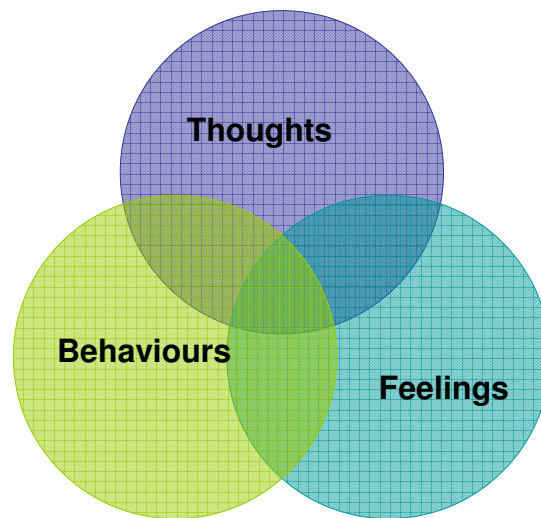


# DEPRESSION



- ✓ **What is depression**
- ✓ **Causes of depression**
- ✓ **Symptoms and characteristics of depression**
- ✓ **Types of depression**
- ✓ **Treatments**
- ✓ **Helpful Exercises**
- ✓ **Quick tips for dealing with depression**
- ✓ **Templates to copy and complete**

*This booklet contains information to help the clinician understand the nature of depression, how to recognise the signs of depression, and numerous proven exercises to assist you when working with your clients*

## **What is Depression?**

The word depression is used to describe various and sometimes overlapping experiences. To many people being depressed means feeling sad, 'blue', downhearted, disappointed, detached or upset. However, a person can feel all these emotions without being 'clinically' depressed. Feelings of sadness or the 'blues' are generally brief and have slight effects on normal functioning.

Clinical depression is an emotional, physical and cognitive (thinking) state that is intense and long-lasting and has more negative effects on a person's day-to-day life. Approximately one in five people will experience an episode of clinical depression in their lifetime.

It is also important to distinguish depression from the sadness we naturally experience after loss, such as during bereavement. Although the grief associated with loss is often intense and long lasting, such emotions are a healthy response to loss and allow people to adjust to their new life circumstances. Depression on the other hand, can have significant and detrimental effects on many aspects of a person's life. It is generally important to consider what is causing and maintaining the depression for improvement to take place. This may involve a person approaching life stresses or relationships differently, making lifestyle changes, regaining self-esteem or reconnecting with his or her values.

Finally, it is helpful for depressed people to understand what depression is and isn't. It is not something to be ashamed of or to feel guilty about. It is not a character flaw or a sign of weakness, or a lack in discipline or personal strength. It is not just a 'mood' that someone can 'snap out of'. Most importantly, depression is not permanent - that is, the chances for recovery are very good. A number of psychological and pharmacological treatments (antidepressant medication) are effective, affordable and readily available.

## Symptoms of Depression

If a person has a depressive disorder they would have, for at least two weeks, nearly every day, many of the following symptoms:

- An unusually sad mood
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities that used to be enjoyable
- Lack of energy and tiredness
- Feeling worthless or feeling guilty when they are not really at fault
- Thinking about death a lot or wishing to be dead
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Moving more slowly or sometimes becoming agitated and unable to settle
- Having sleeping difficulties or sometimes sleeping too much
- Loss of interest in food or sometimes eating too much.
- Changes in eating habits may lead to either loss of weight or putting on weight.

Not every person who is depressed has all these symptoms. People differ in the number of symptoms they have and also how severe the symptoms are. A person who has **mild depression** would have five or six of the above symptoms. They would be affected in their ability to function at work or in their family roles, or they might be able to function with unusual effort. A person who has **severe depression** would have most of the symptoms and would be clearly unable to function. A person with **moderate depression** would be in between mild and severe.

## Types of Depression

Mental health professionals recognise different types of depressive disorders. The main ones are:

- **Major depressive disorder.** Sometimes this is called 'major depression', 'clinical depression', 'unipolar depression' or simply 'depression'. It involves low mood and/or loss of interest and pleasure in usual activities. In addition, the person will have other symptoms such as those described earlier. The symptoms are experienced most days, nearly every day and last for at least two weeks. The symptoms interfere with the person's work and social relationships.

- **Dysthymia** is milder than major depressive disorder, but lasts longer. A person has to have this milder depression more than two years to be diagnosed with dysthymia.
- **Bipolar disorder.** This disorder used to be known as 'manic depression', because the person has periods of depression, but at other times periods of mania. In between they have periods of normal mood. Mania is like the opposite of depression and can vary in intensity. The person may feel great, have plenty of energy, talk fast, experience racing thoughts, and little need for sleep. The person may have difficulty focusing on tasks and may become frustrated and irritable. Sometimes the person loses contact with reality. For example, they could become convinced that they have special powers or are some important person (such as Jesus or a famous movie star). When in a state of mania a person can do foolish things such as get into debt or take serious risks. Treatments for bipolar disorder are different and are not covered in this guide.

Other types of depression are sometimes distinguished:

- **Psychotic depression.** Sometimes a person with a depressive disorder can lose contact with reality (becomes 'psychotic'). For example, they may falsely believe that other people are persecuting them or that they are being punished for bad actions in the past.
- **Melancholia.** This is a more biological form of depression. The person is more likely to have depressed mood that feels different from normal sadness, early wakening, being slowed down, weight loss and excessive guilt. One of the major changes is that the person can be observed to move more slowly.
- **Seasonal affective disorder.** This form of depression comes and goes with the seasons. The most common pattern is for the person to become depressed in the winter or autumn. This is sometimes called 'winter depression'. Lack of sunlight is the cause. People with seasonal affective disorder are more likely to experience lack of energy, sleeping too much, overeating, weight gain and a craving for carbohydrates.
- **Post-partum or postnatal depression.** Women are at an increased risk of depression following childbirth. Causes include hormonal and physical changes and the responsibilities of caring for the baby. For many women, this may only be mild 'baby blues'. For other women it is longer lasting and interferes with their mothering in a significant way. The symptoms do not

differ from depression at other times. However, depression at this time has an impact not only on the mother, but also on the mother-infant relationship and on the child's development. Depression commonly occurs together with other mental and physical health problems. For example, a person with a depressive disorder might also have an anxiety disorder or a problem with alcohol or other drugs. Depression also commonly occurs in people with physical health problems, like heart disease, cancer or thyroid conditions.

## **Treatments for Depression**

There are two major forms of treatment for depression that may be used individually or in combination, depending on the type of depression: psychological treatments and medication.

**Psychological Treatments** for depression provide a supportive environment for a person to work through difficulties. Psychologists help by providing skills and strategies to change negative thinking patterns and behaviours that contribute to depression and to lessen underlying sensitivity to future episodes of depression.

