

Take Control of Low Mood and Depression

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Neshomo







Greater Manchester Jewish Community
Mental Health | Befriending | Advocacy

ABOUT NESHOMO

Neshomo is a Jewish, culturally sensitive, confidential mental health charity for adults. We strive to be accessible, welcoming and accepting of all. Our goal is to improve emotional wellbeing and reduce stigma within the Manchester Jewish Community.



Neshomo offers...

-  Advice and support for mental health
-  Befriending service
-  Hospital linkwork
-  Social prescribing
-  Support and guidance for taking control of your mental health.

To contact Neshomo:

Men: 07741 625 345

maleoutreach@neshomo.co.uk

Women: 07512 578 587

femaleoutreach@neshomo.co.uk

www.neshomo.co.uk

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Greater
Manchester
Health and
Social Care
Partnership



Salford CVS
Making a difference in Salford



HM Government



The Auto Trader
Community Fund



How to use this booklet...



-  Go through it slowly, don't rush.
-  Sometimes it may take time to think about the ideas included.
-  **Do the exercises** - take some time to complete the exercises included in this guide as they will help you think about how the concepts apply to you and your depression.
-  **Listen to the Audio**
When you see this sign there will be a corresponding audio on the Neshomo resources line and website.
-  Dial the corresponding number or webpage to listen to an audio that will give you more information.



0161 394 1446
(Options 5)

If you would like to be matched with a mentor who can work with you through this guide, please contact Neshomo:

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Understanding Depression



What depression is not!

- ⚙️ Depression is not the same as sadness.
- ⚙️ Depression is not a weakness.
- ⚙️ Depression is not a lack of Emunah (faith).
- ⚙️ Speaking about it does not mean you are weak.

**“Had I not sat in darkness
I would have never
appreciated light”
(MEDRESH)**

So what is depression?

Depression is more than simply feeling unhappy or fed up for a few days.

Most people go through periods of feeling down, but when you're depressed you feel persistently sad for weeks or months, rather than just a few days.

Some people think depression is trivial and not a genuine health condition. They're wrong-it is a real illness with real symptoms.

Depression is not a sign of weakness or something you can "snap out of" by "pulling yourself together".

The good news is that with the right treatment and support, most people with depression can make a full recovery.

to be...
point of view.
Depression

state of being...
sad or despondent.
mental disorder cha

Am I depressed?

“I feel like crying all the time”.



“I have no interest in the things I used to do”.



“I just cant get out of bed in the morning”.



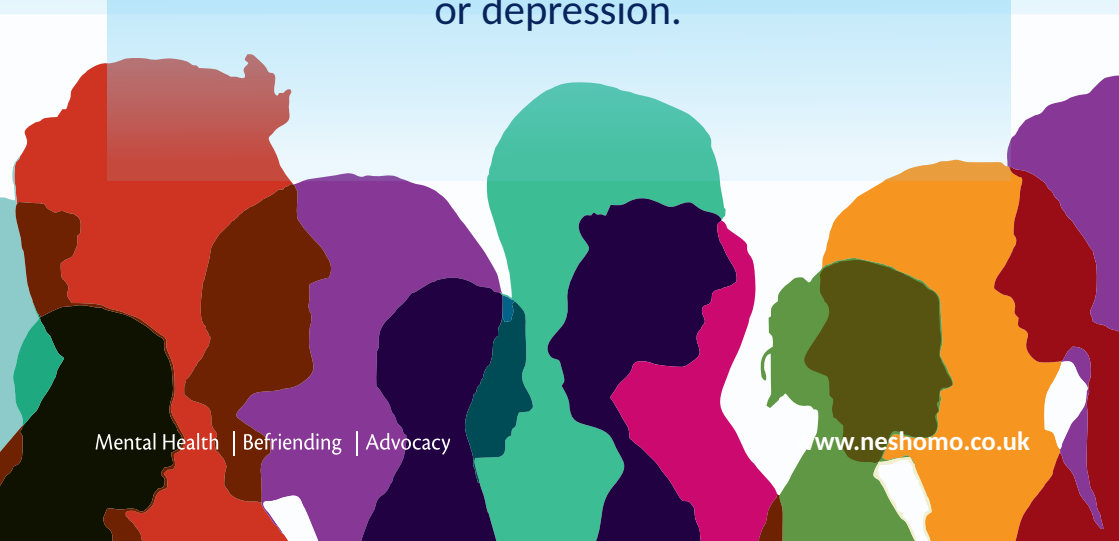
“I can’t concentrate on my prayers”.



