

**STEPPING STONES CLINIC**

CREATING PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE



# Depression

[info@steppingstonesclinic.uk](mailto:info@steppingstonesclinic.uk)

[www.steppingstonesclinic.uk](http://www.steppingstonesclinic.uk)

07944877172

## What does depression in children and young people look like?

Young people or children presenting with the following could be feeling depressed: Lack of interest in things that they were interested in before; lack of ability to enjoy things; withdrawing themselves; feeling tearful or irritable; lack of concentration; changes in sleep pattern; changes in appetite; having many negative thoughts or feelings about themselves; sense of worthlessness; sense of hopelessness and sometimes strong guilt feelings and at times, feelings that life is not worth living.

Young people often suffer in silence and do not tell anyone that they are feeling depressed. Young people often try and hide their feelings and

may work very hard at looking happy. It is a myth that children and young people cannot get depressed. They can get very depressed and it often goes unnoticed by everyone close to them for as long as several years.

Sometimes young people describe severe mood swings in that they feel talkative, energetic, full of ideas and on top of the world for a short while, followed by a deep depression and despair. Periods of heightened irritability can also be experienced. Mood swings such as this may need to be assessed further to explore whether someone may have an underlying bipolar disorder.

## What does depression in young adults look like?

The symptoms are very similar to what has been described above.

## What are the triggers?

Many things can trigger depressed feelings in young people or children, these are just a few examples:

- Bullying
- Loss of someone you loved
- Family conflict
- Difficulties in friendships or relationships
- Abuse
- School pressure
- Feeling like a failure
- Worrying about the way you look
- Feeling different from your peer group
- Feeling isolated or lonely

# What can you do when you feel like that?

First of all, you are not alone. You are not a freak or mad. You are a brave young person who have been coping with many difficult feelings and we are proud of you. It is important to realise that your feelings are important and you deserve to be taken seriously. Talk to someone you trust or ask for help. We provide treatment for depression.

## Advice for parents: When you think your child is depressed:

### 3 Don't's:

- Don't panic
- Don't tell them to snap out of it
- Don't ignore it

### 3 Do's:

- Listen & understand
- Empathise
- Provide safety & security

It is also advisable to get professional help. The earlier we can intervene the better.



## What is the treatment?

We offer treatment packages for depression in all children, adolescents and young adults. The treatment package will be tailor made to the needs of your child. For some people weekly individual therapy will be offered and in other cases a more intensive package may be suggested that also includes either family therapy or group therapy in addition to individual therapy. Medication may be indicated in cases where the depression is more severe or risks are high. In cases of higher risk, we also offer a package where there will be daily support for your child. Parents too have access to a range of supportive workshops and interventions that are helpful in supporting them in helping their children.

young adults to focus and to have a better control over themselves. The medication works immediately which means that it is immediately visible whether it works or not.

When medication is discussed as an option with you or with you and your child, then the psychiatrist will discuss how it works in detail with you as well as discuss any potential side effects.



## Stepping Stones clinic: Who we are

Stepping Stones clinic is a mental health clinic for children, young people, young adults and families. We offer a range of assessments and interventions that are all delivered by highly experienced clinicians. We have a multidisciplinary team of child psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, family therapists, occupational therapists, child psychotherapists and dieticians.

All our clinicians are registered with their regulatory bodies. All our interventions are based on the latest evidence. We are regulated by CQC and contracted into all medical insurances. We provide a world-class service. We monitor progress and improvement throughout every treatment delivered to ensure high quality outcomes. We work in partnership with families and their children. Every person gets a tailor-made treatment package and we aim to offer appointments and deliver treatment as soon as they are received at a time that will suit each family.

Our passion is patient care – Dr Trudie Rossouw, Clinic Director, Stepping Stones Clinic

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Please contact us on:

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or [info@steppingstonesclinic.uk](mailto:info@steppingstonesclinic.uk)

16 Canon Hill road, N14 7HD.

[www.trudierossouw.co.uk](http://www.trudierossouw.co.uk)

[www.steppingstonesclinic.uk](http://www.steppingstonesclinic.uk)