullying and physical illness. Depression can also be triggered if too many changes happen in your life too quickly.

Depression can cause serious problems, such as:

- Difficulties getting on with friends and family.
- Loss of friends.
- Loss of confidence and difficulty making decisions.
- Inability to study, work and perform well in exams.
- Difficulty with day to day tasks.
- Eating problems, turning to food for comfort and eating or dieting excessively.
- Lying, stealing and missing school.

Simply talking to someone you trust and who you feel understands can lighten the burden. It can also make it easier to work out practical solutions to problems. For example, if you are stressed out by exams or study, you could talk to your teacher.

“Keep as active and as occupied as possible and allow for fun and leisure time.”

Could this be you?

- Being self-critical, self-blaming and hating yourself.
- Feeling out of control.
- Becoming stressed about minor things.
- Becoming withdrawn, avoiding friends, family and regular activities.
- Feeling guilty or bad.
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate.
- Not looking after your personal appearance.
- Changes in sleep pattern, tiredness and lack of energy.
- Frequent minor health problems.
- Not enjoying life anymore.
- Depression increases the risk of using drugs, alcohol or solvents.
- Are you being bullied, exploited or suffering abuse?

What to do next

- Try to understand why you are feeling this way.
- Talk to someone and don't keep it to yourself.
- You can talk to your GP in confidence if you have felt down for a long time.