



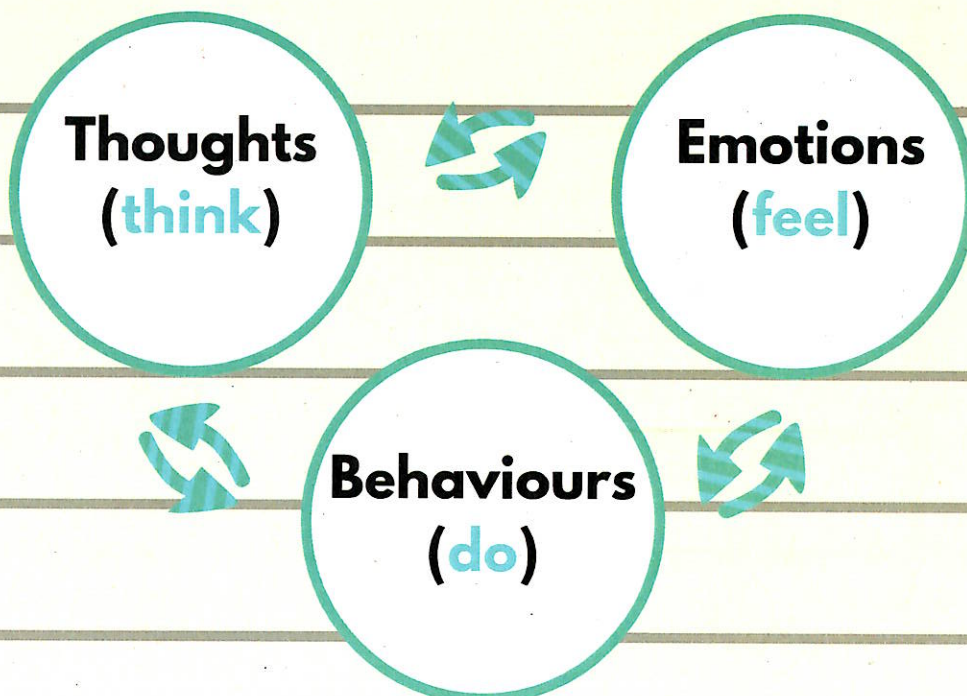
Low Mood: Young Person's Fact Sheet

What is Low Mood?

Anyone can get Low Mood. It is the most common psychological problem. It varies from person to person and stressful or difficult things can trigger it or it can seemingly come out of nowhere.

We all feel sad from time to time but usually the feeling passes. With Low Mood, these feelings of sadness just seem to go on and on and it's hard to see a way to feel happy again.

Low Mood can impact how you **feel**, how you **think** and things that you **do**.



Symptoms of Low Mood

Feeling Hopeless & Guilty

Feeling low for a long time can make us focus on the bad things in life, making us feel hopeless, sad, or like nothing is good. We might also feel guilty for thinking this way and more irritable than usual.

Concentration

Low Mood slows our bodies and brains down meaning we might struggle to concentrate or make decisions. We might also feel like we're 'clumsier' than normal or might forget things easily.

Aches and Pains

Low mood and pain share nerve pathways in the spinal cord and also share chemicals in the brain. This means we might feel aches and pains in our muscles due to feeling low.

Negative Thoughts

Feeling low is linked to negative thinking for example, you might think that nothing is good, that you don't want to be here anymore, or you might have thoughts about hurting yourself. These are really upsetting thoughts but are a very common symptom of low mood.

Lack of Energy

Low mood drains our bodies of energy, making us feel tired and drained. This might mean we feel too tired to do the things we'd usually want to do.

Change in Appetite

Cortisol (our stress hormone) is released by the brain when we feel low - this might mean we don't feel hungry. Or, we might also comfort eat and eat more than usual.

Sleep

Changes to our hormones can make it difficult to get to sleep. Equally, negative thoughts could also stop you getting to sleep. You might also notice you're sleeping more or sleeping through the day because you don't have much energy.



Understanding your symptoms of low mood is the first step to getting better. Remember, though these symptoms are upsetting, they are a **NORMAL** reaction.

Behavioural Activation

Behavioural Activation is an intervention used to help people who are struggling with low mood. It is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and there is lots of evidence and research that shows it works! The main idea behind Behavioural Activation is that, when low in mood, we get stuck in a vicious negative cycle. To feel better, we therefore need to change something in the cycle so that it becomes a positive cycle.

feel low

Feel low, down and sad.

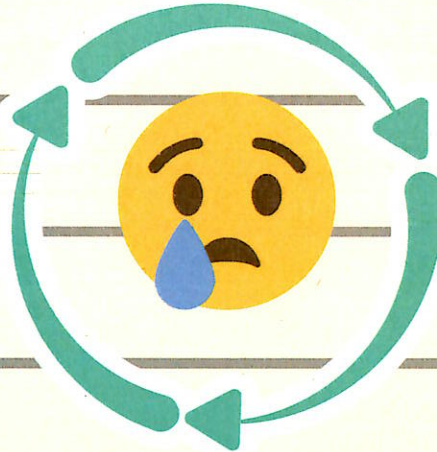
Feel tired and exhausted.

