

WHEN IS IT MORE THAN JUST A BLUE DAY?



We all have ups and downs in our mood. Who hasn't had the Sunday evening blues, or the first day back at work downer after being on leave? When we receive bad news or are criticised, it's also quite normal to feel a little flat or subdued. These mood states tend to change after a while as time passes and circumstances change. Even if they last for a full day, maybe a day or two if something has really upset you, the negative mood still changes back to neutral or is even uplifted.



WATCH YOUR MOOD

When your mood is low, negative, pessimistic, and you find yourself becoming tearful over small things most of the time and this lasts two to four weeks, it's more than feeling stressed. Perhaps you are irritable combined with low mood, or feel numb and detached and you just don't care about anything. These mood states are something to take note of, especially if they start to affect how you do your work and how you deal with others.



YOUR SLEEP CAN TELL YOU IF IT'S TIME TO WORRY

Sleep is the other main symptom of depression. Depression is not just a few nights of broken or disturbed sleep, or struggling to shut your mind down before being able to fall asleep. The same is true if you are waking up early with a racing mind or consumed by thoughts of the past. In some cases, you may be feeling flat and just want to sleep, take naps during the day and sleep for more than nine hours at night.

All of these can happen for a few nights or days at a time, but if sleeping too much or too little becomes a pattern and you have mood symptoms for four weeks or more, this could be the early signs of depression.



BURNOUT

Depression can also be confused with burnout. They share symptoms of disturbed sleep, mood fluctuations and others like significant changes in appetite, concentration, short-term memory and motivation.

One of the key differences between burnout and depression is that burnout focuses just on work and your mood tends to lift by the weekend and drop significantly by Sunday afternoon or evening. Depression is there every day, no matter if it's a weekday or weekend.

With burnout, your negative thoughts are mostly about the type of work you do, place of work and the people there. With depression, negative thoughts filter into your whole life and affect functioning in areas beyond work, such as your personal relationships and social life.

While we all have mood changes through the day and across a week or month and feeling lower on some days than others, sometimes too many blue days can be the start of a blue phase. Only a doctor or clinical psychologist can diagnose depression. If you feel that you may be suffering from burnout or symptoms of depression, contact the Healthy Company support line for further professional assistance or advice.

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