



# Tourette syndrome and depression

This information explains about the link between depression and Tourette syndrome (TS). Some children and young people with TS feel sad and down sometimes, but not everyone feels this way. This information explains a little more about depression and what you can do to help.

## What is depression?

Depression is more than feeling sad for a little while. Someone who is depressed may feel sad for most of the day for several weeks. They may have difficulty looking forward to the future or doing things they used to enjoy. Sometimes, a sign of depression is someone being irritable rather than sad, particularly in young people. Depression in children and young people can also show up in lots of different ways:

- Not wanting to be sociable, hang out with friends or talk on the telephone
- Having problems concentrating at school
- Tiredness, aches and pains
- Having difficulty sleeping or sleeping more than usual
- Feeling less or more hungry than usual
- Thinking dark thoughts about the future, or about death and self harm
- Feeling useless, worthless and unloved.

These are only a few ways that depression can show up. The main sign is that someone stops behaving as usual, stops doing things they used to do or seeming to change generally.

## How does it affect friends and family?

Living with someone who is depressed can feel difficult at times. It might seem like his or her mood is passing on to everyone else in the house. Things can be especially difficult if the child or young person is irritable or has anger attacks as part of feeling sad. It is often difficult for children and young people to discuss their feelings with grown ups, so he or she may talk to a good friend, teacher or youth worker before parents.

## Ways of coping

- The most important thing to remember is that the reason why the child or young person is feeling sad is very real to them. Do not try to make fun of their reasons for feeling down or say that they have nothing to be depressed about as this often makes the situation worse.
- Do not think that it is just a phase and that the child or young person will 'snap out of it'. It is always better to get help rather than blunder on for ages without help or support.
- Encourage the child or young person to talk about their feelings. Sometimes, it might feel difficult to have discussions with parents, but other people can help too. Perhaps a good friend or another grown up, like a teacher or youth worker is easier to approach. There are also telephone lines if face to face talking seems hard.

## Where to get help

The first stop for anyone who is feeling very sad for an extended period of time is his or her family doctor (GP). Remember that children and young people can see the doctor on their own, without parents being in the room with them. The doctor may recommend other people, such as therapists or counsellors.

The main form of help for depression in children and young people is 'talking therapies'. There are lots of different types and it may take some time to find the right one. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) looks at the way a child or young person is thinking and then how they react to these thoughts. It also teaches young people to tackle and solve problems. Family therapy involves the whole family and tries to find new and better ways of dealing with any problems so that living together becomes easier. Medicines are rarely used in children and young people but can sometimes be helpful and are usually prescribed by a specialist.

## Where can I find more information?

If you have a specific question or concern, talk to a member of the TS team. The following organisations may also be able to offer support and advice:

### **ChildLine**

Helpline: 0800 1111

(24 hours everyday)

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **Depression Alliance**

Helpline: 0845 123 23 20

Website: [www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

### **Young Minds**

Website: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)