

DEPRESSION

FACTSHEET



Ministry of Health, Nutrition
& Indigenous Medicine



World Health
Organization

COUNTRY OFFICE FOR Sri Lanka

KEY FACTS



Around 350 million suffer from depression, worldwide



Depression is the leading cause of **disability worldwide**



More women are affected by depression than men



Depression can affect **anyone at any age**



Depression is **increasing** in **Sri Lanka** and globally



WHO estimates **over 800 000** people have depression in Sri Lanka



Stigma surrounding depression adds unnecessary suffering and is a **major barrier** to people accessing appropriate care



One out of eight people in Sri Lanka suffer from a mental illness, yet **only 40% receive treatment**



Depression **harms economies** through increased health costs for governments, lower productivity and employee absenteeism



At worst, depression can lead to **suicide**

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities for at least two weeks.

Depression can be categorized as mild, moderate, or severe depending on the number and severity of symptoms.

SYMPTOMS



People with depression normally have several of the following symptoms for at least two weeks:

- sadness
- loss of energy
- a change in appetite and/ or weight loss
- sleeping more or less
- anxiety
- reduced concentration
- indecisiveness
- restlessness
- feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness
- irritability
- thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Aches, pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause that do not ease even with treatment

TREATMENT



- There is effective treatment for depression, but most people do not receive them
- Mild depression can be treated without medicines
- Moderate or severe depression may need medication and psychological treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy and psychotherapy

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF YOU THINK YOU ARE DEPRESSED:



- Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Seek professional help. Your local health-care worker or doctor is a good contact person.
- Remember with the right help, you can get better.
- Eat regularly and get adequate sleep
- Stay connected. Keep in contact with family and friends.
- Exercise regularly, even if it's just a short walk.
- Engage in meditation and mindfulness practices
- Accept that you might not be able to accomplish as much as you usually would. Break up large tasks into smaller activities.
- Avoid or restrict alcohol intake and refrain from using illicit drugs as they worsen depression.
- Expect your mood to improve gradually. Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts.
- If you feel suicidal, seek help immediately.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Depression and Other Common Mental Disorders Global Health Estimates, 2017
- Mental Health Directorate
- Institute of Health Matrices
- Sri Lanka depression data 2015 - Global Burden of Disease Study 2015

SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT



- All district Hospitals, General Hospitals, Teaching Hospitals and Mental Health outreach clinics
- National Institute of Mental Health, Colombo
- Private Hospitals

Help Hotlines



- **SUWASARIYA Health Education Bureau's Hotline:**
071 0 107 107
- health advice
- **National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol (NATA):**
1948 - alcohol and tobacco abuse
- **National Child Protection Authority:**
1929 - child abuse and maltreatment
- **Courage Compassion Commitment (CCC) Foundation:**
1333 - counselling
- **Sumithrayo:**
011 2 692 909 - befriending
- **Sri Lanka Sumithrayo:**
011 2 682 535 - befriending
- **Sri Lanka Association for Child Development:**
011 7 490 000
- advice on Autism (ASD)
- **National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):**
011 3 140 844 - people with Dementia and carers



World Health Organization

COUNTRY OFFICE FOR **Sri Lanka**



seslregistry@who.int



+94 11 2379191



www.searo.who.int/srilanka/en/

