

# Depression

Toolbox Talk MH03



## What is depression?

**Depression is a low mood that lasts for a long time, and affects your everyday life.**

In its mildest form, depression can mean just being in low spirits. It doesn't stop you leading your normal life but makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can be life-threatening because it can make you feel suicidal.

### Are there different types of depression?

If you are given a diagnosis of depression, you might be told that you have mild, moderate or severe depression. This describes what sort of impact your symptoms are having on you currently, and what sort of treatment you're likely to be offered. You might move between different mild, moderate and severe depression during one episode of depression or across different episodes.

**There are also some specific types of depression:**

#### Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

Depression that occurs at a particular time of year, or during a particular season. See our page on SAD for more information.

#### Dysthymia

Continuous mild depression that lasts for two years or more. Also called persistent depressive disorder or chronic depression.

#### Prenatal depression

Depression that occurs during pregnancy. This is sometimes also called antenatal depression.

#### Postnatal depression (PND)

Depression that occurs in the weeks and months after becoming a parent. Postnatal depression is usually diagnosed in women, but it can also affect men.

*"It starts as sadness then I feel myself shutting down, becoming less capable of coping. Eventually, I just feel numb and empty."*

*"It feels like I'm stuck under a huge grey-black cloud. It's dark and isolating, smothering me at every opportunity."*

**3 million people are diagnosed with depression in the UK, with a depressive episode lasting, on average, about 6-8 months.**

## Warning Signs



Depression affects employees at all levels. Managers, Supervisors and others who spot warning signs can help employees afraid to seek treatment, reducing employer costs in the long run.

While you should never try to be an “armchair psychiatrist” and diagnose depression yourself, knowledge of the symptoms can help you better understand depression. Professional help should be sought if someone experiences five or more of the following symptoms for more than two weeks or if the symptoms interfere with daily life:

- Persistent sad, anxious, nervous or “empty” moods;
- Sleeping too little, early-morning awakening or sleeping too much;
- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain;
- Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed;
- Restlessness or irritability;
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (such as headaches, chronic pain or digestive disorders);
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions;
- Fatigue or loss of energy;
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless; and
- Thoughts of suicide or death

“ There’s still an attitude that some people are too young to experience mental health problems - I’ve been told that my illness is not ‘serious’.”

Adam

1 in 4 people will experience a mental illness. Yet there is still something taboo about saying “I’m feeling anxious today”.

Matty

time to change

#worldmentalhealthday

let's end mental health discrimination

## PEOPLE DIAGNOSED WITH DEPRESSION ARE...

**2x** as likely to suffer from **1+ CHRONIC DISEASE**

**3x** as likely to suffer from a **PAIN-RELATED DISORDER**

**7x** as likely to suffer from **ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER**



Which can lead to a loss of nearly **10 YEARS OF HEALTHY LIFE**