**Medications** can work to manage depression by affecting the balance of chemicals in the brain that impact on mood. When some specific chemicals in the brain are very low or lacking, this can contribute to feelings of low mood, sadness, and fatigue. Antidepressant medications are drugs that help restore the brain's chemical balance to improve mood.

**Combination Treatments** for depression involve integrating both antidepressant medication and psychological treatments, which have been shown to be most helpful. Antidepressant medication helps to change a person's mood and increase their responsiveness to psychological treatment. The psychological treatment provides support and strategies to change depressed thinking and behaviour, and improves long-term coping skills to minimise future relapse.

Just as no two people are affected the exact same way by depression, there is no "one size fits all" treatment that cures depression. What works for one person might not work for another. The best way to treat depression is to become as informed as

possible about the treatment options, and then tailor them to meet your needs. It is important to consider the following points:

- **Learn as much as you can about your depression.** It's important to determine whether your depression symptoms are due to an underlying medical condition. If so, that condition will need to be treated first. How severe your depression is also has a role in treatment; the more severe the depression, the more intensive the treatment is likely to be.
- **It takes time to find the right treatment.** It might take some trial and error to find the treatment and supports that works best for you. For example, it might take a few tries to find a therapist that you click with if you decide to pursue therapy. Or you may try different types of exercise, finally to find that what's best for you may be a twenty-minute walk after work. Be open to change and a little experimentation.
- **Don't rely on medications alone.** It's hard to escape ads about medication as a treatment for depression. Although medication can be effective for severe depression, studies have shown that therapy can be as effective or even a more effective treatment for many types of depression. Therapy and/or lifestyle changes may be all you need, and they come without the side effects of medication. If you do decide to try medication, remember that medication works best when you pursue therapy as well.
- **Get social support.** The more you cultivate your social connections, the more protected you are from depression. If you are feeling stuck, don't hesitate to talk to trusted family members or friends. Asking for help is not a weakness but a sign of strength.
- **Treatment takes time and commitment.** All of these depression treatments take time, and sometimes it might feel overwhelming or frustratingly slow. That is normal. Recovery has its ups and downs.

**The following pages are filled with some exercises you things you can do at home to help manage and work through your depression.**

1. Increase your activity level
  - Weekly Activity Schedule
  - Fun Activities Catalogue
2. Setting Goals
3. Managing Stress and Problem Solving
4. Awareness of Unhelpful Thinking
5. Challenging Negative Thoughts
6. Daily Mood Diary
7. Thought Record
8. Assertive Behaviour
9. Managing Sleep
10. Incorporating Exercise
11. Relaxation
12. Cultivating Relationships
13. Awareness of irritability, agitation, and fatigue

*With information compiled from [www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au),  
[www.cci.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au) and [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)*

## **Activity 1- Increase Your Activity Level**

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. There is evidence to show that increasing activity levels and participating in pleasurable experiences can help reduce depressive symptoms. The idea is to start with small easy steps and begin with things that you can do. 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. 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!

The following points provide guidelines for increasing pleasurable activities and the sense of accomplishment you experience:

- Make a list of activities you need to complete as well as some that you find (or used to find) enjoyable. Make sure you write down as many activities as you can. Remember to also list activities that are only marginally enjoyable.
- Plan to take part in an activity each day. Activities should be achievable and should provide a sense of accomplishment when completed. Include enjoyable activities and try to increase the amount of time each day available for these. Using a weekly activity schedule (see the example on the next page) can sometimes help to plan these activities.
- Think about what you have accomplished once you have completed a daily task. When participating in pleasurable activities, think about their enjoyable



aspects. Talk to others about activities they enjoy and reflect on positive experiences.

- Remember that during a depressive episode you often lack motivation to work through daily routines and things you enjoyed previously may not seem as enjoyable. Focus on the positive, no matter how small, and remember that as you recover, the enjoyment you experience will increase.

Push yourself to do things, even when you don't feel like it. You might be surprised at how much better you feel once you're out in the world. Even if your depression doesn't lift immediately, you'll gradually feel more upbeat and energetic as you make time for fun activities.

**List in the following table the activities you enjoy doing, why you enjoy them, how long you might want to spend doing that activity, and how often you plan to do it :**

	<b>Activity I enjoy...</b>	<b>Why I enjoy this...</b>	<b>How long I will spend on this...</b>	<b>How often I will do this...</b>
	<i>e.g. reading a magazine</i>	<i>Keeps me entertained</i>	<i>30 minutes</i>	<i>Once a week</i>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

### Weekly Activity Schedule

Use the schedule below to plan your activities for the coming week. Make sure you balance fun and pleasurable activities with your daily responsibilities and duties.

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
7am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							
10pm							

## Fun Activities Catalogue

Go through the fun activities catalogue on the next few pages and aim to do two or three things from that list each week.

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. Spending an evening with good friends	20. Planning a day's activities
21. Reading magazines or newspapers	22. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)	23. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people	24. Remembering beautiful scenery
25. Saving money	26. Card and board games	27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics	28. Eating
29. Going window shopping	30. Meeting new people	31. Practising karate, judo, yoga	32. Thinking I have a lot going for me
33. Repairing things around the house	34. Working on my car (bicycle)	35. Getting out of debt/paying debts	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. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading	59. Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state	60. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer, basketball, etc.)
61. A day with nothing to do	62. Having class reunions	63. Losing weight	64. Going sailing
65. Going to the beach	66. Thinking I'm an OK person	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. Going rock climbing	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. Playing with my pets	112. Thinking about my achievements
113. Writing diary/journal entries or letters	114. Going canoeing or white-water rafting	115. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet	116. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
117. Going fishing	118. Thinking about pleasant events	119. Having a barbecue	120. Star gazing
121. Flying a plane	122. Reading fiction	123. Acting	124. Making jigsaw puzzles
125. Sketching, painting	126. Eating gooey, fattening foods	127. Reading non-fiction	128. Taking children places
129. Dancing	130. Going on a picnic	131. Photography	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. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides	139. Playing cards	140. Solving riddles mentally
141. Doing something new	142. Playing cricket	143. Splurging	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. Going horseback riding
153. Surfing the internet	154. Lighting candles	155. Listening to the radio	156. Going crabbing
157. Having coffee at a cafe	158. Going skiing	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. Playing computer games
165. Cleaning	166. Going bowling	167. Doing woodworking	168. Fantasising about the future

## Activity 2 – Setting Goals

Goal setting is an important part of keeping you active, motivated, and beating your depression. Set some goals for yourself for the next 3 to 6 months. Be specific. What would you like to achieve? What would you like to see happening in your life? How would you like to change? Remember to make your goals realistic – that means they should be achievable within the time frame you have set.

### Aims or goals:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Choose one goal. Make sure that it is realistic, achievable, doesn't rely on others, and can be broken down into smaller goals.

- .....
- .....
- .....

### List the steps you would take towards achieving this goal:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

**What I will do in the next few days towards achieving this goal:**

.....  
.....

