

DEPRESSION MANAGEMENT PACKAGE

DEPRESSION

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What is Depression?

Symptoms of a Depressive Episode

depressed mood	loss of interest or pleasure	significant weight change	diminished concentration
sleep difficulties	fatigue nearly every day	feelings of worthlessness	recurring thoughts of death

Symptoms must cause significant distress.

Symptoms must last for at least two weeks.

Demographics

- Women are 2x more likely to develop depression.
- About 1 in 10 people will experience depression during their lifetime.
- Most people experience their first depressive episode between ages 20 and 30.

Risks for Depression

- Family history of depression or similar disorders.
- Poverty, unemployment, social isolation, and other stressful life events.
- Regular drug and alcohol use.

Psychotherapy

(Cognitive Behavioral Therapy)

CBT works by changing self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.

CBT has been found to be equally, if not more effective than medicine in many cases.

CBT is the most researched form of psychotherapy for depression.

Medication

(Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors)

SSRIs increase the level of serotonin (a chemical related to depression) in the brain.

Studies suggest that SSRIs are the most effective when used to treat severe depression.

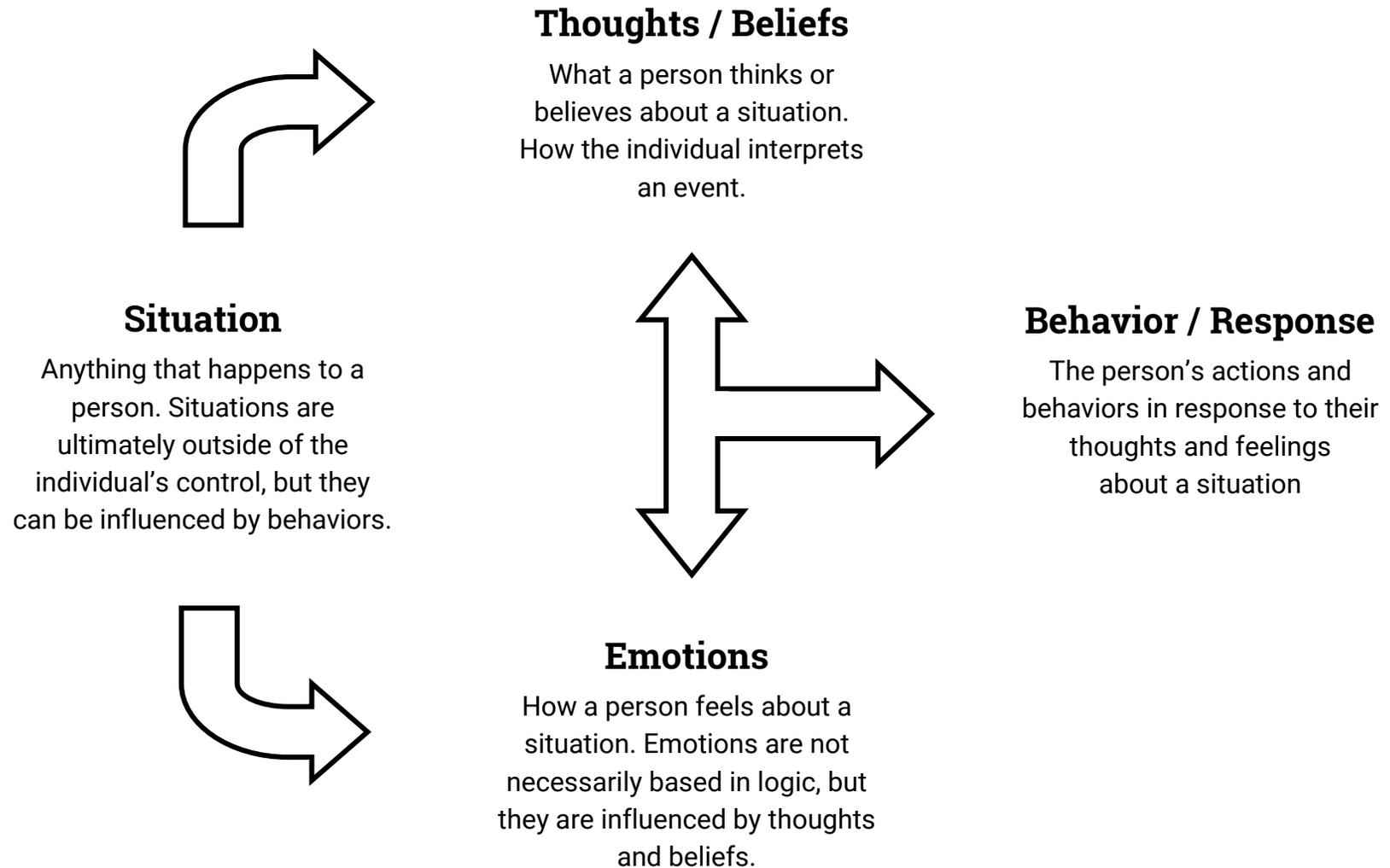
SSRIs don't work overnight—it might take up to 6 weeks before they reach their full effect.

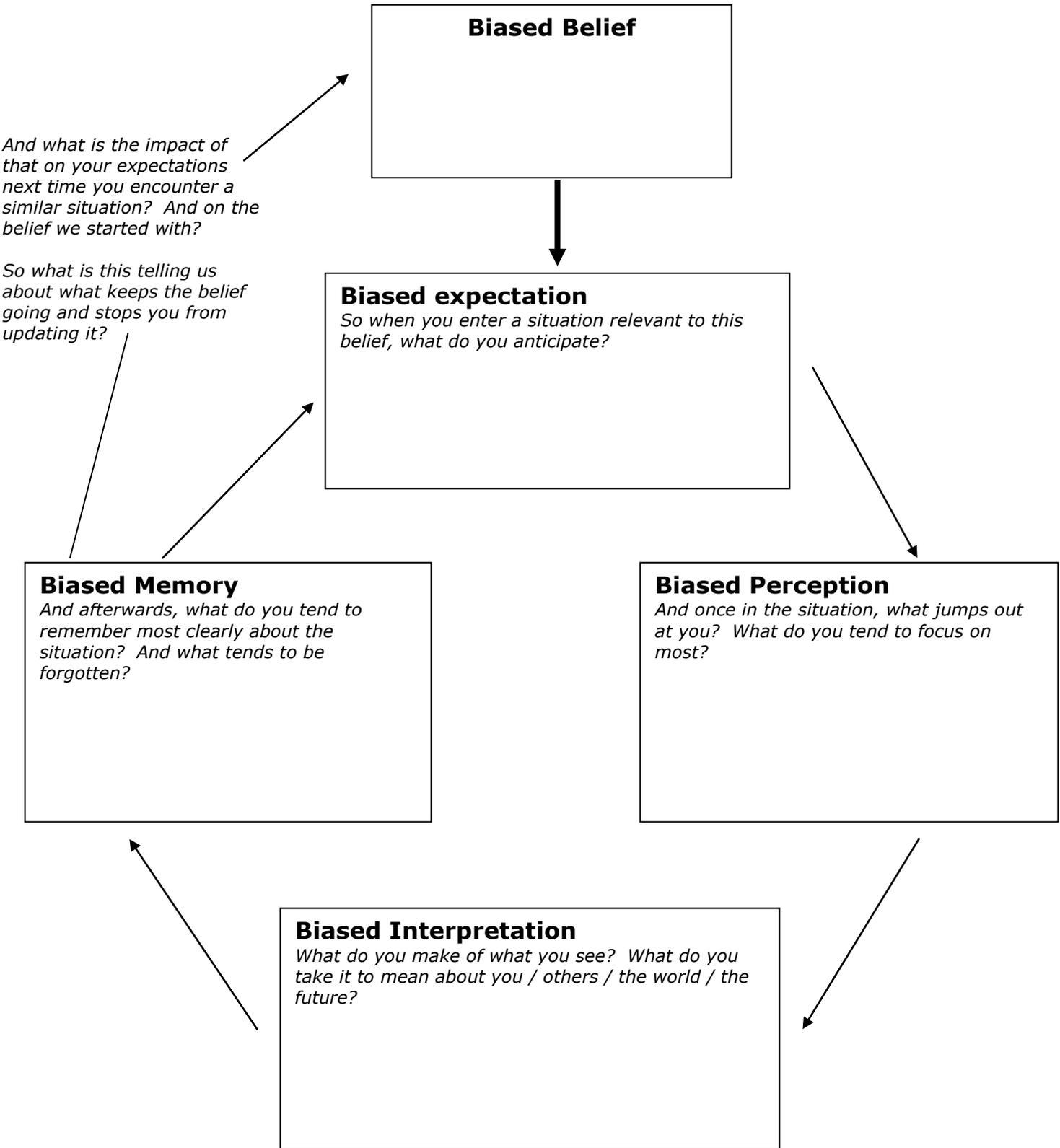
A combination of both psychotherapy and medication has been found to be the most effective treatment for depression.

