



DEPRESSION

What is depression?

Depression describes a period of low mood. A person suffering from mild depression might feel as though life is colourless and lacking in joy. A person with more severe depression may feel that life is meaningless and experience a lack of motivation that makes even simple self-care (such as washing and dressing) seem pointless and a struggle.

Depression can affect a person's appetite, interfere with their sleep and make it hard to concentrate on things that would normally interest them.

Winston Churchill describe his depression as a black dog that followed him everywhere, sapping the pleasure from his life.

Often a person with depression can feel stuck and unable to navigate a way out of their distress. Depression often causes us to withdraw from life and this only re-enforces the sense of pointlessness and isolation.



Union Baptist Church

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WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

There is not one clear answer to this. Depression can be triggered by negative life events such as a period of stress, loss of status e.g. redundancy, or bereavement. There is evidence that a traumatic childhood, a family history of depression or low self-esteem can make a person more likely to experience depression. In some instances, depression may be linked to a lack of serotonin in the brain. Some physical illnesses such as

An under-active thyroid gland can cause depression so always worth talking to your doctor if you experience these symptoms for the first time.

HOW TO GET OUT OF THE PIT OF DEPRESSION.

A depressed person may have unresolved grief or a sense of failure. They can be extremely self-critical and this re-enforces their sense of hopelessness. Talking to a good friend, pastor or a therapist can help process these feelings. Learning more positive self-talk can be really helpful.

There are other things that you can do yourself that will help lift depression:

Connect with others: Often the temptation is to hide away, this and a lack of motivation can make meeting with others seem really difficult, but studies have shown that spending time with people can improve your mood.

Exercise: This may feel like the last thing that you want to do, but exercise even if it is just a short walk will help ease your depression. If you are able to walk in a green space, this is particularly helpful in lifting mood.

Achieving or creating something: It may be necessary to set small goals at first, but research has shown that achieving some targets will help lift mood. Similarly, doing something creative like making a cake, gardening or doing some colouring can help.

Appreciating the moment: A lot of studies have shown that taking time to notice the good things around us can help lift mood. An example might be to be intentionally aware of the feel of the sun on your face, or to really look at a flower, noticing its feel and smell. You can also bring mindfulness into our daily routine by taking time to enjoy a meal, really tasting your food, giving it your full attention.

A healthy diet: There is a temptation when a person is feeling low to comfort eat, making poor nutritional choices. Also, the effort of cooking might seem daunting. Research has shown, however, that a healthy diet is as important for our mental health as it is for our physical health. It is really helpful, therefore, to aid recovery from depression by making an effort to eat well.

Caring for others: Research has shown that someone you can help to care for is really helpful in easing depression. The sense of being needed and making a difference to another person helps change your perspective.

Anti-depressants :

It may be that if a period of depression is proving difficult to shift, that your GP will prescribe a course of anti-depressants. These can be particularly effective when used in conjunction with the suggestions above.

SOURCES OF HELP

Talk to someone: If you have someone you can trust (perhaps a partner, relative or friend), you may find it helpful to talk about your problems. If you have no one to talk to, or if you fear that those closest to you will not understand, you are very welcome to drop into our Open Door Friendship Centre at The Hub (11.30 -1.30 every Tuesday) and ask to talk with a member of the team.

Talk to God: Do bring your depression to God in prayer, if you would like us to pray for you complete a prayer card at the reception of the HUB

Your GP: If you are worried that you may be depressed, do seek advice and support from your GP. There are also various services and organisations which offer help and support directly to people with mental health problems without need for a referral, and a few are listed here:

Healthy Minds Bucks

Healthy Minds is a fast-acting NHS service offering talking therapies, practical support and employment advice to people with a GP in Buckinghamshire. Contact details are listed below:

Website: <http://www.healthymindsbucks.nhs.uk/>

Email: healthy.minds@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Location: Across Buckinghamshire

Telephone: 01865 901600

Text: Text "Talk" and your name to 07798 667169 Address: Floor 2, Prospect House, Crendon Street, High Wycombe, HP13 6LA

Wycombe Mind

Wycombe Mind is a local mental health charity, offering information, advice and day services.

16-18 Easton St, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 1NR.

Tel. 01494 448279

email: enquiries@wycombemind.org.uk

website: www.wycombemind.org.uk

Talk to The Samaritans

The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day - in full confidence.

Call 116 123 - it's FREE

Or email jo@samaritans.org.uk

Shout Crisis Text Line

If you're experiencing a personal crisis and need support, Shout can help with urgent issues such as: suicidal thoughts; abuse or assault; self-harm; bullying; relationship challenges.

For support in a crisis, Text **Shout** to **85258**

from mobile phones will vary considerably). Or email info@mind.org.uk.

DEPRESSION AND FAITH

For the Christian, depression may cause deep spiritual distress. It is not uncommon to feel that God is distant, that prayers are bouncing off the ceiling, and that all joy has gone. Doubt may set in. The illness may bring suicidal thoughts which seem like the ultimate renunciation of hope, and impossible for the sufferer to admit to fellow Christians. It is important to hold on to the fact that God's love is not dependent on our feelings: black clouds may hide the sun, but it never goes away. When the dark clouds lift, it will be clear that God has been with you all along.

Whilst many people find great comfort in their church family, for some the distress may be compounded by those who suggest that the problem is due to sin, lack of faith, lack of prayer, or some other failing. This lack of understanding may cause sufferers to isolate themselves away from church and fellowship. If you are seeking to help a Christian friend or family member with depression, remember that depression is an illness. Do not judge; be a good listener; avoid platitudes and clichés; be patient; and pray with them and for them. Some sufferers maintain a mask of cheerfulness; never judge someone's state of mind from their outward expression. Choose your words carefully; sometimes your loving presence and concern is sufficient. The following verses may be helpful: but do be sensitive in using them to support others

VERSES FROM THE BIBLE

Philippians 4:13 **"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."** Depression can make even the smallest task seem impossible. Look to Christ to give you the strength you need throughout the day.

2 Corinthians 10:5: **"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."** When dark thoughts intrude, recognise that they are not of God. Try mentally to take them captive. Picture your hand seizing hold of the thought and crushing it.

Psalms 34:18: **"The Lord is near to the broken hearted and saves the crushed in spirit."** Depression may well cause you to feel that God is distant. But however low you are, God still loves you and is near you, even if you cannot feel His presence at this time.

Psalms 40:1-2: **"I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure."** Depression can truly feel like a pit, but wait patiently, and the Lord will pull you out of the bog in His own time.

Psalms 43:5 **"Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again—my Saviour and my God!"**. The Psalmist was honest with God; don't be afraid to tell Him how you feel.

Isaiah 41:10 **"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."** God loves you and His perfect love casts out fear.

FOR REFLECTION WHEN OFFERING SUPPORT:

Ecclesiastes 3:7 **"...a time to be silent and a time to speak".**

Job 2:13 **"Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him, because they saw how great his suffering was."**