

The Ins and Outs of Depression

All ages

25mins

An activity to get people thinking about different aspects of depression.

What you need:

- Sugar Paper (x4)
- Post-it notes.

Method:

- Write one of the following questions at the top of each piece of sugar paper.
 - **What are the symptoms of depression? Physical? Behavioural? Feelings? Thoughts?**
 - **Why do people become depressed?**
 - **How is depression treated?**
 - **Where can you get help for depression?**
- Place the four questions on different walls in the classroom or on the floor/desks around the room.
- Either split the class into 4 groups and allocate one group to each question, or allow the class to move around the different questions as they please.
- Give everyone a number of post-it notes, and get them to write down ideas relating to the questions and stick them on the sugar paper. Or they can write directly on to the paper
- Allow 15 minutes for everyone to write their ideas in response to the questions.
- Ask for volunteers to feedback what has been written in response to each question, allowing an opportunity for further discussion.

Questions:

- **What are the symptoms of depression? Physical? Behavioural? Feelings? Thoughts?**

Answer:

Physical: Difficulty sleeping, sleeping much more than usual, tired and no energy, lost appetite and losing weight, eating more than usual and putting on weight, physical aches and pains with no obvious physical cause, moving very slowly, using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs more than usual.

Behavioral: Withdrawing from activities you usually enjoy, avoiding social events, isolating yourself, finding it difficult to speak, self-harm.

Feelings: Restless and agitated, getting tearful easily, empty, numb, full of despair, isolated, unable to relate to others, irritable, impatient, finding no pleasure in life or things you usually enjoy, helpless.

Thoughts: Difficulty remembering things, finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions, blaming yourself, feeling guilty, no self-confidence or self-esteem, lots of negative thoughts, the future seems bleak, what's the point? Suicidal thoughts.

- **Why do people become depressed?**

Answer:

People don't have to have a reason to become depressed. Depression can be caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain. Life events can also cause someone to become depressed, however it's important to recognize that feeling sad about a life event can be normal and this is not the same as having depression. Depression can be caused by one major life event, or a buildup of smaller life events.

- **How is depression treated?**

Answer:

Counselling

Talking Therapies (such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy, psychotherapy and family therapy).

Medication

- **Where can you get help for depression?**

Answer:

School Support – Tutor? Head of Year? (Who would be the right person in your setting)

School Nurse

GP

Off the Record

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – If other sources of help have been tried first and/or your symptoms have lasted for more than a couple of weeks and are having a big impact on how you are feeling and functioning day to day then you may need help from CAMHS. If you are under 16 you will need to be referred by your GP, school nurse or another professional. But if you are over 16 you may prefer to self-refer via the CAMHS self-referral telephone line Kooth (This an online counselling service coming to B&NES very soon.)

Also online - Childline, YoungMinds.