**What I will do in the next few weeks:**

.....  
.....

**What I will do in the next few months:**

.....  
.....

**Date goal achieved:**

.....

**My next goal:**

.....  
.....

Continue to do this for all the goals on your list. Keep making goals, planning steps towards achieving your goal, and keeping track of your progress. Setting realistic goals and working towards achieving them will help beat your depression, give you a purpose, and keep you motivated.

### Activity 3 - Managing Stress and Problem Solving

Not only does stress prolong and worsen depression, but it can also trigger it. In order to get over depression and stay well, it's essential to learn how to minimize and cope with stress.

**Identify your stressors.** Figure out all the things in your life that are stressing you out. Examples include: work overload, unsupportive relationships, substance abuse, taking on too much, or health problems. Once you've identified your stressors, you can make a plan to avoid them or minimize their impact.

**Remember to go easy on yourself.** Many depressed people are perfectionists, holding themselves to impossibly high standards and then beating themselves up when they fail to meet them. Battle this source of self-imposed stress by challenging your negative ways of thinking.

**Plan ahead.** If you know your stress triggers and limits, you will be able to identify and avoid many landmines.

**1. Identify your current stressors or problems. What is worrying you the most right now? Rate each issue on the following scale:**

(No Stress) 0 ... 1... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 (Moderate) ... 6 ... 7 ...8 ...9 ... 10 (Highest)

**Example:**

	<b>Stressor/Problem</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>How long I have had this issue</b>
1.	<i>Not having friends</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Past 12 months</i>
2.	<i>Being angry most of the time</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>A few years</i>
3.	<i>Being unemployed</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>6 months</i>
4.	<i>Feeling down all the time</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3 months</i>

**Now complete the table below:**

	<b>Stressor/Problem</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>How long I have had this issue</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**2. Using your worst stressor or problem (issue with the highest rating)  
complete the worksheet below to work towards finding a solution**

***Problem Solving Worksheet A***

<b>Stressor or worst problem</b>	<b>How does this affect me?</b>	<b>How will things be different if this problem is resolved?</b>	<b>How do I change?</b>
<p><u>Example:</u></p> <p>Being unemployed for six months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feel depressed</li> <li>- No confidence</li> <li>- Feel like a failure</li> <li>- Have let my family down</li> <li>- People think I am lazy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will have money</li> <li>- Will be busy and have a purpose</li> <li>- Friends and family will think better of me</li> <li>- I will get my confidence back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be active in looking for work</li> <li>- Update my resume`</li> <li>- Ask family and friends for help</li> <li>- Join a Job Find agency</li> <li>- Use the Library Computer/Internet (free service) to search for jobs</li> <li>- Start small e.g. stacking shelves, delivering papers</li> <li>- Do volunteer work to build your skills</li> </ul>



Now having worked through your stressors/problems, list some of the things you can do **right now** to help change the situation:

*E.g. Update resume` and give to family member to look over; look through the careers guide section in the paper*

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

**Now think of your situation and the other problems you thought you had. How might changing one issue affect others?**

*Example: Getting employed will give you the opportunity to resolve your other problems:*

- *Meeting new people, developing a social network, making new friends*
- *Earning money, paying bills, growing savings, keeping you busy and active to stop feeling down all the time*
- *Building connections, keeping busy, and growing in confidence will help you resolve your anger*

**How your issues may change:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

**For other problems, you may find the following worksheet useful:**

***Problem Solving Worksheet B***

1. Describe the particular problem in specific terms:

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How have you dealt with a similar situation in the past?

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2. Using your creativity, list as many possible solutions as you can  
(Remember don't censor or cull any solutions at this stage)

<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

3. Consider the pros and cons of each of the solutions above and tick the boxes beside the solutions that appear most likely to help you resolve your problem.

4. In the spaces below summarise your "best" solution(s) and why you chose them.

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5. Carry out your chosen solution(s). What steps would you take to do this?

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## Activity 4 – Awareness of Unhelpful Thinking

Often people who are depressed have unhelpful thoughts pop into their head that contribute to their depression. It is useful to start being aware of these unhelpful thoughts and to make note of which thoughts you tend to experience the most so you can start to challenge these later on. There are several types of unhelpful thinking:

- **All-or-nothing thinking.** Also called black and white, polarised, or dichotomous thinking. You view a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum
- **Anticipating negative outcomes.** You expect that something negative has happened or is going to happen. Two types of thinking fall into this category:
  - **Fortune telling:** You predict that something negative is going to happen in the future, as if you were gazing into a crystal ball.
  - **Catastrophizing:** You tell yourself that the very worst is happening or is going to happen, without considering other possibilities that may be more likely and/or less negative
- **Disqualifying or discounting the positive.** You unreasonably tell yourself that positive experiences, deeds, or qualities do not count.
- **Emotional reasoning.** You think something must be true because you ‘feel’ (actually believe) it so strongly, ignoring or discounting evidence to the contrary.
- **Labelling.** You put a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering that the evidence might more reasonably lead to a less disastrous conclusion.
- **Mental filter.** (Also called selective abstraction). You pay undue attention to one negative detail instead of seeing the whole picture.
- **Mind reading.** You believe you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely, possibilities, and you make no effort to check it out.
- **Over-generalisation.** You make a sweeping negative conclusion that goes far beyond the current situation.
- **“Should” and “Must” statements.** (Also called imperatives). You have a precise, fixed idea of how you or others should behave and you overestimate how bad it is that these expectations are not met.

- **Maladaptive thoughts.** Problematic thoughts that do not contain logical thinking errors. These thoughts may be true. However, dwelling on them makes you feel more anxious and may interfere with your performance.

In the following table, please think about the unhelpful thoughts that pop into your head, the situation in which these thoughts occur, and try to match each thought to the types listed above.

<b>My thought</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Type of unhelpful thinking</b>
<i>Example: My boss thinks I am not good enough</i>	<i>Doesn't make eye contact with me when passes me in the foyer</i>	<i>Mind reading, All-or-nothing thinking</i>

The next activity will help you start to challenge these unhelpful thoughts.

## **Activity 5 – Challenging Negative Thoughts**

Changing negative thinking patterns and reducing worry is not as easy as it may seem. This is an area where people often require the assistance of a psychologist or other mental health professional, but you can practice this at home. Below are some suggestions for learning to control worry and reduce negative thinking.

