

Depression

Most people, children and adults feel low or 'blue' occasionally. Feeling sad is a normal reaction to stressful or upsetting experiences. However, if these feelings go on and on, affect your daily life this is when it is classed as 'depression'.

Depression often starts in the teen years. Often teenagers are affected as they enter adulthood and the condition is much less common in children under 12. It can affect anybody, but is more common in girls than boys.

What are the symptoms of depression? Some of the symptoms of depression include:

- Being moody and irritable – easily upset, 'ratty' or tearful
- Becoming withdrawn – avoiding friends, family and regular activities
- Feeling guilty or bad, being self-critical and self-blaming
- Feeling unhappy, miserable and lonely a lot of the time
- Feeling hopeless and wanting to die
- Finding it difficult to concentrate
- Not looking after personal appearance
- Changes in sleep pattern: sleeping too little or too much, feeling tired
- Not interested in eating, or eating too little or too much
- Suffering aches and pains, such as headaches or stomach aches
- Feeling ugly/not good looking

If a teenager or young person has all, or most of, these signs and have had them over a long period of time, it may mean they are depressed.

Who can help?

A GP, school nurse, or the welfare officer at school, will be able to advise a young person or their family about what help is available. A referral to the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) can be arranged.

www.youngminds.org.uk Provides information and advice on child mental health issues

www.epicfriends.co.uk This website is all about helping young people who might be struggling emotionally

www.youngpeoplecornwall.org **Young People Cornwall** engages, inspires and supports young people across the county, with youth work that makes a difference.

www.mindyourway.co.uk Cornwall specific young people and mental health website. It's made for young people, by young people.

If you would like more information or support around depression, please contact Caroline Hunt, Student Welfare Officer who is able to discuss this in more depth with you.