



KOOTH: HAVING DEPRESSION & BEING ON YOUR OWN

Having depression is not easy to manage at the best of times, but dealing with it alone can feel even tougher. Right now, with the pandemic still in full force all around the world, millions of people of all ages are feeling more alone than ever.

For young people, isolation may be unavoidable at the moment and the impact of that can be huge. For example, some university halls of residence are having to isolate due to COVID outbreaks on campus, there are increased remote lessons for those studying and more and more people are having to shield away from friends and family because they are either showing symptoms, have tested positive for COVID or because of other health reasons.

So as we become a more isolated society for the time being, it's hardly surprising that feelings of depression are on the rise. If you are somebody who is suffering from depression and you are managing alone, it might be that the strategies you have previously relied on, might need a rethink and so this article will also explore some of the things you can do to help yourself.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

We all get sad or experience a low mood from time to time, and that is completely normal and part of dealing with the ups and downs of daily life. But depression is when that sadness or low mood doesn't go away and it starts to interrupt the quality of your life.

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

Of course, depression is experienced differently by different people and while some might experience mild symptoms, for others they are more severe. Here are just some of the more typical symptoms somebody with depression might experience:

- Low mood that lasts all or most of the day
- Changes in appetite
- Sleep difficulties or changes in your sleeping pattern
- Lack of motivation or interest in things you previously enjoyed
- Irritability

- Difficulty focusing on tasks or remembering what to do
- A feeling of sadness or emptiness that doesn't seem to go away

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF IF YOU ARE DEALING WITH THIS ALONE?

Right now, if you are shielding, you might have to rethink some of your usual strategies so here are just a few things you could do to help yourself during this time.

- Connect with someone - it might not be possible to see people in person, but with zoom, facetime, and good old fashioned calling someone you care about, staying connected has never been easier. Don't put pressure on yourself to talk about your feelings if it doesn't feel right, but just simply connecting with somebody about anything at all, can sometimes help you feel better, less alone and give you a welcome distraction.

Don't forget If it feels right, you can always post on our discussion boards to get support and advice from our amazing Kooth young people. <https://www.kooth.com/members.html/forum/start-discussion>

- Keep a mood diary - this is a great way to track any changes in your mood and get to know any possible triggers.
- Practice self care - taking care of yourself is so important, especially when you lose motivation to do so. For some ideas on self care, have a look here (insert article on self care link)
- Move your body - keeping your body moving is a great mood booster and can also help to increase your motivation. This could be anything from some gentle stretches, a walk around the block, a workout in your bedroom or even taking part in a team sport.
- Setting daily goals - setting yourself small achievable goals such as getting up at a certain time, walking the dog or even calling a friend can help increase your motivation at a pace that feels right for you.
- Do something you enjoy - this is a tricky one when your interest and motivation is lacking but spending just a few minutes (or whatever feels manageable) doing something you usually like to do (E.g. walking, gaming, drawing, spending time with a pet etc) can really lift your spirits.
- Express yourself - keeping your feelings and thoughts to yourself can be really tough and sometimes add to that feeling of loneliness and isolation. If you can't or don't feel able to talk to someone, expressing how you feel in different ways can be just as helpful. Listening to music, doing something creative or even releasing your feelings physically (like dancing in your bedroom or doing something sporty) can be really useful to get rid of some of those stuck or difficult emotions.

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