

Time to Talk

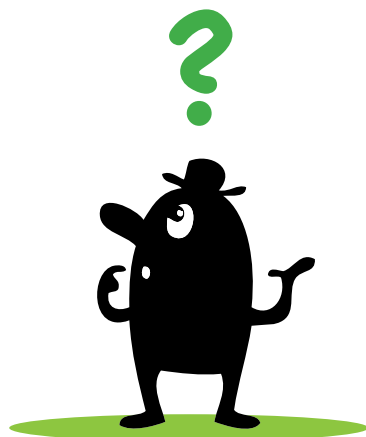
Depression and low mood – your self help guide

helping you make the
changes that you want,
so you can feel better

*Feeling sad or despairing?
Losing interest in things?
Irritable?
Worried?
Stressed?
Tearful?*



Getting started



By opening this booklet you are on the road to learning how to manage the symptoms of depression and low mood you have been experiencing. It can be hard to admit that things in our lives may not be how we would like them to be, and often understanding a problem is the first step to tackling it.

This booklet aims to help you understand and manage these problems better, so that you have the tools to help yourself.



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These are the thoughts of two people who are depressed:

"I feel so alone, I never see my friends now, I guess they have dropped me. They probably don't like me – who would? There is no point in making any effort. It doesn't pay off... I just hate myself"

"I feel like crying all the time, I am so tired and can't get interested in anything. In fact, I don't even get started with the jobs I should be doing. I can't even do basic things that seem so easy to other people..."

Perhaps you have had similar thoughts yourself? Depression is a very common problem and many people feel low or down in the dumps at times. This is often due to stresses such as bereavement, getting older, physical health problems, money or housing issues, or difficulties in relationships. For some people, the problem becomes much worse and gets in the way of normal life.

How can this booklet help me?

It may seem that nothing can be done to help you feel better. But there are things that you can do to make a difference and you can get further help if the depression does not seem to be getting better.

This booklet aims to help you cope with depression and begin to get better. The approach is called Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT uses methods that have been tried and tested and found to be effective. It involves looking at the way you think about things (Cognitive) and what you do (Behavioural). We have included pen and paper exercises in the booklet to help you understand more about depression and begin to deal with it in a practical way.

Completing these exercises will help you.

What if I feel too depressed to read this booklet?

If you are depressed, you will probably find it hard to concentrate or even read this booklet. Perhaps it looks too difficult and too long? Don't worry. There is a lot of information, so try taking it in a bit at a time. If some parts are harder to take in, go through the text and discuss these parts with your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner.

What does research tell us about depression?

Life is sometimes difficult and we know that factors such as low income, divorce or relationship problems and loss of work can make people more likely to be depressed. New research has helped us to understand depression more clearly. We now realise that **thoughts can also play an important role in depression.**

Changes in feelings may occur gradually, but the way a person thinks when they are depressed is very different from how they thought before. Perhaps you can think about some examples of depressed thinking in yourself or in someone who has depression. People who are depressed typically have these types of thoughts and, at the time, they believe them to be true. When someone's thoughts change like this, they also begin to experience other changes.

Signs and symptoms of depression:

Emotions or feelings – (tick if you feel like this)

- Feeling sad, guilty, upset, numb or despairing
- Losing interest or enjoyment in things
- Crying a lot or unable to cry when a truly sad event occurs
- Feeling alone even if you are in company
- Feeling angry and irritable about the slightest things

Physical or bodily signs

- Tiredness
- Restlessness
- Sleep problems
- Feeling worse at a particular time of the day – usually mornings
- Changes in weight, appetite and eating

Thoughts

- Losing confidence in yourself
- Expecting the worst and having negative thoughts
- Thinking that you hate yourself / feeling worthless
- Poor memory or concentration
- Thinking that life is not worth living

Behaviour

- Having difficulty in making decisions
- Can't be bothered to do everyday tasks
- Putting things off
- Not doing the things you used to enjoy

If you have ticked many of these boxes, then you may be experiencing low mood or depression. When you're depressed you may believe that you're helpless and alone in the world; you often blame yourself for all the shortcomings that you think you have.

At the bottom of all this, you feel negative about yourself, about the world and the future. So you tend to lose interest in what's going on around you and you don't get any satisfaction out of the things you used to enjoy. It can become hard to make decisions or to carry out little tasks that you once did with no problem at all.

