When You're Having a Depression Attack

It's not a choice. It's a mental health response.
Here's what's happening — and what can help.

What is a Depression Attack?

A depression attack is a sudden wave of intense sadness, hopelessness, low energy and emotional pain. It can feel overwhelming and can make everything seem very dark, even when life is actually okay. It's not a sign of weakness — it's a real mental health response, and it can happen to anyone.



Why Does It Happen?

A depression attack can be triggered by a combination of things, such as:

- Stress or emotional overwhelm
- Changes in routine or environment
- Feeling isolated or alone
- Hormonal changes
- Past experiences or trauma
- Chemical changes in the brain



It's not your fault. Your brain is trying to cope, even though it feels really hard right now.

Remember...

- This feeling is temporary.
- You are not alone.
- It's okay to ask for help.
- You are not weak — you are human.
- You have survived every other hard day, and you can get through this one too.



Common Signs

- Overwhelming sadness or emptiness
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Low energy and exhaustion
- Loss of interest in things you usually enjoy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Crying or feeling like you might cry, even without a reason
- Thoughts of self-harm or not wanting to be here (get help if this happens – you are not alone)

What You Can Do

When a depression attack hits, try:

Breathe
Slow, deep breaths. In for 4, hold for 4, out for 6.

Ground yourself
Notice 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.

Use your coping tools
Listen to music, watch a comfort show, wrap in a blanket, stim, or do something that feels safe and familiar.

Reach out
Talk to someone you trust, a support person, or use a helpline.

Follow your safety plan
Remove yourself from anything that triggered the attack. Keep yourself safe and give yourself time.

Be kind to yourself
This feeling will pass. You are doing your best, and that is enough.

If you feel like hurting yourself...
Please get help immediately. Contact a trusted person, your GP, or a crisis helpline (e.g. Lifeline 13 11 14 in Australia). You matter. Help is available.

~ Liane Holiday Willey