

# Let's talk

Do you feel down?

Do you feel tired for no reason?

Have you lost pleasure or interest in things?

If you answered **yes**, this booklet may be for you.

A self-help booklet for older people affected by low mood and depression.



## Let's talk .....

While it is normal to feel down occasionally, if you have been feeling low for some time you may be experiencing depression. Anyone is at risk of depression which can affect people of all ages. There are treatments available, this booklet can support you to take the first step today.

### Spotting the signs of depression

You may have been feeling less motivated or less interested in life. You may have noticed a change in how you feel or behave. Some people may not realise they are depressed. Have a look at these signs of depression, do you recognise any of these in yourself?



Eating more  
or not feeling  
hungry



Difficulty  
sleeping



Not wanting to  
see people



Neglecting  
yourself

Drinking alcohol  
or smoking more



# What are the signs of depression?



Harming  
yourself

Feeling  
agitated,  
anxious  
and/or  
overwhelmed



Memory  
lapses



Forgetting  
to drink  
fluids  
regularly



Dwelling on  
things from  
the past

## Debunking the myths

**Myth:** Depression occurs because of ageing

**Truth:** Growing older can mean some difficult life changes - retirement, bereavement, and physical illness. These can make you feel sad but should not cause depression. Depression is not a normal part of getting older. It is a medical illness.

**Myth:** My GP has other things to do than listen to me talking about my feelings

**Truth:** Your GP is your main contact for general healthcare, physical and emotional health. Your GP is there to listen and provide support.





**Myth:** This is temporary, I should just push through it and it will pass

**Truth:** If you notice signs of depression or you have concerns about your mood please talk to someone – a friend, family member, a GP or a health professional. You may need some treatment such as traditional medication, talking therapy, exercise or meditation.

**Myth:** There is nothing that can help me feel better

**Truth:** 8 out of 10 people who get treatment including talking therapies say it has helped. Talking therapies help people by looking at ways of coping. Some of the most encouraging results are in older people.

# Let's talk .....

## How to stay healthy and take care of yourself

 ageUK have developed 10 top tips for ageing better. These are:



Watch what you eat and drink



Take care of your feet



Look after your teeth



Sort out your sleep



Stay active



Take hearing and eye tests



Make the most of your doctor



Stay in touch



Get a vitamin boost



Give up smoking

Make sure you keep an eye on your alcohol intake and have at least 2 alcohol free days per week

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## What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about both feeling good and functioning well in your day to day life. The things that we do and the way that we think affects our wellbeing.

## Why is Wellbeing Important?

Improving wellbeing is proven to help with physical and mental health and improving our quality of life.

## Five Ways to Wellbeing

There are five simple things we can do on a regular basis to keep us happier and improve wellbeing and mental health.



## Let's talk .....

The five ways to wellbeing can protect and improve mental health. If you can't do all five every day, try one and build up from there:



**Connect** - Spend time with family and friends. Enjoy doing things together. Connect with your local community'



**Be Active** - Doing a physical activity you enjoy that suits your level of mobility and fitness will make you feel good. Walking sports groups, older adults exercise classes and Health Walks are a great way to be active.







**Take Notice** - Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Savour the moment.



**Keep Learning** - You are never too old to try something new or rediscover an old interest. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.



**Give** - Do something for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in.

## Harming yourself

If you're not caring for yourself, or you are hurting yourself or having thoughts about hurting yourself, it is important to get support.

You can speak to your GP or another health professional for help and advice.

Older people who harm themselves are at a higher risk of suicide. Receiving support will reduce the risk.

## Create a safety plan

Creating a safety plan can help. Write down your answers to these questions and keep it safe for when you need it.

- What warning signs make me feel more out of control?

- .....
- What have I done in the past that helped me?

- .....
- What ways of coping do I have?

- .....
- Who can I call? List the people.

- .....
- Where do I feel safe? It may be your bedroom, a friend's house, a library.
- .....

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# Where to find help

## Reach out to your GP

Talking to your GP about mental health problems early can help prevent them from escalating.



Free confidential talking therapy and practical support for adults with common mental health problems including low mood and depression

Please speak to your GP or use the contact details below to self-refer via the telephone or internet.

### Hertfordshire

**Call:** 0800 6444101

**Visit:**

[www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk](http://www.hpft-iapt.nhs.uk)

### West Essex

**Call:** 0333 015 2966

**Text:** 'YOU' to 88802

**Visit:**

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

## Urgent help

If you are in a situation of crisis, you should contact NHS 111 Option 2

or Samaritans on 116 123 or at [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

# Let's talk .....

## Get local support

Contact your local service, where you can speak to friendly staff who will advise you on staying healthy. You can also ask a friend or family member for help in finding support.

### West Essex

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#### Essex Wellbeing Service

**Call:** 0300 303 9988

**Visit:** [www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk](http://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk)



**Essex Wellbeing Service**

### Hertfordshire

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#### HertsHelp

Is able to direct you to a network of community organisations who can listen and help people to get health and wellbeing support.

**Call:** 0300 123 4044

**Visit:** [www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)



#### Healthy Hubs Hertfordshire

**Visit:** [www.healthyhubs.org.uk](http://www.healthyhubs.org.uk)



### National support

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#### Age UK

**Call:** 0800 678 1602

#### Silver Line

**Call:** 0800 4 70 80 90



**The Silver Line**

A helpline for older people in the UK