Summary

Research now tells us that negative thoughts play an important role in depression. When someone is depressed there are usually changes in the way they feel (their emotions), how their body reacts, what they think and how they behave.

Understanding these feelings

The way you think about things will affect the way you feel, which affects the way you behave. It is difficult to change the way you feel, but you can change the way you think.

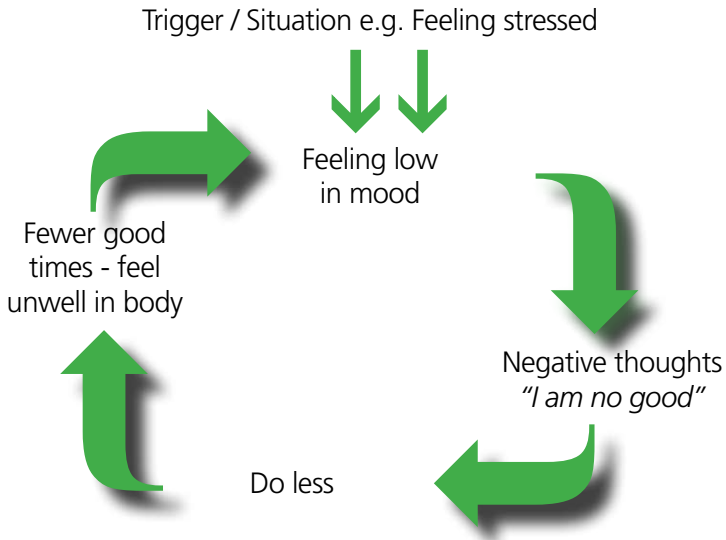
When you are feeling depressed, you might have negative thoughts a lot of the time. With each negative thought, the feelings of depression are likely to increase.

Sometimes, negative thoughts can stop you from doing things that you would normally do. As a result, you may have critical thoughts about being lazy, or irresponsible which make you feel even worse. In other words, you get caught in a vicious cycle.

For example:

Imagine you are walking down the street and you see a friend who appears to ignore you completely. You might wonder why your friend has turned against you and you feel a little sad. Later on, you mention the incident to your friend, who tells you that he was preoccupied at the time and didn't see you. Normally you would feel better and put what happened out of your mind. But if you're depressed, you probably believe your friend has rejected you. You may not even ask him about the incident, and then the misunderstanding goes uncorrected. If you're feeling depressed you're more likely to make assumptions like this over and over again.

This vicious cycle can be like this:



Has a similar cycle happened to you?

Try to draw it out below:

Positive Steps: Help with getting active

Becoming more active in a step-by-step way can help improve your mood and wellbeing. When you feel low, this can mean you don't feel like doing much. This means that you may be doing very little that gives you a sense of enjoyment, or very little that gives you a sense of achievement or purpose. Doing less can mean that you have more time on your hands and you may start to think more about all the things that are upsetting you.

Learning how to become more active includes increasing the enjoyable and necessary activities and also finding activities that give you a sense of achievement. There is lots of research to show that this can be really helpful in getting over depression.

Why is getting active important?

When you feel depressed, you can feel physically unwell, have more gloomy thoughts which can lead you to withdraw. For example, you might stop seeing your friends or family, stop exercising, and stop doing the things you used to enjoy or that were important to you. In the **short-term**, you might feel a sense of relief that you don't have to do the activities that feel hard because you are depressed.

In the **longer-term**, if you continue to avoid things, you miss out on the sense of pleasure or achievement. This can make symptoms of depression worse.

What types of activities do people stop doing when they feel low?

Routine activities

You might find that you avoid every-day activities, which are important life routines that make you feel comfortable day-to-day. These include:

1. Cleaning and tidying the house
2. Getting up too late, going to bed late
3. Avoiding meals or eating less healthily
4. Doing the ironing or washing up

Pleasurable activities

You may also avoid or withdraw from activities that you used to find enjoyable, such as:

1. Seeing friends
2. Exercise such as swimming, jogging or walking the dog
3. Having lunch with work colleagues
4. Reading
5. Playing with your children

Necessary activities

A third area where people avoid activities is in important necessary things such as:

1. Paying the bills
2. Opening post
3. Dealing with difficult situations at work
4. Looking after yourself e.g. taking a daily shower, brushing your teeth

These are as important as pleasurable activities because if you avoid them, this can lead to further problems and an increase in low mood.

