

# Feeling down? Here's when to seek help for low mood or depression



**As humans, we feel a lot of different emotions on a regular basis.** It is common to have periods of sadness, frustration, and regret for choices we have made along the way. Inevitably, life will serve us difficulties. Sometimes we can find ourselves feeling down for a few days or weeks. It is normal for situations, stressors, and circumstances to trigger feelings of sadness, loneliness, anger, grief or emptiness. It can be tough to differentiate between the very normal feeling of the “blues” and more intense feelings of low mood or depression that we might need more support managing.

When thinking about whether you need more support, assess and explore current stressors that might help explain your low mood. A recent loss – whether of a person, pet or circumstance (job, divorce, friendship) – might make you feel down. A lot of changes in a short amount of time can

also affect our ability to cope. Added pressures on top of our usual responsibilities may also affect our mood.

An often-overlooked cause for low mood is how even positive events can be a source of stress (e.g., a new job, new relationship, becoming a parent or changing careers). We call these experiences situational because with time, the stress fades, our ability to cope increases, and we adjust to the change – allowing our low mood to improve.

To help you understand your mood, these are some questions you might want to ask yourself:

- What is going on in my life that may be contributing to how I am feeling?
- How many changes have occurred recently?
- If I were able to resolve certain stressors, how would that affect my mood?

Another factor in determining whether you need more support is looking at your day-to-day. How are you coping on a regular basis? Bad days are a normal part of life. Bad days are those where you feel blue, lack motivation and struggle to manage your emotions. More bad days are common at certain times in the year – for example, during the fall/winter months or around anniversaries of loss. The important thing to consider is how you have been coping day-to-day and for how long. Is there still a sense of pleasure in activities you normally find enjoyable? How is work going? Are you able to take care of yourself, your home and personal hygiene?

Another important consideration is how long you've felt low in relation to what is happening in your life. Multiple

stressors, grief, losses or gains can all have a negative impact on your life, until your ability to cope increases or issues resolve. The question is duration. A couple of weeks of low mood can be quite normal – but if you continue feeling low and have trouble coping in your day, that might indicate the need for consultation with a mental health professional.

Finally, normal or more intense low mood can come with physical symptoms. Our minds and bodies work in unison. Physical symptoms to consider are loss of energy, fatigue, weight loss or gain, sleep issues – either sleeping too much

or too little – and poor concentration or focus. If tasks are becoming a daily struggle, and you are feeling low for an extended period, you may want to consult with a mental health professional to further explore.

So, if you're wondering about whether you might need more support to help manage your mood, remember that the key is to look at what's happening in your life in relation to how you feel, and the duration and intensity of your symptoms. If you feel you need help, reach out as soon as you can. The sooner you address your symptoms, the sooner you will feel more like yourself.

**UPCOMING WEBINAR:** October 12, 1:30–2:30 PM EST. [Recognizing the Signs of Depression in a Team Member.](#)

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**If you need help managing your low moods,  
HumanaCare is here to help whenever you  
need – we're only a phone call away.**

