

“Living life more easily”

The Samaritans

Samaritans - 24 Hour
Multi-Lingual Hotline:

2896 0000





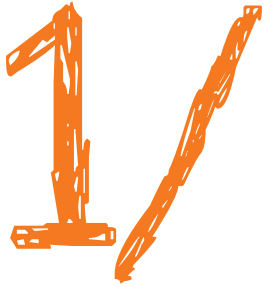
“Living life more easily” is a booklet to help students recognise the signs and symptoms of depression and those feelings that may lead to suicide. Being a teenager can be demanding and depression is common during adolescence. Recognise these signs and perhaps you will be able to help yourself and your friends too.

The Samaritans is a charitable organisation which provides suicide prevention services.

Our trained volunteers provide emotional support for anyone who is feeling depressed, hopeless or helpless.

24 hours a day and is

strictly confidential!



What is “Emotional Flu”?

According to mental health professionals if you suffer from the following signs for more than 2 weeks you may have caught “emotional flu”, otherwise known as Depression. Score yourself and see how many ✓ s’ you get

Signs of depression	✓	Signs of depression	✓
1. Feeling desperate and thinking that nobody can help you		6. Sudden loss of appetite or increase in appetite	
2. Feeling irritated and angry		7. Feeling that you’re a “nobody”	
3. Having difficulty concentrating		8. Feeling tired all the time and can’t be bothered to do things	
4. Having difficulty sleeping at night / feeling sleepy during the day		9. Have no interest in social activities (e.g. going out with friends, shopping...etc)	
5. Loss of confidence, blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong		10. Have thoughts of suicide or wanting to escape from everything.	

Result Table

If you have 7 ✓'s or more:

You are seriously depressed. Samaritans would encourage you to talk to a trusted adult or the school counsellor/doctor as soon as possible.

4 to 7 ✓'s:

You are a bit depressed and we would encourage you to talk to a trusted adult or the school counsellor/doctor very soon.

4 ✓'s or below:

You are emotionally healthy. However, if a particular sign persists, you may need to talk it over with someone.

Remember: If it isn't possible to talk to a professional, talk to us "The Samaritans" or a trusted adult.





Depression can affect anyone for no apparent reason whether you are young or old, male or female. But if you are feeling “down” for more than 2 weeks and it is starting to affect your life at school, at home or with your friends, you may be developing the “Emotional Flu”.

All sorts of stress may affect our emotions and cause depression. This can trigger thoughts of suicide. So, by using the above table and taking your emotional “temperature”, you will know if you are suffering from Emotional Flu. Take steps to get “treatment” so that your flu can be “treated” quickly.



2/ Case Study

Case 1:

Fiona is a form 4 student who had an older boyfriend in school. She believed she loved him, but was under great stress as her parents disapproved of her relationship with him. She has a lot of homework and extracurricular activities and her parents feel she is not paying enough attention to her studies. Recently Fiona and her boyfriend had been arguing about their relationship, in particular, her parents' disapproval. In the end he dumped her.

Although it was a short lived relationship Fiona's heart was broken and she cried most days. Fiona found it hard to concentrate on her studies as her parents were breathing down her neck. They complained she had lost concentration and enthusiasm for school. She soon started blaming herself for everything, even small mistakes. She felt very depressed, lost interest in doing anything and often cried for no reason. Sometimes she didn't want to eat and even started self-harming.



What are **Fiona's** problems?

