



DEPRESSION

It's normal for people to be going through periods of feeling unhappy or feeling fed up. However, when you're depressed this feeling of sadness persists for weeks or months, rather than the few days that most people experience.

What are the symptoms of depression?

Depression can affect everyone in different ways, and it has a range of symptoms. The symptoms can be divided into 3 categories: psychological, physical and social.

Psychological include:

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Having no motivation or interest in things
- Having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself

Physical include:

- Changes in appetite or weight
- Lack of energy
- Disturbed sleep
- Unexplained aches and pains

Social include:

- Not doing well at work
- Neglecting your hobbies and interests
- Avoiding contact with friends

Despite what some people may think, depression is a genuine illness. It's not something that you can "snap out of" or just "cheer up" from. However with the right treatment and support, most people suffering from depression can make a full recovery.

For more information on depression, visit the NHS website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/depression

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Depression doesn't have a single cause or trigger. Some people may develop depression after an upsetting life event; some people may develop a low mood after being ill; depression may run in your family; or you may possess personality traits that make you more vulnerable to depression, like low self-esteem. However you can also become depressed for no obvious reason and it is okay to not know why you are feeling this way.

If you think you are depressed, you should seek help from your GP or another medical professional. It may seem like a big step, but the sooner you see a doctor then the sooner you can begin your road to recovery.

HOW CAN DEPRESSION BE TREATED?

Treatment for depression usually involves a combination of making lifestyle changes (like getting more exercise, cutting down on alcohol etc.), prescribed medications and talking therapies. You may also benefit from reading a self-help book or joining a support group. This can help you get a better understanding about what is causing you to feel this way, and sharing your experiences with other people can be a great support for you.

You can also call to the **Student Wellbeing Drop-In Service** (via the Student Guidance Centre information desk) Mon-Fri, term time, 12.30-1.30pm, or you can email studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk to book an appointment with a Wellbeing Advisor.

Take5

steps to wellbeing



Give



Be active



Connect



Keep learning



Take notice

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.



There are five simple actions to help maintain and improve your emotional wellbeing in everyday life. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for emotional wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you, with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life and invest time in developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you everyday.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, step outside, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Be curious, catch sight of the beautiful, remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are on a bus or taxi, eating lunch or talking to friends, be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or interest or sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give to others

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time, or consider joining a community group. Look out, as well as in, seeing yourself, and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing were developed by the New Economics Foundation

www.mindingyourhead.info

Would you like to share your story on the back of this leaflet? If so please email studentwellbeing@qub.ac.uk

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