“I have all these negative thoughts”.



If these sound like common thoughts and situations to you, it may be that you are suffering from low mood or depression.



Symptoms of Depression

There are different ways depression can impact us:

Physical symptoms

Tiredness even when you have slept, low energy, sleep issues, weight loss.

Emotions

Constantly crying, low motivation, loneliness even when you have people around you, feeling angry or irritable with people or things.

Behaviours

Stopping doing activities that you normally do, difficulty making decisions, avoiding people and spending a lot of time by yourself.

Thoughts

Negative self-thoughts, for example “I am no good”, critical self thoughts for example, “I always get it wrong”, thoughts that you deserve punishment, thoughts that G-d doesn't want your service, suicidal thoughts.

For EXAMPLE...

Chana is 32 years old and a mother of four children. She used to enjoy cooking and spending time with friends and family. Recently she has been spending a lot of time by herself and does not join the family at meal times.

Chana doesn't know what is wrong with her as she loves her family very much.

Chana finds it hard getting out of bed and relies on her husband to get the children ready and take them to school. She finds herself criticising herself for not being a better mother and wife.

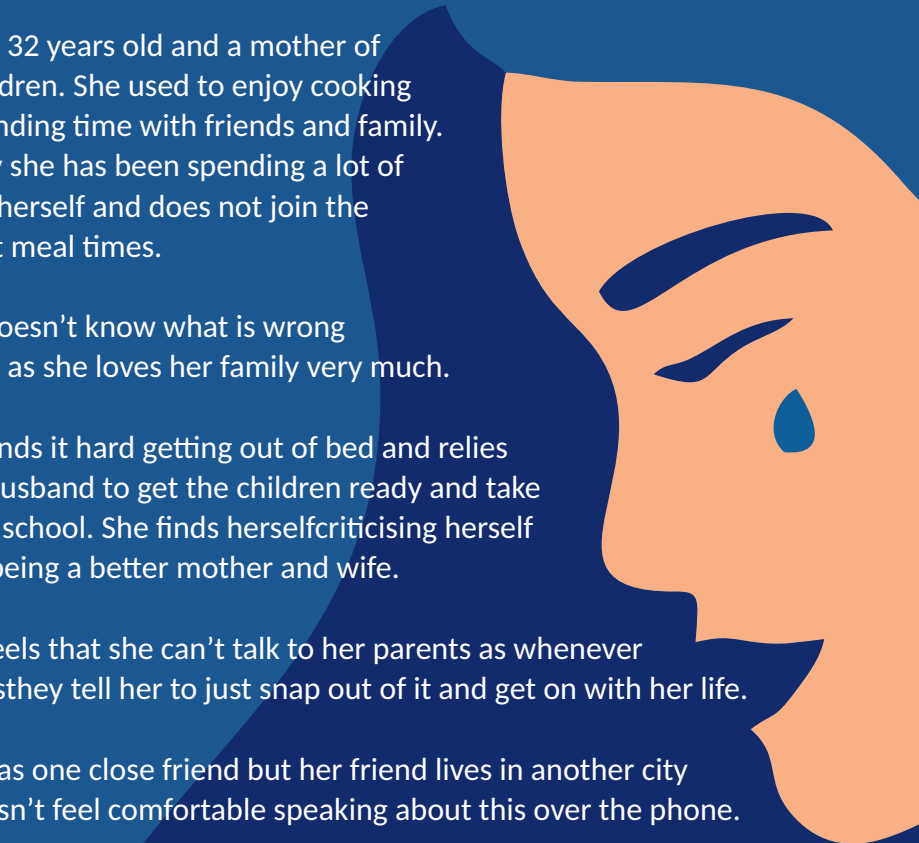
Chana feels that she can't talk to her parents as whenever she does they tell her to just snap out of it and get on with her life.

