



ITEC



VTCT

UMH4 – Understanding depression

Learning outcomes

LO1 Understand depression

LO2 Understand the causes of depression

LO3 Understand how depression affects individuals and others

LO4 Understand how to manage and support people experiencing depression



LO1: Content and Assessment criteria

- 1.1. Explain the difference between clinical depression and psychotic depression
- 1.2. Describe the signs and symptoms of depression
- 1.3. Outline the factors associated with psychotic depression



Definitions and descriptions

- **Depression** can be described as a feeling of low mood that lasts for an extended period of time and that can affect your everyday life. This is different from just feeling 'low'
- Depression that is persistent, lasting for weeks or months rather than just a few days, is sometimes referred to as 'clinical' depression
- Some people's depression can be so severe that they experience hallucinations and delusional thinking. These symptoms associated with depression are known as 'psychotic' depression



Common signs and symptoms of depression

Symptoms of depression can be largely separated into psychological, physical and social symptoms.

- **Psychological symptoms:**

- Continuous low mood or sadness
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Having low self-esteem
- Feeling tearful
- Feeling guilt-ridden
- Feeling irritable and intolerant of others
- Having no motivation or interest in things
- Finding it difficult to make decisions
- Not getting any enjoyment out of life
- Feeling anxious or worried



Common signs and symptoms of depression

Symptoms of depression can be largely separated into psychological, physical and social symptoms.

- **Physical symptoms:**

- Moving or speaking more slowly than usual
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Constipation
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Lack of energy
- Loss of libido
- Changes to menstrual cycle
- Disturbed sleep



Common signs and symptoms of depression

Symptoms of depression can be largely separated into psychological, physical and social symptoms.

- **Social symptoms:**

- Avoiding contact with friends
- Taking part in fewer social activities
- Neglecting hobbies and interests
- Difficulties with relationships



Factors associated with **psychotic depression**

People with psychotic depression may experience psychosis leading to:

- **Delusions** – false thoughts or beliefs about any particular situation
- **Hallucinations** – hearing, feeling, smelling, seeing or tasting things that are not there, e.g. hearing voices

These psychotic responses are often related to their depressed state, e.g. hearing voices that relate to their body image.

People with psychotic depression are also known to suffer from ‘psychomotor agitation’ or ‘psychomotor retardation’:

- **Psychomotor agitation** – inability to relax, constantly fidgeting
- **Psychomotor retardation** – a slowing down of thoughts and movements



LO2: Content and Assessment criteria

2.1. Describe the triggers and life demands that could lead to people developing depression



Triggers and life demands that are linked to **depression**

There is no single cause of depression.

Some of the reasons people develop depression include:

- Stressful life events
- Family history
- Post-natal depression
- Loneliness or isolation
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Gender differences
- Illness or poor health



The stresses of everyday life can contribute to **depression**

- Loss or bereavement
- Lower socioeconomic circumstances
- Unemployment or work-related pressures
- Relationship problems



LO3: Content and Assessment criteria

3.1. Explain the effects of depression on the individual and others



Effects of depression on the individual and others

The individual

- Anxiety, fear, anger, sadness, frustration, low self-esteem, struggling to make decisions, constant worry, forgetfulness

Behavioural effects of stress:

- Being irritable and snappy, verbally or physically aggressive
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Eating too much or too little
- Avoiding certain places or people
- Drinking or smoking more



Effects of depression on the individual

- Feelings of hopelessness and negative thinking are common for individuals who suffer from depression
- Sleep patterns may be adversely affected, either through an inability to get to sleep or to have adequate sleep
- Altered social contact – some people may need to be around others more than they usually would, while others may do the opposite and become withdrawn and want to avoid contact
- A loss of confidence may arise from feeling low
- A person with depression may find it difficult to develop relationships
- A person with depression may find their appetite altered, either reduced or increased



Effects of depression on others

- People around those suffering from depression may feel frustrated or guilty at the situation or the lack of help they are able to provide
- Work colleagues may become frustrated at having to do extra work or cover for those suffering from depression
- Stigmas attached to mental health can lead to others behaving inappropriately towards people with depression, e.g. anger
- Family, friends and others may experience a grief response, as there is a perception that they have lost someone close



LO4: Content and Assessment criteria

4.1. Describe the treatments available to help manage depression and psychotic depression

External theory examination

4.2. Outline the role of two organisations available to help with the management and support of depression



Treatments available to help manage depression and psychotic depression

- For mild depression, a doctor may suggest a combination of waiting and monitoring of the condition to see if it improves. Typically this will be reviewed in 2 weeks for improvement in symptoms. If the symptoms persist the doctor may recommend the following examples of treatments/therapies
- Exercise or physical activity – exercise and physical activity has been shown to help with depression due to its potential to release endorphins that are associated with improved mood and relaxation
- Talking therapies – therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) and/or counselling can be used for mild and moderate depression. CBT has also been shown to be effective in helping people with psychotic depression
- Medication – antidepressants are sometimes used to treat depression



Treatments available to help manage depression and psychotic depression

- Combination therapy – moderate to severe depression is sometimes treated with a combination of CBT and antidepressants
- A combination of antipsychotics and antidepressants can be used to treat psychotic depression
- Self-help groups – social support groups, including friends and relatives, can help people suffering from depression
- Hospitalisation – a person being treated for psychotic depression may be admitted to hospital if other treatments are not effective
- Although controversial, electroconvulsive therapy may sometimes be recommended for severe or psychotic depression



Organisations available to help with the management and support of depression

- Examples of agencies and organisations that help with the management of depression
- Mind – information about depression, its symptoms, causes and treatment
- Rethink – helpful resources and factsheets to help with depression
- Depression Alliance – an outreach organisation for people suffering with depression, now linked with Mind
- NHS – information on depression, its types, help and support mechanisms





Learning check

- **Outline two** treatments for depression
- **Explain** the benefit of CBT for depression
- How long will a medical professional wait/monitor an individual before recommending treatment or therapies for depression?
- **Describe two** ways in which living with with depression can affect the individual
- **Describe two** triggers associated with the development of depression
- **Outline** the difference between depression and psychotic depression
- **Identify three** psychological, physical and social symptoms of depression

