

## Actions

- Losing interest in things you usually like to do
- Avoiding other people, even people you like
- Having a hard time paying attention
- Having a hard time at school, or finding that your grades are dropping

## Changes in your body

- Changes in the way you sleep. Some people don't sleep much at all. Other people may sleep a lot more than usual
- Changes in the way you eat. Some people don't feel hungry and have a hard time eating. Other people feel very hungry all the time or get a lot of comfort from food
- Feeling worried or on edge a lot
- Pains or other physical feelings that no one can figure out, like headaches or stomach aches
- Feeling tired all the time, like you just want to stay in bed all day

Some people have thoughts of suicide (ending their life). This can be very scary. With treatment, these feelings will become manageable and fade away. It's very important to seek help if you ever think about ending your life. If you don't know where to go, call 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE) at any time.

Young people go through a lot of changes, and it can be hard for other people to see what is "normal" and what might be a bigger health concern like depression. If you think that you might be experiencing depression, it's important to speak up and ask for help.

## LEARN MORE

**HeretoHelp** at [www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca) has information about many different mental health problems. You can also read personal stories, find self-care ideas in the Wellness Modules, learn more about treatments, and take screening self-tests to check your mental health.

The **Mood Disorders Association of BC** at [www.mdabc.net](http://www.mdabc.net) supports people who experience a mood disorder like depression. They have services like a psychiatry clinic for young people, different workshops, and a directory of support groups around BC.

**Blue Wave**, a program from the Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division, helps youth take charge of their mental health and share their voice. Visit [www.bluewavebc.ca](http://www.bluewavebc.ca) to find information and resources, learn about wellness courses and bursaries, or get involved.

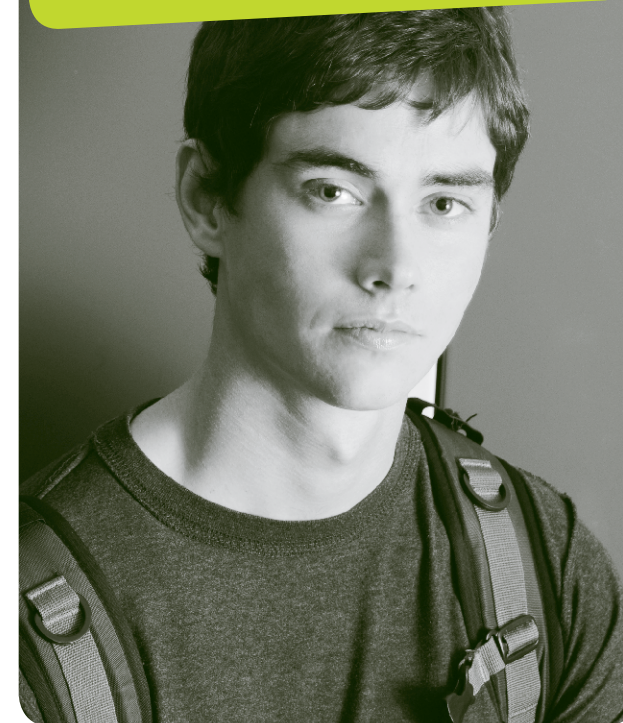
Visit **Mindcheck** at [www.mindcheck.ca](http://www.mindcheck.ca) for information about mental health, resources, and support. You can take a quiz to check your mood, and their self-care resources include several apps and websites you can try on your own.

## WANT MORE INFO ON DEPRESSION?

This brochure is part of a series on youth and depression. To learn more about dealing with depression, finding help, and feeling better, see *Dealing with Depression: For Youth* at [www.heretohelp.bc.ca/for-youth](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/for-youth).

FOR YOUTH

# LEARN ABOUT DEPRESSION



**Canadian Mental Health Association**  
British Columbia  
*Mental health for all*



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The Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division is proud to be affiliated with HeretoHelp. HeretoHelp is a project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information, a group of non-profit agencies providing good-quality information to help individuals and families maintain or improve their mental well-being. The BC Partners are funded by BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority.

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**heretohelp**  
Mental health and substance use  
information you can trust

How many times have you heard someone talk about how depressed they feel because they're a little bit disappointed or upset? Some people use the word 'depression' to mean a lot of different things, or even make jokes. But depression is really an illness that we all need to take seriously. Feeling sad from time to time is normal. Feeling sad most of the time is a sign that you might need extra support.



Depression is more than a bad week or “a phase.”

## DEPRESSION IS A MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental illnesses are illnesses that affect your mind. Depression affects your mood—the way you feel. It makes you feel very low, sad, or hopeless. Changes in your mood can cause big changes in other parts of your life.

Depression is more than a bad week or “a phase.” It can last for a long time on its own. It's not your fault that you have depression. The things you get when you have depression can be hard to fight by yourself, and they can make you feel worse and worse. Depression also steals hope and energy: the stuff that helps most people recover. So try not to expect that you can fix everything on your own. That's why it's important to ask for help if you think you might have depression.

Some people who have depression have thoughts of ending their life. If you have thoughts of ending your life, seek help right away. You can talk to someone at any time by calling 1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE).

## DEPRESSION ISN'T YOUR FAULT

We aren't exactly sure why some people get depression. Most people think that depression is caused by more than one thing, including changes in your body, a history of other family members who have experienced depression, and stressful or difficult life events. How you see yourself and the world can also add to feelings of depression.

Depression is a common mental illness. In fact, more than one in ten people will have a mood problem like depression during their lifetime. When you know what to look for and what to do if you think you might have depression, you can get help quickly and start to feel better.

## RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Depression causes thoughts, feelings, actions, and changes in your body that last for a long time.

### Feelings

- Sad or down
- Angry or irritated
- Hopeless
- Guilty
- Numb or empty—not feeling anything at all

### Thoughts

- “Nothing ever works out”
- “No one likes me”
- “I'm so alone”
- “Everything is my fault”
- “I don't know why I bother trying”
- “I should be able to just snap out of this”
- “I should just end my life”

## IS IT JUST A BAD WEEK, OR IS IT SOMETHING ELSE?

A lot of people wonder if they're just having a bad week, or if they might be experiencing a problem like depression. In general, it's a good idea to talk with a doctor or health professional if:

- Low mood or other signs of depression are not going away on their own and have lasted two weeks or more
- It's bothering you and causing problems in your life
- You're having a hard time taking care of yourself
- You've had thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life



Remember, you aren't responsible for diagnosing yourself! If you have concerns about your mental health, it's better to seek help early—don't wait and see if things get worse.