Chana has one close friend but her friend lives in another city and doesn't feel comfortable speaking about this over the phone.

Chana feels low and finds that she cries multiple times during the day for no apparent reason.

Try writing down on the next page some of your symptoms....

If it is easier maybe think about what symptoms of depression Chana is displaying.



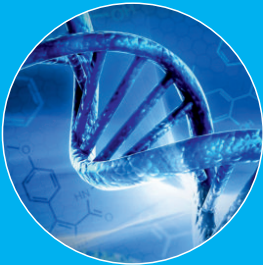
What causes depression?

There are many different factors that come together to cause a person to feel low.



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They can be grouped into three categories:



Biological factors

These can include a person's genetic makeup, their general health, whether they take drugs or drink alcohol etc...



Social factors

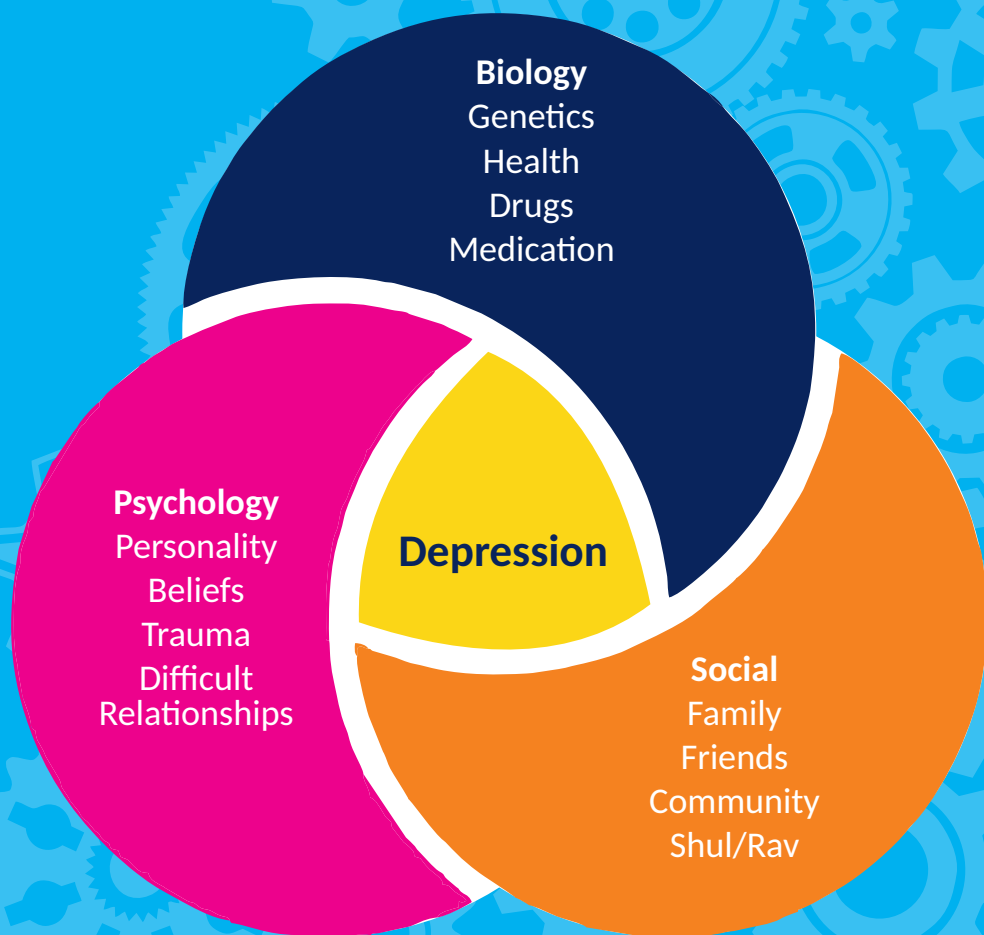
These can include a person's social experiences and network, such as their relationship with their parents, spouse, their family and friends, their wider community, for example their Shul and Rav etc...



