

**Taking the first steps**

A depression self-help pack for teenagers

\*\*\* introduction to pack\*\*\*

Welcome to our depression self-help pack.

We have put together this pack in order to help people take the first steps towards overcoming depression. If you are reading this then you or someone who cares about you will have noticed that depression has become a problem for you. Depression may be getting in the way; it may be effecting different areas of your life for example school, home, friends etc. This pack has lots of ideas to help you make changes in your life which have been shown to have positive effects for beating depression and change the way people feel. There are several different ways you could approach this pack. You might find it helpful to read through everything and then pick out what you are going to change first and then give it a go, and then choose the second, third, fourth etc. Or you might find it helpful to go straight to the section that you are most interested in, read it, and give those ideas a go. You can do the thing that is most helpful for you.

Your parents or guardians will have also received a parent version of this pack. That means they have the same information as you do on how to tackle depression. That means that they can be there to support you. They can support you in many ways, practically and emotionally. This doesn’t mean you have to tell them everything about how you’re feeling. But it might be helpful to let them know the ideas that you are trying out. It might help to tell them how you get on. Was it helpful or unhelpful? Are there things you might try again? What would help it work better in the future? Your parents or guardian will really find it helpful to know what you are trying. And if you go to them first it means they don’t have to nag you to find out, which will probably be better for both of you!

How the pack is laid out

Part 1 explores “what is depression?” and looks at the symptoms of depression, the causes of depression, and putting this together in a diagram to look at what keeps depression going.

Part 2 explores things you can do to make yourself feel better, including; sleep, exercise, healthy eating, relaxation exercises and changing negative thinking.

Part 3 explores self-harm and suicide. This section looks at why people want to hurt or kill themselves and things you can do to keep yourself safe if you are experiencing thoughts about hurting or killing yourself.

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![C:\Users\smithsi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\7IFLA1SQ\MC900078739[1].wmf]()Part 1: What is depression?

Anyone can get depressed. Depression is a very common problem for young people with 1% of under-12’s and 3-5% of teenagers experiencing it at some point. Many people experience feeling low or sad at some time, but when these feelings don’t go away or interfere with everyday life it is then that someone is said to be suffering from depression. Depression affects how we feel, our thoughts, our behaviours and our bodies.

#### These are some of the symptoms that you may be experiencing:

Emotions or Feelings:

* Feeling sad, guilty, upset, numb, empty or despairing.
* Losing interest and/or enjoyment in things.
* Crying a lot or feeling unable to cry.
* Feeling alone even if you are in company.
* Feeling irritable and angry, snapping easily.

Physical or bodily signs:

* Tiredness
* Lack of energy
* Restlessness
* Sleep problems
* Slowness
* Feeling worse at a particular time of day (usually morning).
* Changes in appetite, eating and weight

Thoughts:

* Losing confidence in yourself
* Expecting the worst and having negative or gloomy thoughts
* Thinking that everything seems hopeless
* Thoughts that things are your fault
* Thoughts of suicide or hurting yourself
* Thinking you hate yourself
* Poor memory or concentration

You may lose your motivation to do things which means:

* You may find it difficult to do even simple things.
* You stop doing your normal activities
* You cut yourself off from other people
* You may become inactive, just doing nothing for long periods of time.

# What causes depression?

![C:\Users\smithsi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\7IFLA1SQ\MC900441962[1].wmf]()It is difficult to say why someone gets depressed as everybody is different, and there is no one specific cause for depression. Sometimes the reason may be obvious, sometimes it might not be clear. It is usually a mixture of things, for example:

* Something difficult happening to you
	+ Parents getting a divorce
	+ Difficult relationships in the home
	+ The death of a loved one
	+ Abuse
	+ Bullying
	+ Physical illness
* If you are under a lot of stress and have no one to share your worries with
* It can run in families
* There are links to the chemicals in your brain which control mood, these can change in depression

# Understanding Depression

The way you think about things affects the way you feel, which affects the way you behave. It is difficult to directly change the way that you feel. However, you can change the way that you think and your behaviours, which will have a positive impact on the way you feel.

**Triggers and Context**

*What led to the difficulties? What is keeping it going?*

E.g. Bullied at school. Making mistakes in school work. Having arguments with friends.

Things that happen to us effects how we think

**Thoughts**

*What unhelpful thoughts am I experiencing?*

E.g. Nobody likes me. Why can’t I get this right? Why me? I must have done something really wrong to deserve this. Mum and Dad will be so mad.

