

What is Depression?

Depression is a common experience which is often under-reported and misunderstood.

Different people will experience depression in different ways. It's a good idea to address depression early before it starts having a bigger impact on your life.

We have all felt depressed at one time or another. Sometimes it is tied to a particular issue or experience; a relationship breakdown, feeling overwhelmed by family pressure, or something going on at work. At other times, it is simply that we feel down for no reason at all.

Hopefully depression strikes only in short episodes, but it can become an illness when it lasts for two weeks or more, it strikes with significant severity or it interferes with our ability to function at home or at work.

Signs of depression

- Lowered self-esteem or self-worth
- Broken sleep, restlessness or insomnia
- Less ability to control emotions such as pessimism, anger, guilt, irritability and anxiety
- Varying emotions throughout the day, for example, feeling worse in the morning and better as the day progresses
- Reduced capacity to experience pleasure: you can't enjoy what's happening now, nor look forward to anything with pleasure.
- Reduced productivity or performance both at work and at home; your hobbies and interests drop off and you don't make time for all the things you usually enjoyed doing.
- Reduced pain tolerance for 'normal' aches and pains or you have a host of new ailments
- Poor concentration and memory retention
- Changed sex drive: absent or reduced
- Reduced motivation, things seem meaningless
- Lowered energy levels or a feeling of exhaustion that you can't overcome.
- Dependency on or abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Having thoughts of self-harm, death or suicide

What you can do

If you are experiencing these feelings and they persist for most of the day or you experience them on more days than not over a fortnight, and they interfere with your ability to manage at home and at work, then you might benefit from getting an assessment by a skilled professional.

Having one or other of these features, by themselves, is unlikely to indicate depression; however there could be other causes which may warrant medical assessment.

If you are feeling suicidal it is very important to seek immediate help, preferably through your GP or a counsellor.

What Hunterlink can do

We know it can be a daunting process to pick up the phone when you are already experiencing depression or the feelings that lead to it, but please know that we are here for you 24/7 with our fully qualified and registered counsellors ready to help you anytime of the day or night.

We provide confidential telephone or face-to-face support sessions, as well as access to these services for immediate family members.

Remember, you don't have to be in a crisis situation to contact Hunterlink.

