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!

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.

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.

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”.

Depression & Suicidal Behaviour
“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.nsrf@iol.ie
www.nsrf.org

Cork & Kerry’s Alliance for Awareness of Depression & Suicidal Behaviour
www.nsrf.org

Samaritans
(Callsave) 1850 60 90 90
Coach Street, Cork
Providing free, face-to-face 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 8am – 10pm) 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 support.

Farm & Rural Stress Helpline
(Freefone) 1800 742 645
A help-line (open daily 8am – 10pm) 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
1 Liberty St, Cork. Hours: Mon-Fri 9am-6pm. Mental Health organisation promoting personal growth through friendship and mutual support groups.
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 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.

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.

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.

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)

Depression has many faces

Depression and suicidal behaviour in Ireland

Support Reference Card

National Suicide Bereavement Support Network 085 7224819 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 Night, personal one-to-one support, meeting every Wednesday night 8-10pm

Citizens Information 0-Call 1800 777 121 Providing easy access by telephone and e-mail to information and advice on a broad range of social services.

AWARE 021 405 0027 SMA Parish Centre, Wilton, Cork. Support group for those affected by depression, meeting at the Parish Centre, every Tuesday night at 8pm.