

Depression



Providing services we would be happy for our own families to use





An information guide for Depression

This booklet aims to:

- Give you information about depression and some quick tips you can start using to help change how you are feeling.
- It describes cognitive behavioural strategies you might find useful. It may also be useful to someone helping family and friends experiencing depression.

What is depression?

Depression can happen at any time to any one of us. In fact 1 in 4 of us will experience it at some point in our lives. Whereas it can be a response to a difficult life event, sometimes there doesn't appear to be a trigger at all. It can be hard to understand what you are experiencing and this makes explaining it to others difficult too.

Sometimes it feels like nothing can help you feel better. This booklet might help you make sense of your experiences and give you some ideas that might help.

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What do we mean by depression?

There are differing severities of depression or low mood. In its mildest form depression may not interfere with normal life, we have all at times felt 'down in the dumps' or 'blue'.

At its most severe depression can be very debilitating and can seem to strip life of its colour and enjoyment. At this point it's very difficult for people to do the things that they would normally do and it is a very real feeling.

Depression can make it very hard to find any enjoyment in life, even from loved ones which can be very difficult to experience.

Depression is made up of different symptoms:

Feelings -

- Low, sad, upset or numb
- Getting angry or irritated over the slightest thing
- Feeling alone, even when around others

- Not enjoying the things you used to
- Tearful

Physical sensations -

- Tiredness or lethargy
- Restlessness
- Over sleeping/ not getting enough sleep
- Changes in appetite

Actions -

- Can't be bothered to do things you normally do
- Putting things off
- Wanting to spend more time on your own
- Finding it hard to make decisions

Thoughts -

- Expecting the worst
- Negative thoughts about yourself
- Thinking others think negatively about you

- 'Everything seems hopeless'
- Worrying or finding it hard to concentrate
- Going over and over things in your mind
- Thoughts of being better off dead or of hurting yourself.

What causes depression?

Often there are several factors. Sometimes depression can be linked to external pressures eg difficult life events such as divorce, or unemployment. Circumstance plays a role eg unsuitable housing, not enough money, harsh work environment, loneliness. New mums can be prone to depression, this is known as post natal depression or PND.

Sometimes there isn't an obvious cause, though a closer look may reveal internal pressures, like negative thoughts which are known to increase feelings of depression.

It's common for people experiencing depression to be hard on themselves, focus on mistakes and have an unrealistic expectation of the person they 'should be'. Thoughts like 'I should be better, should be handling things better, should know better' are common. Often we compare ourselves negatively to others, which makes us feel worse.

Depression can also be linked to feeling powerless, sometimes we don't think we can stand up for ourselves, get our needs met or take care of ourselves, sometimes we even believe this may be 'selfish'.

The Vicious Cycle – Thoughts, Feelings and Actions

Whether we know the trigger of depression or not, the route out of it remains the same; we need to bring our attention to our thoughts and our actions.

There may be many events that cause us distress throughout our lifetime, events that come and go. It's what we focus on, how we think and what we do that will determine how long we remain distressed / upset / angry by these events.

