

## Self-test Depression

Try this self-test but remember to answer “yes” if one of the following statements applies to you for more than two weeks. All statements to which you agree are the equivalent of 1 point; whereas question 14 counts for 5 points.

If you reach a total of 5 points or more, this might be an indication that you are affected by depression. Please, find help and support at the local support services mentioned in this flyer.

It is often difficult to distinguish from “being in a bad mood” and “being depressed”

1. You are often depressed or discouraged without identifiable reason.
2. You can hardly concentrate or you often feel swamped even with little decisions.
3. You have lost your drive or you often feel exhausted and/or agitated.
4. You have no longer an interest in things you liked before
5. You have stopped believing in your own ability and skills.
6. You agonise about feelings of guilt and self-criticism.
7. You are pessimistic about the future.
8. Mornings are often the hardest time for you
9. You suffer from persistent sleeping disorders.
10. You withdraw from social contacts.
11. You suffer from physical complaints, which cannot be explained from biological causes.
12. You have no or little appetite.
13. You have lost your interest in sexuality.
14. You are desperate and you don't want to live anymore.

## Warning signs for depression

- Persistent feelings of sorrow, hopelessness and unhappiness often without an identifiable reason which cannot be influenced
- Obvious lack of decision-making ability and reduced concentration
- Anxiety and excessive worries
- Daily mood changes which clear in the evening
- Strong feelings of guilt and inferiority
- Agonising despair with the wish not to live anymore
- Sleeping disturbances
- Loss of sexual interest
- Various physical complaints or pains, e.g. headache, stomach problems or a heavy feeling in the chest

## Warning signs for suicidal behaviour

- Previous suicidal behaviour
- Presence of suicidal thoughts
- Preoccupation with death
- Depression
- Feeling isolated
- Increase in substance/drug/alcohol use
- Experiencing sudden changes in mood/behaviour
- Making final arrangements – giving away possessions

### Important:

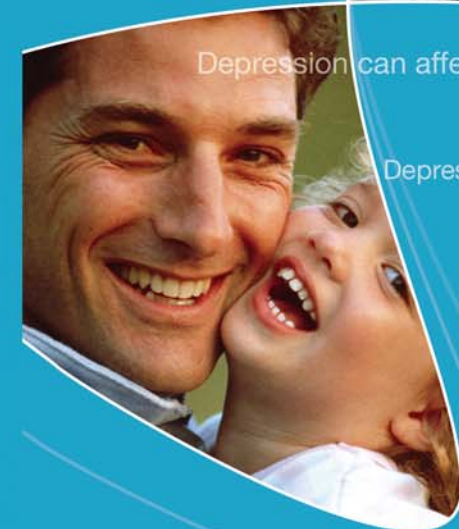
It is easier for the doctor to help you when you tell him/her about both physical and mental complaints!



“Depression can affect everybody”

“Depression has many faces”

“Depression can be treated”



Depression can affect everybody

Depression has many faces

Depression can be treated

### National Suicide Research Foundation

1 Perrott Avenue,  
College Road,  
Cork.

Tel: 021 4277 499  
Fax: 021 4277 545  
Email: [mary.nsrif@iol.ie](mailto:mary.nsrif@iol.ie)

[www.nsrif.org](http://www.nsrif.org)

**Samaritans** (Callsave) **1850 60 90 90**  
Coach Street, Cork **021 427 13 23**  
Providing befriending 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to those passing through personal crisis

**Suicide Helpline** (FreeFone) **1800 742 745**  
Health Service Executive – Southern Area  
A help-line (open daily 6.00pm – 10.00pm) for people who are feeling suicidal or equally for a family member or friend who is concerned about someone. People can ring the number and talk, in complete confidence, to someone who will listen and offer help and support.

**Farm & Rural Stress Helpline** (FreeFone) **1800 742 645**  
A help-line (open daily 6.00pm – 10.00pm) for people who may be feeling down or are suffering from stress or depression in the rural community. People can ring the number and talk, in complete confidence, to someone who will listen and offer help and support.

