

Coping Mechanisms

Try and encourage your child to do the following:

- Breathing exercises: Breathing exercises are simple but effective ways of calming the mind when it needs it. When the depression or dark thoughts take over the mind, it can help to take a step back and focus on breathing:
 - Take a slow, deep breath in through the nose
 - Hold it for 2 seconds
 - Breathe out through the mouth
 - Wait for 5 seconds and repeat as necessary
- Physical exercises: Releasing endorphins can really help depression:
 - Go for a walk or run
 - Dance around their bedroom
 - Tense and hold the muscles in the body, squeeze them tightly and release them. keep doing this until feeling some level of relief
 - Pushing a wall away – ask your child to stand in front of a solid wall and try to push the wall away. As hard as they can, for as long as they can, and when they stop, their muscles will relax. This physical exercise can help with the release of much needed endorphins.
- Socialising – isolation is a huge part of depression, in order to lessen, encourage your child to spend time with other people, they likely won't want to, but persevere
- Personal hygiene – people with depression often neglect their personal hygiene. Encourage regular baths/showers, doing their hair, get a haircut, brushing their teeth etc
- Responsibilities – encourage your child to clean their personal space – such as bedroom, open the curtains, and complete any tasks that need to be done – such as other household chores, homework, college/university assignments etc

Depression Coping Mechanisms



The Lotus Mental Health

www.thelotusmentalhealth.org

What is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder that negatively affects how a person feels, acts, behaves, and thinks. Depression causes feelings of deep sadness, alongside a loss of interest in activities that a person used to feel pleasure in. It can affect the way a person function and how a person is able to find fun, enjoyment, and fulfilment in their daily life.

Depression is one of the more well-known mental health disorders and is often used as a word to describe a person's mood if they are feeling a bit down, low, or sad, but in reality, depression is far more than an off day or two. In truth, depression can often make a person feel worthless, guilty about things they have no reason to feel guilt for, they lose interest in activities, in friendships, in relationships, in family, and even their daily lives.

What can you do?

Because of the impact depression can have not only on the sufferer, but the wider family too, it can be hugely beneficial to have coping mechanisms in place.

It is important to find what works for you and your family, so here are a few examples to get you started...

Coping Mechanisms

If your child is feeling depressed, there are things that you can encourage your child to do that can help them. They are:

- Nobody should go through difficult times alone, and this is something that your child needs to learn to understand, because of this, it is important for your child to learn how to open up to people about how they are feeling. A parent, carer, brother, sister, grandparent, auntie, uncle, cousin, a trusted friend, a counsellor – it doesn't matter who, as long as your child feels comfortable talking to someone who they trust, about how they are feeling.
- Encourage your child to get the thoughts that are in their head – out. An effective way that they can do this by keeping a diary. Simply writing down how they are feeling can be really useful. Not only will that work because it helps them put a place for their negative thoughts, but it can also be used as a point of reference for any particular depression triggers that they didn't realise they had.
- Writing a letter – this might seem a bit daft, but if they can write letters to themselves, particularly after difficult days, they can use the letters to read back and see themselves, through their own words, that they have overcome the negative thoughts in the past, and therefore they know that they are capable of overcoming them again.