

Depression hos unge, engelsk

Information for

YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT DEPRESSION

The disorder, its treatment and prevention



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This brochure is written for those who want to know more about depression in young people. It is mainly intended for those being treated for depression by the psychiatric service in Region Midtjylland. The brochure covers how depression manifests itself in young people, how depression is treated, and what you and your parents can do to help you get through depression.

We hope this brochure will help you to learn more about depression.

Kind regards

The psychiatric service in Region Midtjylland

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WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a disorder that can strike anyone – adults, children and young people. A depressed person has been feeling sad or just not very happy for a long time. They tire more easily and are unable to cope with the things they normally do. They often think that they are no good at anything, and that nothing is much fun anymore. They might feel that life is no longer worth living.

It is entirely natural for you to have days now and again when you feel sad and find things tedious – days when you think you are not particularly good at anything – everybody does. But if sad thoughts and emotions persist for a long time, you might be depressed, and you may need help.

“ I didn't know what it [depression] was. I was just tired and I felt everything was tedious or I couldn't take pleasure in anything. ”

MARK, AGE 15.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION?

There are various signs of depression. The number and nature of the signs of depression experienced varies from person to person.

Here is a list of the various signs of depression in young people. These signs are also called symptoms.

Sadness or bad mood

Your mood has changed. You feel sad and in a bad mood and perhaps cry more than usual. You might also have

difficulty feeling anything at all – or you feel empty inside. You might also argue more with your parents or friends.

Loss of joy and interests

You lose the desire to do the things you otherwise enjoy. Leisure interests or hanging out with friends is not as much fun or as nice as it usually is. You might also quickly start to feel sad or in a bad mood after you have had a positive experience.



Less energy

You might feel more tired and not have the energy to do the things you usually do. Perhaps you stay at home more and you cannot really be bothered to do anything.

Less self-confidence

You might feel you are not coping well with things or you are no good at things, e.g. at school or compared to your friends. Perhaps you feel you do not matter to anyone, and that you are not worth loving.

Feeling guilty

You might think a lot about being to blame for things that go wrong. These thoughts linger, even though other people assure you that it is not your fault.

Difficulty sleeping

You may have difficulty getting to sleep at night and difficulty getting up and getting going in the morning. You feel more tired throughout the day. Sometimes you get night and day the wrong way around, so you are awake late into the evening or at night and asleep during the day.

Difficulty eating

You might lose your appetite and interest in food, so you might eat less and lose weight. Or it might be the other way around for you: you eat too much to comfort yourself.

Thoughts of death or suicide

Perhaps you speculate more about death, and you might think it would be better if you were no longer alive. Perhaps you have thoughts about taking your own life.

Difficulty concentrating

You have difficulty gathering your thoughts and concentrating, e.g. at school. You might also have difficulty making perfectly ordinary choices and decisions.

Agitation and a slow pace

Some people find it very difficult to sit still and be at peace. Others find they think more slowly, or move and talk more slowly.

Pains

You get headaches, stomach aches or other pains more readily.



Anxiety

You tend to worry more easily and you might be afraid of various things, e.g. of being alone or away from your parents.

Irritation and anger

You more easily become irritated or angry with other people and perhaps also with yourself. Perhaps you spend more time on your own to avoid conflicts. Some young people also start to play truant or steal.

WHY DO SOME YOUNG PEOPLE GET DEPRESSION?

It is not known precisely why some young people suffer from depression while others do not. Research indicates that children and young people are at greater risk of suffering from depression if:

- ❑ **Others in the family are depressed or have had depression.**
- ❑ **The young person has experienced other problems in life,** e.g. serious illness or a death, or the young person has other difficulties, e.g. anxiety, difficulty concentrating or academic problems. Young people who have a tendency to have

negative expectations and always think the worst are also more inclined to become depressed.

- ❑ **The young person has been stressed for a long period and is exposed to more than he/she can cope with.** For example, the young person may have great difficulty keeping up at school, is being bullied or is going through major family problems.

