**SkyCasts Session Outline: Depression**

Duration: 50 minutes

Description: Often people may say they are feeling depressed, but if you have depression you are not 'just' sad or upset. Living with depression can feel disabling, leaving you feeling lost, alone and not sure who you are anymore.

This session will explore the signs and symptoms of depression, as well as looking at some simple steps you may be able to take to help you cope. Because living with depression can leave you feeling desperately isolated, it will also give you the chance to talk with other people who are struggling with similar (but not the same) things – although you will always be given a choice about how much you want to share.

Session Aims:

1. To provide some information about depression including signs and symptoms as well as common myths about depression
2. To explore some practical coping strategies for living with depression
3. To bring people together who are struggling with similar issues, particularly when feeling isolated and alone in their depression

**Session Outline:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Introduction | **Welcome to Sky Casts (AUDIO)**  Hi Everyone! Welcome to this week’s SkyCast session, which is all about depression. SkyCasts is a new service, offering interactive online workshops to young people from Croydon and Sutton. Before we get started with today’s session, we just have a few introductions to get through.  **<Introduce facilitators> - BIT STRIP IMAGE**  So, firstly, I’m Allie. I’m a counsellor at Off the Record and I work in Croydon and Sutton. Part of my job also involves running SkyCast sessions, as well as looking after the service to make sure everything is running smoothly. Basically, if you have any problems, then I’m usually the person that you’ll talk to.    **Quick tour of the SkyCast features: Audio (and visual)**   * Firstly, you’ll see the ‘presentation area’, which should be the main section of the screen and should say ‘Welcome’ right now? * <click> Just above that at the top of the screen, there’s an ‘I need help now’ button – because some of what we’re talking about in today’s session might be difficult for you or bring up strong feelings that leave you feeling like you need help right now – if you click that button, either myself or one of the facilitators will try to message you directly, otherwise we will send you a message after the session – however, there are some numbers and helplines you can call here: <http://www.offtherecordcroydon.org/useful-info/useful-links/i-need-help-now.aspx> * <click> You’ll also find you have the video section in the top left, where you can see me! (waving) * <click> You have a list of who else is here under that – I’m going to come on to confidentiality in a minute... * In the attendee list there’s a button called statistics and then to the right of that there’s a smiley face – if you click on that you’ll have a few options to help you during the SkyCast * <click> Then at the right you have a ‘chat’ box, where we can all say ‘hello’ to each other. | 5 mins | Welcome slides |
| Getting Started | Confidentiality agreement:  It feels important before we begin the SkyCast, that we all agree on a few things –   1. Firstly, we agree that everything that is said in the session is confidential and that we won’t discuss it with anyone outside of this session – hopefully you all read the confidentiality agreement before we signed up, but if you didn’t, I’m just putting it up here. <need pdf of confidentiality agreement> 2. That we all agree to listen to each other and give people a supportive space where they can let their feelings out 3. That we will treat each other with respect, take each other’s views seriously and do our best to try and understand where people are coming from, even if we disagree with something they are saying – and if this is the case that and we want to disagree, that we will do so kindly and with respect 4. That we all agree that we are entitled to share as much or as little as we want – there’s no obligation to say anything during these sessions, but also if you want some time to talk about your situation, that’s okay – I will try to ensure that everyone who wants to is given a bit of space to speak. | 5 mins | Confidentiality pdf |
| **Introducing Depression:** | So, looking at the chat section, why don’t we start off with a few introductions:  **If you could describe our depression as an animal, what would it be and why?**  Okay, that’s great, so nice to meet you all.  Feel free to add comments in the chat section throughout the session – XXX will be keeping an eye on things there and also I’ll be asking you some questions from time to time to see where you’re at! | 5 mins |  |
| **Myths about depression** | So, we might just start off with a quick introduction to depression. From talking about our animals, you can get an idea of what depression looks and feels like, but often it is very misunderstood. There are a lot of myths and mistakes that get reported and believed about what it is like to live with depression, which can leave people feeling alone and unable to talk about how they feel.  Let’s do a quick quiz and have a talk about some common myths about depression:   1. **Depression is more common that aids, cancer and diabetes COMBINED (**TRUE)   Despite depression being one of the most common illnesses, many people don't know that much about depression and it is commonly misunderstood.   1. **Being depressed is a sign of mental weakness (FALSE)**   This stigma is one of the main reasons why so many people suffer in silence and don’t talk to anyone about how they are feeling. The reality is that no one *chooses* to develop depression. It is a [complex mental disorder](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/basics/causes/con-20032977) that can affect anyone and [does not discriminate](http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/10/18/7-myths-of-depression/).   