

Ordinary Magic

Low Mood

Fact Sheet and Top Tips

What is it ?

Everyone feels sad from time to time, this could be because something has made you sad or for no apparent reason at all. Feeling sad is not bad however if your child is feeling sad for a significant length of time and this sadness is having a negative impact upon their life, then they may require some support to assess this sadness and work through it.

Where does it come from?

The causes of low mood are:

- Adverse life events such as family breakdown, abuse, bereavement, illness or disability, issues at school or transitions.
- The side effects of certain medications (always discuss low mood with your GP if you are taking medication).
- Addiction.
- Changes in hormones.
- Be the part of a complex diagnosed mental health disorder.

Signs of Low Mood

Psychological

- Irritability, frustration and anger
- Tearful and withdrawn.
- Feeling bad about themselves.
- Lack of emotional responsiveness.

Physical

- Lack of energy.
- Lack of care about appearance.
- Tiredness.
- Unrestful sleep patterns.
- Disturbance of menstrual cycle in young ladies.
- Stomach pain or pains in body.

Behaviour

- Avoidance of situations.
- Low motivation to do anything.
- Risk Taking behaviours.
- Being snappy at family and friends.
- Under or overeating.



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Understand

To help a child with consistent low mood which requires further support from professionals it is important you know that this is not something that the child can:

- Just snap out of.
- Something that everyone gets.
- Something that makes them weak as a person.
- Something they will be stuck with forever (even if diagnosed with depression, most children with support recover within a year).

Help to reframe the negative thoughts.

Common phrases children with low mood will use are phrases such as

- I have let everybody down.
- I am a failure.
- I am alone.
- I am no good.
- It is all my fault.
- No one can help me.

If you hear your child opening up about their unhappy thoughts use this as a golden opportunity to reframe their negative thinking into more hopeful thoughts. If your child says they are a failure in a certain area of maths for example, remind them that they tried it before and it wasn't perfect but that does not mean they failed. Then reassure them that they have control through practice and if they practice you are sure it will get easier. Ask them then if they would like any help, if they do great, if not check in with them later to see how they got on.



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Things that may help

Exercise

Good mental health and exercise are strongly linked. Exercising regularly can help with your mood and is a great self care strategy for anyone who is facing low mood.

Some good forms of exercise include:

- Running
- Yoga
- Cycling
- Walking
- Playing a sport
- Gardening

Healthy Diet

Our diet not only affects our physical health it has a huge impact on our mental health too. Try reducing sugar, caffeine intake, excessive carbohydrate consumption and eat a varied diet of fruit and vegetables. There are lots of tips on the Change for Life website, go take a look.

<https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>.

Connect and Unconnect

Help children connect with friends, family and pets face to face and on a regular basis, support them in developing new hobbies and interests and set aside quality time each week to spend with your child. Help your child disconnect for a little while from the news and social media if that is having a significant impact.

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Helping your child get support

All children who suffer from periods of low mood that have a significant impact upon their daily lives should seek the help of professionals.

The best places to ask for support are your child's school, Solihull SOLAR or your GP surgery as they should be able to assist you in getting the right treatment for your child.

Your child can also access their own support from:

Childline - 0800 1111

Young Minds - 0808 802 5544

Low mood and crisis

- If you are concerned your child is going to harm themselves please call 999 or go to your nearest A and E department.

To understand your child's active thoughts if they are suggesting harm or suicide with intent you can ask the following 3 questions:

1. What do they mean when they say they do not want to be here anymore.
2. If they suggest that they wish to die, ask them if they have thought about how they may do this.
3. If they can tell you this detail, ask them when they were planning to do this.

If your child answers question 1 and 2 please ensure you get them immediate support, when getting support please let the professional know the answer to all 3 questions. You can contact the crisis team at Solar via 0121 301 2750 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) where you will have access to a trained clinician who will assess what support your child needs. You can also attend your local GP surgery during surgery hours or A and E 24/7.