Source of stress

- Break up with boyfriend
- Parents' expectation

Signs of depression

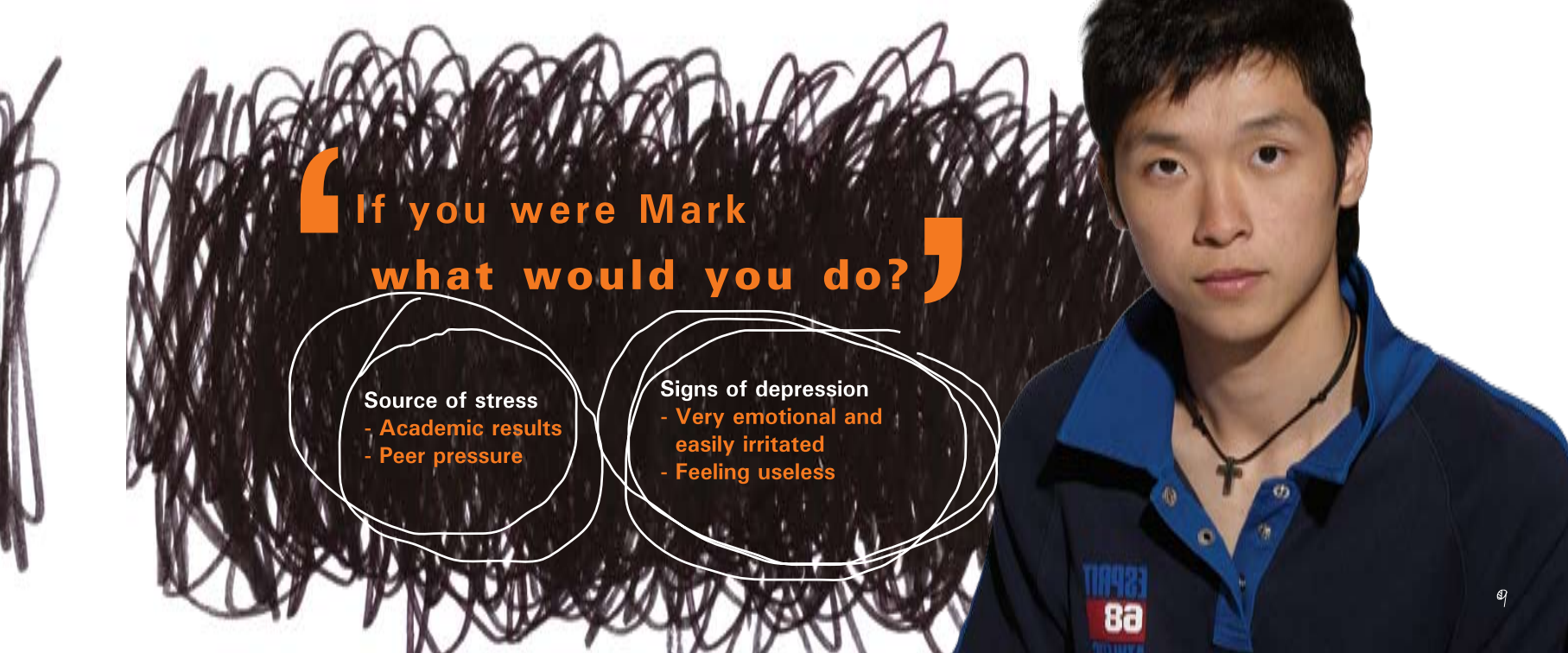
- Crying for no reason.
- Lost interest in doing anything
- Self-harming



Case2:

Mark hates studying but loves playing practical jokes and he is the life and soul of the party. You know the type, full of fun and always making jokes. He loves to stay out late at night and loathes staying in. He failed his recent exams and was warned by the school that if he made no improvement, he would have to repeat the year and re-sit his exams. Since then, his relationships with his teachers and parents has deteriorated. Not only did some teachers make him feel stupid and worthless, but his parents had little patience and on some occasions even grounded him and didn't let him out with his mates. Mark is furious, but he doesn't know how to cope with the situation and releases his anger by shouting, swearing and constantly playing antisocial internet games.

He was labelled the "Bad Guy" at school and as a result of this he suffered a lot of stress. He started thinking that he was useless and felt he was unable to find a good reason to live. Mark started smoking, drinking alcohol and taking drugs with his friends, but even by doing all this he couldn't get rid of his stress.



**“If you were Mark
what would you do?”**

Source of stress

- Academic results
- Peer pressure

Signs of depression

- Very emotional and easily irritated
- Feeling useless

3/ Sources of stress

Do you know your source of stress?

Satisfaction/Academic results

- > Homework?
- > Failing exams?
- > Worrying about further study?