Other Facts

- Over ½ of those diagnosed with depression also suffer from anxiety.
- 60% of those who commit suicide suffer from depression or a related mood disorder.
- Physical exercise has been found to have a significant antidepressant effect.
- Depressive episodes also occur during bipolar disorder alongside manic episodes.

The Cognitive Behavioral Model





Cognitive Maintaining Cycle

Butler, Fennel, Hackmann 2008

Common Self-Defeating Beliefs*

Achievement	Depression
<p>1. Perfectionism. I must never fail or make a mistake.</p> <p>2. Perceived Perfectionism. People will not love and accept me as a flawed and vulnerable human being.</p> <p>3. Achievement Addiction. My worthiness depends on my achievements, intelligence, talent, status, income, or looks.</p>	<p>13. Hopelessness. My problems could never be solved. I could never feel truly happy or fulfilled.</p> <p>14. Worthlessness / Inferiority. I'm basically worthless, defective, and inferior to others.</p>
	Anxiety
Love	<p>15. Emotional Perfectionism. I should always feel happy, confident, and in control.</p> <p>16. Anger Phobia. Anger is dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.</p> <p>17. Emotophobia. I should never feel sad, anxious, inadequate, jealous or vulnerable. I should sweep my feelings under the rug and not upset anyone.</p> <p>18. Perceived Narcissism. The people I care about are demanding, manipulative, and powerful.</p>
<p>4. Approval Addiction. I need everyone's approval to be worthwhile.</p> <p>5. Love Addiction. I can't feel happy and fulfilled without being loved.</p> <p>6. Fear of Rejection. If you reject me, it proves that there's something wrong with me. If I'm alone, I'm bound to feel miserable and worthless.</p>	<p>19. Brushfire Fallacy. People are clones who all think alike. If one person looks down on me, the word will spread like brushfire and soon everyone will look down on me.</p> <p>20. Spotlight Fallacy. Talking to people feels like having to perform under a bright spotlight on a stage. If I don't impress people by being sophisticated, witty, or interesting, they won't like me.</p>
Submissiveness	<p>21. Magical Thinking. If I worry enough, everything will turn out okay.</p>
<p>7. Pleasing Others. I should always try to please others, even if I make myself miserable in the process.</p> <p>8. Conflict Phobia. People who love each other shouldn't fight.</p> <p>9. Self-Blame. The problems in my relationships are bound to be my fault.</p>	
Demandingness	Other
<p>10. Other-Blame. The problems in my relationships are the other person's fault.</p> <p>11. Entitlement. You should always treat me in the way I expect.</p> <p>12. Truth. I'm right and you're wrong.</p>	<p>22. Low Frustration Tolerance. I should never be frustrated. Life should be easy.</p> <p>23. Superman / Superwoman. I should always be strong and never be weak.</p>

Cognitive Distortions

From "Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy" by David D. Burns, MD

Usage	Distortion	Description				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	All or Nothing Thinking	You see things in black and white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Overgeneralization	You see a single negative event as a never ending pattern of defeat.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Mental Filter	You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Disqualifying the Positive	You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Jumping to Conclusions	<p>You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Mind Reading</td> <td>You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and you don't bother to check this out.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Fortune Teller Error</td> <td>You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.</td> </tr> </table>	Mind Reading	You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and you don't bother to check this out.	The Fortune Teller Error	You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.
Mind Reading	You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and you don't bother to check this out.					
The Fortune Teller Error	You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization	You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick".				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Emotional Reasoning	You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it; therefore, it must be true."				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Should Statements	You try to motivate yourself with should and shouldn't's, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration and resentment.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Labeling and Mislabeled	This is an extreme form of over generalization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him: "He's a jerk." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Personalization and Blame	With personalization, you see yourself as the cause of some negative external event which in fact you were not primarily responsible. With blame, you blame other people or your circumstances for problems, and overlook ways that you might be contributing to the problem.				

The Ladder of Emotions

Our emotions are neither good nor bad. They are only an indicator of where we are on any given subject. Imagine that each emotion below is a rung on a ladder. We understand that it is not possible for us to stand at the bottom of a 22 foot ladder and reach the top rung in one step. The same is true for the emotional scale. We have to climb the ladder rung by rung. Sometimes we can skip a rung or two but we usually can't skip ten. So if you were jealous and now feel anger, acknowledge that you are moving in the right direction.

One more note about the emotional scale. You may notice that there are more "negative" emotions than positives. When we feel good, we don't really need the exact word to describe how we feel. But, when we don't feel so good, there is a big difference between our emotions and we sometimes need just the right word to explain it.

Ways to use this emotional scale:

At first, just become familiar with what you are feeling. Identify any thoughts or beliefs that may have led up to the feeling.

Once you get skilled at identifying your self defeating beliefs and your cognitive distortions then you can begin to "reach for a better feeling thought." First, identify where you are then identify where you want to be. Next, reach for a better feeling thought by changing the story you are telling yourself. If the thought makes sense to you, keep going. When you feel like the thought doesn't make sense, or isn't realistic, pause at that feeling for a bit. Once you feel ready, keep reaching for a better feeling thought. Remember: beliefs contribute to thoughts and thoughts result in feelings and feelings shape experiences.