How we think about ourselves effects what we do. What we do effects how we think.

Negative thoughts lead to negative feelings

**Feelings**

*What are the main emotions I am experiencing?*

E.g. Sad. Lonely. Frustrated. Embarrassed.

**Behaviours**

*How do I behave when I am feeling low?*

E.g. Say I’m sick so I don’t have to go to school. Cry when I get stuck with my homework. Stop seeing my friend outside school so we don’t argue. Can’t sleep – thinking too much.

How we feel in our bodies effects what we do

How we feel emotionally effects how we feel in our bodies

**Physical Signs**

*What bodily sensations do I feel?*

E.g. Sick in my stomach. Tired. Don’t want to eat.

Part 2: What can I do to make myself feel better?

There are several key things which research has shown to be effective in helping people with depression.

1. Sleep
2. Increase exercise
3. Healthy eating
4. Relaxation
5. Changing Negative Thinking

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Depression often disrupts sleep for example difficulty getting to sleep, difficulty getting up or waking early. Making changes to your sleep can help your mood.

On average children age 5 to 12 need between 10 and 11 hours sleep a night. Teenagers need between 9 and 10 hours sleep. Of course there are differences in how much each individual needs. Think about getting good quality sleep as well as the right quantity of sleep.

###### Did you know:

* The light and flicker from TVs/computer screens/ laptops/ iPads/ smartphone screens draw our attention and can make it harder to get to sleep.
* Exposure to natural light helps keep the body clock regular
* Exercise can help to give you energy in the day and sleep better at night
* Staying up late and sleeping in does not give the same quality of sleep as going to bed early and getting up early
* Drinks with caffeine and sugar in can keep you awake. Drinks which have caffeine in include; tea, coffee, coke, hot chocolate. Certain foods also contain caffeine as well, chocolate, especially dark chocolate contains caffeine.
* Your bedroom environment affects your sleep – extremes of temperature, light, and noises all effect sleep.
* Our brains are always working hard to solve problems, even when we are trying to sleep.

###### Sleep tips:

* Try to have a regular sleeping pattern throughout the week. Try to get up at roughly the same time every day, including weekends.
* Only go to bed when you are sleepy. Tossing and turning makes you associate going to bed with being awake. If you find that after 20 to 30 minutes you are still awake and perhaps getting restless, get up and do something gentle in low light, for example listening to relaxing music. Try going to bed again when you are feeling more tired. Make sure you are not up so late that it makes it very difficult to get up in the morning.
* Make sure your bed is associated with sleep. For example, don’t watch TV, do homework or eat in bed. This might be difficult if you only have your bedroom to go to in order to have some space. Try to do your homework and things on your laptop at a desk in your room, or use the dining table. Try putting in a comfy chair, or create a seating area out of cushions etc. so that you have somewhere else to sit.
* Turn TVs/computer screens/ laptops/ iPads/ mobile phones off at least half an hour before you go to bed.
* Give yourself an hour to ‘wind down’ before bed – stop doing any work or homework, then do something relaxing such as reading a book , listening to music or an audio book, or chatting with a friend before you do your final pre-sleep rituals like brushing your teeth etc.
* Think about your bedroom environment. Do what you can to ensure your bed is comfortable, and that you keep noise and light to a minimum. It is best to be neither too hot, nor too cold, and it is useful if you can circulate some fresh air in your room before bed time, perhaps you could open your window to let some fresh air in.
* It is best to avoid food and drink that contains caffeine within four hours of bedtime because caffeine will affect the quality of sleep. If you are having a bedtime drink try to make sure it is decaffeinated, for example hot milk or Horlicks/Ovaltine, fruit teas, or a simple glass of water.
* Get into a routine of staying awake during the day and sleeping at night. Avoid ‘all nighters’ and skipping meals or late night snacking. Avoid taking naps during the day, it will affect your natural rhythm.
* Make sure you get outside, even briefly, during daylight hours.

# Increasing exercise

Depression affects our energy levels and our activity levels. Exercise increases our “feel good” hormones, gives you more energy, and combats the low activity levels in depression.

Research has shown that regular exercise is good for our mental health. In fact for mild depression exercise is just as effective as antidepressants and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for changing your mood! This is because the same chemical that is in the antidepressants is released naturally when we exercise.

