

DEPRESSION



What's wrong with me?

- Nothing seems interesting or fun anymore. I don't feel like doing anything
- I'm sad; I feel alone
- Things are harder at home than usual and COVID-19 makes it worse
- Sometimes I think I would be better off dead
- Sometimes I don't take my ARVs because I don't see the point in living
- I don't deserve to be happy
- I can't cope the way I should be able to

What is it?

Depression is having feelings of sadness, loss of hope, courage and being low in spirit

Depression is a condition where you;

- Feel very sad, sometimes to the point of feeling numb
- Feel hopeless and believe that things will never be better
- Believe that no one will love you or that you're not worth loving
- Have little energy or interest in doing things you used to like to do
- Might have trouble eating, sleeping, or concentrating

What causes it?

Difficult life circumstances and a lack of support, such as:

- Experiencing stigma and discrimination that makes you feel unwanted or not as good as others
- Losses due to death or life circumstances (e.g. moves, leaving school) and feeling disconnected
- Being orphaned and feeling like there's no one who loves you the way a mother or father would
- Lack of opportunity for education
- More responsibility than you feel you can handle
- Being abused
- Hopelessness due to an unusual threat like COVID

Why can't I just get over it?

- Depression is a real condition. You can't just wish it away. Depression causes changes in the brain which affect how you feel and how you see things. Fortunately, depression is treatable, but you usually need professional support to get past it

What can I do about it?

- With the help of someone, try to figure out the things causing your depression that can be addressed.
- Get support! Find someone to talk with who understands depression, even if it's just on what's app or SMS.
- If things need to change, how? If there are things that can't be changed, think about who you can reach out to for the kind of support that need to cope?
- Isolating ourselves because of COVID has become important but it can also make depression worse. Figure out ways you can still connect with people at a safe distance or over the phone or internet. Do things you used to like to do, safely where possible, even for short amounts of time.
- If depression is severe, medication might help so you need to talk to a professional who can advise you
- Exercise and eating well are important. If your appetite is gone, try eating small amounts at a time. Appetite should return as your depression lifts.
- Keep in mind that you are not alone! You might think you are the only one who is depressed. Many people feel the same way but hide it.

