



What is Depression?

A young person with depression is likely to struggle with a number of symptoms including:

- Low mood
- A loss of enjoyment and pleasure in previous hobbies and interests
- Changes in appetite, sleep and ability to concentrate / make decisions
- Loss of energy and motivation
- Feeling worthless
- Having thoughts of ending life

This pattern is present for most of the day, nearly every day over a continuous period of at least 2 weeks. The symptoms also have a significant impact on the young person's life, interfering with their ability to function at home, at school and with friends.

Can treatment help?

Both on-line / digital and face to face Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) are recommended as effective evidence-based treatments for mild to moderate depression in children and young people (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, 2019)

CBT Assessment and Key Treatment Strategies:

At Bristol CBT Clinic for young people, an assessment will include use of standardised questionnaires that assess the severity of the low mood, how it impacts on daily life, what thoughts and beliefs are associated with the problem, and an assessment of other difficulties. Following assessment, treatment may focus on the following:

- Identifying an initial list of specific problems such as poor sleep, low energy / motivation
- Developing a shared understanding of the low mood and what is keeping it going
- Working together to agree goals for treatment
- Focusing on reducing the symptoms as soon as possible through helping the young person to restore their activity levels and to re-engage with previous interests that bring a sense of enjoyment and achievement.
- Identifying and testing unhelpful beliefs through using thought records, discussion and behavioural experiments.
- Towards the end of therapy, working on a coping plan together to reduce the risk of relapse in the future.