Psychological factors

These can include a person's personality, their beliefs and thoughts about life, their previous experiences and whether they have been through traumatic experiences as a result of difficult relationships such as bullying etc...

These areas combine to influence a person's likelihood that they will feel low or depressed.



These areas are also linked;
with one area influencing the other(s).

Exercise...

Think about how these three areas might impact on your mood? Jot down some points.



Biological factors

Social factors

Psychological factors

What keeps you depressed?

Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours about situations can help maintain feelings of depression.

For example...

Chaim goes to the store. While he is queuing up he sees someone staring at him. Chaim's thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the situation can impact on Chaim's low mood.

Thoughts...

Chaim starts to think "that person is staring at me" and this triggers a thought that "He must think that I am weird".

Feelings...

This makes Chaim feel embarrassed, low and worthless.

Behaviours...

This leads Chaim to avoid going out as he thinks that people view him as 'weird'. Chaim will stay at home rather than risk the negative feelings that he felt when he was in the store, recurring.

This leads to Chaim feeling more negative and so he stops going out as much, which makes Chaim feel even worse.



Exercise...



Lets look at these thoughts, feelings and behaviours and how they might apply to you.

Think about a situation where you felt down.

Try and write down your thoughts, feelings and behaviours:

Thoughts

Emotions

Behaviours

So how can I take control of my low mood?



In the next pages we will look at the areas that can help a person take control of their depression.



Mood Diary



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Mood changes

Keeping a mood diary can be really useful in helping us to take control over our mood.

The main benefits of a mood diary are:

Helps to identify changes in your mood. Sometimes people can think that they are always feeling the same way. Only when they write it down do they begin to see that their mood actually varies a lot.

Helps understand your mood better and creates links. Keeping a diary can help you better understand why you are feeling a certain way. It can also help link different emotions such as anger and sadness.

Helps identify triggers. Certain situations or people may trigger certain mood changes. Keeping a record helps identify these.

Helps plan accordingly. If you can identify triggers and mood changes, you will be better placed to try and put things in place to change them.



Making Positive Steps...

Exposure to sunlight releases a hormone in the brain called serotonin, which is thought to be associated with increasing mood, as well as memory. Make sure you spend time during your day outdoors or open your blinds and let the sunlight in.

Sunlight



Spending time amongst nature has also been shown to increase people's mood, reduce stress and can also be a way to get exercise. Try to spend time around nature at least once a week.

Nature



Being amongst people is also really important for our mental health. Try and socialise and be around people as much as possible. Try to be around positive people who have a positive outlook.

People



Keeping Active

As part of working on your mental health, it is really important that you keep active by...

Exercising

Exercising releases chemicals (endorphins) that make you feel better about yourself. It also helps your physical health, which also connects with your mental health.

Doing enjoyable activities

Doing something enjoyable can help you to relax and unwind which can lift your mood. Activities may include; reading a book, painting or listening to music.

Projects

Having a project can be a really good idea as it can create that sense of achievement. It can be as small as a puzzle or as big as putting a new shed together; having something to work towards can really help lift some depressive feelings.

Socialising

Try to socialise a few times a week. It may begin as a small step such as talking to a neighbour or attending a lecture, but being isolated is not good for depression.



WEEKLY EXERCISE

Fill out the schedule below with some activities that you could try to fit into your week.

Monday

.....
.....

Tuesday

.....
.....

Wednesday

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.....

Thursday

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.....

Friday

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.....

Sunday

.....
.....

Sleep



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Mental health problems such as depression and anxiety often go hand in hand with sleep problems. So it's really important to try and maximise your sleep.

Lifestyle can have an impact on your sleep.

Keep regular sleeping hours

Keeping regular sleeping hours helps train your internal clock that regulates your sleep. Try to keep a similar time each day that you go to bed and wake up at.

Stay off stimulants

Try and stay off stimulants such as caffeine and sugary drinks as well as alcohol close to bed time. Technology can also be a stimulant and screens should be avoided close to bedtime.

Exercise

Exercise can be useful to help regulate your sleep, just don't do strenuous exercise close to bed time, rather keep it for the day time.

