

## Mental Health in your Workplace: Topics and Issues

# Depression

## What is depression?

Did you know 1 in 6 adults experience depression? According to the NHS- depression is a low mood that can last a long time or keep returning, affecting your everyday life. The symptoms of depression can be complex and vary widely between people. If you're depressed, you may feel sad, hopeless and lose interest in things you used to enjoy. The symptoms persist for weeks or months and are bad enough to interfere with your work, social life and family life.

## What are the symptoms of depression?

### Psychological symptoms include:

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Having low self-esteem
- Feeling guilt-ridden
- Feeling irritable and intolerant of others
- Not getting any enjoyment out of life
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Having suicidal thoughts or thoughts of harming yourself

### Physical symptoms include:

- Moving or speaking more slowly than usual
- Changes in appetite or weight (usually decreased, but sometimes increased)
- Disturbed sleep – for example, finding it difficult to fall asleep at night or finding it hard to stay awake during the day

### Social symptoms include:

- Avoiding contact with friends and taking part in fewer social activities
- Neglecting your hobbies and interests

# What can you do to help an employee with depression?

- Facilitate open and honest conversations with your employee about their needs, and practice confidentiality to ensure trusted support.
- Consider taking mental health first aid training to learn about depression and become equipped to help your employee
- Signpost to a GP if your employee is not already undergoing treatment
- Signpost to in house mentoring or counselling
- Address workplace triggers, for example ask your employee if they need to adjust their workload or working hours.
- Offer time off and allow your employee a mental health break
- Allow adjusted working hours or time off to attend appointments
- Be kind and listen to your employee, sometimes all it takes is someone who is willing to listen for an employee to open up and talk about the help they need.

## Reasonable adjustments for an employee with depression might include:

- Reviewing tasks or deadlines to help someone have a reasonable workload while managing their mental health
- Breaking down work into short term tasks to reduce the complexity of someone's work and to provide structure to the working day
- Reviewing someone's responsibilities to reduce those that are more stressful – for example reducing phone calls or customer facing work
- Moving someone into a different role or department if their current job has a negative impact on their mental health
- Making sure someone is working with trusted people to limit the impact of different working and communication styles
- Allowing someone to work from home to engage in activities that allow them to manage their mental health – for example, so they can take regular breaks without feeling other people are watching them
- Providing rest areas away from the main staff area to allow someone to rest away from social demands
- Providing reserved parking to reduce the stress of commuting

## Sources and signposting

[Examples of reasonable adjustments for mental health: Reasonable adjustments for mental health - Acas](#)

[How to support employees with depression | Benenden Health](#)

[Symptoms - Depression in adults - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Depression | NHS inform](#)

[Depression Statistics UK | 2023 Data | Champion Health](#)