When you are feeling tired and down exercise can help break the cycle. Think back to our diagram earlier.

Change your behaviour. Change your feelings

Thoughts

Feelings

Behaviour

Change how your body feels. Change your thoughts and feelings.

Physical signs

Exercise doesn’t have to mean running a marathon! You might want to aim for 30-60 minutes worth of exercise approximately three times a week. However, set yourself small realistic targets at first. It is better to do a little every day, rather than aiming for something and then never achieving it. Think about what you like, and then plan when you are going to do it and stick to it. Give yourself a small reward when you get started, such as a cup of tea and biscuit with your favourite TV show.

Try to build in physical activity every day, such as walking to school, walking round the playground at break time, or making sure you take the stairs instead of the lift/escalator.

Finding it difficult to think about what to do? Here are some ideas for you:

* Go for a walk. It’s easy and cheap to do. Is there somewhere nice you could walk such as the local park? Or perhaps a walk around the block going down the road with the nicest gardens. Getting fresh air and exercise can help beat the lack of energy associated with depression.
* Try yoga or pilates. A gentle form of exercise which also teaches breathing exercises. Look out for classes at your local gym or community centre. Alternatively you could teach yourself at home with either a book, DVD, or on Youtube. However, do not to push yourself with a position you aren’t comfortable with as this will cause pain. Take things slowly at first and build up to moves and stretches. For some examples take a look at  [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tklllKHDkIE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tklllKHDkIE)
 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=obLEZDOrRRk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obLEZDOrRRk)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xctBhj7TVc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xctBhj7TVc).

* Swimming is an exercise you take at your own pace, try to aim for a number of lengths and then build up slowly, or aim for a set length in the pool.
* Team sports can be fun due to the socializing element. There might be clubs in your local area or in your school or college. Have a look at what interests you the most and then make the commitment to give it a try.
* You could use a fitness DVD at home. Make sure you choose one that suits your current fitness level – there are some which have shorter workouts to choose from. You could see if your local library has any DVDs you could borrow.
* Go for a cycle ride, you can take it at your own pace and explore the area.
* You could put on your favourite tracks and dance around your room. Why not try lots of up-tempo tracks to really get you moving!
* Grab a pair of trainers and go for a jog or run. You can run around your local park or green space or run along the roads in your neighbourhood. If you are running in the dark make sure that you are safe; remember to look out for cars (especially if you have headphones in) and try to wear light colours as this also helps with visibility. Why not see if you can go running with a friend? Some people find this helps with their motivation.
* Bouncing on a trampoline or a trampette is a fun way to exercise. You can look online for trampette exercises to do to give your workout a boost.
* Look on line for some exercise you can do at home. NHS choices have a series of 10 minute workouts as well as warm up and cool down routines all designed to do at home., Look at [www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/home-cardio-workout.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/home-cardio-workout.aspx) for the first in the series and then simply follow the other links at the bottom of the page.

Try making a plan of the activity that you plan to do each week. Then note down how you did.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| What I plan to do *e.g*. *Go for a 30 minute walk around the block* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| When I plan to do ite.g. *4pm, just after getting home from school* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| How did it go?e.g. *It was a bit cold so I walked faster and was only out for 20 minutes. Felt better afterwards and ready to do my homework* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Healthy Diet

![C:\Users\smithsi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\HV31RJYY\MP900227717[1].jpg]()*Poor food choices and irregular eating habits can contribute to mood swings and intensify depression. Choosing healthier foods and paying attention to eating routines can make a significant difference in steadying mood.*

Depression often has an effect on appetite. When depressed you may not have much of an appetite and so eat less. Often food choices are poor due to the lack of motivation to prepare food and perhaps the easy or comforting choice of “junk food”.

Making small, steady changes in your eating habits is important for your general health and will also help to improve your mood.

### Did you know?

* Missing meals leads to low blood sugar, which can cause low mood, irritability and fatigue
* Sugary foods are absorbed quickly into the bloodstream, which can lead to a short surge of energy, however once that wears off it can leave you feeling tired and low.
* Wholegrain foods, fruit and vegetables are more filling and the sugar in these foods is absorbed slower, preventing mood swings. These foods release their energy slowly and may help to boost certain chemicals in the brain which are lower when we are depressed.
* Aim to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. One portion is roughly two serving spoons.
* They early effects of mild dehydration can affect our feelings and performance, we can become restless or irritable, and our concentration and thinking abilities are affected.