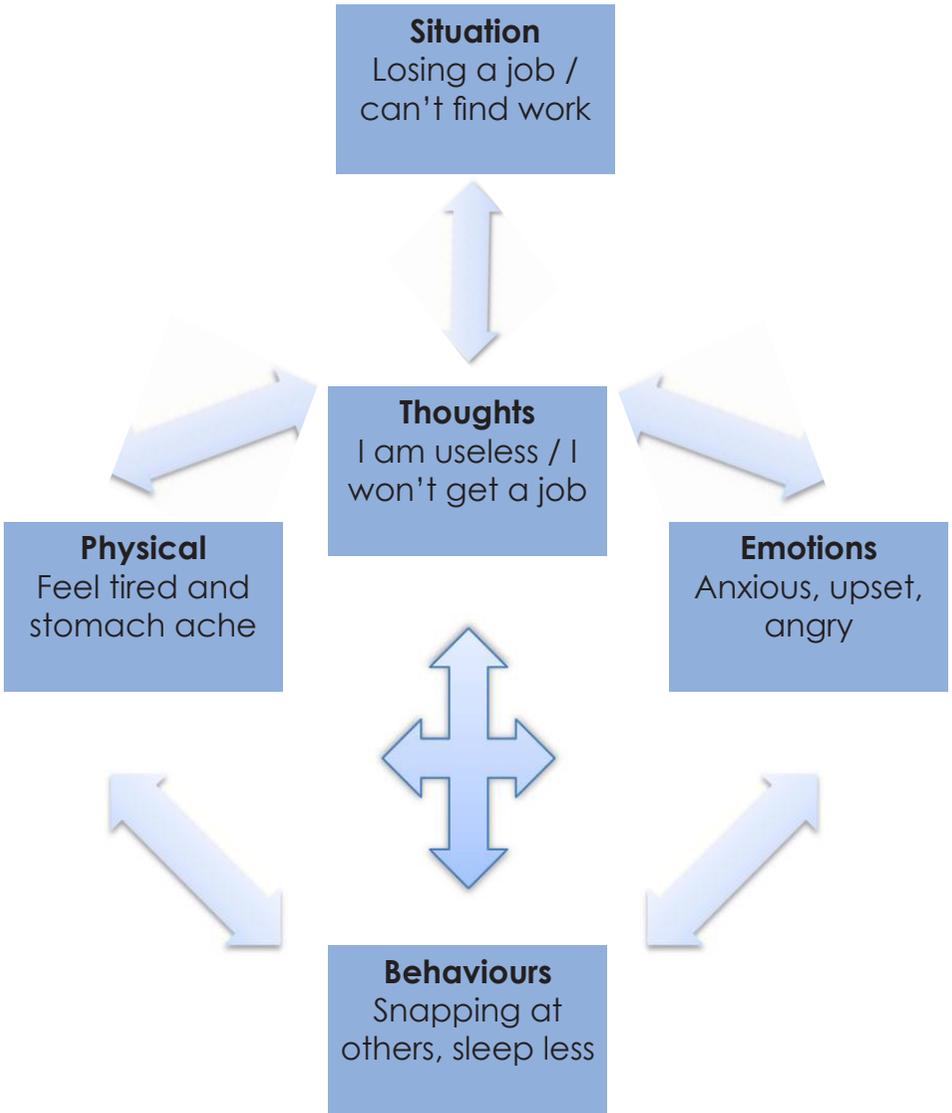
By bringing our attention to our thoughts and actions we can stop the vicious cycle in its tracks, allowing us to grow from the experience and move forward.

Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are linked. If we have negative thoughts about ourselves, such as 'I'm useless' this will trigger feelings such as frustration, sadness, fear of rejection.

This may then lead us to withdraw from people around us, not do the things we would normally do, maybe let the housework slip. These actions then seem to reinforce the self-critical and negative thoughts. In this way we get 'trapped' in a vicious cycle.

An example of the vicious cycle can be found on the following page (see *figure 1*).

(Figure 1)



Increasing motivation

Often when we are low we want to do less and hide away. This can lead to problems mounting up and stops us getting the enjoyment we would normally experience from being around our loved ones. Low mood can make it harder to enjoy usual activities but it is possible to find a way through this.

Try and keep your routine as normal as possible. If you usually go swimming on a Tuesday, for example, try to keep doing this. You won't want to at first, and may not even enjoy it initially but if you persevere your feelings may start to change.

Often we wait until we feel better before we start doing things again, however with a little bit of self-encouragement we can use activity to help us feel better. We can start enjoying our activities again and getting a sense of achievement from them.

Try and identify if there is anything you are putting off. Look at breaking it into smaller, more manageable steps. For example:

Cleaning the house can be broken into:

- 1) Dusting the living room
- 2) Hoovering the dining room and so on.

Tackle one step at a time.

Try and think of activities you enjoy and activities you do routinely (such as cleaning) and aim for a combination of these throughout your week. It can help to write down what you plan to do in a diary or calendar or tell someone what you are going to do.

Challenging our thoughts

Although it doesn't always seem this way, just because we think something, doesn't mean it is true. As our thoughts can be accompanied by feelings, this can make our thoughts seem much more true. Also, when we are feeling low we are much more likely to see the negative and ignore the positive in any situation. For example, if someone yawns whilst we are talking, people feeling low are more likely to think 'I'm a boring person', rather than, 'they are probably just tired'.

This thought can even be strong enough or believable enough to make us stop talking, or forget what we want to say. So we can see the impact our thoughts have on our experience. It's important however that we don't let our thoughts run away with themselves, often our first impressions can prove inaccurate or we can jump to conclusions only later to be proven wrong. Have you ever had an experience like this?

If you have negative thoughts, try asking yourself the following questions:

- How big a deal is this, will it matter in 5 years time?
- How might a friend see this situation?
- Is there any information I'm not taking account of?
- Am I overlooking my strengths?

