

Bedfordshire Neuro Therapy Service

Feeling low or depressed after a stroke



Call: 0300 790 6832



Email: eec.beds.adults.neuroesd@nhs.net

Why might you feel low after a stroke?

Low mood is a **reaction** to all the **changes** that the stroke has brought into your life.

A **stroke** can cause your **mood** to drop so that you **feel low**.

If it **stays low**, you may become **depressed**.

About **one third of stroke** survivors have **post stroke depression** within the first year after their stroke.



What causes low mood/depression?

The **emotional centres** in the brain **can be affected by the stroke** changing how you feel



Life after a **stroke** can be **more difficult** than before



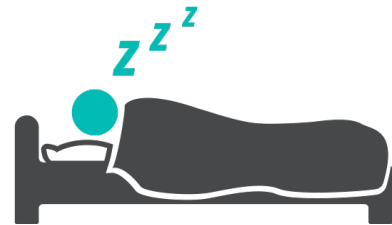
What are the signs you may have low mood?

Changes happen in your body

You may have **brain fog**



You may **sleep a lot**



You may have **little physical energy**



Changes happen to your thoughts

Your **thoughts** may become **negative**



Your feelings might change

The future may seem **hopeless**



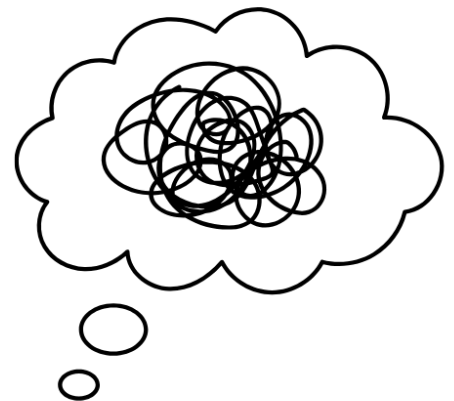
You may feel **flat** or **shut-down**



You might feel **angry**, **tearful** or **sad**

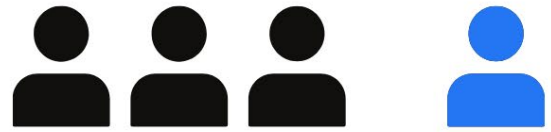


You might have **suicidal thoughts** or think about **harming yourself**



Your behaviour may change

You **stop seeing friends** and **going out**



You **can't settle** or **concentrate** on anything



You neglect to wash, eat and **take care of yourself**



You spend **a lot of time in bed** or asleep



What can help you feel better?



Having a **daily routine** that includes **enjoyable activities**



Getting some **gentle exercise**



Eating **healthy** foods



Drinking **plenty of fluids**



Sharing your feelings with friends and family

Avoiding using alcohol, drugs or smoking to deal with difficult emotions



Is your low mood serious?



You should **ask for help**
and get **medical attention** if:

You **continue** to have low mood
over **2 or more weeks**.



You **struggle to engage with things** you
used to enjoy.



You **feel hopeless** or **worthless**



You may have **depression** that can be **helped with treatment**

If you feel **suicidal** then get support straightaway.

Who can help?

Contact your **GP** who may prescribe **antidepressant** medication to help



Speak to one of **our team**.
We can refer you for **talking therapy**.



If you feel **suicidal** or think about harming yourself call:
999 or 111 and ask for **option 2**.

This help is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year



You can also ring **Samaritans** on **116 123** for confidential, non-judgemental emotional support.



Where can you get more Information?

1. Stroke Association

- **Aphasia friendly stroke information**
<https://www.stroke.org.uk/stroke/effects/aphasia/information>
- **Emotional changes after a stroke - accessible video**
<https://www.stroke.org.uk/stroke/effects/emotional#emotional>
- **Feeling Overwhelmed – Video on the emotional impact of stroke**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LsH_zZ3F8LM

2. City University of London

- **CARA resource hub videos:**
<https://cityaccess.org/carahub/>
- **Psychological Journeys after stroke and aphasia:**
Jo and Michael's stories – Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iy7wm2_tnl



Thank you!

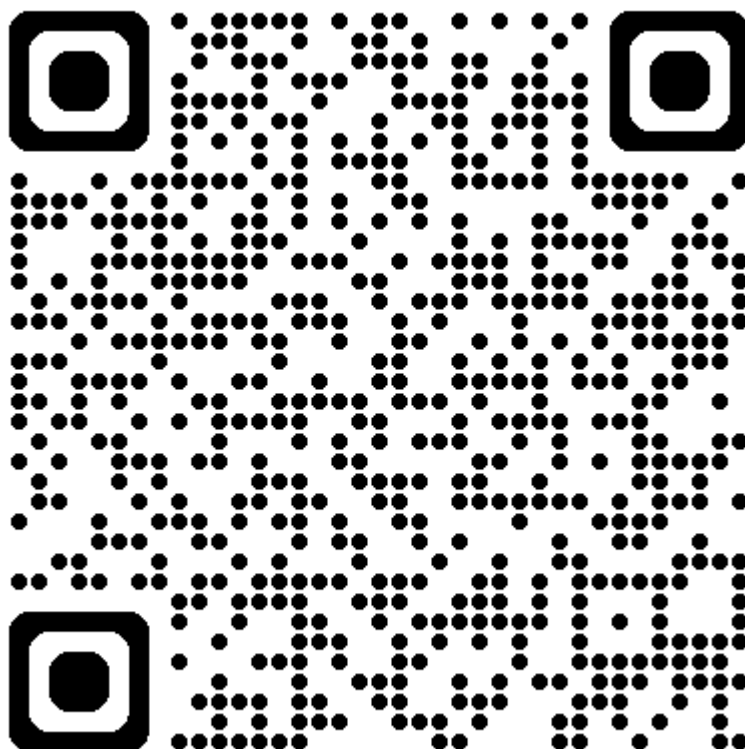
We would like to **thank our team of experts** living with communication difficulties for their **help** with making this leaflet.



Thank you Rashmi, Arber, Mark, Steve and Fiona.



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This leaflet was made by East of England Community Health and Care NHS Trust.

We welcome the distribution of this leaflet to improve awareness and support good practice.

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