Comments from others

- > Parents' expectations?
- > Nobody (including teachers) appreciates you, all you get is criticism?



Friends

- > Not really understood by others?
- > Not accepted on any level by your peers and the people you admire?
- > In fact you don't have many friends?

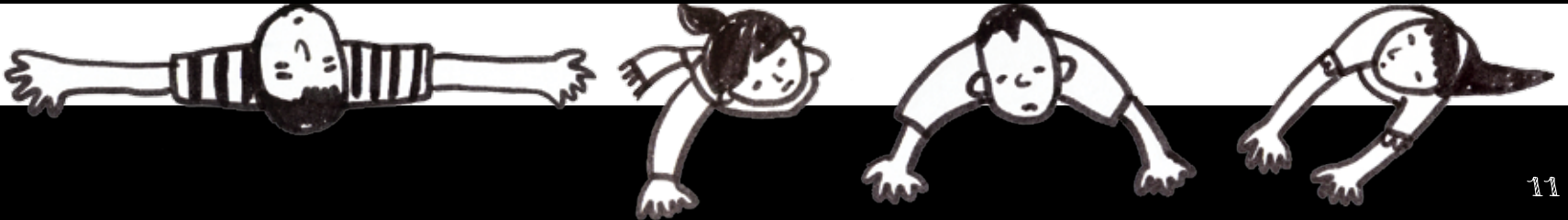
Change in environment

- > Mum and Dad have separated or divorced?
- > Your loved ones or pets have passed away?
- > Moved home or changed school?

Perfectionism

- > No matter how hard you try, you don't get the results you need?
- > You look different to other people in your year?

Conclusion: Any of, or several of, the above factors can lead to depression.





Perhaps sometimes
you feel:

- Sad and miserable
- Scared people will laugh at you
- Tearful
- Like a misfit

Sometimes you have:

Lost interest in hobbies, sports, your appearance

Stopped going out with friends

Lost confidence



Can you think of other feelings

that are weighing you down?



5/

How to get control back in your life

YES

Tell someone you trust how you are feeling.

Share your dark thoughts and feelings with those you have faith in. This could be someone in your family, social workers, or your friends. If the person you're telling doesn't seem to understand, don't be put off – tell someone else. You could phone a helpline.

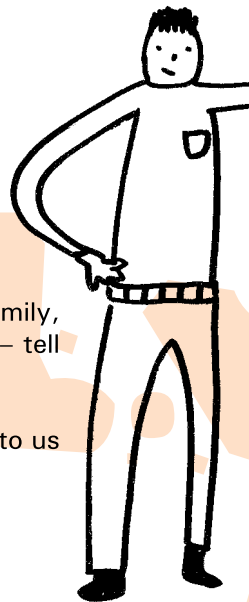
YES

If you find it difficult to talk, write it down. Write / email or blog because sharing helps! You could write to us at jo@samaritans.org.hk

YES

Use the internet / chat room wisely.

Make sure that you're getting something positive out of it.





- YES** Tell yourself about the good things you've done today. Just thinking about your bad thoughts less often can be a great achievement.
- YES** Do exercise that you enjoy for half an hour everyday i.e. tennis, swimming, walking, hiking with friends.
- YES** Make a study plan and try to stick to it.
- YES** Take a break after every one hour's revision.
- YES** Reward yourself and give yourself a 'pat on the back'.
- YES** You might find prayer helpful if you have religious belief.
- YES** Think positively and smile more.

Can you think of some positive things that might help Fiona?

- > Perhaps Fiona can
 - Release her emotions by crying or writing a blog to share with those she trusts.
 - Learn from the breakup with her boyfriend and feel she is a better person after this experience.
 - Try and be less afraid of finding more friends in the future.



How to get control back in your life



Have No Regrets – avoid alcohol, drugs and cigarettes.

- > Although they can give you a temporary lift, they make depressed people even worse in the long run.
- > They can cause brain damage.
- > They can become addictive.
- > They can cause loss of control leading people to make the wrong decisions.
- > Be smart and have no regrets.

