

Overview - Depression

Depression is a mental health condition characterised by significant and sustained low mood, making it difficult for someone to manage day-to-day activities for long periods. Depression will affect students differently and symptoms range from mild or moderate to severe. It is a chronic condition: repeat episodes of poor health are often triggered by the stress of study tasks or life events.

Depression is treated by lifestyle changes, talk therapies and medication. Some students will manage their depression well and have good coping mechanisms for triggers. However, acute phases of depression can occur for any student leaving them withdrawn and functioning poorly.

Students with depression may experience the following issues:

- Feeling worthless, hopeless and anxious.
- Social isolation and avoiding contact with others.
- A lack of motivation.
- Difficulty concentrating and remembering things.
- Problems thinking clearly and articulating their thoughts.
- Difficulty meeting deadlines and attending lectures.
- Elevated levels of stress.
- Unusual sleep patterns (sleeping too much or too little).
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

Top tips for academic staff:

- Be flexible about attendance and participation – a student may struggle to get up for morning sessions and perform better in the afternoon.
- Offer advice to keep a student from getting stressed about academic tasks, e.g. the importance of pacing academic tasks and the need for reasonable expectations of achievement.



- Provide summaries in writing or support the student to record notes of seminars and tutorials to counter concentration and memory problems.
- Be clear about when and how you can be available to the student.
- Be ready to provide one-to-one tutorials.
- If the student appears unwell, communicate your concerns to counter the student's feelings of isolation
- Be open to the student talking about her/his health experiences and ask what would be helpful.
- Encourage the student to access professional help if she/he becomes unwell.
- Make sure that the student has access to all the support services available.
- If you have concerns about a student, contact Student Services (studentservices@fxplus.ac.uk)

Useful links

- <https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org/>
- https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/d/depression?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI-bC2sZqD3AIVhLHtCh1mvQmBEAAYBCAAEgKhw_D_BwE
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health/>
- <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/for-friends-and-family/#.WzuSd02pUdU>
- <http://www.fxplus.ac.uk/students/student-support-services/counselling>

