

Do you feel sad a lot?

It's normal that we might have a bad day, or be upset about something sad that has happened. But if those sad thoughts don't go away and they are having an impact on how you go about your life, talking to someone or getting some advice can help.

Understanding depression

Sadness is a normal part of life. Everyone feels sad sometimes, especially after something difficult or upsetting happens. It's usually temporary and fades as time goes on, and you can often still feel like yourself and do the things you enjoy.

Depression is more than just feeling sad. It's a mental health condition that can make you feel down or numb for weeks or months, not just a few days, and can affect how you think, feel, and act. When you're depressed, it might feel like you've lost interest in things you used to enjoy, like hanging out with friends, playing games, or going to school. You might feel tired all the time, even if you haven't been physically active, or have trouble concentrating or making decisions. You may also feel worthless, hopeless, or like you're a burden to others. It can feel all-consuming and make daily life really tough.

If you think you might be depressed, it's important to talk to someone you trust, like a friend, family member, or professional. Reaching out for support is the first step toward feeling better.

Helpful tools

Behavioural activation – Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are all connected, and have an impact on our mental health. Behavioural activation is a way of improving how we feel by changing what we do. When we do small things (like choosing to go outside, finishing a simple task, or practicing a hobby), and gradually and consistently build these up, it can boost our mood and energy.

Watch this [video](#) to learn more

Find worksheets to help [here](#)

Challenging automatic thoughts – Automatic thoughts can get us stuck in a negative spiral. But we can learn to challenge these when they pop up through the “Record, Rationalise, Replace” exercise. Watch the [video](#) to learn more.

Challenging negative self-talk – How we talk to ourselves can have a big impact on how we feel. When we feel low, we often slip into negative self talk and don’t give ourselves the same patience or understanding that we would show to others. Practice talking to yourself like someone you care about, and when that negative self talk starts, challenge it like you would if a friend was saying the same thing about themselves.

Practice self-care – Self-care will look different for all of us. It’s about finding the right strategy or technique that works for you. Take a look at our self help tools later in this pack, or [Anna Freud's list](#) of self-care techniques. You can also try apps like [Finch](#).

Talk to someone – Talking to a friend or trusted adult can be a great start to dealing with difficult emotions. Sometimes we don’t feel ready to share with those around us, and it’s helpful to reach out to a professional or other service. Try one of the following:

- [Kooth](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [Papyrus](#)
- [Talk/Isle Listen](#)

Worried about someone else? If you are supporting someone with depression, take a look at this [advice sheet](#).