



Wellbeing  
& Recovery  
College

Midlands Partnership  
NHS Foundation Trust



*A Keele University Teaching Trust*

# Understanding Depression Week 1

## 1.0) What is depression?

Depression is a common mental health problem, believed to affect more than 300 million people worldwide. According to the World Health Organisation, it's now the leading cause of ill health and disability around the globe<sup>1</sup>. It's not only an important mental health issue; it's an important health issue. Depression is characterised by a variety of symptoms that affect mood, behaviour, overall health and are persistent.

### 1.1) The Difference Between Depression and Sadness

A common misconception is that depression is the same as sadness but they are very different. Sadness is a normal human experience on the emotion spectrum and is usually triggered by a situation or experience.

Although depression can be triggered by an event or situation, it is not part the normal emotional spectrum. The impact of depression affects someone psychologically, physically and socially.

#### When to seek help:

The NHS advice is to seek support from your GP if symptoms of depression persist for most of the day, every day for more than 2 weeks.

#### SADNESS

- Feelings of sadness are temporary
- Comes and goes as negative situations come and go.
- Often connected to a life change or something negative.
- Usually without feelings of suicide
- Can make a person take less care of themselves

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation 'Let's Talk' campaign video, April 2017  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-depression/symptoms/>



#### DEPRESSION

##### Psychological Symptoms

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Having low self-esteem
- Feeling tearful
- Feeling guilt-ridden
- Feeling irritable and intolerant of others
- Having no motivation/ interest in things
- Finding it difficult to make decisions
- Not getting any enjoyment out of life
- Feeling anxious or worried
- Thoughts of suicide or self-harm

##### Physical Symptoms

- Moving/speaking more slowly than usual
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Constipation
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Lack of energy
- Low sex drive (loss of libido)
- Changes to your menstrual cycle
- Disturbed sleep

##### Social Symptoms

- Not doing well at work
- Avoiding contact with friends and taking part in fewer social activities
- Neglecting your hobbies and interests
- Having difficulties in your home/ family life