- Take time to think about how realistic your negative thoughts are. Try to find some different and more helpful thoughts and explanations for circumstances. Write down some of these more helpful ways of thinking.
- Avoid excessively discussing negative thoughts and feelings with colleagues, family or friends. Instead, try to focus on positive aspects of situations. Negative thinking and dwelling on negative topics will not help you feel better.
- Keep yourself busy and your mind focused on tasks. Avoid unstructured time where you have nothing planned, as your mind may wander and dwell on negative themes.
- Try to think positively. There are many things you can do to address the cognitive (thinking) component of depression. These include: making a list of your skills, talents, and achievements; identifying the three most beautiful things in your environment; reminiscing about a time when you were really happy, successful or content.
- Set aside a daily "worry time" of 15 minutes when you do nothing but ruminate about your problems. Set an alarm so that once this time is finished you can leave all your concerns behind and begin working on thinking more positive thoughts. If during the day you begin to focus on your worries, remind yourself that there is a designated time for this and move your thoughts away from your problems. After some time of practising this, people often complain that they have difficulty filling 15 minutes with their worries.
- Do not make any major life decisions, such as quitting your job or breaking up a relationship, while depressed. Remember, you may not be seeing yourself, the world, or the future in a clear way when you are depressed.

## **Challenging Negative Thinking A:**

Every time a negative or unhelpful thought pops into your head, use this list of **20 questions** to help change your thinking:

1. What evidence or support do I have for believing this?
2. Am I jumping to conclusions that are not completely supported by the evidence?
3. Are there any small things that challenge my thoughts that might be important?
4. Have I had any experiences that show that this thought is not completely true all the time?
5. What's an alternative explanation for what I'm feeling?
6. Is what I believe the only or best way to explain what is going on or are there other explanations?
7. Would everyone in a similar situation think this way?
8. What would I tell a friend who was in the same situation?
9. In what ways might I be twisting reality?
10. What is the worst thing that could happen?
11. How likely is it that the worst will happen?
12. What is most likely to happen?
13. If the worst thing happened, how bad would it really be?
14. Would it still be bad in a week/month/year?
15. Five years from now if I look back at this situation, will I look at it any differently?
16. What is fact in this situation and what are my own feelings?
17. What have I learned from past experiences that could help me now?
18. Are there any strengths or positives in me or the situation that I'm ignoring?
19. Are things really as bad as I'm making out?
20. What's positive about this situation?

## **Challenging Negative Thinking B**

The following are an additional list of questions to help you challenge any unhelpful thoughts that pop into your head. You can use this list of questions as an alternative to the 20 questions above.

1. What evidence do I have for this thought? Is there an alternative way of looking at the situation?
2. How would someone else think about the situation?
3. Are my judgements based on how I felt rather than what I did?
4. Am I setting myself an unrealistic or unobtainable standard?
5. Am I forgetting relevant facts or over-focusing on irrelevant facts?
6. Am I thinking in all-or-nothing terms?
7. Am I over-estimating how responsible I am for the way things work out? Am I over-estimating how much control I have over how things work out?
8. What if it happens? What would be so bad about that?
9. How will things be in x days/months/years time?
10. Am I over-estimating how likely an event is?
11. Am I underestimating what I can do to deal with the problem/situation?
12. Am I thinking in absolutes i.e. 'should' 'must' 'ought' 'always' 'never' ?

Now complete the table below and start to challenge your negative or unhelpful thoughts.

<b>Negative or unhelpful thought:</b>	<b>How is this thought making me feel:</b>	<b>Ways to challenge this thought:</b>	<b>A more helpful thought would be:</b>	<b>This new thought will make me feel:</b>
<i>My partner always works late – he must be cheating on me</i>	<i>Insecure, untrusting, betrayed, angry, upset</i>	<i>Look for the evidence – he always calls to tell me he is working late, has worked late before and never cheated, we have a good relationship</i>	<i>My partner must be stressed out – we should take time out on the weekend to spend time together</i>	<i>Happy and secure in my relationship, relaxed and less stressed</i>



## Activity 6 – Daily Mood Diary

Keeping a daily record of how you feel will make you more aware of what things might trigger a change in your moods and emotions. By using a mood diary or log you can start to notice these triggers or early warning signs and take steps to lift your mood.

Remember to rate your mood on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Weakest mood</b>									<b>Strongest mood</b>

### *Mood Record Form A*

Day/Date:	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<b>Average mood (Time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							
<b>Worst mood (time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							
<b>Best mood (time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							

**Mood Record Form B**

Use the rating scale below to complete this form:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Utter depression	Tremendously depressed	Depressed	Spirits low	Feeling a little bit low	Feeling pretty good/ok	Feeling very good	Elated	Very elated	Completely elated

Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:																																
When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

## Activity 7 – Daily Thought Record

Like the mood diary above, it is important to start keeping a daily record of any thoughts that pop into your head to continue to be aware and challenge any unhelpful thoughts that contribute to your depression. Using a daily thought record, such as the one below, list the emotions you felt during a particular situation, any thoughts that came to you automatically, what a rational response would be, and how you feel after challenging any unhelpful thoughts.

**Example:**

Emotion(s)  What do you feel? How bad was it?  Rating: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Situation  What were you thinking about?	Automatic Thoughts  What exactly were your thoughts? How far did you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	Rational Response  What are your rational answers to the automatic thoughts? How far do you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	Outcome  1. How far do you believe the thoughts (0-100%)? 2. How do you feel (0-100%)? 3. What can you do now?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
<i>Sad – 8</i> <i>Empty – 8</i> <i>Guilty - 9</i>	<i>Evening out with ex-partner</i>	<i>We're never going home together again because of the stupid way I've handled my life. Things are never going to be as good again. I don't deserve any happiness because of the hurt I've caused him. Believe this 90%</i>	<i>There's nothing I can do to alter what has happened in the past (100%).                      There is no point dwelling on what might have been (70%)                      I don't know that things will never be as good again because I can't see into the future (90%)                      I'm still young and there are lots of people in my situation who end up having a happy life and do lots of things they never would have done if things hadn't changed (75%)                      In fact the future could be better for me than the past; if I'm honest with myself, the marriage just wasn't working out for either of us (70%)</i>	1. 60% 2. <i>Sad – 5</i> <i>Empty – 5</i> <i>Guilty – 7</i> 3. <i>Don't dwell on the past. Put your energy into planning future pleasures.</i>										

Now complete the table below filling in each column with your own examples

<b>Emotion(s)</b> What do you feel? How bad was it (0-10)? Rating: <table border="1" data-bbox="190 555 678 600"> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Situation</b> What were you thinking about?	<b>Automatic Thoughts</b> What exactly were your thoughts? How far did you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	<b>Rational Response</b> What are your rational answers to the automatic thoughts? How far do you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	<b>Outcome</b> 1. How far do you believe the thoughts (0-100%)? 2. How do you feel (0-100%)? 3. What can you do now?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					

## Activity 8 – Practice Assertive Behaviour

Often people with depression do not practice assertive behaviour and are unable to stand up for themselves, making them feel hopeless and helpless. By practicing assertive behaviour, you will work towards feeling better about yourself, communicating more effectively to other people, and building stronger relationships which will help beat your depression.

**Assertive behaviour** involves standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a direct, honest and appropriate way which does not violate another person's rights. It involves respect, not submission. You are respecting your own needs and rights as well as accepting that the other person has needs and rights as well.