### Healthy eating tips:

* Try to eat regular meals, especially breakfast. The ideal pattern is to eat breakfast, midmorning snack, lunch, late afternoon snack, dinner and late night snack.
* Try to get a balanced diet including fruit and vegetables and carbohydrates, for example pasta, bread, potatoes.
* You may want to cut back on the amount of sweet things you eat.
* Ensuring that you drink enough water throughout the day can help. Make sure you drink when you are thirsty, but don’t drink too much too quickly. Be aware that fizzy drinks contain a high amount of sugar and caffeine so try making healthier choices such as water or flavoured water. Milk and fruit juice also count, and are also part of a balanced diet providing calcium and vitamins.
* Ideas for snacks include a handful of nuts and raisins, peanut butter on wholemeal bread, or fruit with seeds or yoghurt.

Try keeping a record of what you eat in a week, this will help you see if you are achieving a healthy balance over the course of a week.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
| Breakfaste.g. Weetabix with raisins |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snacke.g. yoghurt |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lunche.g. Sandwich, fruit juice, apple |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snacke.g. handful of grapes |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dinnere.g. spaghetti Bolognese  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Snacke.g. cream cheese and cracker |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Relaxation

**![C:\Users\smithsi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\6CIR25EX\MC900437745[1].wmf]()Depression feeds off stress. Managing our stress better is one of the key things we can do to keep depression at bay. And the foundation for managing stress levels is knowing how to relax.**

There are several ways which you can relax. You can learn some relaxation exercises and try to incorporate them into your day to help you feel generally calmer. You may want to identify which ones might be most helpful to use when you are out and about.

# Breathing Exercise

We’ll start with a breathing exercise which can be done in a few seconds, no matter where you are.  It is helpful to practice this when you are feeling relaxed and calm. Try to find time to practice this on a regular basis. By practicing it when you are feeling relaxed and calm you can get used to the technique. This will then help you use it in stressful situations.

1. *Take a deep, slow breath in for 4 seconds, hold, and breathe out for 4 seconds. These times are a guide. As you practice start to find your own natural soothing rhythm.*
2. *When you breathe in through nose fill your tummy with air and make it expand. When you breathe out push the air out of your mouth and watch your tummy go down again. Some people find it helpful to imagine their stomach is like a balloon. If fills up and gets bigger with air, and it gets smaller again as it deflates.*
3. *Continue to breathe in and out slowly. Make every breath slow and steady and the same as the one before it and the one after it.  As you breathe out, concentrate on expelling all the air in your lungs.  Keep it relaxed for a few seconds before you inhale again.*
4. *Spend a few minutes focusing on your breathing in order to find your soothing rhythm.*
5. *Notice your thoughts and return to focusing on your breathing. It is ok that your mind wonders, just notice those thoughts, and return to focusing on your breathing.*

*To help you with this have a look on YouTube for some videos. For example take a look at* [*www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExvXmsr--Mk*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExvXmsr--Mk) *it also uses a count of 4 for the in breath and 4 for the out breath.*

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Start by finding a quiet, warm, comfortable space.

During this exercise remember to breath in deeply, hold the position for a count of five, then relax and breathe out slowly saying the word “relax” in your mind. Each exercise should be done twice, leaving 10 seconds pause before doing it for the second time.

Notice the difference in tension before and after each exercise.

1. Push your forearms firmly down onto the floor or arms of the chair. Hold for five seconds and relax…
2. Clench your fists, hold and relax…
3. Tighten your biceps by drawing your forearms up toward your shoulders and make a muscle with both arms, hold and relax…
4. Tighten your forehead and eyebrows, hold and relax…
5. Wrinkle your nose and cheeks, hold and relax…
6. Clench your teeth, hold and relax…
7. Do an exaggerated shrug of your shoulders, hold and relax…
8. Tighten your stomach muscles, hold and relax…
9. Press your heels firmly into the floor, hold and relax…
10. Lift your legs slightly off the ground, hold and relax…
11. Point your toes away from you, hold and relax…
12. Curl your feet and toes, hold and relax…
13. Notice how relaxed your whole body feels. Stay where you are and enjoy the feeling of relaxation for five minutes.

You can look on YouTube to take you through this. For a similar method try [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwCKKa--18](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwCKKa--18). Of course you can have a look at other videos. Find one which you find helpful and relaxing.