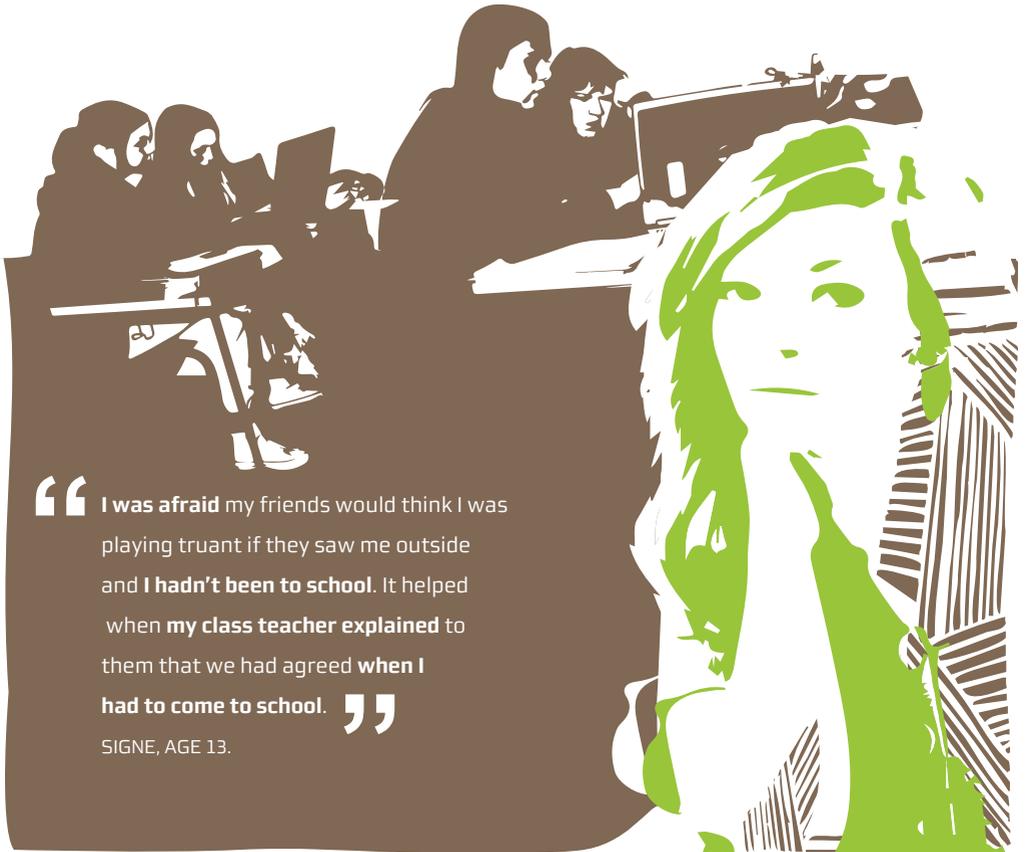
As a rule, there are various reasons why someone becomes depressed – and sometimes it is difficult to identify any reason at all.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU ARE DEPRESSED?

To find out if you are depressed, you should talk to a doctor or psychologist who has a special understanding of depression in children and young people. During the meeting, you will discuss how you feel. Your parents should also come along to the consultation and explain their perceptions of you. They should also talk about how you have developed from a very young age.

The idea of these conversations is to discover what signs/symptoms of depression you have. It is also important to find out whether any other difficulties or problems are stressing you out, besides depression.

The doctor/psychologist can assess whether or not you are depressed based on the nature and number of your symptoms.



“ I was afraid my friends would think I was playing truant if they saw me outside and I hadn't been to school. It helped when my class teacher explained to them that we had agreed when I had to come to school. ”

SIGNE, AGE 13.

WHAT TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE FOR DEPRESSION?

There are several different types of treatment for treating someone who is depressed.

Here is a list of the types of treatment that could help young people in depression. Not all young people need all these types of treatment.

Psychoeducation

Learning about the disorder is known as psychoeducation. It is important for all young people in depression, and for their parents and close relatives, to learn about what depression is. You all need to learn about the symptoms of the disorder known as depression, learn what you struggle with the most, how your parents can help you, and what you can do yourself to get well again. By learning about depression, you and your parents can find out what it takes to give you the support you need to gradually start feeling better.

Relief from stress

Another important thing that helps young people with depression is relief from stress. Relieving you from stress might mean that, for a while, you will not have to cope with the same tasks and live up to the same demands as usual. For example, you might spend less time at school, have less homework, do fewer jobs around the home or not take part in every family activity away from home. The idea of

relieving you of stress is to conserve your energy and try to make sure you avoid experiences that you cannot cope with because you are feeling tired and sad.

Relief from stress does not mean you are to do nothing at all. You still need to do something and have a few tasks to perform. When someone is depressed, it actually helps to keep going, for example with easier, short school assignments or a few little jobs around the house. Perhaps tidying your room would be too overwhelming, but emptying the dishwasher would be easier for you.

It is very important, too, for you to do something that could make you more cheerful or content. You might not be able to cope with a class party, but a visit from a friend for a few hours is OK.

The important thing about relieving stress is for you and your parents to agree on tasks that you are able to cope with, and enjoyable activities.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is another word for counselling. It means you talk to a therapist (usually a doctor or psychologist) about how you are feeling, and what you can do to get better. As a rule, your parents will also be involved in such consultations – either for the whole consultation or for

part of it. This also gives your parents an opportunity to talk to you and your therapist about what works best for you.