Beliefs → Thoughts → Feelings → Experiences

Emotional Scale

1. Joy -- Knowledge -- Freedom -- Love -- Appreciation
2. Passion
3. Enthusiasm -- Eagerness -- Happiness
4. Positive Expectation -- Belief
5. Optimism
6. Hopefulness
7. Contentment
8. Boredom
9. Pessimism
10. Frustration -- Irritation -- Impatience
11. Overwhelm
12. Disappointment
13. Doubt
14. Worry
15. Blame
16. Discouragement
17. Anger
18. Revenge
19. Hatred -- Rage
20. Jealousy
21. Insecurity -- Guilt -- Unworthiness
22. Fear -- Grief -- Depression -- Despair -- Powerlessness

The list is from "Ask and It is Given" by Esther and Jerry Hicks

Handout compiled by Teresa Kleffner, MSW, LCSW. St. Louis Counseling and Wellness. www.stlcw.com

Identifying New Beliefs and Thoughts

For each situation that comes up, fill out a chart with the following information:

What I told myself:	What did I feel?	Identify Self Defeating Beliefs and/or Cognitive Distortion	What I could have told myself instead:

Core Beliefs

Everyone looks at the world differently. Two people can have the same experience, yet have very different interpretations of what happened. **Core beliefs** are the deeply held beliefs that influence how we interpret our experiences.

Think of core beliefs like a pair of sunglasses. Everyone has a different “shade” that causes them to see things differently.



Many people have negative core beliefs that cause harmful consequences. To begin challenging your negative core beliefs, you first need to identify what they are. Here are some common examples:

I'm unlovable	I'm stupid	I'm boring
I'm not good enough	I'm ugly	I'm worthless
I'm a bad person	I'm abnormal	I'm undeserving

What is one of your negative core beliefs? _____

List three pieces of evidence contrary to your negative core belief.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Untwist Your Thinking: Cognitive Behavioral Tools

Empathy	<p>When we're upset, we need someone to listen and see the world through our eyes <i>without</i> trying to cheer us up, help us, or give us advice. Although this won't usually lead to a cure, it can be a relief to know that someone's listening.</p> <p>You can learn to empathize when you're trying to help a friend or family member who feels upset. Usually, all they really want is for you to be a good listener.</p>
Agenda Setting	<p>Agenda Setting is the most basic and important technique of all. First, try to define the problem you want help with. It must be real and specific as to person, place, and time. Ask yourself, "When was I upset? What time of day was it? Where was I? Who was I interacting with? What was going on?"</p> <p>Now ask yourself if you're willing to roll up your sleeves and work on it <i>now</i>, rather than just talking about it endlessly. Ask yourself, "What would it be worth to me to solve this problem? How hard would I be willing to work on the solution?"</p>
Identify the Distortions	Use the Checklist of Cognitive Distortions to identify the distortions in each negative thought.
Straightforward Technique	Try to substitute a more positive and realistic thought for each negative thought. Ask yourself, "Is this negative thought really true? Do I really believe it? Is there another way to look at the situation?"
Double Standard Technique	Instead of putting yourself down, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you might talk to a dear friend who was upset. Ask yourself, "Would I say such harsh things to a friend with a similar problem? If not, why not? What would I say to him or her?"
Examine the Evidence	Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the evidence for it. Ask yourself, "What are the facts? What do they show?"
Experimental Technique	Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought, in much the same way that a scientist would test a theory. Ask yourself, "How could I test this negative thought to find out if it's really true?" For example, if you believe you're on the verge of losing control and cracking up during your panic attacks, you can test this belief by trying to drive yourself crazy though willful effort. You can roll around on the floor, flail your arms and legs in the air, and speak gibberish. It can be a relief to discover that you <i>can't</i> go crazy, no matter how hard you try.
Survey Technique	Conduct a survey to find out if your thoughts are realistic. Ask yourself, "How do other people think and feel about this? Could I ask some friends and get some feedback?" For example, if you believe that social anxiety is rare or shameful, you could simply ask several friends if they've ever felt that way.
Reattribution	Instead of blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that contributed to it. Ask yourself, "What caused this problem? What did I contribute and what did others contribute? What can I learn from the situation?"

Socratic Method	<p>Ask yourself questions that will lead to the inconsistencies in your negative thoughts. For example, you might ask yourself, "When I say that I'm a 'failure at life,' do I mean that I fail at some things some of the time, or all things all of the time?"</p> <p>If you say, "some things some of the time," you can point out that this is true of all human beings. If you say, "all things all of the time," you can point out that this isn't true of anyone, since no one fails at everything.</p>
Thinking in Shades of Gray	<p>Instead of thinking about your problems in black-and-white categories, you can evaluate them in shades of gray. When things don't work out as well as you'd hoped, you can think of the experience as a partial success or learning opportunity. Pinpoint your specific errors instead of writing yourself off as a total failure.</p>
Semantic Method	<p>Substitute language that's less colorful and emotionally loaded. Instead of thinking, "I <i>shouldn't</i> have made that mistake," you can tell yourself, "It would be <i>preferable</i> if I hadn't made that mistake." This method is especially helpful for Should Statements and Labeling.</p>
Let's Define Terms	<p>When you label yourself as "inferior," "a fool," or "a loser," ask yourself what those labels mean. What's the definition of "a fool" or "a loser"? When you try to define these terms, you'll discover there's no such thing as "a fool" or "a loser." Foolish behavior exists, but "fools" and "losers" do not.</p>
Be Specific	<p>Stick with reality and avoid judgments about reality. For example, instead of thinking of yourself as defective or worthless, you can focus on your <i>specific</i> strengths and weaknesses.</p>
Self-Monitoring	<p>Keep track of repetitious negative thoughts or anxiety-producing fantasies by counting them. You can keep a 3x5 card in your wallet or pocket and put a tick mark on it each time you have a negative thought. Alternatively, you can wear a wrist-counter like the ones golfers use to keep track of their scores. Record the total number of negative thoughts each day on your calendar. Often, the upsetting thoughts will diminish or disappear within two to three weeks.</p>
Negative Practice / Worry Breaks	<p>Schedule time to intentionally worry or criticize yourself. For example, if you constantly beat up on yourself because of your shortcomings, you can schedule several five-minute periods each day to berate yourself and feel miserable. At those times, you can be as self-critical as you want and rip yourself to shreds with gusto. Use the rest of your time for positive, productive living.</p>
Paradoxical Magnification	<p>Instead of trying to refute your negative thoughts, you can buy into them and exaggerate them. Try to make them as extreme as possible. For example, if you feel inferior, you could tell yourself, "Yes, it's true. In fact, I'm probably the most inferior person in California at this time." Paradoxically, this can sometimes provide objectivity and relief. Of course, if you're really upset, this technique may have the unintended effect of making you feel even worse. If so, try another method.</p>

Shame-Attacking Exercises	<p>If you suffer from shyness, you probably have intense fears of looking foolish in front of other people. Shame-Attacking Exercises are a specific and potent antidote to these kinds of fears. You intentionally do something foolish in public so you can get over this fear. For example, you could stand up and announce each stop on a bus or shout out the time in a crowded department store.</p> <p>When you make a fool of yourself on purpose, you discover that the world doesn't come to an end after all, and that people don't really look down on you. This discovery can be liberating.</p>
Acceptance Paradox	<p>Instead of defending against your own self-criticisms, you can find truth in them and accept your shortcomings with tranquility. Tell yourself, "It's true that I have <i>many</i> inadequacies. In fact, there is very little, if anything, about me that couldn't be improved considerably."</p>
Individual Downward Arrow	<p>Draw a downward arrow under a negative thought on your Daily Mood Log and ask yourself, "Why would it be upsetting to me if this thought were true? What would it mean to me?" A new negative thought will come to mind. Write it down under the arrow and repeat this process several times. When you review the chain of negative thoughts, along with the list of Common Self-Defeating Beliefs (SDBs), you can pinpoint the attitudes and beliefs that make you vulnerable to depression and anxiety, such as Perfectionism, the Achievement Addiction, or the Brushfire Fallacy.</p>
What-If Technique	<p>This Uncovering Technique was developed specifically for anxiety. Draw a downward arrow under a negative thought on your Daily Mood Log and ask yourself, "What if that were true? What's the worst that could happen? What do I fear the most?"</p> <p>A new negative thought or fantasy will come to mind. Write it down under the arrow and repeat this process several times. You'll generate additional thoughts that will lead to the fantasy that frightens you the most. Then you can ask yourself, "How likely is it that this would happen? And could I live with it if it did?"</p>
Self-Disclosure	<p>Instead of shamefully hiding your feelings of shyness or nervousness in a social situation, you can disclose them openly. This technique requires a good sense of self-esteem to be effective. If it's done skillfully, it will allow you to form real relationships with people instead of trying to put on a show and pretend to be something that you're not. This technique is based on the rather unintuitive idea that shyness without shame is actually an asset, because it makes you seem more human and personable.</p>

What Is Rumination?

