

*Providing the Irish community with information, resources and opportunities to talk about mental health.*

## Depression - Causes, Symptoms and Treatment

Depression is more than being down or 'feeling blue' - it's a serious mental health issue

Depression is very common. Around 16 million people in America have experienced depression in the past year\*

Depression can be successfully treated in a variety of ways. There is hope!

### Signs of Depression

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty remembering, concentrating, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or over sleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death, suicide, or self-harm
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease with treatment

### Causes

**There is no one single cause of depression. While it can be triggered by a trauma or crisis, depression can occur spontaneously without being linked to life events**

- Trauma - Childhood trauma can change how the brain responds to stress and fear later in life.
- Genetics - There is evidence to suggest that depression may 'run in the family'
- Life events - Difficult interpersonal relationships, financial worries, exposure to violence, and personal safety concerns can be linked to instances of depression.

### Treatments

- Psychotherapy - including cognitive behavioral therapy, family -focused therapy and interpersonal therapy
- Medications including antidepressants, mood stabilizers and anti-psychotic medications.
- Exercise can be helpful with prevention and mild-to-moderate symptoms
- Brain stimulation therapies can be tried if other treatments are not effective.
- Light therapy, which exposes a person to full spectrum light to help regulate the hormone melatonin.
- Alternative approaches including acupuncture, meditation, prayer and nutrition

\* Depression Fact Sheet - National Alliance of Mental Illness  
<https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Images/FactSheets/Depression-FS.pdf>