**Passive or non-assertive behaviour** involves not standing up for your own rights by not expressing honest feelings, thoughts, and beliefs and by letting others violate your personal rights. The message communicated through passive behaviour is "I don't count; you can take advantage of me; my feelings don't matter only yours do. I'm nothing, you're superior." This means you are not respecting your own rights and needs. People who practice passive behaviour always try to please others and avoid conflict at any cost.

**Aggressive behaviour** involves standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a way which is often dishonest, usually inappropriate, and always violates the rights of the other person. The usual goal of aggression is domination and winning, forcing the other person to lose. Winning is ensured by humiliating or overpowering other people so that they become weaker and less able to express and defend their needs and rights. The message is "This is what I think – you're stupid for believing differently. This is what I want – what you want isn't important. This is what I feel – your feelings don't count."

### Examples:

In confronting a teacher who gives inappropriate and excessive amounts of work:

**Aggressive Response:** "You have some nerve giving me this much work. I don't have to take this. \*\*\*\* off".

**Non-assertive (Passive) Response:** “OK, I’ll do it. I suppose you have a reason. I don’t suppose you would let me off this time? Huh?”

**Assertive Response:** “You’ve just given me work not related to your class. I would have to work extra in inappropriate hours. For these reasons, I need to say NO to the work”.

### **Assertiveness Techniques**

The following are some assertiveness techniques that can be used across a wide range of situations. When you practice these techniques it can be useful to begin practising them in a neutral situation. By this we mean one where your emotions aren’t too strong. Then as you become more skilled you can begin using them in more difficult or emotional situations. Remember, as with any new skill you learn, the first time you try these techniques they may not go the way you planned. It is important you don’t beat yourself up about this but look at what went wrong and how you might do it differently next time. And then have another go! Over time you will find that they get easier.

With each of the techniques it is important to remember the nonverbal communication as well as the verbal. You may think you are being assertive because you are using a particular assertiveness technique; however it is possible to use all of these in an aggressive or a passive way if you are not careful with your nonverbal communication. To make sure you are using assertive nonverbal communication keep your voice calm, the volume normal, the pace even, keep good eye contact, and try and keep your physical tension low.

**Basic assertion** is when we make a statement that expresses clearly our needs, wants, beliefs, opinions, or feelings. This type of assertion can be used everyday to make our needs known. Typically basic assertion uses “I” statements such as

- “I need to be away by 5pm” or “I feel pleased with the way the issue has been resolved”

You can also use basic assertion to give praise or compliments, information or facts, or when raising an issue with someone for the first time. For example:

- "I haven't thought about that before, I'd like time to think about your idea."
- “I thought your presentation was really good”.
- "The cost will be \$2,000"

- “I like it when you help me”.

It is important to remember to be specific when making your statement. Decide what it is you want or feel, and say so specifically or directly. Avoid unnecessary padding and keep your statement simple and brief. This skill will help you to be clear about what exactly it is you want to communicate. Using “I” statements to express your feelings in this way also shows you are taking responsibility for your own feelings.

***Empathic Assertion*** is expressing your needs and feelings, but also showing sensitivity to the other person. This type of assertion can be used when the other person is involved in a situation that may not fit with your needs and you want to indicate that you are aware of and sensitive to their position. For example

- When two people are chatting loudly when a meeting is in progress: “You may not realise it, but your talking is starting to make it hard for me to hear what’s going on in the meeting. Would you please keep it down.”
- When you have some furniture delivered: “I know it’s hard to say when the truck will come, but I would like an estimate of the arrival time.”

***Consequence Assertion*** is the strongest form of assertion and is seen as a last resort behaviour. It is usually used in a situation where someone has not been considering the rights of others and you want to get their behaviour to change without becoming aggressive yourself. In a work situation it may be used when standard procedures or guidelines are not being followed. When you use consequence assertion you inform the other person of the consequences for them of not changing their behaviour. As this type of assertion can easily be seen as aggressive you need to be very careful of the non-verbal signals you use. Keep your voice calm and at an even pitch and volume, keep good eye contact, and try and keep your body and face relaxed.

*Examples of consequence assertion:*

- "If you continue to withhold the information, I am left with no option, but to bring in the production director. I'd prefer not to."
- "I'm not prepared, John, to let any of my staff cooperate with yours on the project, unless you give them access to the same facilities that your people have."
- "If this occurs again, I'm left with no alternative, but to apply the formal disciplinary procedure. I'd prefer not to."

**Discrepancy assertion** works by pointing out a discrepancy between what has previously been agreed and what is actually happening. This is useful for clarifying whether there is a misunderstanding or a contradiction, and when a person's behaviour does not match their words.

Examples of discrepancy assertion:

- "As I understand it, we agreed that Project A was top priority. Now you're asking me to give more time to Project B. I'd like to clarify which is now the priority."
- "Paul, on the one hand you are saying that you want to improve cooperation between our departments, but on the other hand you make statements about us that make it difficult for us to cooperate. I agree that we can improve the situation, so I'd like to talk about that."

**Negative Feelings Assertion** is used when you are experiencing very negative feelings towards another person - anger, resentment, hurt and so on. In a controlled and calm way you draw attention to the undesirable affect another person's behaviour is having on you. This allows you to deal with the feelings without making an uncontrolled outburst, and alerts the other person to the effects of their actions on you.

There are four steps to negative feeling assertion:

Step	Example
1) Describe the other person's behaviour objectively. Be careful to do this without interpreting or judging.	<i>When you leave it this late to produce your report...</i>
2) Describe the impact of the person's behaviour on you. Be specific and clear. Don't overgeneralise.	<i>...it involves my working over the weekend...</i>
3) Describe your feelings	<i>...I feel annoyed about this...</i>
4) State how you would prefer the behaviour to be in the future.	<i>... so in future I'd like to receive it by Friday lunch time</i>



*Examples of negative feeling assertion:*

- “When you come home late, without telling me before, I worry that something is wrong and I feel angry. I would really appreciate it if you could ring and let me know beforehand.”
- "When you continually interrupt me when I'm working on the balance sheets, it means I have to start all over again. I'm feeling irritated by this, so I would prefer you to wait until I have finished."

**Broken Record** involves preparing what you are going to say and repeating it exactly as often as necessary, in a calm relaxed manner. This skill can apply in most situations. It is a good skill to use when you are dealing with clever articulate people as all you have to do is stick to your prepared lines. It helps keep you relaxed because you know what you are going to say and you can maintain a steady comment, avoiding irrelevant logic or argumentative bait. It is a particularly good technique good for saying no.

*Example of the Broken Record technique:*

Kate: Can I borrow \$20 from you?

Dave: I can't lend you any money. I've run out.

Kate: I'll pay you back as soon as I can. I need it desperately. You are my friend aren't you?

Dave: I can't lend you any money.

Kate: I would do the same for you. You won't miss \$20.