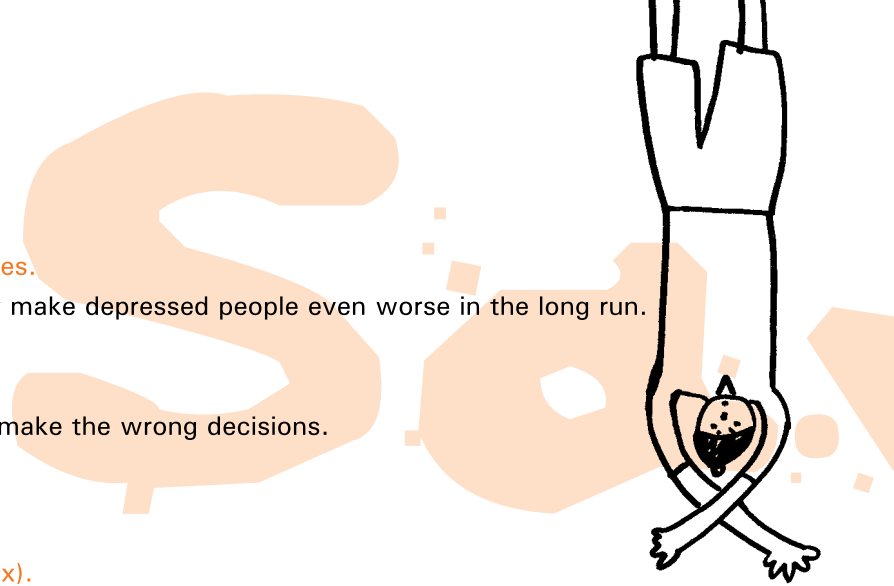


Avoid self harming.



Avoid any risk taking behaviour (eg. promiscuous sex).

Some people think this may help relieve pressure. If you believe this, please seek help to find a better solution for reducing your stress.





Don't think bad thoughts about yourself all the time.

Try to recognise when your bad thoughts are likely to come and be prepared for them. You could try being more active, being with people or doing something you enjoy. Remember don't keep thinking you're a failure; this can only make you feel worse.



Don't push yourself to be "superman/woman" as everyone has different strengths and weaknesses.



Don't listen to sad music when you are really down.



Don't be afraid to seek help.

There are some very good "talking treatments" which work really well, especially if you go in the early days of feeling bad.



Don't expect to feel OK all at once. Just knowing that life is slowly getting better and that there is light at the end of the tunnel will help to alleviate your stress.

Can you think of some positive things that might help Mark?

- > Perhaps Mark could assess the primary reason for his poor exam results.
- > Recognise the positive things he is capable of.
- > Not everybody is destined to go to university. Maybe Mark could think about other careers he might enjoy.



Positive signs of Stress

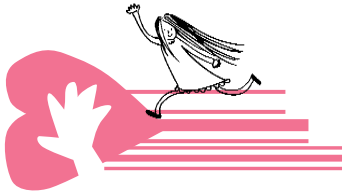


- > Life always has its ups and downs and it is inevitable that we have to face assorted pressures throughout our lives.
- > Some days are happier than others.
- > Stress doesn't affect everyone in the same way.
- > Stress is not necessarily bad, but it's the way you deal with it that affects your wellbeing.





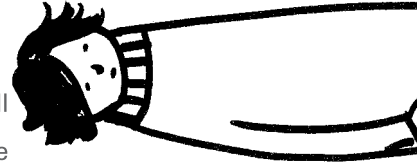
Sometimes, stress can be good as it can motivate you to do better and bring out your **hidden potential**.



The Samaritans numbers

The 24-Hour Hotline 2896 0000:

No one will judge you or tell you that you are wrong, or that you shouldn't have such feelings. We will listen to you and accept you and support you. Our phones don't have caller ID and what you share with us is **absolutely confidential**.



The email service jo@samaritans.org.hk

All our volunteers are known as "Jo", and we endeavour to reply to your emails within 24 hours. We will only keep your emails for one month and destroy them afterwards. Everything is **strictly confidential** but if you want us to, we will destroy them immediately.