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# Relaxing Imagery

1. Imagine a place where you can feel calm, peaceful and safe.  It may be a place you've been to before, somewhere you've dreamt about going to, or maybe somewhere you've seen a picture of. For example it may be a shaded forest, a beach on a warm sunny day, or sitting by a fire.
2. Next we are going to work through four of our body senses to help our imaginations create a safe place in your mind.
3. Focus first on where you are, what are your surroundings like? Notice what you can see around you. Notice the colours in your peaceful safe place. For example, the colours of the leaves on the trees, the colour of the sea, or the colour of the flickering fire.
4. Now notice the sounds that are around you, or perhaps the silence. For example, the wind in the trees, or waves on the shore, or the crackling logs in the fire.
5. Think about any smells you notice there. For example, the mulch of the forest floor, the saltiness of the sea air, the smoke of the fire.
6. Then focus on any skin sensations - the earth beneath you, the temperature, any movement of air, anything else you can touch.
7. Now whilst you're in your peaceful and safe place, you might choose to give it a name, whether one word or a phrase that you can use to bring that image back, anytime you need to.
8. You can choose to linger there a while, just enjoying the peacefulness and serenity. You can leave whenever you want to, just by opening your eyes and being aware of where you are now.

# Challenge Negative Thinking

When someone is experiencing depression they often tend to think and expect the worst of themselves, their life and the future. Don’t just accept these thoughts, try to:

1. Identify when you mood is low
2. ![C:\Users\smithsi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\6CIR25EX\MP900382877[1].jpg]()Jot down the thoughts you are having during that time
3. Which thoughts are positive (+) and which are negative (-)
4. Imagine what would you say to your friend if they had each of these thoughts about themselves
5. How about saying this to yourself
6. Write down one good thing that happened to you each day. If this is difficult ask someone close to you to help.

You can write these ideas out in a thought record. Have a look at the example and give it a try.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **When were you feeling low?** | **What were you thinking about at this time?** | **For each thought, identify whether they were positive (+) or negative(-)** | **For each thought think about what you would say to a friend if they had these thoughts** | **How do you feel after saying those things to yourself?**  |
| *Monday evening* | *I got a bad mark in my test today, I’m so stupid, everybody else could do it why couldn’t I?* | *Negative*  | *I would say “it’s only one test” “you’ve done well in other subjects” “one bad mark doesn’t make you stupid”* | *I am still disappointed by my mark but I don’t feel as angry with myself.*  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

# Part 3: Hurting yourself

# Self-Harm

Many people deliberately harm themselves and are unhappy about it. People may self-harm by cutting, burning, punching or hurting themselves in some way. People who self-harm often feel distressed a lot of the time. Many people say they self-harm in order to get rid of these difficult feelings. However there are many reasons as to why people self-harm.

To manage moods or feelings

* To escape from emptiness, depression, shame or unreality.
* To relieve tensions, pressure or anger.
* To feel something – to know you exist
* To feel in control
* To get a buzz
* To express or stop sexual feelings
* To turn emotional pain into physical pain
* Do you have another reason?

To fit in with beliefs or thoughts

* To punish yourself because you are “bad”.
* To maintain negative belief “I’m flawed, worthless, weird”.
* To escape from feelings of guilt

To communicate

* To let people know how bad things are
* To make your body show your pain
* To express anger towards others and yourself but on your own body
* To obtain and maintain a response from other that you feel you wouldn’t otherwise get

Many people want to stop self-harming. There are many reasons people want to stop self-harming, for example because the scars remind them of when they did it, people look at the scars so it stops you wearing certain clothes, and it upsets the people you are close too. It might help for you to think of your own reasons that you want to stop.

# Controlling my self-harm

* It might help to keep a diary of when you self-harm. This might help you understand your self-harm. It might help you see a pattern to your self-harm which will help you put some other ideas into place.
* Keep away from things you might use to harm yourself.
* Try to delay and distract the self-harm by doing something different:
	+ Exercise: run, jog, swim, cycle, dance, run up and down the stairs
	+ Go for a walk
	+ Clean the house
	+ Go to the shops
	+ Read a magazine
	+ Play a game on your phone
	+ Watch a video on YouTube
	+ Tidy up
* Try the “10 minute delay”. Say to yourself that you will wait 10 minutes to self-harm. When the time is up, think again. Can you wait another 10 minutes? If you have what you might use to self-harm with you, try putting them out of sight or in another room.
* Do something nice for yourself, have a nice meal, a favourite (non-alcoholic) drink, pamper yourself, have a warm shower, or a bubble bath.
* Use a calm breathing technique. Find somewhere comfortable to sit. Concentrate on your breathing; breathing in for 4 seconds, hold for 2 seconds, and breathe out for 4 seconds. Don’t worry too much about the timings. The main idea is that you slow down your breathing.
* Call a friend or someone you trust
* Try to speak to yourself in a kind, caring, compassionate way. Think about some calm things that you can say to yourself when you want to self-harm. For example, “I’ve got through this before”, “I can cope”, “I deserve better than this”

