

Depression

Depression is characterised by a lack of vitality or a profound state of sadness. Feeling down does not necessarily mean that you are depressed. There is a difference between depressive feelings and an actual depression. If you have depressive feelings you may identify with some of the symptoms listed below, but if you are suffering from a depression, you will experience many of them for a prolonged period.

Causes of depression may include: shocking events, personality traits, changes with a profound impact, long-term stress and biological factors. Alcohol and drugs can also trigger and exacerbate depressive symptoms. Feeling sad after losing a loved one is a natural reaction and part of a normal grieving process. This will usually pass.

QuickScan

- Do you feel down for most of the day?
- Are you clearly less interested in enjoyable activities?
- Has your appetite changed and have you gained or lost a substantial amount of weight?
- Do you have insomnia or are you sleeping more than usual?
- Are you so worn out or tired that you can't bring yourself to study?
- Do you feel helpless, useless or guilty nearly every day?
- Are you finding it difficult to concentrate (on your studies, for example) or make decisions?
- Do you have suicidal thoughts?

Approach

What can you do yourself?

You can make a start by creating a regular lifestyle for yourself, doing more things you enjoy and taking regular exercise. You could also consult free online practical resources such as <http://www.helpguide.org/>, which can offer insight in your problem and practical tips.

What can we do for you?

Are you feeling overwhelmed by your depressive feelings or do you think you may be depressed? The first step is to make an appointment with your general practitioner to discuss the situation and to rule out a medical cause. A common medical cause of depressive feelings is for example vitamin D shortage. This is especially common for foreign students, who often come from a country with more hours of sun per day. When a medical cause is ruled out, cognitive behavioural therapy is the treatment of choice, as it has proved to be an effective treatment for depression. We can offer you short-term individual consultation and/or help you look for a suitable treatment outside of TU Delft. Visit <http://psychologists.tudelft.nl>.

More information

- <http://www.helpguide.org/>
- The mindful way through depression (J. Mark, G. Williams), ISBN13: 9781593851286
- Healing through the dark emotions (Miriam Greenspan), ISBN13: 9781590301012
- The depression cure (Stephen S. Ilardi), ISBN13: 9780738213880
- The upward spiral: using neuroscience to reverse the course of depression, one small change at a time (Alex Corb), ISBN13: 9781626251205
- Feeling good: the new mood therapy (David D. Burns), ISBN13: 9780380810338