

What Treatments are available?

People experiencing depression should be able to choose freely between the range of treatment options, or combinations of treatments. In practice, the majority of people attending GP surgeries are offered antidepressants as the first treatment choice. For many people, a combination of talking treatments (such as Counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy or Psychotherapy) and antidepressants is the most effective way of coping with depression.

Counselling

Counselling involves talking with someone who is trained in the art of listening. This allows you to express how you feel in order to begin to find your own solutions to your problems. Talking and being listened to can help you to explore issues that are troubling you. The counsellor may be able to help you to develop a greater understanding of your feelings, thoughts and behaviours.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is a talking treatment that helps you to find ways of coping with problems you may be experiencing. The psycho-therapeutic process goes deeper than counselling: you may be encouraged to look closely at your past, particularly your childhood, and your relationships with significant people in your life.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a shorter term (usually 8-12 weeks) talking treatment that helps you to recognise problems and overcome emotional difficulties. The therapist enables you to identify connections between your thoughts, how your thoughts affect you and how you behave. CBT helps you to develop skills which enable you to explore what lies at the root of your feelings and behaviour. A referral from your GP is normally necessary.

Guided Self-help

You may be offered a programme of guided self-help. This includes books or manuals, based upon Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, for you to work through with the support of a mental health professional.

Life Style

Research has shown that your life style can have a significant effect on your mood. Taking regular exercise and eating healthily can be as effective in helping people to deal with mild to moderate depression as other treatments.

Medication

Antidepressant drugs are the most common medical treatment for depression. They work on chemicals in the brain to lift your mood. They do not cure depression, but they do alleviate the symptoms so that you may feel able to take action to deal with the depression yourself. Antidepressants do not work for everyone: you may experience side effects, or withdrawal symptoms if you stop taking them. There are also herbal treatments, which some people find helpful.

Hospital Treatment

In severe cases of depression, hospital treatment may be required. If a person's safety is at risk, and there is no other way for them to be treated, this may be compulsory treatment under the Mental Health Act. Treatment which is given in hospital may include medication, psychotherapy or Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT). ECT is only given to severely depressed patients who have not responded to medication or other treatment.



**For better
mental health**

**Understanding
Depression**

What is Depression?

Depression can affect different people in different ways and can produce a wide variety of symptoms, both psychological and physical. If you are depressed, you may feel that nothing can help. But there are things you can do that can make a difference. Deciding to do something is the most important step you can take. Most people recover from bouts of depression.

Depression is a medical term that covers quite a broad range of psychological distress. In its mildest form, depression can cause lowered mood, which does not stop you leading your normal life, but makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile.

At its most severe, depression can be life threatening. You may feel like hurting yourself, or simply give up the will to live.

There is no one cause of depression; it varies very much from person to person. In some cases, depression is triggered by life-events, especially in a first episode of depression. What happened to you as a child can also have a profound effect on how you feel about yourself in the here and now.

Negative experiences, such as a physical attack or bereavement, can trigger depression. It's not just the negative experience that causes depression, but how you deal with it. Negative experiences are more likely to contribute towards depression if your feelings about the experience are not expressed or explored.

What are the Symptoms?

People suffering from depression may suffer from some of the following symptoms:

- feel low-spirited a lot of the time
- have low self-esteem and may lack self-confidence
- be preoccupied with negative thoughts
- feel numb, empty and despairing
- blame themselves and feel unnecessarily guilty about things
- find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions
- be unusually irritable or impatient
- wake early, or have problems getting to sleep
- eat more and put on weight, or not eat properly and lose weight
- not enjoy normally pleasurable activities
- experience a loss of sexual drive
- use more tobacco, alcohol or other drugs than usual
- consider, or commit, acts of self-harm or suicide
- have reduced energy and reduced activity
- cut themselves off from others, rather than asking for help or support
- have a bleak, pessimistic view of the future.

About us

Dorset Mind is a local, independent charity providing services for people with mental health problems. It is affiliated to Mind, the mental health charity.

The services provided include a befriending service; a group for people suffering from anxiety disorders; groups for women; a sports club and an arts group.

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Useful Numbers

Samaritans	01202 551999
Bournemouth Mental Health Helpline	01202 314577 (Evenings only)
Mind Information Line	0845 766 0163
Saneline	0845 767 8000
Depression Alliance	020 7633 0557

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