Rumination is:

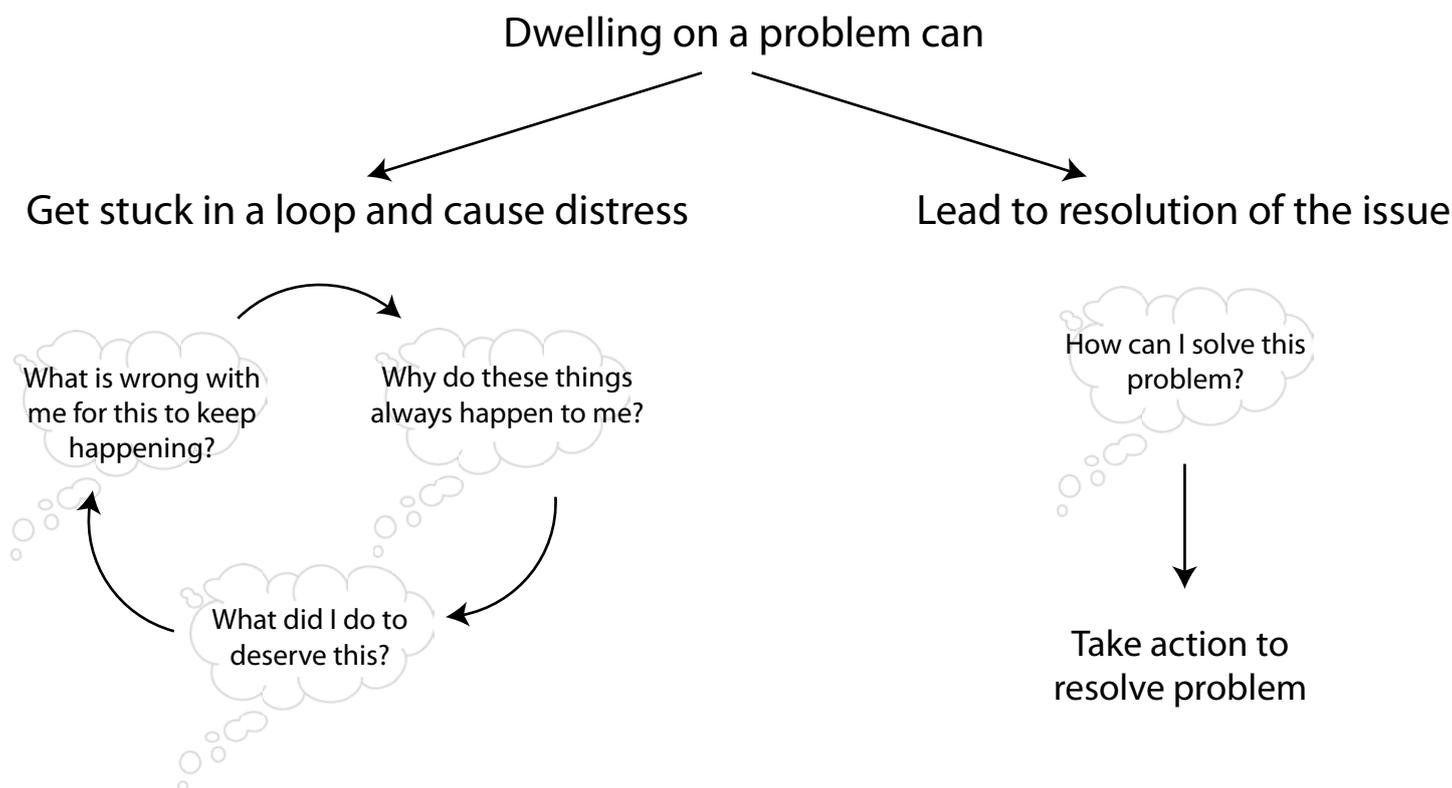
- dwelling on difficulties and things which distress us
- repeatedly thinking about events from our past
- becoming preoccupied with something and not being able to get it out of your mind
- a learnt strategy for trying to deal with our problems

Is rumination normal?

- Yes, to some extent everyone ruminates or dwells on their problems
- Thinking about our problems can be helpful: especially if we reach a solution and put it into action
- Most of the time, and for most people, rumination is time-limited: it stops when the problem is solved
- Although rumination is normal, excessive use of it can become problematic

What are the problems with rumination?

- Unhelpful rumination tends to focus on causes and consequences instead of solutions
"What did I do to deserve this" and *"Will my life ever get better?"* instead of *"How can I make my life better?"*
- Rumination tends to focus on what has gone wrong and can lead to negative thinking
- When used excessively, rumination can lead to depression
- When used excessively, rumination can maintain an episode of depression
- Unhelpful rumination can lead to inactivity and avoidance of problem-solving



Unhelpful rumination

Unhelpful rumination asks more *"why ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'evaluative mode' because these questions evaluate the meaning of events or situations)

"Why ... ?" questions tend to focus on the problem, its causes, and its consequences

"Why am I in this situation?"

"What if it never gets better?"

"What did I do to deserve this"

Helpful rumination

Helpful rumination asks more *"how ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'process-focused-mode' because these questions focus on the process of how events and situations happen)

"How ... ?" questions tend to focus on solving problems

"How can I get out of this situation?"

"What can I do to make this better?"

11 Steps to Stop Ruminating

1. Be aware of the fact that you are ruminating and realize that it isn't helpful.
2. Think about your situation or problem one more time and plan what to do next.
3. Find something funny about your situation: humor can help you see it from a different angle and move on. View what has happened as a learning experience: this can help you approach the situation constructively, and with an eye toward the future. And finally, try to remove yourself from the situation, viewing it as you might watch a scene in a movie.
4. Think about what you would say to a friend facing the same situation. This can help you treat yourself more compassionately. As you would with a friend, forgive yourself if you have done something wrong.
5. Focus only on things that you have control over. There will be always some degree of uncertainty. Our whole life is influenced by so many factors that uncertainty is simply a big part of life. Become comfortable with it and accept it.
6. Accept your situation. Pain and suffering gets worse depending on how you think about it. We often feel sad because we feel sad. Are angry because we feel angry and so on. Accept your current state as it is. Stop wanting things to be different.
7. Think "Stop!" or even say it out loud to break the loop. You can also practice visualization, such as imagining that you are taking your current thoughts and putting them in a trash bin.
8. Center yourself in the here and now and try to let go of unattainable or unhealthy goals. You are in the here and now and there is nothing you can do but come up with a good plan and stick with it. Stop thinking about how long any discomfort might last. You cannot fight your current situation so simply be with it and accept it.
9. Distract yourself. Use mindfulness meditation to focus your attention on your breath instead of being attached to your thoughts.
10. Don't forget, you are not your thoughts! Your thoughts are just part of you and they will fade away if you do not hold on to them. Examine your thoughts curiously and without judgment. Stop judging situations or experiences. It will not change them or make them any different and just waste your energy.
11. If all this doesn't help schedule some time for worrying or rumination. Just plan to ruminate for 30 minutes after lunch and stop ruminating right now. You already have made some time for it and you don't have to be caught up with those thoughts now