Getting active step by step:

Step 1: Understanding your cycle

Sometimes people can find it hard to know what types of activities they might be avoiding as a result of feeling low, or what they are still managing to do that makes them feel better. The first step can be to start keeping a diary (there is one on page 10 of this booklet) to see what you are doing day-to-day, and what you are finding hard. This can be used as a starting point for planning and including more activities.

Step 2: What are your routine, pleasurable and necessary activities?

The next step is to identify routine, pleasurable and necessary activities that you used to do, and would like to be doing, but have stopped doing since you felt low.

Exercise 1: What activities have you withdrawn from / do you avoid doing since feeling low that you would like to be able to do?

1. Routine activities
2. Pleasurable activities
3. Necessary activities

Step 3: Making a list of routine, pleasurable and necessary activities in order of difficulty (a “hierarchy”)

Using your examples from Exercise 1, use Exercise 2 to place the activities in order of difficulty, as follows:

1. Difficult
2. Medium difficulty
3. Easiest

In each of these three groups you should include some routine, pleasurable and necessary activities to work towards. Use Exercise 2 to create your ‘hierarchy’.

Exercise 2: Place your lists in order of difficulty, as below, mixing up routine, pleasurable and necessary activities

Easiest (least effort):

Medium difficulty

Most difficult (most effort)

Step 4: Setting goals

Now you know what you would like to start doing again, and which activities are easier and harder to do, it is time to set some goals. It is best to start with the easiest activities on your list and to include some pleasurable, routine and necessary ones. You can use the activities from Exercise 2 to help you set your goals.

You can use an activity diary (see opposite) to plan your activities for the week. The more specific you are about your goals (where, when, with whom and which activity) you can be, the more likely you are to succeed. It is tempting to set big goals but setting small and regular activity goals is better in the early stages and you can build on these, one step at a time.

Exercise 3: Goal setting to increase activity

Set some goals for increasing routine, pleasurable and necessary activities, starting with the easiest ones first and put them onto a blank activity diary sheet so that you know when you will do them.

Activity diary for planning what to do each day

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Step 5: Putting it into practice and getting active

Now that you have made a plan of what goals you would like to work on, it is time to put it into practice. Don't forget to include some relaxing and pleasurable activities!

Exercise 4: Try to do the activity tasks you have planned on your activity diary. Make a note on the diary sheet as to whether you managed to achieve the goal, and any problems or successes you had.

Step 6: Reviewing your progress and setting new activity goals

If you have difficulties, ask for support to **problem-solve** these, and adapt your goals in terms of:

1. Difficulty
2. Frequency
3. Balance of routine, pleasurable and necessary activities
4. The demands on your life at the time

Exercise 5: How am I getting on?

At each support session and in your own time it is helpful to think about how you are getting on with your goals. If you are finding some goals easy to achieve and they are helping with your mood, it is useful to carry on with those goals, or take the next step to a more difficult goal.

If you are having difficulties in achieving a goal, it can be helpful to ask yourself:

1. Is the goal meaningful to me? If not, you may want to set a different goal
2. Is the goal too difficult for me at this time? If this is the case, how can you break the goal down into smaller, more manageable steps?
3. Am I trying to do the task at the right time? There may be an easier time of day or week to try and achieve this goal. When would that be for me?
4. Would it be easier to do this task if I had some help or support from someone? If so, who could help me, e.g. a partner, colleague or friend

Over time, you should start to feel more positive and less depressed through becoming more active again. In addition, you will have learned skills that you can use in the future should you start to feel low again.

Recognising negative thoughts

When you are feeling low or depressed you may find that the nature of your thoughts can change.

For example:

You may find that you are getting negative thoughts about yourself more often and that these can be quite extreme. Because they are so familiar and happen so frequently, you may find that you are just accepting them as facts instead of opinion.

"I'm no good."

"People don't like me."

"I'm a bad mixer."

"I look ugly."

Do you have any negative thoughts about yourself? Jot them down:

You may also find that you are getting negative thoughts about other things, such as the world around you or the future. Once again, because they are so familiar and happen so frequently, you may find that you are just accepting them as facts, not opinion

"People are unkind."