Dave: I am your friend but I can't lend you any money. I've run out.

### **Practising the Techniques**

All of these techniques require practice. Start with basic assertion and practice this for a week or two before you begin trying the others. Pick one technique at a time and use it whenever appropriate. It can be helpful to keep a little log book or diary of the ways you have been able to use these assertive techniques. Then you can see how often you are using assertiveness and which techniques are the most useful ones for you. We have an example log sheet below. You can use this or make up one for yourself.

## Practice Sheet for Assertiveness Techniques

Date / Time	Technique Used	Situation and how used	Things to remember for next time
<i>Example: Tuesday 10am</i>	<i>Basic assertion</i>	<i>At work. Complimented Mary on her report.</i>	<i>My voice was probably too soft and I didn't look at her much. Next time speak more loudly and make good eye contact.</i>
<i>Example: Wednesday 2pm</i>	<i>Discrepancy assertion</i>	<i>At work. My boss told me to do one thing then told me another 5 minutes later</i>	<i>I think I got a bit angry and might have sounded annoyed. I need to keep calmer.</i>

## **Activity 9 – Establish Regular Sleeping Patterns**

Regular healthy sleeping patterns are extremely important for people recovering from depression. Listed below are a few key points to assist you in establishing healthy sleeping patterns.

1. Make sure you get up around the same time every morning regardless of how tired you feel and try to go to bed at more or less the same time, even on weekends and days off. This regular rhythm will make you feel better and will give your body something to work from.
2. If you wake up during the night, do not lie in bed trying to sleep for more than 30 minutes at a time. Get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy. Sit quietly on the couch with the lights off (bright light will tell your brain that it is time to wake up), or read something boring like the phone book. Avoid doing anything that is too stimulating or interesting, as this will wake you up even more. When you feel sleepy, return to bed and sleep.
3. Avoid sleeping during the day or taking naps in the early evening. If you can't make it through the day without a nap, make sure it is for less than an hour and before 3pm.
4. Bed is for sleeping. Try not to use your bed for anything other than sleeping and sex, so that your body comes to associate bed with sleep. If you use bed as a place to watch TV, eat, read, work on your laptop, pay bills, and other things, your body will not learn this connection.
5. No clock-watching. Many people who struggle with sleep tend to watch the clock too much. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up (especially if you turn on the light to read the time) and reinforces negative thoughts such as “Oh no, look how late it is, I'll never get to sleep” or “it's so early, I have only slept for 5 hours, this is terrible.” Turn your clock away from the bed, or place it in a drawer to stop this habit.
6. Reduce tea and coffee intake to a maximum of four cups per day and do not have any tea or coffee after 4pm.

- 7. Avoid alcohol. It is also best to avoid alcohol for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Many people believe that alcohol is relaxing and helps them to get to sleep at first, but it actually interrupts the quality of sleep.
  
- 8. Sleep rituals. You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - some people find it useful to do relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea.
  
- 9. Keep your daytime routine the same. Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired.
  
- 10. Bath time. Having a hot bath 1-2 hours before bedtime can be useful, as it will raise your body temperature, causing you to feel sleepy as your body temperature drops again. Research shows that sleepiness is associated with a drop in body temperature.
  
- 11. Exercise. Regular exercise is a good idea to help with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!
  
- 12. Eat right. A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.

**Now think about your own sleep habits. Write down your current routine:**

*Example – I watch TV in my bed late at night and find it hard to get to sleep*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**What sleep habits would you like to change?**

*Example – I would like to be able to get to sleep and wake up at roughly the same times every day*

.....  
.....  
.....

**What sleep habits would you keep the same?**

*Example – I would continue to have a warm bath before getting ready for bed as this makes me sleepy*

.....  
.....  
.....

**Now come up with a new routine incorporating some of the points above to help you sleep better:**

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....
- 6.....

**What is the first step you will take to start this new routine?**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

## **Activity 10 – Get Regular Exercise**

When you're depressed, exercising may be the last thing you feel like doing. But exercise is a powerful tool for dealing with depression. In fact, studies show that regular exercise can be as effective as antidepressant medication at increasing energy levels and decreasing feelings of fatigue. Evidence suggests that physical activity increases mood-enhancing neurotransmitters in the brain, raises endorphins, reduces stress, and relieves muscle tension – all things that can have a positive effect on depression.

To get the most benefit, aim for 30 minutes of exercise per day. But you can start small. Short 10-minute bursts of activity can have a positive effect on your mood. A 10 minute walk can improve your mood for 2 hours. The key to sustaining mood benefits is to exercise regularly. Here are a few easy ways to get moving:

- Take the stairs rather than the elevator
- Park your car in the farthest spot in the lot
- Take your dog for a walk
- Pair up with an exercise partner
- Walk while you're talking on the phone
- Find exercises that are continuous and rhythmic such as walking, swimming, dancing, biking, and yoga

As a next step, try incorporating walks or some other enjoyable, easy form of exercise into your daily routine. The key is to pick an activity you enjoy, so you're more likely to keep up with it.

List the exercises you would like to try in the following table to help you start moving – and don't forget to reward yourself after!

	<b>An exercise I would like to try is...</b>	<b>I will try this exercise for...</b>	<b>My reward for doing this...</b>	<b>Doing this exercise will make me feel...</b>
	<i>E.g. I would like to try yoga</i>	<i>20 minutes for 3 days a week</i>	<i>Renting a DVD on the weekend</i>	<i>Better about myself, refreshed, and less depressed</i>
<b>1</b>				
<b>2</b>				
<b>3</b>				
<b>4</b>				
<b>5</b>				
<b>6</b>				
<b>7</b>				
<b>8</b>				

Now include these exercises into your weekly activity schedule (on page 10)

## **Activity 11 – Practice Relaxation**

Relaxation is another technique that can help overcome depression. Everyday relaxation can take various forms and is generally unique to the needs of the individual:

- Reading an enjoyable and interesting book
- Enjoying a sociable drink or meal with family or friends
- Watching television, listening to music
- Playing with pets
- Going for a drive or for a walk, etc.

### **Tips for Relaxation:**

- Choose a comfortable position, either lying on your back or sitting in a chair
- Maintain an open and passive attitude – don't worry about whether you can relax or not, just turn your attention to your breathing if you get distracted by thoughts and sounds

### **Types of Relaxation Techniques:**

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Toe Tensing
- Deep Breathing
- Guided Imagery

### **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

This technique is often most useful when you tape the instructions beforehand. You can tape these instructions, reading them slowly and leaving a short pause after each one.

- Sit in your chair comfortably, close your eyes.
- Feel your feet. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and sink them into the floor. Start with your toes and progress to your ankles.
- Feel your knees. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink towards the floor.
- Feel you upper legs and thighs. Feel their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the chair.