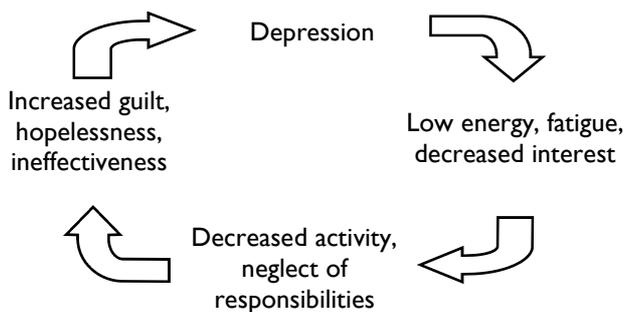
the vicious cycle of depression

The symptoms of depression can bring about some drastic changes in a depressed person's life, daily routines, and their behaviour. Often it is these changes that makes the depression worse and prevents the depressed person from getting better.

For example, a lack of motivation or a lack of energy can result in a depressed person cutting back on their activities, neglecting their daily tasks and responsibilities, and leaving decision-making to others. Have you noticed these changes in yourself when you are depressed?

You may find that you have become less and less active, don't go out much anymore, avoid hanging out with friends, and stopped engaging in your favourite activity. When this happens, you have become locked in the vicious cycle of depression, which might look like this:

The Vicious Cycle of Depression



When your activity level decreases, you may become even less motivated and more lethargic. When you stop doing the things you used to love, you miss out on experiencing pleasant feelings and positive experiences. Your depression could get worse.

Similarly, when one begins neglecting a few tasks and responsibilities at work or at home, the list may begin to pile up. As such, when a depressed person thinks about the things they have to do, they may feel overwhelmed by the pile of things they have put off doing. This may result in them feeling guilty or thinking that they are ineffective or even, a failure. This will also worsen the depression.

Reversing the Vicious Cycle of Depression

One of the ways of breaking the vicious cycle of is through the use of medication. Medication such as antidepressants can help change your energy level and improve sleep. Another way is to simply increase your activity level, especially in pleasurable activities and

tackling your list of tasks and responsibilities, but doing it in a realistic and achievable way, so that you set yourself up to succeed.

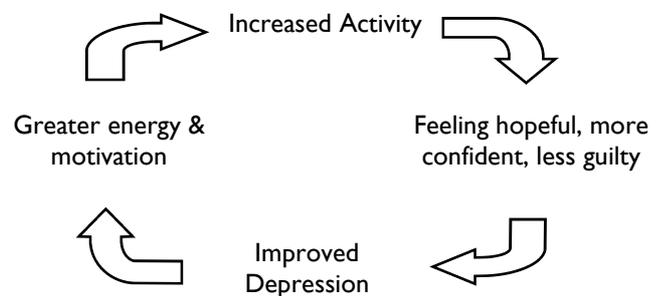
Becoming more active has a number of advantages:

- Activity helps you to feel better
- Activity helps you to feel less tired
- Activity can help you think more clearly



When the depression cycle is broken, it will look like this:

Reversing The Vicious Cycle of Depression



Here's a list of possible fun things to do. You can add your own to this list.

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
3. Going for a day trip
4. Going to see a comedy at the movies
5. Going to the beach
6. Playing squash/tennis/badminton
7. Having a barbecue at the park
8. Going for a walk, jog, or hike
9. Listening to uplifting music
10. Gardening

Try some of them out and evaluate how you feel before and after the activity. Chances are, you'll find that you'll feel a little better. The important thing is to persist – keeping your activity levels up is the first step to breaking out of that vicious cycle!

The second step is to look at how *thinking patterns* contribute to the vicious cycle of depression. The "Improving how you feel" information sheet starts to look more closely at this.

behavioural activation fun & achievement

The symptoms of depression such as tiredness, lethargy, loss of interest, loss of motivation, loss of pleasure, and indecisiveness can lead to inactivity, and this often keeps the depression going or even make it worse.

Also, because of the lack of motivation, a depressed person might begin to neglect everyday tasks and responsibilities at work or at home, and the list begins to pile up. As such, when a depressed person thinks about the things they have to do, they might feel overwhelmed by the pile of things they have put off doing. This might result in them feeling guilty or thinking that they are ineffective or even, a failure. This will also worsen the depression.



Increasing Your Activity Level

One of the ways of overcoming depression is to increase your level of activity. There is a lot of evidence that shows that the more people do, and the more pleasant activities they get involved in, the better they feel. Becoming more active has a number of advantages:

Activity helps you to feel better. At the very least, when you start engaging in some kind of activity, it gives your mind something else to think about – a different focus. Doing things, even a little at a time, can help give you a sense that you are moving forward, taking control of your life again, and achieving something – experiencing a sense of MASTERY. You may even find PLEASURE and enjoyment in the activities you do.



Activity helps you to feel less tired. Usually, when you are physically tired, you need rest. However, when you are depressed, the opposite is true. Sleeping more and sitting around doing nothing will only cause you to feel more lethargic and tired. Also, doing nothing leaves room for your mind to ruminate on depressive thoughts, which will make you feel even more depressed.

Activity can help you think more clearly. Once you get started, you may find that you take a different perspective on particular problems in your life. Also, because your mind takes a different focus as a result of the activity, your thoughts may become clearer.

Fun & Achievement

It makes good sense to do fun and pleasurable things to make yourself feel better, but these are not the only sorts of activities that will help generate positive feelings. Being depressed isn't just about feeling sad – there are a lot of other feelings involved as well, such as hopelessness, guilt, and despair. So, it also makes sense to do things that result in other positive feelings, such as achievement and a sense of purpose. When you are planning things to do for yourself, it is important to remember to include a mixture of activities, adding those that have the potential to give you other positive feelings. An example of this is paying off money on your credit card, or doing the ironing. Doing these things can help you feel more in control of your life (e.g., paying off your debts) and give you satisfaction that

you have started doing something (e.g., catching up on household chores). Doing tasks that give you a sense of achievement or mastery will help you feel like you are starting to get back on top of things again. Some activities may combine the two. For example, making your bed may give you a sense of pleasure at having a neat, tidy bed, but it may also give you a sense of achievement at having done something to improve your home environment. This sense of achievement is just as important as getting pleasure out of something, and may indeed prompt you to do more.

Start Simple

Even though there are a number of advantages in increasing your activity level, it may not be easy to get started. Often, this is because when you are depressed, you think negative thoughts such as “I won't enjoy doing this,” or “It's too hard,” or “I'll probably fail at this too.” These thoughts may stop you from getting started. Often the big mistake people make is trying to do too much too soon.

When you are depressed, things that you usually don't even have to think about doing (when you are not depressed) can seem to require a huge amount of effort. The idea is to start with small easy steps and begin with things you can do. Think of it in terms of training for a sports event.