"The world is a horrible place."

"Nothing will work out well."

Do you have negative thoughts about other things? Jot them down:

What more should I know about these negative thoughts?

- People who *are* depressed may experience some of these thoughts quite often or all of the time and may find it difficult to challenge them.
- People who *are not* depressed may experience some of these thoughts as well. However, the difference is that they would be able to dismiss them more easily and would experience them less frequently.

Let's look at these *negative thoughts* in more detail:

- 1) They tend to be automatic and without any basis of reason or logic
- 2) They are unreasonable, unrealistic and serve no purpose. They make you feel bad and they get in the way of what you really want out of life. If you think about them carefully, you will probably find that you have jumped to a conclusion that is not necessarily correct, for example, thinking someone does not like you because they have not phoned recently.
- 3) Even though they are unreasonable, they seem plausible and correct to you at the time.
- 4) The more you believe and accept these thoughts, the worse you are likely to feel. If you allow yourself to get into the grip of these thoughts, you are viewing everything in a negative way.

You may find that you have been using the following common unhelpful thinking styles that can lead us to negative conclusions:

Exaggerating the negative

This is when you think things are much worse than they really are. In other words, you jump to a negative conclusion and believe that it is likely to happen, for example: you make a small mistake at work and fear that you may be dismissed because of it, or you misplace your house keys and believe you are "losing your mind".

Do you ever exaggerate the negative? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

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Overgeneralizing

This is when you draw a negative conclusion which is much bigger and covers all sorts of things based only on one thing that has happened to you. For example, if one person does not get on with you, you may think that “no one likes me” or if one of your many tasks hasn’t been finished you think “I have achieved nothing – nothing has been done.”

Do you ever overgeneralize? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

Ignoring the positive

This is when you focus your thinking on negative or bad events and ignore positive or good events. For example, you play football, miss the goal once but play well in general. After the game you just think about that one missed shot and not the rest of the game which you played well. You may have many good friends who you have known for years but you concentrate and worry about the one that has fallen out with you rather than remembering all the other good friendships.

Do you sometimes ignore the positive? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

Taking things personally

This is when you blame yourself for something that goes wrong, even if in reality it has nothing to do with you. For example, you go into a local shop and the assistant who knows you is “off-hand”. Your automatic thought is “she does not like me... have I done something wrong?”, but the more likely reason is that she is tired, upset or has had a “bad day”.

Do you sometimes take things personally when they probably have little to do with you? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

Mind reading

This is when you try to guess or predict what someone else is thinking., for example, someone gives you a compliment and you think they do not really mean it, but are only saying it to make you feel better

Do you sometimes mind read? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

Catastrophising

This is when you imagine the worst possible scenario or outcome and dwell on it. For example, you have a work presentation to make and you think you will lose your job if you make a mistake or notice your heart beating faster and immediately think you are going to pass out or die.

Do you sometimes catastrophise? Think back over the last 2 weeks and list examples.

How can I help myself?

So far, we have talked about how what we think affects the way we feel and have looked at particular ways of thinking that can lead us to become depressed. In this section, we will look at practical steps to help overcome depressive feelings and thoughts.

Positive steps

- Take exercise
- List things to do
- Join in activities
- Mix with people
- Do the things you enjoy

Making a daily plan

When people are depressed they often don't feel like doing anything, find it hard to decide what to do each day and can end up doing very little. Begin to tackle this by making a list of things you want to do, then plan out an action list. Start off with the easiest task first and don't aim too high. For example, mixing with family and friends, taking your dog for a walk, doing a household chore, taking your children to the park or visiting somewhere new.

Work through your action list and tick off what you've done. At the end of the day you'll be able to look back and see what you've achieved.

List some activities that you could do. This can be as simple as a brisk walk or doing a crossword with a member of your family.

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Suggested daily action plan format

(There is a larger copy at the end of the booklet for you to use.)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Achievement and Pleasure

When people are depressed, they often forget what they've achieved and what they've enjoyed. Most people have more things going for them than they are usually aware of. On your daily action plan, write down all the events of the day, putting a (P) next to those which have given you pleasure and an (A) next to those activities where you felt you achieved something and did well.

