

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

(dee-presh-en)

Everybody feels sad sometime in his or her life. You may feel really sad if your best friend left your school or your pet died. If you feel sad it does not mean you have depression! When someone is sad for a long time, and finds it hard to get out of bed or get dressed, or do the things they normally do, this might be called *Depression*. A person with depression can't just 'snap' out of it!



Some symptoms, or 'signs' of depression, include:

- Ⓢ **Having very little or no energy**
- Ⓢ **Finding it hard to sleep or sleeping all the time**
- Ⓢ **Feeling so sad that they want to cry all the time or cannot cry at all**
- Ⓢ **Losing weight or putting on a lot of weight**

- Ⓢ **Not enjoying the things they used to enjoy**
- Ⓢ **Being tired or cranky a lot of the time**
- Ⓢ **Not wanting to talk much**

Everyone experiences illnesses differently so these symptoms vary a lot.

Depression can happen for all kinds of reasons and often it can be very hard to work out why it has happened. Sometimes it can happen after a very stressful event.



How can depression be treated?

■ People with depression can be treated with medication, which may be **tablets or injections**. The medication can take up to three weeks to take effect and can have some yucky side effects, like feeling sick and dizzy, getting headaches. It may take a while to find the right sort of medication and get used to it.



■ They may also go to see someone to **talk through** how they are feeling; this might be a doctor, a counsellor, a psychologist or someone else who has special skills in helping people with depression.

■ Sometimes the person may have a course of **ECT (Electroconvulsive therapy)**. This used be called electric shock treatment and most people get scared when they hear those words! ECT is only used now when perhaps medication hasn't worked and the person is really not getting any better. It is only given in hospital and is very carefully done.

■ Sometimes someone who is very depressed may need to go to hospital for a while until they feel better. Sometimes they can be treated at home with the help of family, doctors or the **CATT (Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team)**. The CATT are all health professionals like doctors and nurses with special training in psychiatry to help people with mental health problems. CATT visit people at home if they are sick and try to help them get better at home. But sometimes if the mental illness makes a person really sick, CATT will help take people to hospital to get special care.



Depression can also happen to people with other sorts of mental illnesses, like schizophrenia and bi-polar disorder.

Having someone in your family with depression can be hard. It can sometimes make you feel sad yourself, or angry that the person cannot just 'get better' because you want them to.

Remember:

- **it is not their fault they have depression**
- **It is not YOUR fault**
- **it is not your job to make your mum or dad feel better (tho' hugs are free)**
- **with the right help they can feel better**
- **it is important for you to do the things each day that are important like going to school and having fun.**
- **talk to another trusted adult if you are worried, sad or confused....**