If you hadn't been doing any running for 6 months, would you try and run a marathon without doing any training? Of course not! You would go on a training programme that slowly builds up your fitness and endurance. Similarly, when you are depressed, it is unreasonable to expect yourself to be able to jump out of bed and clean the house before going out to meet a friend for a late lunch. If you set your goals too high, you might end up not doing them, become disappointed in yourself, and feel worse than ever. Instead, plan to do things that are achievable at your current level of functioning. Start with small steps and slowly build yourself up to the large tasks that seem unmanageable right now. For example, aim to get out of bed for 10 minutes, then slowly build up the amount of time you are out of bed for. Don't try to clean the whole kitchen – just aim to do the dishes. If this is too much, just stack all the dirty dishes in a pile. Aim to get one bench top clean, or just wash 5 plates. Any task can be broken down into smaller and smaller steps until you find something achievable.

Sometimes it is easier to aim to do a task for a set period of time rather than trying to achieve a set amount. Read a book for 5 minutes rather than reading a whole chapter. Say you will spend 10 minutes weeding the garden rather than aiming to weed a certain area. In this way, it will be easier for you to achieve your goal. In the beginning, the important thing is not what you do or how much you do, but simply the fact that you are DOING. Remember that action is the first step, not motivation, and you'll soon find yourself feeling better!



Behavioral Activation

You can begin to decrease depression by engaging in activities you find enjoyable, and by taking care of responsibilities that you have been neglecting.

List three activities you enjoy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List three responsibilities you need to take care of:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Try doing at least one activity or responsibility each day. Use the following scale to rate your depression, pleasant feelings, and sense of achievement before and after the activity.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
None			Moderate			Extreme		

Activity (location, date, time)		Depression	Pleasure	Achievement
	<i>Before</i>			
	<i>After</i>			
	<i>Before</i>			
	<i>After</i>			
	<i>Before</i>			
	<i>After</i>			

Fun Activities Catalogue

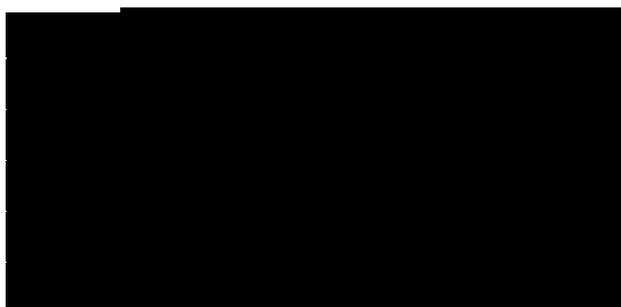
The following is a list of activities that might be fun and pleasurable for you. Feel free to add your own fun activities to the list.

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Planning my career
3. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
4. Going for a holiday
5. Recycling old items
6. Relaxing
7. Going on a date
8. Going to a movie
9. Jogging, walking
10. Listening to music
11. Thinking I have done a full day's work
12. Recalling past parties
13. Buying household gadgets
14. Lying in the sun
15. Planning a career change
16. Laughing
17. Thinking about my past trips
18. Listening to others
19. Reading magazines or newspapers
20. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
21. Spending an evening with good friends
22. Planning a day's activities
23. Meeting new people
24. Remembering beautiful scenery
25. Saving money
26. Card and board games
27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics
28. Eating
29. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
30. Getting out of debt/paying debts
31. Practising karate, judo, yoga
32. Thinking about retirement
33. Repairing things around the house
34. Working on my car (bicycle)
35. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
36. Wearing sexy clothes
37. Having quiet evenings
38. Taking care of my plants
39. Buying, selling stocks and shares
40. Going swimming
41. Doodling
42. Exercising
43. Collecting old things
44. Going to a party
45. Thinking about buying things
46. Playing golf
47. Playing soccer
48. Flying kites
49. Having discussions with friends
50. Having family get-togethers
51. Riding a motorbike
52. Sex
53. Playing squash
54. Going camping
55. Singing around the house
56. Arranging flowers
57. Going to church, praying (practising religion)
58. Losing weight
59. Going to the beach
60. Thinking I'm an OK person
61. A day with nothing to do
62. Having class reunions
63. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading
64. Going sailing
65. Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state
66. Sketching, painting
67. Doing something spontaneously
68. Doing embroidery, cross stitching
69. Sleeping
70. Driving
71. Entertaining
72. Going to clubs (garden, sewing, etc.)
73. Thinking about getting married
74. Going birdwatching
75. Singing with groups
76. Flirting
77. Playing musical instruments
78. Doing arts and crafts
79. Making a gift for someone
80. Buying CDs, tapes, records
81. Watching boxing, wrestling
82. Planning parties
83. Cooking, baking
84. Going hiking, bush walking
85. Writing books (poems, articles)
86. Sewing
87. Buying clothes
88. Working
89. Going out to dinner
90. Discussing books
91. Sightseeing
92. Gardening
93. Going to the beauty salon
94. Early morning coffee and newspaper
95. Playing tennis
96. Kissing
97. Watching my children (play)
98. Going to plays and concerts
99. Daydreaming
100. Planning to go to school
101. Thinking about sex
102. Going for a drive
103. Listening to a stereo
104. Refurbishing furniture
105. Watching TV, videos
106. Making lists of tasks
107. Going bike riding
108. Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
109. Buying gifts
110. Travelling to national parks
111. Completing a task
112. Thinking about my achievements
113. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer,

- basketball, etc.)
- 114. Eating gooey, fattening foods
- 115. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
- 116. Photography
- 117. Going fishing
- 118. Thinking about pleasant events
- 119. Staying on a diet
- 120. Star gazing
- 121. Flying a plane
- 122. Reading fiction
- 123. Acting
- 124. Being alone
- 125. Writing diary/journal entries or letters
- 126. Cleaning
- 127. Reading non-fiction
- 128. Taking children places
- 129. Dancing
- 130. Going on a picnic
- 131. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
- 132. Meditating
- 133. Playing volleyball
- 134. Having lunch with a friend
- 135. Going to the hills
- 136. Thinking about having a family
- 137. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
- 138. Splurging
- 139. Playing cards
- 140. Solving riddles mentally
- 141. Having a political discussion
- 142. Playing cricket
- 143. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides
- 144. Knitting/crocheting/quilting
- 145. Doing crossword puzzles
- 146. Shooting pool/Playing billiards
- 147. Dressing up and looking nice
- 148. Reflecting on how I've improved
- 149. Buying things for myself
- 150. Talking on the phone
- 151. Going to museums, art galleries
- 152. Thinking religious thoughts
- 153. Surfing the internet
- 154. Lighting candles
- 155. Listening to the radio
- 156. Going crabbing
- 157. Having coffee at a cafe
- 158. Listening to the radio
- 159. Getting/giving a massage
- 160. Saying "I love you"
- 161. Thinking about my good qualities
- 162. Buying books
- 163. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
- 164. Going skiing
- 165. Going canoeing or white-water rafting
- 166. Going bowling
- 167. Doing woodworking
- 168. Fantasising about the future
- 169. Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
- 170. Debating
- 171. Playing computer games
- 172. Having an aquarium
- 173. Erotica (sex books, movies)

- 174. Going horseback riding
- 175. Going rock climbing
- 176. Thinking about becoming active in the community
- 177. Doing something new
- 178. Making jigsaw puzzles
- 179. Thinking I'm a person who can cope
- 180. Playing with my pets
- 181. Having a barbecue
- 182. Rearranging the furniture in my house
- 183. Buying new furniture
- 184. Going window shopping
- 185. Thinking I have a lot more going for me than most people

Others:



The Poisoned Parrot

Imagine you're given a parrot. This parrot is just a parrot - it doesn't have any knowledge, wisdom or insight. **It's bird-brained** after all. It recites things 'parrot fashion' – without any understanding or **comprehension**. **It's a parrot.**



However, this particular parrot is a poisoned and **poisonous parrot**. **It's** been specifically trained to be unhelpful to you, continuously commenting on you and your life, in a way that constantly puts you down, criticising you.