Try not to be too modest; people who are depressed tend not to take credit for their achievements. Remember, if you have been feeling depressed and doing very little, doing something like the washing-up, or another chore you have been putting off, is an achievement. People can also stop doing things they enjoy when they feel low. Try and build some pleasant events into your diary every day – treat yourself... it will help you!

The ABC of changing feelings

Most people who are depressed think their lives are so awful that they have every right to feel sad. In fact, our feelings come from what we think about what has happened to us and how we make sense of it.

Try to think about a recent event that has upset and depressed you. You should be able to sort it into the following three parts:

- A. The event** (Activating event i.e. what happened)
- B. Your thoughts about it** (Beliefs i.e. what went through your mind)
- C. Your feelings about it** (Consequences i.e. what you did and what you felt)

Most people are normally only aware of A and C.

Let's look at an example:

Suppose someone criticises you for something that you have done.

- A. The event – criticism.
You may feel hurt and embarrassed.
- B. Your thoughts – “He thinks I’m no good and he’s right, I’m hopeless, I’m useless at everything.
- C. Your feelings – hurt, embarrassed.

You may need to play the event back in your head to pay attention to the thoughts you were having.

How depressing! No wonder you feel bad! The important point about trying to become aware of these three stages, A, B and C, is that we can change what we think about the event and therefore we can change how we feel about it and what we do.

Thought balancing

A useful technique to try is called thought balancing. When you have a negative, critical thought, balance it out by making a more positive statement about yourself.

For example:

The thought *"I'm no good at my job"*, could be balanced with *"my boss said how much he appreciated the piece of the work I did yesterday"*.

The thought *"I'm an awful mother"*, could be balanced with *"the Health Visitor says my daughter is doing really well"*.

The thought *"I can't do anything"*, could be balanced with *"with the help of my friends I did my shopping and had a lovely day out"*.

The double column technique

A helpful way to do this is to write down your negative thoughts in one column and in the opposite column, write down a more balanced positive thought. Like this:

Negative thoughts	Balancing Thoughts
John hasn't called me, he doesn't love me	John is busy at work and may have not had the time to call me. That does not mean that he doesn't love me.

Try and remember details

Research tells us that people who are depressed do not remember details of events very well, but tend to think in general statements such as *"I've never been good at anything"*. Try and train yourself to remember details so that good times and experiences are easy to recall. Think of particular times. A daily diary can help you do this. Make lists of actual achievements and good aspects about yourself such as *"I'm always on time"*, *"I helped my friend on Tuesday"*, *"My partner complimented me on my work last week"*.

Using the diary below, try and keep a record of events, feelings and thoughts. It may look like the following table. Use the approaches described earlier to gain more balanced thoughts. Look out for the unhelpful thinking styles we discussed earlier.

Summary

Using a daily plan, noting achievements and pleasure, increasing physical activity and keeping a diary of negative thoughts and more balanced thoughts can help you fight depression and the unhelpful thoughts that go with it.

Balancing thought diary sheet

Event	Feeling or Emotion	Thoughts in your Mind	Other more balanced thoughts
A neighbour ignored me	Low and depressed	She doesn't like me, no one does	She's probably got something on her mind. I am jumping to conclusions.

Problem Solving

Solving difficult Problems

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed by the very complicated and difficult things we have to do. Problem solving is a systematic way to help you manage your problems. It can help you feel more in control and think of realistic and practical solutions.

The 7 steps of problem solving:

1. Identify and clearly define the problem.

If you are experiencing more than one difficulty choose the most urgent, or maybe the easiest, to deal with first.

2. 'Brainstorm' or list all of the possible solutions to your chosen problem.

Even silly ideas or ones that are not likely to work are useful to write down – the more ideas you come up with, the more likely you are to find a solution.

3. Evaluate how effective each solution will be.

Go through each solution and list the pros and cons of each one – this will help you decide which solution is most suitable.

4. Choose the most realistic and practical solution.

The one you choose should be both helpful and achievable.

5. Plan the steps for carrying out your solution.

Breaking down your solution into simple steps will help you see how it can be achieved and any aspects that may be more difficult. Try thinking about what needs to be done; how it will be done; when you will do it; who will be involved; and where it will happen.