Medication

Some young people who have been depressed for a long time or who think about suicide a lot also need medication to get well again. Medication is not like waving a magic wand to make you happy again just like that, but medication can help lift your mood and give you more energy. It may take 2–8 weeks for the medication to start working. The effects of the medication can differ from person to person. Some young people do not find that medication helps them.

The doctor, together with you and your parents, is the one who decides whether or not medication is a good idea for you.

Before you go on medication, the doctor will tell you how the medicine works and what side-effects it might have. Side-effects are things that happen in your body – things that you do not want, but which are the result of your body being affected by the medication. Side-effects could include stomach aches or difficulty sleeping. As a rule, the side-effects pass once your body has become accustomed to the medication. However, some continue to experience the side-effects, and an agreement will need to be made with your doctor about whether you should stop the medication or switch to a different type. When you take the medication, especially at the start, you must have regular consultations with your doctor. The doctor must check whether the medicine is working, and whether there are any side-effects.

WHAT CAN YOU DO YOURSELF IF YOU ARE DEPRESSED?

Do some of the things that usually make you happy

If you are depressed, it is a good idea for you to keep trying to do some of the things you used to enjoy – meet up with your friends for short periods, watch a film with your family or do some sport.

Know your limits

You might not have the energy or strength to do something for very long at a time, but if that is the case, you can do it for a shorter time. Be honest with the people around you. Tell them when you are getting tired and need a break or need to stop. For example, if it is difficult for you to manage a full day at school, you and your parents

and teachers might be able to agree on a shorter school day for you for a while.

Get some fresh air and eat healthily

Getting some exercise and fresh air generally also helps your mood, even if you do not really feel you want to or have the energy for it. You will also get strength from eating your daily meals, even if perhaps you do not feel much like eating or you would prefer to eat junk food.

Go to bed and get up at more or less fixed times

If you have difficulty getting to sleep at night, it is still best not to stay up too late, because that makes it more difficult to

get up the next morning. If you feel tired during the day and need a rest, do not sleep for too long – otherwise you will have difficulty getting off to sleep again at night.

Be open with your parents

Tell your parents when you are really struggling so you can spend some time together. Perhaps you could have a chat or find something you can do together to get you away from your sad thoughts for a while. If you are feeling sad, it is generally worse if you are alone with this feeling of sadness. Tell your parents, too, if you have thoughts or plans about suicide. Your parents will help you through the tough periods so that nothing will happen to you.

Keep in touch with your closest friends

It is a good idea to keep in touch with your friends – perhaps with your best friend. Even if you are too tired for a visit, you can still send each other text messages or write to each other via social media.

Tell your closest friends that you are depressed. Tell them that you are not able to do the things you usually do, or that you do not feel like doing much of what you usually do at the moment. Your parents might be able to help you. It is also best if your parents let your teacher and your class know so that they can be considerate towards you, and you will not have to pretend to feel better than you do.

Write down the things you need to remember

If you have difficulty concentrating, try writing down the things you need to remember.



“

I wanted my friend to come and see me. My parents helped me to decide that the visits should be short. They also suggested some things we could do.

”

JESPER, AGE 14.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR DEPRESSION IS PASSING?

Unfortunately, an episode of depression does not end just like that. Instead, you gradually start to feel better. At some point, you will notice that you have more energy and you are able to do more things for longer at a time. As time goes by, you will feel happier more often, and you will have fewer periods of feeling sad.

You will probably also think less about the things you feel you are no good at. If you have been thinking about suicide, these thoughts will occur less frequently or stop altogether. Finally, you will mostly feel happy and only occasionally sad – just like everyone else who is not suffering from this disorder.

ADVICE FOR A DEPRESSED PERSON

- Remember that depression is a disorder and not anyone's fault.
- Remember that by far the majority of episodes of depression pass with treatment.
- Tell your parents how you feel.
- Do some of the things you usually enjoy doing – but maybe for shorter periods.
- Try to get out for some fresh air every day.
- It will help your mood if you get some exercise.
- Eat your daily meals (the same size portions – not less and not more) – this will boost your strength.
- Give yourself breaks during the day to relax, and go to bed at the usual time.
- Try to keep in touch with your closest friends.
- Tell your closest friends that you are depressed, or get help to explain this to them.

About the quotations

The quotations are anonymous, and the names are fictitious.

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Where can you find MORE INFORMATION

 psykinfomidt.dk

Here, you will also be able to find articles on psychiatric diagnoses in different languages

 depNet.dk

 depressionsforeningen.dk

 psykiatrifonden.dk