For example, the bus gets stuck in a traffic jam, and you arrive at work 5 minutes late. The parrot sits there saying: "There you go again. Late. **You just can't manage to get there on time can you. So stupid. If you'd left the house and got the earlier bus you'd have arrived**



with loads of time to spare and the boss would be happy. But you? No way. **Just can't do it.** Useless. Waste of space. Absolutely pathetic!"

How long would you put up with this abuse before throwing a towel over the cage, or getting rid of the parrot?

Yet we can often put up with the thoughts from this internal bully for far too long. Decades. We hear **that 'parrot', believe the 'parrot'**, and naturally get upset. That then affects the way we live our lives – the way we behave towards others, how we are, what we think about others, what we think about the world, and how we think and feel about ourselves.



We can learn to use the antidote: just notice that parrot, and cover the cage! **"There's that parrot again. I don't have to listen to it – it's just a parrot"**. Then go and do something else. Put your focus of attention on something other than that parrot. **This parrot is poison though, and it won't give up easily, so you'll need to keep using that antidote and be persistent in your practice!**



Eventually it will get tired of the towel, tired of you not responding. **You'll notice it less and less. It might just give up it's poison as your antidote overcomes it, or perhaps fly off to wherever poisoned parrots go.**

Adapted from "The Malevolent Parrot" – Kristina Ivings

A Activating Event	B Believable Thoughts	C Consequences	
<p>What, where, when, who with. Outside event or internal trigger, real or imagined. What was it that I reacted to? What disturbed me? What pressed my buttons?</p>	<p>What went through my mind at that time. What meaning did I give that situation? What was the worst thing about that? What did I think or imagine? <i>(Write down all thoughts)</i></p>	<p>Consequences of Believing the Thought Pick the most disturbing thought from column B . How do I react when I believe this thought?</p> <p>Balanced alternative thought- optional</p>	<p>Consequences of Not Believing the Thought How am I likely to react (behave and feel) if I do not believe the thought?</p>
D De-fuse		Examples of Defusion Exercises	
<p>Defusion involves seeing thoughts and feelings for what they are (streams of words, passing sensations), not what they say they are (dangers or facts). What defusion technique could I use?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice unhelpful thoughts. Say them slowly. Write them down. Say them in funny voices. • Label unhelpful thoughts and emotions, e.g. an judgement, a prediction, a feeling, a sensation, a memory etc • Practice mindfulness so that you can better notice when you are in the present moment versus when you are stuck in your head in the past or future. • Use metaphors to help get a different view of your thoughts, feelings, and self evaluations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g. Passengers on the Bus, The Beach Ball, The River, The Thought Train, Radio Doom & Gloom, Mind Monsters, Quicksand, Storyteller • STOP, STEP BACK. OBSERVE (what you are feeling and thinking; how the other person is acting). 	

Positive Affirmations

Over the years, we tend to get into [unhelpful thinking habits](#), and think negatively about ourselves and situations. Using positive statements can help us develop a new attitude to ourselves and our situations.



Choose a statement from those below, or make one that means more to you, and repeat, repeat, repeat throughout the day, every day, of every week, of every month. You might want to make or print out a card with your affirmation, and carry it with you. For the positive affirmations to work, you must use it whenever you notice you have that negative thought – immediately turn it around by using your affirmation.

Use a statement that starts with “I” and use the present tense. See the examples below – choose one, adapt one, or make up your own. Make it something broadly realistic, even if you don’t believe it right now.



- ❖ I am strong
 - ❖ I have strength
 - ❖ I am determined and successful
 - ❖ I am a good and worthwhile person
 - ❖ I am a unique and special person
 - ❖ I have inner strength and resources
- ❖ I am confident and competent
 - ❖ I hold my head up high
 - ❖ I look good because I am good
 - ❖ People like me – I am a likeable person and I like myself
 - ❖ I care about others, I am needed and worthwhile
 - ❖ I am a loving person
 - ❖ I have a lot to be proud of
 - ❖ I have all that I need
 - ❖ I am in control of my life
 - ❖ I can achieve anything I want to achieve
 - ❖ I make wise decisions based on what I know
 - ❖ **I’m moving towards my goals**
 - ❖ I accept myself as a unique and worthwhile person
 - ❖ My life has meaning and purpose
 - ❖ I am in control of my choices



- ❖ I am strong and healthy
 - ❖ I am calm and confident
 - ❖ I have many options and can make wise decisions
 - ❖ Everything is getting better every day
 - ❖ I am calm and relaxed
 - ❖ I am healthy and have all that I need
- ❖ Today is the first day of the rest of my life and I will take notice of the many positive things this day has to offer
 - ❖ I live a healthy and positive lifestyle
 - ❖ I know I can master anything if I practice it continually
 - ❖ I have my wise mind – I can seek inner guidance whenever I need to
 - ❖ My life purpose can be whatever I choose it to be
 - ❖ All is well, right here, right now

COPING WITH SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

There are times in life when we might feel totally, hopeless, helpless, overwhelmed with emotional pain. It can seem like there is no other way out of our problems, we've run out of ideas, possible solutions. Our problems seem unfixable. The pain feels like it will never end. We believe we've run out of options, and suicide is the only answer left.



Maybe the suicidal thoughts come to mind, and you might have mixed feelings about them. They can be frightening and confusing.

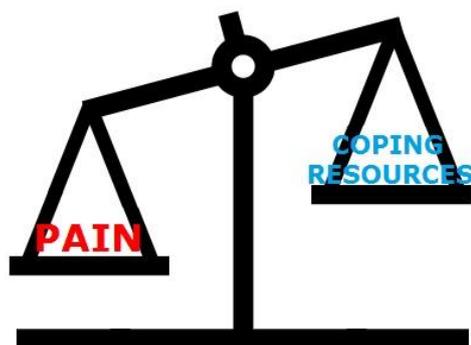
For some people, suicide may be a way of getting back at others, or showing them how much pain you're in. But after suicide, you won't be there to see that they feel guilty, or finally understand your pain.

Feelings will pass. Depression feels permanent, but it's transient. Things will change. Depression comes, and it goes.



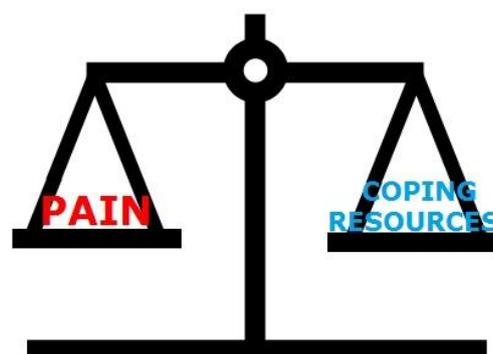
Depression and pain distort our thinking. It can seem like we're wearing very dark tinted 'gloomy specs'. Everything looks different to how it really is. **Thoughts are thoughts** - not necessarily how things are, although it certainly feels like the thoughts are true. Thoughts affect the way we feel, and thoughts and feelings affect the way we react, what we do ([see this page](#)).