Feel bad or guilty.

Feel unmotivated.

Feel hopeless or like nothing will get better.

The Vicious Cycle



do less

Slow down physically and mentally.

Do less things that you'd normally do.

Avoid seeing/socialising with friends/family.

Find it difficult to find motivation to do things.

get less out of life

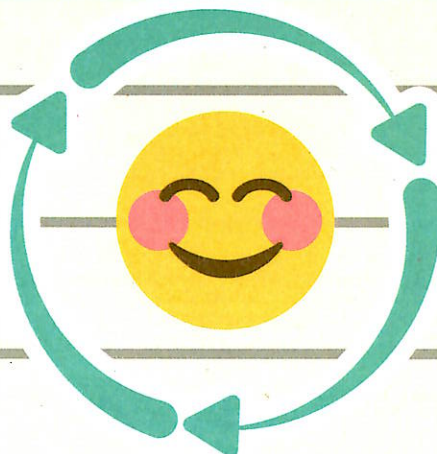
Stop getting enjoyment from life, stop feeling any sense of achievement and feel isolated from others.

The longer we're stuck in the vicious cycle, the lower and more unhappy we feel. This then makes it more and more difficult to do things and means we get even less out of life.

Breaking the Cycle: Do More to Feel Better

A proven way to break this cycle is to start **DOING** more meaningful and enjoyable activities. This can be very difficult at first but we know that activity helps us to feel happier, distracts us from negative thoughts, makes us feel more motivated, improves our concentration, and makes us feel less tired. This is why we say **DO MORE TO FEEL BETTER!**

do more of
what
matters



feel better
and
happier

get more from life

This can be hard to do at first, but the more you do it, the happier you will feel, the closer you will feel to others and the more you will feel a sense of achievement.

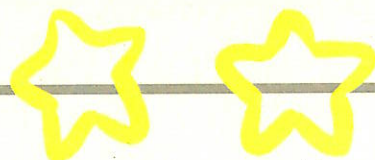
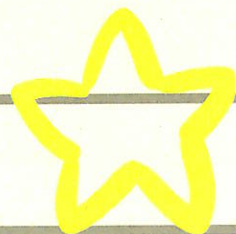
10 things to help you feel better!



1. Call or text a friend or sibling.
2. Go for a walk.
3. Play with your pet.
4. Go for a run or a bike ride.
5. Try a new activity
6. Watch a film.
7. Read a book.
8. Listen to music (don't sit in silence).
9. Eat some good food (like a smoothie, fruit or porridge).
10. Create something (draw or paint a picture/write a song, poem or rap).



Becoming more active will help you begin to overcome your low mood. This is because, when you do something you enjoy, you feel happier and more positive about life and the world! Doing more meaningful things helps you feel better!



**Make a list of 10 activities
that you enjoy or make you
feel good!**

1

2

3

4

5

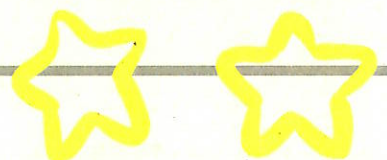
6

7

8

9

10



Activity Planner

It's important to plan in enjoyable and meaningful activities to help us feel happier and get a good balance in our lives. By taking time to plan in activities, we are much more likely to actually do them and start to feel better. It can be difficult to do activities when feeling low but remember, it's important to follow your plan and not your mood. This way, you can start to **DO MORE TO FEEL BETTER**.

What are you going to do?

When will you do this? (date/time)

Where will you do this?

Who will you do this with?

Remember to
follow your plan
and not your
mood!

Is there anything else you need to plan in order to do this? (eg. how you'll get there, what you'll need, whether you need to ask a friend/family member)

After you've done your activity, answer these questions:

How did you feel after your activity?

Is this an activity you will do again?

😊 **yes, make a plan to do it again!**

😞 **If no, make a plan to do something different.**

Remember, the
key is to **DO**
more to
FEEL better!

(Achievement, Closeness, Enjoyment)

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My List of Meaningful Activities

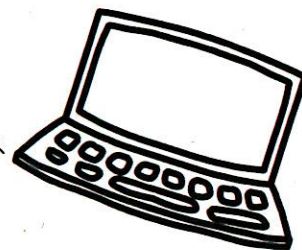
When we feel low in mood, it can be difficult to plan activities or know what we can do to help us feel better. By creating a list of meaningful activities, it is much easier to choose something to do and make a plan to do it. There are some ideas here which you might want to put on your list but the most important thing is that your list is YOURS - it should be full of things that YOU enjoy doing and that matter to you.