Establish a pre-sleep routine

Try to get into a routine of what you do before bed. Take a bath or do something relaxing, like reading a book. Unwinding every night like this gets your body ready for bed.



WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?



Antidepressants



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Antidepressants are the most commonly prescribed drug in the UK, with one in six adults in England being prescribed antidepressants.

Your GP can prescribe them.
You can have a conversation with your GP to discuss if this is a suitable course of action for you.

It is normal to ask for them and it doesn't mean that you are 'weak' or 'crazy'.

There can be side effects from taking antidepressants and this should be discussed with your GP.



Therapy

There are different types of therapy that deal with depression. While it is beyond the scope of this guide to list them all, there are three main categories of therapy.

Counselling

While there are different forms of counselling, the common theme is that counselling offers a safe space to explore your emotions and experiences in a non-judgemental space. Counselling will explore your experiences and you will work together with your therapist to develop healthier ways of dealing with your depression.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

While CBT is also a talking therapy. It looks at how your thoughts, feelings and behaviours come together to impact your mood. CBT is different from counselling, in that it is more structured than counselling and you may spend time doing exercises looking at your thoughts with the therapist. CBT also generally focuses on your current situation rather than exploring your past experiences in depth.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy is similar to counselling in that it is providing a safe space to explore your emotions, but generally, psychotherapy goes deeper and focuses on how early relationships have influenced your way of relating to the world. You should therefore expect to be in therapy generally longer than in counselling.

Any therapist that you see should be registered with an professional body. The main bodies are:

British Council for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

British Council for Psychotherapy (BPC)

United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC for psychologists)

If you would like any more information about therapy or you are unsure about the credentials of any therapist, please feel free to give Neshomo a call as we will be happy to give further advice and guidance on your options for therapy.







Befriending



Befriending can be a stand-alone option or alongside therapy as they can complement one another.

You would usually meet the befriender once a week and will agree together what you will do during this time. This is a completely confidential service and you will only be matched with someone who is a good 'fit' for you.

Befriending can help:

-  Reduce isolation
-  Connect to the community and help access community support programs
-  Provide support and advice
-  Create schedules and activities
-  Give you a sense of achievement and progression
-  Help you work towards goals

We provide training and supervision.

Quotes:

"My befriender is supportive and understanding."

"My befriender is incredible, I look forward to every session."

If you would like to access a befriender or would like more information please contact Neshomo:

Men: 07741 625 345

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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Sometimes there are things that crop up in life that stop us progressing. This could be an unexpected illness or the death of a loved one. The way we carried on before may not work and we may have to try to adapt to the new situation. The Corona pandemic of 2020 is one such situation.




These are some tips for dealing with mood during these hard times.

Establish a daily routine

-  Routines provide structure and purpose. Even if you can't do the things you used to do, try to think about things that you can do such as attending virtual groups.
-  Ensure you have a good mix of work, (activities that have to be done), rest and leisure.
-  Exercise is really important. Even a 15 minute walk can really help you feel better.
-  If you are working from home, take breaks and eat away from your "desk."

Set daily goals

These will provide purpose and a sense of achievement. This might include working through that list of things you keep meaning to do but never get round to.

-  Keep in touch. Talk with family, friends and neighbours. During difficult times it is more important than ever to keep in touch with family and friends.
-  Arrange to speak to someone most days on the phone, online or over the garden fence.
-  Talk to trusted friends about what you are feeling

Remember you can always contact Neshomo for remote befriending if you can't get out.



FURTHER CONTACTS

Pathways

A referral service to help you find a Jewish therapist: **0161 696 4511**

JAMH

Jewish Action for Mental Health
Free counselling and therapy for children and adults: Tel: **07510 204 844**
Email: hello@jamh.org.uk
Website: www.jamh.org.uk

Six Degrees

Short-term psychological support for self-referral or they will refer you onwards if appropriate: Tel: **0161 212 4981**
Email: sixdegrees@nhs.net
Website: www.six-degrees.org.uk

Jewish Women's Aid Domestic Abuse

Helpline: **0808 801 0500**
Sexual violence support: **0808 801 0656**

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