6. Carry out your plan.

Try and break down your plan into smaller steps, and take these one at a time. Ask yourself if there is anyone who can help you carry out your plan. If you find it hard to achieve the goals, try breaking it down more, or asking for further support and help.

7. Review the outcome.

If your solution works, GREAT! Congratulate yourself and remember this success for the future. If the problem is not solved, try to understand what went wrong – maybe you were feeling particularly unwell, tried to do too much, or the plan was not as manageable as you would have liked. Whatever the reason, you did not fail. Learn from the experience. You could try again or go back to your solution list and choose the next most suitable one. You can return to your list of solutions as often as you need to. The more ideas you produce, the bigger your list of options.

Example:

Problem: “I can’t pay my credit card bill this month”

(This is a clear and specific statement of the problem)

Possible solutions:

- Ignore the problem.
- Rob a bank.
- Arrange an overdraft from the bank and use this to pay off the bill.
- Pay off a small amount of the bill.
- Switch to another credit card with a smaller interest rate.
- Speak to an expert about the debt e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Request a change in the re-payment terms from the credit card company.

Chosen solution:

“Arrange an overdraft from the bank.”

Pros: Better rate of interest and can spread out the payments over a longer period of time.

Cons: They may say no and it would be scary to speak to the bank manager.

Plan: “I could find the number of the bank from a letter and phone them up. I’ll do this tomorrow morning. I will plan what I want to say in advance so I don’t get my words muddled up. I’ll ask for an appointment to discuss the fact that I am having problems paying off my credit card bill. I’ll ask if I can arrange a meeting for the morning (as I tend to feel tired and low in the afternoon). I’ll make sure I take all the information I have about my credit card and bank account to the meeting. If they say no to my request I will look at my other solutions.

Try this way of problem solving yourself.

What is the problem? (write it down)

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List all of the solutions (brainstorming). Remember how you may have solved similar problems in the past. What would your friends advise?

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List the pros and cons (advantages and disadvantages) of each possible solution:

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Choose the best solution (write it down)

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Steps to tackle it:

(Include the what, how, when, who and where aspects)

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Step 4:

Step 5:

Long Term Beliefs

Sometimes people have long held views about themselves that are very self-critical – for example, *“I’m not a very clever person”* or *“I am not a very lovable person”*. These beliefs are often a product of our past experience and may hold no truth in present reality. Try to challenge this self-criticism, stop knocking yourself down, find ways to be kinder to yourself and look for evidence that disproves these beliefs.

Try asking yourself... *“What would I say to a good friend if they said that about themselves?”*

Sleep Management

Sleep problems are common with depression.

You may have difficulty getting to sleep, or you may be waking during the night or very early in the morning. The important thing to remember is that your sleep will improve as your depression improves.

Rules for better sleeping

- There are some basic rules for better sleeping:
- Get used to going to bed and getting up at a regular time
- Establish a bedtime routine and try to wind down before you go to bed
- Avoid drinking tea, coffee and alcohol in the evenings.
- Don't take naps during the day, even if you are feeling really tired - it will upset your body clock
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime. If you're hungry before you got to bed, have a light snack
- Try to exercise during the day, but not close to bedtime
- Only sleep in your bed, not on the settee or anywhere else
- Don't watch TV, eat or write in bed unless you are certain from past experience that these activities will help you get to sleep
- Don't go to bed until you feel sleepy
- If you have not fallen asleep within half an hour, get up and do something distracting and relaxing (away from the bedroom if possible). Go back to bed only when you feel sleepy. It may also be helpful to monitor your sleep behaviour to see when you are and when you are not sleeping. Record any activities that helped you return to sleep

Looking after yourself

When you are feeling low it is particularly important that you take care of yourself. It can be easy to forget to eat regular meals or take exercise.

Your diet should be a source of health and pleasure. Eating regularly can help maintain a daily routine and keep your energy levels up. Try to avoid cycles of under and over eating, and limit, rather than ban, unhealthy foods.

Physical exercise helps keep you healthy and can actually make you feel invigorated rather than exhausted. It is also recommended as a treatment for mild to moderate depression. There are lots of ways of increasing your activity levels, whether through vigorous housework, a daily walk or attending a local gym/community centre. If you have any concerns about doing physical exercise consult your GP.

Take time to relax. Everybody deserves a break once in a while!

