

# ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

## Depression

### Am I sad or depressed?

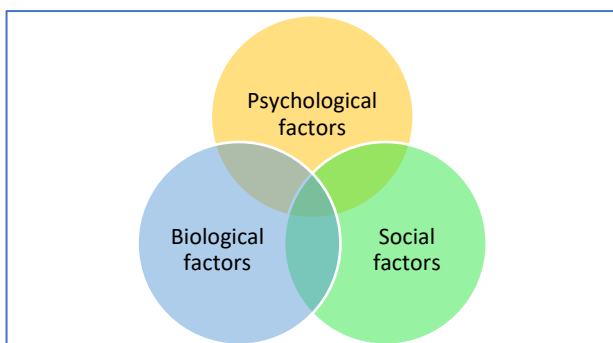
Depression is an illness with specific symptoms. It is not something you can “snap out of” at will. Some but not all of the **symptoms of Depression** that can be noticed are:-

- Persistent low mood for more than 2 weeks
- Feelings of sadness, guilt, helplessness and worthlessness
- Lost of interest in things that bring joy
- Difficulty sleeping/ Oversleeping
- Overeating/ Loss of appetite
- Fatigue
- Suicidal thought, attempts or self-harm
- Difficulty concentrating



### Why do I feel like this ?

There is no single cause or factors that contributes the onset of depression. Depression is more likely to be experienced by people with a family history of depression. Aversive life events that are stressful like bereavement, an unexpected change or a shock that makes one perceive that one is out of control of the situation can all trigger depression. At times, symptoms of depression may appear during or right after the events or it could appear years after a past event or issue. It is important to note that depression is not a sign of laziness, weakness or the inability to “be positive”.



### Factors contributing to depression according to the biopsychosocial model of depression

- Psychological factors: Negative cognitive patterns
- Biological factors: Genetic factors, hormones and genetic factors.
- Social factors: Stressful experiences, low social support and aversive life events

### What can I do to make myself feel better?

A helpful way to deal with depression is to make an appointment to see a professional, to begin a course of anti-depressants and/or talking therapies such as counselling. If you feel your symptoms aren't yet so extreme, you could try some of the following:

- Talk to someone close to you about how you really feel. Going over a painful experience and allowing yourself to cry can help you come to terms with it;
- Try to spend some time each day walking outdoors;
- Eat regularly and healthily;
- Try to keep your alcohol intake to a minimum as it will only make the depression worse and harder to treat;
- If you can't sleep, get up and do something you like, that can distract you till you feel ready to sleep.
- Try some relaxation techniques that could help distract you from your thoughts and calm the body and mind.



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**“Asking For Help  
Reveals **Strength**,  
Not Weakness.”**

Many of the techniques mentioned above are about taking care of your body; physically getting in as good shape as possible so that your mood can begin to improve. Physically taking care of yourself is about supporting yourself through this difficult time. However, there are times where you may like to get some external support to do this as staying connected could help you feel less helpless and lonely in this difficult situation.

### Getting professional help

If you are very low in mood or feeling very depressed or suicidal, consider going to a local GP to see if you need further consultation with a specialist. If you are prescribed anti-depressants, it may take a few weeks to begin being effective. Your doctor will discuss this with you if he/she prescribes them. It's important to take the tablets regularly so that they can stabilise your mood. Only stop taking them after consulting your doctor, who will advise you on how and when it's safe to do so. Stopping suddenly can lead to headaches, renewed symptoms of depression, anxiety, stomach upsets and other disturbances.

Currently registered students can contact either of our Administrators and register for an appointment with our counsellor. What matters is that you talk to someone rather than avoid people.

### Giving help

You might be reading this information as one of your friends or close ones has been showing signs of depression or seem “off” lately. If that's the case, your support to he or she matters, even if its minimal.

### You can try to:

- **Talk to the depressed person.** Simple as that might sound, talking and listening to understand conveys that you value that person. That alone could be worth a lot to someone who is depressed.
- **Encourage the person to seek professional help** from a GP or UoRM Counselling Service, where they will be listened to non-judgementally.
- **Supporting a friend who feels so low can be draining.** If you're very worried about your friend/flatmate, contact the university Counselling Service for an appointment for yourself, to have the chance to talk it through.



### Useful contacts & resources:

- **UoRM Counselling Service:** Email: [ruok@reading.edu.my](mailto:ruok@reading.edu.my) or telephone: **0162084012**
- **KPJ Johor Specialist Hospital:** Telephone: 072253000, or email [jsh@jsh.kpjhealth.com.my](mailto:jsh@jsh.kpjhealth.com.my)
- **Befrienders Johor Bahru:** Telephone: 073312300, or email [sam@befriendersjb.org](mailto:sam@befriendersjb.org)
- **Coping with Depression:** <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/coping-with-depression.htm>