1. **Someone in my family has depression, so I’m definitely going to get it too (FALSE):**   While a genetic predisposition to depression can increase a person's likelihood of developing the condition themselves, that risk is relatively small -- [only 10 to 15 percent](http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2009/10/18/7-myths-of-depression/). People with a family history of depression may be more aware of certain symptoms, but anyone exhibiting signs of depression should express concerns to a medical professional.   1. **Depression can be brought on by traumatic life events: (TRUE)**   What causes depression varies between person to person – it isn’t necessarily caused by a traumatic event – but can be. Often it can creep up on someone, other’s can pin point a time when it began and link it to key events in their lives. So certain circumstances can (and often do) trigger depressive episodes, but this isn’t always the case.   1. **If you have depression, you will probably have it for the rest of your life (FALSE):**   People can recover from depression as well as other mental health problems. Lots of people go on to never have depression again, however some people may have a ‘vulnerability’ and become depressed again later in the future, however may be better equipped to deal with it based on how they recovered after their last ‘episode’.   1. **Feeling depressed is a normal part of adolescence – young people just go through ups and downs as part of puberty, it’s nothing (FALSE):**   Because being young isn’t easy, it can be normal to struggle from time to time and feel ‘depressed’. However, having depression is serious and is not just part of the ‘ups and downs’ of life. It can be hugely debilitating and needs to be taken seriously.   1. **It’s easy for young people to talk to friends about their feelings (FALSE)**   Everyone is different and for some people it might feel easy to talk about their feelings, however people with depression often find it very hard to talk about what they are going through. In particular, nearly three in four young people fear the reactions of friends when they talk about their mental health problems. So talking about depression isn’t easy – however not talking about it can leave you feeling more isolated and alone.   1. **Young people are most at risk of committing suicide (FALSE)**   Surprisingly, elderly men are actually most at risk of committing suicide. However, young men aged 16-25 are also particularly vulnerable. Perhaps this is because they find it particularly hard to ask for help or talk about how they are feeling? Be interesting to discuss – why is this? | 10 mins | True and False Poll |
| Definitions and Symptoms of Depression | So what is the truth about depression?  Depression can happen to anyone – show slides of famous depressives  According to the NHS, depression is: **“Depression can be complex and vary widely between people. But as a general rule, if you are depressed, you feel sad, hopeless and lose interest in things you used to enjoy. The symptoms persist for weeks or months and are bad enough to interfere with your work, social life and family life**”.  What about the symptoms of depression:  We are just going to watch a short video about depression, which captures some of the physical and psychological symptoms of depression.  Video – black dog – signs and symptoms  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>  Are there any other symptoms/signs of depression? Psychological symptoms include:  * continuous low mood or sadness * feeling hopeless and helpless * having low self-esteem * feeling tearful * feeling guilt-ridden * feeling irritable and intolerant of others * having no motivation or interest in things * finding it difficult to make decisions * not getting any enjoyment out of life * feeling [anxious or worried](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/understanding-panic.aspx) * having [suicidal thoughts](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Suicide/Pages/Introduction.aspx) or thoughts of [harming yourself](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/self-injury/Pages/Introduction.aspx)  Physical symptoms include:  * moving or speaking more slowly than usual * change in appetite or weight (usually decreased, but sometimes increased) * [constipation](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Constipation/Pages/Introduction.aspx) * unexplained aches and pains * lack of energy or lack of interest in sex ([loss of libido](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/loss-of-libido/Pages/Introduction.aspx)) * changes to your [menstrual cycle](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/periods/pages/introduction.aspx) * disturbed sleep (for example, finding it hard to fall asleep at night or waking up very early in the morning)  Social symptoms include:  * not doing well at work * taking part in fewer social activities and avoiding contact with friends * neglecting your hobbies and interests * having difficulties in your home and family life | 15 mins | Famous Depressives Depression slides  Black Dog Video |
| Managing Depression | What are ways that people can manage their depression? (ask the group to share ideas)  Medication  Therapy  Look after wellbeing / 5 ways to wellbeing   * Give * Connect * Take notice Mindfulness * Keep active * Keep learning   **What top tips can we share about managing depression?**  Key way of managing depression is to begin to understand the underlying reasons for depression – have a think -  If depression is a friend, what is it trying to communicate to you? (write down in a thought bubble) – what is being communicated? | 10 mins |  |
| Checking Out | To end the session, I’d like to ask you to think about one thing that you’ve got out of this session – what one thing are you going to take away?  Have a look at our useful info section, which has lots of ideas about coping with depression and organisations that can help.  There’ll also be a recording of this session saved on the websites under ‘past skycasts’  Then to wrap up –  Please take a few minutes after the session to give us your feedback. If you complete the evaluation form you will automatically be entered into the chance to win an ipad mini.  Next session is on Wednesday XXX on XXX. | 5 mins |  |