- Feel your abdomen and chest. Sense your breathing. Consciously will them to relax. Deepen your breathing slightly and feel your abdomen and chest sink into the back of the chair.
- Feel your buttocks. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the chair.
- Feel your hands. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into your legs.
- Feel your upper arms. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the sides of your body.
- Feel your shoulders. Sense their weight. Consciously relax them and feel them sink into the chair.
- Feel your neck. Sense its weight. Consciously relax it and feel it sink into the top of your torso.
- Feel your head and skull. Sense its weight. Consciously relax it and feel it sink into your body.
- Feel your mouth and jaw. Consciously relax them. Pay particular attention to your jaw muscles and unclench them if you need to. Feel your mouth and jaw relax and sink into your body.
- Feel your eyes. Sense if there is tension in your eyes. Sense if you are forcibly closing your eyelids. Consciously relax your eyelids and feel the tension slide off the eyes.
- Feel your face and cheeks. Consciously relax them and feel the tension slide off into the chair.
- Mentally scan your body. If you find any place that is still tense, then consciously relax that place and let it sink into the chair and then let it pass through your legs into the floor.

### **Toe Tensing**

This one may seem like a bit of a contradiction to the previous one, but by alternately tensing and relaxing your toes, you actually draw tension from the rest of the body.

1. Sit on your chair, arms gently resting on your lap, close your eyes.
2. Sense your toes.
3. Now pull all 10 toes back toward your face. Count to 10 slowly.
4. Now relax your toes.
5. Count to 10 slowly.
6. Now repeat the above cycle 10 times.

## **Deep Breathing**

By concentrating on our breathing, deep breathing allows the rest of our body to relax itself. Deep breathing is a great way to relax the body and get everything into synchrony. Relaxation breathing is an important part of yoga and martial arts for this reason.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair.
2. Slowly relax your body. You can use the progressive relaxation technique we described above.
3. Begin to inhale slowly through your nose if possible. Fill the lower part of your chest first, then the middle and top part of your chest and lungs. Be sure to do this slowly, over 8 to 10 seconds.
4. Hold your breath for a second or two.
5. Then quietly and easily relax and let the air out.
6. Wait a few seconds and repeat this cycle.
7. If you find yourself getting dizzy, then you are overdoing it. Slow down.
8. You can also imagine yourself in a peaceful situation such as on a warm, gentle ocean. Imagine that you rise on the gentle swells of the water as you inhale and sink down into the waves as you exhale.
9. You can continue this breathing technique for as long as you like until you fall asleep.

## **Guided Imagery**

In this technique the goal is to visualize yourself in a peaceful setting.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair with your eyes closed.
2. Imagine yourself in a favourite, peaceful place. The place may be on a sunny beach with the ocean breezes caressing you, swinging in a hammock in the mountains or in your own backyard. Any place that you find peaceful and relaxing is OK.
3. Imagine you are there. See and feel your surroundings, hear the peaceful sounds, smell the flowers or the barbeque, feel the warmth of the sun and any other sensations that you find. Relax and enjoy it.
4. You can return to this place any night you need to. As you use this place more and more you will find it easier to fall asleep as this imagery becomes a sleep conditioner.
5. Some patients find it useful to visualize something boring. This may be a particularly boring teacher or lecturer, co-worker or friend, or job.

## Activity 12 – Cultivate Supportive Relationships

Getting the support you need plays a big role in lifting the fog of depression and keeping it away. On your own, it can be difficult to maintain perspective and sustain the effort required to beat depression. But the very nature of depression makes it difficult to reach out for help. However, isolation and loneliness make depression even worse, so maintaining your close relationships and social activities are important.

The thought of reaching out to even close family members and friends can seem overwhelming. You may feel ashamed, too exhausted to talk, or guilty for neglecting the relationship. Remind yourself that this is the depression talking. You loved ones care about you and want to help.

- **Turn to trusted friends and family members.** Share what you're going through with the people you love and trust. Ask for the help and support you need. You may have retreated from your most treasured relationships, but they can get you through this tough time.
- **Try to keep up with social activities even if you don't feel like it.** When you're depressed, it feels more comfortable to retreat into your shell. But being around other people will make you feel less depressed.
- **Join a support group for depression.** Being with others who are dealing with depression can go a long way in reducing your sense of isolation. You can also encourage each other, give and receive advice on how to cope, and share your experiences.

### 10 tips for reaching out and building relationships:

1. Talk to one person about your feelings.
2. Help someone else by volunteering.
3. Have lunch or coffee with a friend.
4. Ask a loved one to check in with you regularly.
5. Accompany someone to the movies, a concert, or a small get-together.
6. Call or email an old friend.
7. Go for a walk with a workout buddy.
8. Schedule a weekly dinner date
9. Meet new people by taking a class or joining a club.
10. Confide in a counsellor, therapist, or clergy member.

Complete the following table:

<b>The people I can talk to are...</b>	<b>I can talk to these people about...</b>	<b>Things we can do together...</b>	<b>The first thing I will do is...</b>	<b>Doing this will make me feel...</b>
<i>E.g. My brother</i>	<i>How I'm coping at work</i>	<i>Take the dog for a walk</i>	<i>Call him this afternoon</i>	<i>Less stressed and overwhelmed</i>

**Activity 13 – Be Aware of Irritability, Agitation, and Fatigue**

Being irritable or agitated is a normal part of depression. It is important that people close to you are aware of this so that they can be more patient and understanding, rather than annoyed and unsupportive.

Make sure you take the time to educate and advise key support people, such as close friends, family and colleagues, of what you are going through. Help them to understand that if you appear irritable or agitated it is not because you are unhappy with them, but rather because you are recovering from depression. Thank them for their support and provide feedback on how they can best continue to support you.

When you are feeling irritable or agitated, stop and settle yourself down. Ask yourself what is driving your emotions. If it is negative thinking, then use strategies outlined previously to tackle negative thoughts. If you are tired, pace out your workload to allow for this. If you feel unmotivated, try and incorporate some enjoyable activities into your schedule.

Practise regular relaxation and meditation activities and organise regular times to talk with a support person about how you are coping and implementing new coping skills. By taking time out to relax regularly and to communicate with supportive people, you greatly reduce the impact of potentially irritating and frustrating experiences.

**I feel the most irritable and agitated when:**

*E.g. I wake up in the morning and have not slept properly*

.....  
.....  
.....

**Things I do when I feel this way are:**

*E.g. I criticise my partner over the breakfast table*

.....  
.....  
.....

**Things I can do to change this:**

*E.g. I can talk to my partner about feeling irritable and agitated in the morning and try to work on changing my sleep habits*

.....

.....

.....

**This will help because:**

*E.g. If my partner understands how I feel we can work together to improve the situation and prevent arguments in the morning*

.....

.....

.....