What are you feeling? Try to be clear about what it is that you are feeling. Try to label it, observe it, and accept that emotion. Ask yourself why you are feeling this way. Remember you do not have to act on this feeling. Try to resist the urge to get rid of difficult feelings which often trigger the urge to self-harm.

Try to think of other ways for expressing your feelings, for example:

* Having a good cry
* Doing vigorous exercise
* Writing down your feelings
* Drawing or other art
* Play music
* Telling someone else how you *really* feel
* Keeping a diary
* Sing or play an instrument

If you still feel like hurting yourself try some alternatives such as:

* Pinching yourself
* Holding an ice cube
* Snapping an elastic band/hair band on your wrist
* Punching a pillow/cushion

If you still feel like hurting yourself try to limit the damage.

# Suicide

Suicidal thoughts and feelings can be complicated, terrifying and confusing. Lots of young people do feel suicidal at some point. Unfortunately, young people do go on to kill themselves, which is why it is important to get help if you are experiencing suicidal thoughts and feelings.

There are many reasons why you might start to experience suicidal thoughts:

* You might think that you can no longer cope and you cannot see a reason to live.
* You might have thoughts about suicide which seem to pop into your head and you may feel scared that you might act on these thoughts.
* You may hate yourself so much and think that other people would be better off if you are not here.
* You may feel overwhelmed by difficult situations or something has happened to really upset you.
* Or you may not know why you feel suicidal and have no reason to kill yourself; this is frightening and difficult because you then may feel bad for having these types of thoughts.

Whatever your reason for feeling suicidal, you are likely to be experiencing similar things;

* You may feel hopeless
* You may think things cannot change
* You may obsess about things
* You may find it hard to solve problems
* You may have images of suicide
* You may feel agitated and irritable
* You may behave impulsively and recklessly
* You may make plans based on your suicidal thoughts.

# What can you do?

* Get help and share how you are feeling with someone.
	+ Could you talk to a family member or family friend? Could you talk to a trusted friend? A teacher? The school nurse? Your GP?
	+ You could contact services for help:
		- Berkshire Anxiety and Depression Pathway Duty Admin Number: 0118 949 5060
		- Berkshire CAMHS Out of hours Number: 0300 365 0300
		- Samaritans: 0845 7 90 90 90
		- HopeLine UK: 0800 068 41 41
		- Child Line: 0800 1111
	+ If you find it difficult to talk about how you are feeling try writing things down or emailing or texting one of your contacts.
* Get rid of ways of harming yourself
	+ Ahead of time hand over stocks of medication, remove alcohol, remove sharp objects
	+ In the moment – put things out of sight, take things and put them in a different room. This will help give you time.
* Even if you don’t feel like it spend time with other people or do an activity. Withdrawing and being on your own is often not helpful when you are feeling suicidal.
* When you are feeling suicidal it can be easy to think of the advantages. Instead remember the disadvantages of suicide, for example missing your family, you can’t change your mind, it would be painful, it might go wrong.
* Remember reasons to live. Who would you miss? Who do you care about? Who would miss you? What are your future dreams and plans? What contribution do you make to the lives of others?
* Be kind to yourself – be your own friend. These moments of pain will pass.
* Get out and be active
* Do not drink alcohol or take drugs – they will make much more difficult to think clearly and make sensible decisions and could make your mood worse.

#### If you do not feel you can keep yourself safe call the emergency services on 999 or go to A&E

## What Next?

If things get worse for you need support then you can:

* Go back to your GP
* Call us. The Berkshire Anxiety and Depression Pathway Admin number is: 0118 378 8926. You can ask to speak to the Duty Worker who will be able to talk to you about the current situation and give support.
* Call the Out of Hours Number: 0300 365 0300