

Depression in adults: treatment and management

Information for the public

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Depression: the care you should expect

Depression is a common mental health problem, affecting nearly 1 in 6 people in the UK at some time in their life. Even depression classed as 'less severe' can affect a person's personal, social and work life for the worse, and for people with more severe depression the symptoms can be disabling and long lasting.

With the right treatment and support people with depression can make a good recovery. However, people with depression sometimes do not seek help from their doctor, or their symptoms may not be recognised as depression by either their doctor or themselves. For some people, the symptoms of depression itself can make asking for help difficult, for example, if they are feeling easily overwhelmed, hopeless or their symptoms mean they struggle to focus and carry out everyday tasks (often called 'brain fog'). They may also believe they are a burden on others.

Some people may also have experienced stigma about their symptoms or depression in general, which holds them back from seeking help.

We want this guideline to make a difference to people with depression by making sure:

- doctors and other healthcare professionals are alert to when someone may have depression, and know the right questions to ask
- your healthcare professional helps you choose the treatment that best suits you, depending on your preferences, your symptoms, and other circumstances, treatment plans for depression can look very different from person to person
- you understand the benefits and risks of each treatment (including side effects and possible withdrawal effects for any medicines)
- you have support and check-ups during your treatment, and you know what to do if a treatment you try does not help, or if it is not right for you and you want to change.

Making decisions together

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your healthcare professional should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

To help you make decisions, think about the following:

- What matters most to you – what do you want to get out of any treatment?
- What are you most worried about – are there some side effects or downsides to possible treatments that worry you more than others?
- Have you had any experience with treatments for depression in the past, and do you want to try that same treatment again or try a different one?
- How will the treatment affect your day to day life?

If you cannot understand the information you are given, tell your healthcare professional.

Read more about [making decisions about your care](#).

Where can I find out more?

The [NHS website](#) has more information about depression.

The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [Depression UK](#)
- [Hafal \(Wales\)](#), part of the [Adferiad Recovery](#) group of charities
- [Mental Health Matters](#)
- [Mind](#), Infoline 0300 123 3393
- [National Survivor User Network](#)
- [SANE](#), SANEline 0300 304 7000

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by depression and staff who treat and support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

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