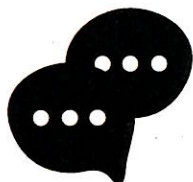
- Draw or create something
- Go for a walk/jog
- Play a game
- Watch favourite movie/TV show
- Take a relaxing bath
- Do some yoga
- Play with a pet
- Read a book
- Video call/chat with a friend
- Bake a cake
- Meditate
- Lay in the sunshine



- Listen to music
- Play an instrument
- Make a meal
- Write in diary/journal
- Go to the cinema
- Go swimming
- Meet with friends
- Go shopping
- Make new friends
- Start a new hobby
- Knit/crochet
- Take dog for a walk

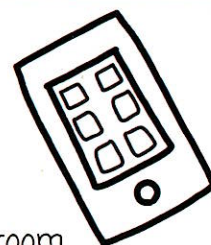


- Make a healthy snack
- Do some exercise
- Spend time with family
- Visit somewhere new
- Go to the beach/woods
- Go out for a meal
- Have a hot chocolate with a family member
- Visit family



- Make a gift for someone
- Go on a bike ride
- Take some photos
- Go for a picnic

- Do some colouring
- Play some football
- Watch a sports game
- Join a group/class
- Rearrange/organise my room
- Do some gardening
- Go to the park
- Go somewhere new with family
- Write a book/poem/short story



- Plan a trip
- Do a jigsaw
- Dance or sing
- Get dressed up nice

Try to make sure your list has a good mixture of different activities (for example, make sure there's a mix of things you can do with others and things you can do alone, things you can do inside and things you can do outside, things that can be done easily and things that need more planning). This way, you will always have something you're able to do.

My List

Make a list of the things that help raise your mood and are meaningful to you. Keep this list somewhere you can easily look at so that you can use it when you are feeling low.

A large, empty rectangular box with a green border, intended for writing a list of mood-raising items. The box is white and occupies most of the page below the instructions.

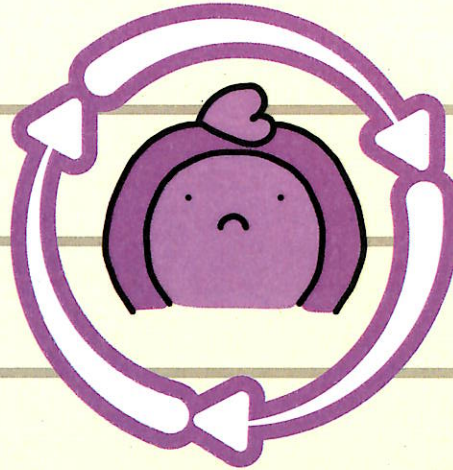
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Find it difficult to find motivation to do things.

get less out of life

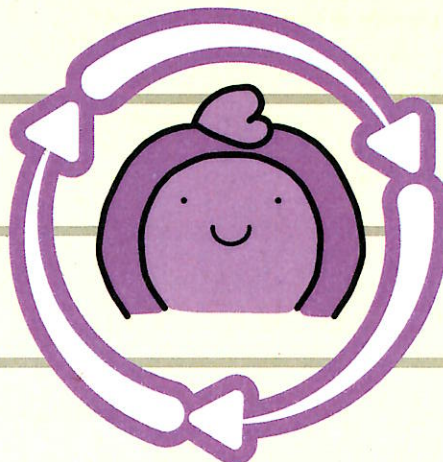
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do more of
what matters



feel better
and happier

get more from life

This can be hard to do at first, but the more you do it, the happier you will feel, the closer you will feel to others and the more you will feel a sense of achievement.

What Matters to Me

It's important to understand and recognise your values and what things matter to you in your life. This helps to plan time to do the things that matter to you and therefore have a better balance of activities in your life.

About Me:

The things I enjoy doing/find fun:

- Reading
- Drawing
- Watching Netflix
- Spending time with friends/family
- Going to the beach
- Gaming

Things I do to take care of my self:

- Swimming
- Walks
- Cross country
- Go to the gym

The things I do which help me relax/feel better:

- Go for a walk
- Have a bubble bath
- Have a hot chocolate
- Talk to mum

What Matters to Me

What I enjoy learning about/what I want to do in the future:

- Science
- Maths
- Art
- I want to be a scientist in the future

Everyday things I do which help me feel happy:

- Take the dog for a walk
- Watch TV with my family
- Text my friends
- Have a cup of tea

Things I feel strongly about that matter to me:

- I feel strongly about equal rights
- I feel strongly about my spirituality/religion
- I am a vegetarian and feel strongly about this

Who Matters to Me

Family who are important to me:

- Mum
- Dad
- Step-Dad
- Step-brother
- Cousins
- Aunty and Uncle
- Grandparents
- My dog
- My cat

Friends who are important to me:

- My best friend
- My group of friends
- My gaming friends

Anyone else who is important to me:

- My teacher
- My swimming instructor
- My best friend's mum

Anything else that matters/is important to me:

- I like doing my hair and makeup and trying out new styles

What Matters to Me

It's important to understand and recognise your values and what things matter to you in your life. This will help you to plan time to do the things that matter to you and help you to find a better balance in your life.

About Me

The things I enjoy doing/find fun:

What Matters to Me

What I enjoy learning about/what I want to do in the future:

Who Matters to Me

Family who are important to me:

Things I do to take care of my self:

Things I do everyday which help me feel happy:

Friends who are important to me:

The things I do which help me relax/feel better:

Things I feel strongly about that matter to me:

Anyone else who is important to me:

Anything else that matters/is important to me: