

# SOS Détresse

## Depression

### How do you know when you or someone around you is depressed?

Classical symptoms of depression are:

- Feeling sad, depressed
- Loss or decrease in interest for things which previously pleased us
- Loss or increase in appetite or weight
- Insomnia – cannot fall asleep, wakening during the night, waking too early
- Excessive fatigue, lack of energy
- An inner tension, moving aimlessly, or the opposite: a reduction in interest and energy in all areas of life
- Feelings of inferiority or guilt
- Difficulty concentrating
- Suicidal thoughts

Following extensive information and awareness campaigns in recent years, most people are now aware of these “typical symptoms”.

Conversely, it is not so well known that the spectrum of symptoms of depression is much wider. Indeed, many depressions are atypical.

Depression comes in many forms and it can be hidden under a multitude of very different symptoms.

Some people feel only physical discomfort, such as headaches, sensitivity to weather or digestive problems. Others simply notice that they can no longer perform daily tasks, or can do so only with extreme effort. Some others do not notice any effects from their depressed mood, but notice that they no longer feel emotions.

If several of these classic or atypical signs appear, it could be that the person is suffering from depression. It is then important to seek medical or psychological help to diagnose the disease.

### What people themselves, or those close to them, can do to help:

In addition to their overwhelming symptoms, many depressed people suffer from the

fact that no one understands them. No one understands that they cannot help but agonise over things, become more and more depressed and that they are unable to take control of their lives. Often they do not even understand this themselves.

**Depression is an illness: depressed people do not have a choice: they cannot view themselves or the world any differently than things appear at that time.**

So it is important not to blame yourself if you suffer from symptoms of depression.

If it is not you who are suffering, but someone close to you, do not blame them as this will only add to their burden. Stay in touch with them, be compassionate and encourage them to seek professional help.

**It is essential to treat depression with professional help and the sooner, the better.**

## **Professional help**

Depression can take on many forms and has numerous causes.

Today depression is well known. Nonetheless, every depressed person has their own personal history.

Any course of psychotherapy will start with understanding the person and their symptoms in the context of their life journey and current situation. Analysis of these links often brings an immediate improvement.

Following on from this, various personal topics will be carefully analysed in therapy.

In some cases medication will be necessary. Such treatment will help the person to rediscover their emotional life, interests, and activities.

Thereafter a new way of living and looking at life becomes possible. Also for the relatives who surround the person suffering from depression.