**GROW** **021 427 75 20**  
11 Liberty St Cork. Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Mental Health organisation promoting personal growth through friendship and mutual support groups.



Cork & Kerry's Alliance for Awareness  
of Depression & Suicidal Behaviour

[www.nsrif.org](http://www.nsrif.org)

## “Depression can affect everybody”



About 15 – 20 million people in Europe suffer from depression. Although depression is common, it is often not thought to be important by the general public and is also underestimated and misunderstood.

Depression is not an expression of personal failure, but a disorder or condition that can affect anyone, of any age, profession or social background.

Depression often happens to a person who has had no previous experience of depression. Sometimes, it is difficult to distinguish from a common depressive mood or a life crisis. Detailed investigation can lead to early detection which is of great importance as the majority of depressed patients can be treated successfully. But if depression remains undetected, the disorder causes unnecessary suffering, which can be harmful to the individual and which could result in suicidal behaviour.

## “Depression has many faces”

In many cases stressful events, such as the bereavement of a loved person or ongoing excessive demands, can lead to depression. Many affected people suffer from a single depressive episode that lasts for weeks or months. In other cases the depression can come back in many episodes.

Not all people suffering from depression have the same symptoms. Low mood doesn't always have to be the strongest feeling, it can sometimes be a lack of energy or feelings of inner restlessness. Sleep disorders and physical complaints frequently occur as well as loss of sexual interests. Beyond the feeling of unhappiness, blunted emotions and inner emptiness, severe anxiety can often occur. The seriousness of depressive disorders varies; sometimes even everyday life is disrupted. It can vary greatly across the life cycle from old age to post natal depression.



## “Depression can be treated”

Today, depression can be treated successfully. Due to specific medications and psychotherapy highly efficient treatment methods are available. Unfortunately, they are not used often enough, as depression is still frequently overlooked.

Research shows that in the context of depression, physical changes can occur independently from a concrete cause. Signals of positive feelings become reduced, whereas those of negative feelings are increased. This is the point where antidepressants take effect by adjusting the change so that the depressive symptoms decrease. In order to avoid a recurrent depressive mode, in some cases a continuous and long-term medical treatment may be appropriate.

Psychotherapy or counselling can be helpful for mild depression or with severe depression in conjunction with medical treatment; the individual learns strategies for dealing with his or her problems. Enhancing positive experiences and reducing negative thinking are both very important. Relatives and friends recognising that depression is a serious disorder can offer support to those coping with their depression.



## Depression and suicidal behaviour in Ireland

Many people who suffer from depression have an increased risk of suicidal behaviour. The existing high rates of suicide and deliberate self harm (DSH) are regarded to be important indicators for the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of depression. Although effective treatments, such as anti-depressants and psychotherapy are available, only about 10% of depressed patients receive best possible care.

The reasons for the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of depression range from:

- shortcomings at the primary care level (lack of knowledge concerning diagnosis and treatment of depression)
- underestimation of the severity of the disorder by individuals (depression is not perceived as a real disorder)
- the depressed individual himself/herself (hopelessness or compliance problems)



### Support Reference Card

**National Suicide Bereavement Support Network** 085 7224819  
P.O. Box 1, Youghal, Co Cork  
Providing support and encouragement to new and existing suicide bereavement support groups and providing information to the bereaved

**Irish Friends of the Suicide Bereaved** 021 4316722  
St Finbarr's Hospital  
Support Nights, personal one-to-one support, meeting every Wednesday night 8-10pm

**Citizens Information** (Lo-Call) 1890 777 121  
Provides easy access by telephone and e-mail to information and advice on a broad range of social services.

**AWARE** 021 455 0027  
SMA Parish Centre, Wilton, Cork. Support group for those affected by depression, meeting at the Parish Centre, every Tuesday night at 8pm.

“Depression is common and can be life-threatening if left unnoticed, but can be treated very effectively.”

“If you are not sure whether you suffer from depression or not, it is recommended to get in contact with a GP, a psychotherapist or a counsellor”.

“Depression is neither due to personal failure nor inevitable destiny. In most cases it can be treated successfully.”