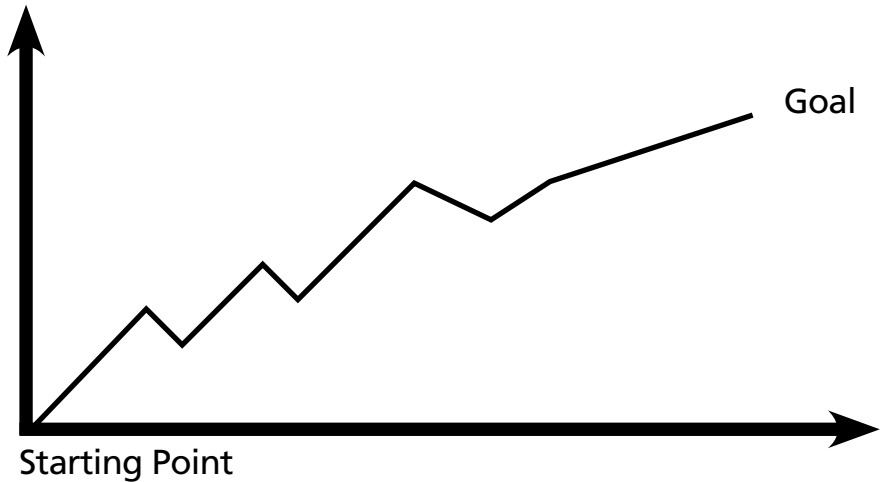
Particularly Stressful Times

Many people experience a difficult time in their lives that is linked with events that they cannot change, for example, bereavement, separating from a partner, unemployment, longstanding illness, chronic financial problems or isolation. Sometimes several of these events happen together and depression can result. In time, most people bounce back, but it may be hard to do this without help.

Coping with Setbacks

Most of us get through our problems in a series of ups and downs.

The diagram below illustrates the progress you should expect:



"Just when I started to make progress and things were going well I had a setback and I was back to square one. I needed help from my husband to start again but I soon made up the ground I had lost and I'm still going forward. I still have one or two setbacks but I keep working at it"

This is a very important point. If you expect to get better without any setbacks you may be very upset, or believe you have done something wrong when a setback occurs.

Setbacks are normal. The way to cope with a setback is to remember that they are to be expected. Look at how you made progress so far. You know you have done it once, so you can do it again!

Most of us have ups and downs as we get over our problems.

Further help

We hope you will use the exercises suggested in this booklet. They should help you begin to overcome your depression and regain control of your thoughts and your life.

If you feel that you are making little progress then other help is available to you in overcoming your problem. Your GP is the best person to talk to first. He or she may suggest a talking therapy, or anti depressant medication, or both. He or she may also suggest you see a mental health worker who can offer you specialist help with your problems. If you feel so depressed that thoughts of harming yourself have been on your mind, please visit your GP as soon as possible and tell him or her how you are feeling.

Where can I find extra help?

If you think you may be depressed and you need more help, your GP is the best person to talk to in the first instance.

If you have any queries about medication that you have been prescribed then do go and discuss it with your GP. Alternatively, you could telephone NHS Direct for information on [0845 46 47](tel:0845 46 47)

Your WELLBEING Plan

In order to feel better and to stay well, it is important to continue to look after your mental wellbeing just as you would your physical health. It can be helpful to see yourself as being on a continued journey towards wellbeing. As part of this journey, it is important to carry on using what you have learned during your sessions to help you stay well in the future, and to improve your wellbeing further. This section will help you to review what your difficulties were, what you did that helped to improve things, and what you can do to stay well and improve how you feel in the future.

1. What difficulties did I ask for help with?

- What were my goals?
- What things did I want to work on?

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2. What was keeping my problem(s) going?

- Behaviour e.g. avoiding situations or people
- Thinking e.g. always imagining the worst
- Difficult situations or life events e.g. relationships, work problems

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3. What progress have I made in achieving my goals? How did I do this?

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4. What ideas and tools have I learned that have helped me?

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5. What obstacles might lead to a setback or make it harder to stay well? e.g:

- Stressful life events/situations
- Lack of motivation and thinking negatively

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6. What would I notice first if I started to have difficulties again? e.g.

