

Press Release

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Take time out to check your general wellbeing

Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is supporting Depression Awareness Week which runs from 11th – 17th April. The Trust is encouraging people to be aware of their current state of mental health and wellbeing. This might just mean taking time out to relax and think about how you are feeling and your general state of health - all important in recognising the symptoms of depression and seeking help and advice early.

Most people feel sad or miserable about life at some point or the other. These feelings however usually pass with time. However, if the depressed feelings interfere with everyday life and either don't go away, or keep coming back, it could be a sign of depression in the medical sense of the term, and help should be sought.

Dr. Nibha Hegde, Specialist doctor in Older Adult Psychiatry said, "People are often embarrassed to seek professional help and admit that they might be depressed. Particularly the elderly who fail to recognize the symptoms of depression or seek necessary and timely help".

She continued: "Depression is a common condition. Each year 6% of adults experience an episode of depression and over the course of their lifetime more than 15% of the population will experience an episode. Treatment and support is readily available and people often recover without the need for long term medications."

The following are a few of the most common symptoms of depression. If you experience four or more of these symptoms for a major part of the day, most days for two weeks or more, you should seek help from your GP. However, if you are experiencing thoughts of suicide, death or self harm, you should visit your GP immediately.

- Tiredness and loss of energy
- Sadness that doesn't go away
- Not being able to enjoy things that are usually pleasurable or interesting
- Loss of self-confidence and self-esteem
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling anxious all the time

- Avoiding other people, sometimes even your close friends
- Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness
- Sleeping problems - difficulties in getting off to sleep or waking up much earlier than usual
- Very strong feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Finding it hard to function at work/college/school
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of sex drive and/or sexual problems
- Physical aches and pains
- Thinking about suicide and death
- Self-harm

If you require further information about depression please visit the Trust's website at www.bcpft.nhs.uk or www.depressionalliance.org.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:

Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (BCPFT) is the major provider of mental health and specialist health learning disabilities services to people of all ages in Sandwell. The Trust also provides specialist health learning disability services to people in Walsall.

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