

# NORMALISING AND UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

FORCES  
CHILDREN  
SCOTLAND

## What is depression?

Depression is a low mood that lasts for weeks or months and affects your daily life.

Everyone goes through periods of feeling low or down, which is completely normal. But with depression, this starts to last longer and impacts other areas of your life.

## What does depression look like?

Depression is different for everyone and there is no one way to describe it. What's important to remember is that if you're feeling low and not yourself, you should speak to someone.

Depression can be caused by a difficult life event, such as moving or losing a family member. But it can also come out of nowhere. You don't need a 'good enough' reason to be having a hard time, it can happen to anyone and you deserve support.



## How do I know if I have depression?

All young people want to know what to look out for when it comes to mental health, so it's good to be asking these questions.

There is no one way to know you may be experiencing depression, but the list on the right has some things to remember...

Experiencing several of these things at once could point to experiencing depression.

Having low mood and feeling down is a normal part of life, but if it is starting to affect your daily living then you may need some help and support to feel better.

- Do you feel consistently sad, low or upset?
- Do you notice you aren't enjoying things the way you normally do (e.g. hobbies)?
- Do you feel tired, drained or hopeless a lot of the time?
- Are you spending more time alone and less time with friends and family?

## How does being an armed forces young person impact depression?

Some people experience depression after a stressful or traumatic event. Being an armed forces young person can have many different stressful experiences, such as moving a lot or having a family member deployed.



Being in a new school can also be a consistently stressful experience, which may also mean you don't know who to ask for help when you need it.

Feeling lonely or isolated can also increase your likelihood of experiencing depression. Being an armed forces young person can mean you move around a lot or find it more difficult to make friends in new places, which could leave you feeling alone.

## What can I do?

You can start by learning that as many as **20% of young people** around the world could be experiencing depression, **so you are not alone**. Speaking to someone and asking for help is the best way for things to get better.

Depression is the most common mental health concern worldwide.



**It's OK to ask for help**

Take time to understand your feelings – write down what you're feeling, think about the things in your life that may be stressful and do some online research.

Speak to trusted adults in your life – your parents, guardians or teachers. Take resources with you to explain.

Have a look at some of our other resources, such as our coping strategies or stories from other young people. You can also find lots of helplines online.

Have a big old cry. Ask someone you trust for a cuddle. It's OK to feel this way and things will get better. You're allowed to ask for support.

## Reach out for support

Sometimes we can't speak to our parents, guardians or even teachers. If that's the case, there is always someone to speak to...

**Papyrus** – Offers confidential advice and support for young people struggling with suicidal thoughts. Helplines are open 9am til midnight, 365 days a year.

**0800 068 4141**

**07860 039967**

**pat@papyrus-uk.org**

**The Mix** – Support for anyone up to the age of 25. The phone line is open 4pm til 11pm Monday to Saturday.

**Call: 0808 808 4994**

A crisis text support service is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Text **THEMIX** to 85258

Someone will always listen. It can take time to find your person, but they are there.



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