What is depression?

• Depression can happen to anyone and is not a sign of weakness.

• It’s an illness characterized by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by difficulty carrying out daily activities.

• People with depression also normally experience several of the following: loss of energy; change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

• But don’t worry. Depression can be treated – with talking therapies, medication or both.

What you can do

• Talk to someone you trust about your feelings – most people find that talking to someone who cares about them helps.

• Seek professional help – your local health-care worker or doctor is a good place to start.

• Try to keep doing at least some of the activities that you usually enjoy.

• Stay connected with friends and family.

• Exercise regularly – even if it’s just a short walk.

• Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits as much as possible.

• Avoid or restrict alcohol intake and don’t use illicit drugs – they can make depression worse.

• If you feel suicidal, contact someone you trust for help, or ring the emergency services.

REMEMBER: With the right support, you can get better – so if you think you might be depressed, seek help.