

LET'S LOOK AT DEPRESSION

1 - WHAT IS IT?

Description:

A feeling of sadness and hopelessness lasting for more than two weeks with significant effect on the sufferer's life.

Types:

Depression pure...as above, with the inability to shake off negative feelings.

Dysthymic depression : periods of depression followed by periods when the person feels normal.

Manic or bipolar depression, when feeling down alternates with high agitation.

2 - WHO MAY BE AFFECTED?

1 in 5 of all adults will have suffered from a depressive illness at some point in their life.

Up to 8.5% of adolescents get seriously depressed each year.

3 - WHAT CAN CAUSE DEPRESSION?

- reaction to illness or sustained pain...

- reaction to loss or trauma (bereavement, divorce of parents, break-up of relationship, victim of crime, bullying or abuse...)

-can also be genetic (chemical imbalance)

-Stress...various pressures may at times be too much to take on (school, peers, society, parent's expectations, your own, the future, life in general, growing up, physical and mental changes...)

-sometimes it just happens or stress-full experiences may have seemed not to matter too much at the time, yet they piled up...

4 - HOW CAN YOU TELL IF SOMEONE MAY BE DEPRESSED?

If 5 or more of the following symptoms are experienced for more than 2 weeks, or if any one of them prevent you from keeping up a normal routine.

- Feeling of sadness that doesn't go away
- Feelings of worthlessness, guilt, anxiety...
- Unusual weight loss or gain, insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Loss of motivation, concentration, energy.
- A continued feeling of stress, low self esteem, fear...
- Anger, hostility, irritability, recklessness.
- Truancy or school phobia. Lowering of academic performance.
- Social isolation
- Negativity or absence of feelings...
- Suicidal thoughts

DEPRESSION IS AN ILLNESS, IT IS TREATABLE

1 - FACT OR FICTION

Some myths prevent people from seeking help.

Myth: with teens come mood swings, young people don't get depressed!

Fact: depression can affect any one any time, it's not just a mood swing!

Myth: To tell an adult a friend may be depressed is betrayal...

Fact: Depression makes you feel isolated, to ask for help may be very hard...

Myth: Talking about how you feel makes it worse...(just snap out of it!)

Fact: Talking through your feelings helps you clarify them and will give you the courage to seek help.

2 - IF YOU ARE CONCERNED, TALK TO SOMEONE...

- To a close friend
- To a family member you trust
- To your family doctor, the school psychologist...
- To your form teacher, a responsible adult...
- To a member of a recognised supportive organisation (see list below)

3 - TREATMENT AVAILABLE :

Having depression is not a sign of weakness or failure, it just means you need some help as in any

other medical condition.

In a mild episode, consistent caring support from family and friends may be enough for the symptoms to improve.

If it is not sufficient, get referred to a specialist by your doctor.

Most people can be helped by psychotherapy, medicine or both.

Short term therapy means talking through the feelings you have and learning how **YOU** could change some negative perceptions. (Ex: Behavioural Th.)

Many different forms of therapy are available + to know about and practice relaxation techniques are often very useful too...

INFORMATION AND HELPLINES :

Email: al@in21.info confidential/with web resources/book lists on any topic relating to these lectures. Caution about some medical sites on the internet.

School Psychologist: Madame Fournel

Childline: 0800 1111 080022345 as well www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC: 0808800 5000

Depression Alliance: 0845 1232320 for info pack (no helpline as such) or email

information@depressionalliance.org

WEB resources:

<http://www.yellowribbon.org> (Suicide prevention)

www.kidscape.org.uk (particularly in case of bullying)

www.DFES.co.uk anti bullying org.

www.boystown.org US

<http://helping.apa.org/warningsigns/violence.html>

<http://www.nimh.nih>

<http://www.beyondblue.org>

<http://www.supportline.org.uk>

<http://www.depressionuk.org> (check their own links)

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk>

www.crisis.org Homelessness