- Changes in the way I think e.g. always imagining that things will go wrong
- Changes in my behaviour e.g. avoiding things, drinking
- Changes in how I feel physically e.g. feeling more tired or run down
- Changes in how I feel e.g. tearful or irritable

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7. What can I do to start using the strategies I have learned to help me feel better again? Who can I talk to? e.g. friends or family, make time to exercise regularly?

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8. How can I build on what I have achieved? What further goals could I set to help me stay well?

- Short-term

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- Long term

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Many people find the structure and routine of talking to someone for regular sessions helpful. Now that your sessions are coming to an end, you might find it useful to continue having this time to check how you are doing by **setting a regular review day with yourself.**

When would be a good regular time for me to check how I am doing?

- What day / time of day?
- How often?
- Do I want anyone else to help me do this? e.g. a friend or partner

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Helplines

Carers Line

0808 808 7777 (Wed & Thurs 10am–12pm, 2–4pm)

Helpline providing advice and information for carers on any issue.

Cruse Bereavement Care

0870 167 1677 (Mon–Fri 9.30am–9pm, Sat & Sun 3–5pm)

Information and advice for people who are bereaved.

Drinkline

0800 917 8282 (open 24 hours)

Confidential information and advice for anyone concerned about their own or someone else's drinking. Can also provide local referrals.

National Debtline

0808 808 4000 (Mon–Fri 9am–9pm, Sat 9.30am–1pm)

Independent advice on how to deal with debt problems.

Parentline

0808 800 2222 (open 24 hours).

Helpline and information for parents in distress.

Shelterline

0808 800 4444 (open 8am-midnight, daily)

For people in urgent need of accommodation.

Women's Aid

0808 2000 247 (open 24 hours)

National helpline for women affected by domestic violence.

Websites

www.livinglifetothefull.com

Online life skills resource using a CBT self-help approach. Sign up for free.

www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

Free self-help programme teaching CBT skills to people vulnerable to depression and anxiety.

Emergencies

If you are in crisis, especially if you feel at risk of harming yourself or someone else, contact your GP or during out of hours, attend Accident and Emergency at your nearest hospital where you will be seen by someone who can discuss your difficulties with you.

Alternatively, you could contact:

Sussex Mental Health Line - 0300 5000 101

24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Samaritans - 08457 90 90 90

Confidential emotional support, 24 hours a day, for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair, or are feeling suicidal.

Further reading

Many of the ideas in this booklet are discussed in more detail in the following books, some of which are available to borrow as part of the Books on Prescription scheme in local libraries. (For more information ask you GP or Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner)

Mind over mood: Changing how you feel by changing the way you think (1995) Christine A Padesky & Dennis Greenberger, Guilford Press

The Feeling Good Handbook (2002 2nd edition) David Burns.
Plume, U.S

Overcoming Depression (1999) Paul Gilbert

Acknowledgements

Extracts from this booklet have been taken from:

Depression and Low Mood: A Self Help Guide (2003)
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust.

Managing Anxiety: A user's manual (2002) Helen Kennerley.
Distributed by Psychology Department, Warneford Hospital.
Oxford Cognitive Therapy Centre Educational Self-Help Booklets.

Dealing with Worry: A Self Help Booklet (2005)
S Black, J Hastings, M Henderson, NHS Borders.

Managing Anxiety and Depression: A Self Help Guide (1999)
Nicolas Holdsworth and Roger Paxton. The Mental Health Foundation.

Manage your Mind (1995) Gillian Butler and Tony Hope.
Oxford University Press.

Daily Plan / Daily Sheet

This can be photocopied and used as needed.

Week commencing:-

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Notes

**This booklet is yours to keep, so,
please make use of it again and again**

To contact **Time to Talk**
Sussex Community NHS Trust,
please telephone your Locality Office

Crawley office

(Crawley area)

Tel: 01293 843 300

Mid Sussex office

(Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Hurstpierpoint)

Tel: 01444 251 084

Horsham office

(Horsham, Storrington, Steyning, Henfield)

Tel: 01403 227 048

Worthing office

(Worthing, Shoreham, Lancing, Littlehampton)

Tel: 01903 703 540

Chichester office

(Chichester, Bognor, Arundel, Pulborough, Petworth,
Midhurst, the Witterings, Selsey, Southbourne)

Tel: 01243 812 537

www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/timetotalk