Suicidal thoughts can result when we experience too much pain, without having enough resources to cope.



We therefore have two ways to get us through this horrible time:

- Reduce the pain
- Increase coping resources



REDUCE THE PAIN

Self-soothing

- Do something that will help you feel better, right now
- Perhaps collect items into an emergency bag or box that you can turn to
- Use all five senses to find things that will soothe you

Vision	Focus your attention on looking at something nice, nature, a painting, watching a favourite programme or movie
Hearing	Listen to a favourite piece of music, sounds of nature, sing
Smell	Really notice smells - favourite soap, food, essential oil
Taste	Use sensation of taste to focus your attention. Eat mindfully - savouring each moment
Touch	Wear soft comforting socks, stroke a pet, give yourself a hand massage

- A useful reminder, using the 5 senses:

5	5 things I can see
4	4 things I can hear
3	3 things I can touch
2	2 things I can smell or taste
1	1 breath. Then continue to just notice your breathing, and the sensations of breathing in your body - in your nose, throat, abdomen.

Avoid drugs and alcohol

- Whilst it seems like they help for a while, they will make your problems worse.

Ask yourself:

- Are these thoughts **facts or my opinion**?
- What has helped me feel better in the past?
- What can I do right now that will help me feel better?
- **What gives my life meaning?** What are my goals, dreams or life values? E.g. Family, friends, pets, helping others, faith, spirituality, community life, connecting with nature.

Tell yourself:

- I've coped this far, I can get through the next (day, hour, 10 minutes)
- Things will look better in time.
- Depression is temporary - this will pass.
- Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.
- Depression is distorting my thinking - these thoughts are the voice of depression. They are not facts. I don't have to act on them.
- The vast majority of people get better from depression. I will look back and be pleased that I chose to live.

Write things down

- [Safety Plan worksheet & Safety Plan Cards](#)
- [Alternative Thoughts & Actions worksheet](#)
- [Crisis Management Plan worksheet](#)

INCREASE COPING RESOURCES – IMMEDIATE STEPS

Read and put your [Safety Plan](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf) into action! (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf)

- Keep the Safety Plan where you can easily find it when you need it. Maybe make several copies – and keep them in several places.
 - E.g. one for your room, your car, your purse/wallet.
 - [Safety Plan Cards](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlanCards.pdf) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlanCards.pdf)

Take one step at a time

- Take things a little at a time. Set out to get through the next day, the next week or month, perhaps the next hour or even less. Tell yourself: "I've got through so far, I can get through the next hour".

Distraction

- Do something else, and focus your attention fully on what you're doing, e.g.
 - Gardening
 - Household chores
 - Physical exercise - walk, run, cycle, dance
 - [Tapping](#) (Emotional Freedom Technique)
 - Reading - magazine, self help book
 - Television
 - Seek out a supportive discussion forum on the internet
 - Learn something new on the internet
 - [Imagery](#)
 - Help someone else
 - Go to the park, the beach - pay attention to nature
 - Visit someone
 - [Music](#)
 - Stroke a pet
 - DIY
 - Feed the birds
 - Sudoku or crossword
 - Do something creative: painting, writing, knitting, play a musical instrument, make a collage, bake a cake, cook a meal, arrange some flowers, make a website or blog



[STOPP](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/stopp.htm) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/stopp.htm) (or [worksheet version](#))

Talk to someone - now!

- A friend or family member
- A [telephone helpline](#) (E.g. Samaritans 116 123)
- A health professional
- Go somewhere you'll feel safe - be with other people
- Go to the local Accident & Emergency department
- Call the local emergency number (E.g. 999, 112, 911)



INCREASE COPING RESOURCES - LONGER TERM STEPS

Take action!

- We can only change our situations by changing something about the way we think, or what we do
- Complete a [Multimodal Treatment Plan](#)



Plan activity and routine

- [Increase your activity](#)
- Get into a daily routine and stick with it - get up at the same time each day, go to bed at the same time, plan an activity each morning, afternoon and evening
- Schedule in activities which help you: Work, rest and play
- Do things you enjoy, or used to enjoy, or you think you might enjoy: [Nourishing vs Depleting Activities](#)
- [Set realistic goals](#)
- Write it down: [Weekly Planner](#), [Activity Diary](#) or [ACE Log](#)

Look after yourself

- [Eat healthily](#), [balance sleep](#), treat physical or mental health problems, avoid drugs and alcohol, [get regular exercise](#)

Systematically work through a problem

- Use the [Problem Solving Worksheet](#)
- Get help from an appropriate person or agency (E.g. [Citizens Advice Bureau](#))

Maintain or improve relationships

- Connect and be with others
- Call, text, email - friends or family
- Create new contacts - join a local support group or an online discussion forum
- Repair relationship: [Relationship worksheet](#)

Lower your expectations

- Sometimes life can feel like we're struggling to drive or cycle up a long and steep hill, in top gear. The motor just can't get us there. It works really hard, but it's impossible to get up that steep hill in top gear. We need to change down a gear or two. Changing down gives the motor more torque, and is much better able to drive those wheels up that hill, albeit a bit slower.
- We often try to struggle on in top gear, expecting so much of ourselves, of others, of life itself. Sometimes we need to change down a gear. Slow it down, reduce the struggle. Carry on, but in a lower gear.
- [Pace & Plan](#)



Write a daily diary or journal

- **Consider writing a letter to yourself when you're feeling safe and calm, to be read when you're feeling suicidal**
- Or use:
 - [Depression Thought Record Sheet](#)
 - [Weekly Planner](#), [Activity Diary](#) or [ACE Log](#)
 - [Worksheets and information leaflets](#) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/freedownloads2.htm)
 - [Safety Plan worksheet](#) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf)
 - [Alternative Thoughts & Actions worksheet](#) (www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AlternativeThoughtsActions.pdf)

Other Getselfhelp resources:

- [Self Help Course](#)
- [Depression Self Help Guide](#) (and [Quick Reference Guide](#)) or [webpage version](#)
- [Depression Thought Record Sheet](#)
- [Weekly Planner](#), [Activity Diary](#) or [ACE Log](#)

All worksheets and information leaflets available at:

- www.getselfhelp.co.uk/freedownloads2.htm

Website addresses for important documents:

- [Safety Plan worksheet](#)
 - www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlan.pdf
- [Safety Plan Cards](#)
 - www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/SafetyPlanCards.pdf
- [Alternative Thoughts & Actions worksheet](#)
 - www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/AlternativeThoughtsActions.pdf
- [Crisis Management Plan worksheet](#)
 - www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/CrisisManagementPlan.pdf

Further online or telephone resources:

- [Support groups \(Guernsey\)](#) ([UK support groups](#))
 - www.patient.co.uk/selfhelp.asp
- [National telephone helplines \(UK\)](#)
 - www.getselfhelp.co.uk/helplines.htm
- [LivingLifetotheFull.com](#) offers free online computerised CBT and discussion forums
 - www.livinglifetothefull.com
- [The Samaritans](#) (with links to worldwide Befriending organisations)
 - 116 123 (UK)
 - www.samaritans.org
 - jo@samaritans.org