

# Depression & Suicidal Behaviour

*Depression can affect everybody*



*Depression has many faces*



*Depression can be treated*

*Optimising Suicide Prevention Programmes and their Implementation in Limerick (OSPI-Limerick)*

“Depression can affect everybody”

“Depression has many faces”

“Depression can be treated”

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*Pictures posed by models.*

## Warning signs for depression

- Persistent feelings of sorrow, hopelessness and unhappiness often without an identifiable reason
- 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
- Sleep 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.

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 between “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 no longer have 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 disturbances.
10. You withdraw from social contacts.
11. You suffer from physical complaints, which cannot be explained by 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.

## Support Services Card

<b>Shannondoc</b> Out of hours family doctor service	<b>1850 212 999</b>
<b>Slainte</b> Drug and alcohol counselling service. You can also drop into their office on 57 O Connell St., Limerick.	<b>061 318633</b>
<b>Adult Counselling Service</b> The NCS is a community based service for adults who were hurt by childhood abuse in Ireland.	<b>061 411900</b>

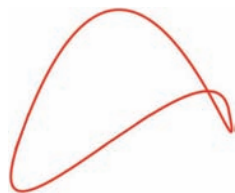
## Depression can affect everybody

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 condition or disorder 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 between a common depressive mood and a life crisis. Detailed assessment can lead to early detection which is of great importance as the majority of depressed patients can be treated successfully. If depression remains undetected, it causes unnecessary suffering, which can be harmful to the individual and which could result in suicidal behaviour.



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

## 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.

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 interest. 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.



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

## Depression can be treated

Currently, 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 of 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 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 is neither due to personal failure nor inevitable destiny. In most cases it can be treated successfully.”

## 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 as important indicators for the under-diagnosis and under-treatment of depression in Ireland. 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)



- **Limerick Local Health Office** 061 483249  
• The Limerick Local Health Office provides information on primary care and community based services in the Limerick area.
- **Aware** 1890 303 302  
• The Aware helpline is a listening service for people affected by depression, either as sufferers or as family and friends.
- **Samaritans** 1850 60 90 90  
• Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.
- **Console** 061 306792  
• Console provides support and information for those affected by suicide.