It's common for people who are feeling depressed to have thoughts of being better off dead or of hurting themselves. If you find you are having these thoughts they can be very difficult to experience but you are not on your own with them. Often people just don't want to experience the feeling of depression anymore and have lost sight of their own qualities.

Depression can also lead to people self-harming, sometimes as a way of releasing very difficult emotions. If you are experiencing these sorts of thoughts or harming yourself it can really help to talk to someone.

If you are worried for yourself or anyone else you can call your GP or the crisis team (*number at the back of the leaflet*) for help and see the next steps part of this leaflet.

Looking after yourself

It's important to remember that when you feel depressed, part of you is just looking for kindness. However, what we

tend to do is become our own worst critic. Think about how you would treat a friend who wasn't feeling well.

Remember that depression is an illness, it affects you physically and emotionally. Don't expect that you will be able to do things to your usual standard.

Remember to eat well and sleep well. Try and listen to what you need and take care of yourself. Relaxation therapies, taking walks in nature, and developing compassion for yourself can help.

Remind yourself none of us are perfect, we all make mistakes and everyone you meet is fighting their own internal battle.

Some do's and don'ts...

What you can do if you are experiencing symptoms of depression.

√ DO

- Keep your routine as normal as possible. Try to do at least one thing each day.
- Explore other options by talking with your GP.
- Be kind to yourself. Try pampering yourself by doing something you usually enjoy or find relaxing.
- Try relaxation techniques. Open Minds have relaxation

CD's or you can search 'Youtube' online.

- Focus on something that has gone well lately.
- Remember to eat and drink enough water, proper hydration and nutrition will help you feel more positive. Remember that caffeine can increase anxiety.
- Challenge your negative thoughts, remember just because you think it doesn't mean it's true. Is there any other way of interpreting this situation; what would I say to a friend in this situation; am I putting pressure on myself?
- Be with others. It can help to talk about how you feel

× **DON'T**

- Rely on negative coping strategies such as drinking alcohol, taking drugs, over spending and avoidance.
- Put yourself down. This is time where you need kindness.
- Compare yourself to others too much, you don't know what they are experiencing.
- Put pressure on yourself to feel differently.
- Expect too much of yourself. You may experience difficulty in concentrating or need more time to complete routine tasks if you are feeling low.

What you can do to support others who are experiencing depression.

√ DO

- Encourage them to keep their routine as normal as possible.
- Encourage talking about feelings but don't pressurise.
- Continue to offer invitations to social events, even if they are declined initially. Remember, encourage, but don't pressurise.

× DON'T

- Tell them to snap out of it

Next steps:

Consider referring yourself to Open Minds, the CBT service (also known as IAPT service) for Grimsby and Cleethorpes. As well as CBT other therapies such as counselling and psychotherapies can also be accessed here. They offer a space for you to make sense of thoughts and feelings.

Speak to your GP about anti depressants. They can be used on their own or together with a therapeutic intervention. Anti depressants change the chemistry in the brain which has a knock on effect on mood.

Useful Contacts -

Open Minds -

Provides short term therapy for those with anxiety and depression.

Grimsby branch
7-9 Osborne Street
Grimsby
DN31 1EY
Tel: 01472 625100

Cleethorpes branch
13-15 Grimsby Road
Cleethorpes
DN35 7AQ
Tel: 01472 252760

E-mail: NAV.Openminds@nhs.net

Single Point of Access -

The acute crisis home treatment service provides an open referral system where people can self-refer via the Single Point of Access.

This service can be contacted **24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

The acute crisis home treatment service is based at:

Harrison House
Peaks Lane
Grimsby
DN32 9RP
Tel: 01472 256256
(Option 3 for mental health)



Rethink -

Provides telephone support service for anyone affected by mental health issues.

Tel: 0808 800 1010

Web: www.rethink.org

Cruse Bereavement Line -

Help for bereaved people and those caring for bereaved people.

Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Louth Branch

Tel: 01472 814455

Mind -

Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Mind

Tel: 01472 602502

Email: grimsbyandcleethorpesmind@googlemail.com

Web: <http://www.mind.org.uk/>

National Debt Line -

Helping anyone in debt or concerned they may fall into debt.

Tel: 0808 808 4000

Monday - Friday 9 am - 9 pm, Saturday 9:30 am - 1 pm

Visit: http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/england_wales



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W: www.navigocare.co.uk



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