

## **What is depression?**

We all know our mood changes from day to day. Some things make us happy and some things make us sad.

Depression is considered an illness when these changes in mood are excessive. The person feels very sad all the time for many weeks and cannot make themselves happier even if they try.

## **What are the causes of depression?**

There is usually no obvious cause for depression starting in a particular person. Occasionally it might be triggered by something bad happening;

- Loss of a job
- Bereavement
- Failure or great disappointment (e.g. an exam)

Depression can also be a side effect of certain medicines (birth control pill, blood pressure medication). Some women develop depression after giving birth.

## **What are the signs of depression?**

- Feelings of sadness. Crying without any apparent reason.
- Feelings of guilt, hopelessness and rejection.
- Lacking interest in activities that were previously enjoyed.
- Loss of interest in self care, household chores and work.
- Loss of feelings of care and warmth towards family and friends.
- Loss of appetite and weight loss.
- Constant tiredness and lack of energy.
- Sleep disturbance.
- Headaches or other physical pain when no evidence of a problem.
- Restlessness, irritability and hostility.
- The person might try to hurt themselves and maybe even try to kill themselves (commit suicide).

## **How to care for someone with depression**

- They need to be supported by family and friends and be reassured that things will get better.
- Encourage them to participate in everyday activities and things they used to enjoy. Praise them for small achievements.
- Take them to see a specialist mental health doctor or nurse.
- Drugs might be prescribed and should be bought and administered accurately and regularly, even when the person seems better.
- If the person is threatening or initiating suicide they need to be continuously watched to keep them safe.

Medication can take several weeks to take effect. Some medicines for depression can have side effects (dry mouth, constipation, dizziness, sleepiness). These will reduce as treatment progresses.

## Advice to the family

- **Depression is an illness and needs treatment**
- **Mental illness is not caused by possession of an evil spirit**
- **The person should not be blamed for their illness**
- **Mental illness could happen to you or any member of your family**
- **Show the person love and consideration**
- **Do not abuse or mishandle the person**

**Name of specialist health worker:**

**Contact no.:**

**Address:**



Caring for someone with

# Depression



Depression is a very common disease. It is a mental illness that can affect men and women, rich and poor. The person should not be blamed for their condition.

The person feels very sad for no apparent reason. They lose interest in caring for themselves, work and might even want to kill themselves (commit suicide).