**Now that you have worked through the exercises, try and complete the following:**

<b>My triggers for depression (signs I may be depressed):</b>	<b>Thoughts I have when these triggers occur:</b>	<b>These triggers make me feel:</b>	<b>I tend to act in this way:</b>	<b><u>What to do to prevent depression:</u></b>
<i>E.g. Increased workload, less sleep, eat more</i>	<i>I can't cope with work, I am hopeless, worthless, I will get fired</i>	<i>Frustrated, sad, helpless, alone</i>	<i>Withdraw from family, friends, co-workers; sleep more</i>	<i>Talk to someone at work, make a schedule to fit in fun activities</i>

## Quick Tips for Dealing with Depression

Adopting healthy lifestyle habits and sticking to a reasonably structured and balanced routine can help lift your mood and maintain any gains that you make along the way. The following are some quick tips to help you adopt a healthy lifestyle and deal with depression:

- **Expose yourself to a little sunlight every day.** Lack of sunlight can make depression worse. Make sure you're getting enough. Take a short walk outdoors, have your coffee outside, enjoy an *al fresco* meal, people-watch on a park bench, or sit out in the garden.
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** A daily relaxation practice can help relieve symptoms of depression, reduce stress, and boost feelings of joy and well-being. Try yoga, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation.
- **Play music that lifts your heart and spirits.** For many of us, music is one of the best ways to shift our feelings.
- **Express yourself.** With depression, a person's creativity and sense of fun may seem blocked. By exercising your imagination (painting, drawing, doodling, sewing, writing, dancing, composing music, etc.) you not only get those creative juices flowing, you also loosen up some positive emotions. Take time to play with a friend or a pet, or do something fun for yourself. Find something to laugh about — a funny movie, perhaps. Laughter helps lighten your mood.
- **Look on the bright side.** Depression affects a person's thoughts, making everything seem dismal, negative, and hopeless. If depression has you noticing only the negative, make an effort to notice the good things in life. Try to notice one thing, then try to think of one more. Consider your strengths, gifts, or blessings. Most of all, don't forget to be patient with yourself. Depression takes time to heal.
- **Eat a healthy, mood-boosting diet.** What you eat has a direct impact on the way you feel. Aim for a balanced diet of protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.
- **Don't neglect breakfast.** A solid breakfast provides energy for the day.
- **Don't skip meals.** Going too long between meals can make you feel irritable and tired, so aim to eat something at least every 3-4 hours.

- **Minimize sugar and refined carbs.** You may crave sugary snacks, baked goods, or comfort foods such as pasta or chips. But these “feel-good” foods quickly lead to a crash in mood and energy. Focus on complex carbohydrates. Foods such as baked potatoes, whole-wheat pasta, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain breads, and bananas can boost serotonin levels without a crash.
- **Practice mindful eating.** Slow down and pay attention to the full experience of eating. Enjoy the taste of your food

### **And finally....**

Expect slip-ups and down days. Setbacks are a normal part of recovery, can happen at any time, and are to be expected. Try not to fall into the trap of believing that you are ‘back to square one’ as this will only make you feel worse. Use your skills of challenging your thinking when this situation occurs. It might be useful to remind yourself that most people have ‘down days’ or days where life’s hassles are harder to deal with – it’s part of being human! Also, you can use setbacks as a way of learning something new about yourself to help avoid similar problems in the future.

Remember, progress may be a bumpy road at times, but it will be a rewarding journey on the whole.

*If you need to speak to someone please see your GP or health professional. You can also call **Lifeline** on 131 114 or contact **Beyond Blue** on 1300 22 4636  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)*



***Copy and use the templates on the following pages to practice the activities to help you overcome and manage your depression***

### Weekly Activity Schedule

Use the schedule below to plan your activities for the coming week. Make sure you balance fun and pleasurable activities with your daily responsibilities and duties.

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
7am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							
10pm							

## Fun Activities Catalogue

Go through the fun activities catalogue on the next few pages and aim to do two or three things from that list each week.

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. Spending an evening with good friends	20. Planning a day's activities
21. Reading magazines or newspapers	22. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)	23. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people	24. Remembering beautiful scenery
25. Saving money	26. Card and board games	27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics	28. Eating
29. Going window shopping	30. Meeting new people	31. Practising karate, judo, yoga	32. Thinking I have a lot going for me
33. Repairing things around the house	34. Working on my car (bicycle)	35. Getting out of debt/paying debts	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. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading	59. Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state	60. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer, basketball, etc.)
61. A day with nothing to do	62. Having class reunions	63. Losing weight	64. Going sailing
65. Going to the beach	66. Thinking I'm an OK person	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. Going rock climbing	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. Playing with my pets	112. Thinking about my achievements
113. Writing diary/journal entries or letters	114. Going canoeing or white-water rafting	115. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet	116. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
117. Going fishing	118. Thinking about pleasant events	119. Having a barbecue	120. Star gazing
121. Flying a plane	122. Reading fiction	123. Acting	124. Making jigsaw puzzles
125. Sketching, painting	126. Eating gooey, fattening foods	127. Reading non-fiction	128. Taking children places
129. Dancing	130. Going on a picnic	131. Photography	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. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides	139. Playing cards	140. Solving riddles mentally
141. Doing something new	142. Playing cricket	143. Splurging	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. Going horseback riding
153. Surfing the internet	154. Lighting candles	155. Listening to the radio	156. Going crabbing
157. Having coffee at a cafe	158. Going skiing	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. Playing computer games
165. Cleaning	166. Going bowling	167. Doing woodworking	168. Fantasising about the future

## Problem Solving Worksheet A

Stressor or worst problem	How does this affect me?	How will things be different if this problem is resolved?	How do I change?
<p><u>Example:</u></p> <p>Being unemployed for six months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feel depressed</li> <li>- No confidence</li> <li>- Feel like a failure</li> <li>- Have let my family down</li> <li>- People think I am lazy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will have money</li> <li>- Will be busy and have a purpose</li> <li>- Friends and family will think better of me</li> <li>- I will get my confidence back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be active in looking for work</li> <li>- Update my resume`</li> <li>- Ask family and friends for help</li> <li>- Join a Job Find agency</li> <li>- Use the Library Computer/Internet (free service) to search for jobs</li> <li>- Start small e.g. stacking shelves, delivering papers</li> <li>- Do volunteer work to build your skills</li> </ul>

## Problem Solving Worksheet B

1. Describe the particular problem in specific terms:

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How have you dealt with a similar situation in the past?

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3. Using your creativity, list as many possible solutions as you can  
(Remember don't censor or cull any solutions at this stage)

<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

3. Consider the pros and cons of each of the solutions above and tick the boxes beside the solutions that appear most likely to help you resolve your problem.

4. In the spaces below summarise your "best" solution(s) and why you chose them.

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5. Carry out your chosen solution(s). What steps would you take to do this?

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## Daily Mood Diary A

Keeping a daily record of how you feel will make you more aware of what things might trigger a change in your moods and emotions. Using a daily mood diary or log can help you start to notice these triggers or early warning signs and take steps to lift your mood.

Remember to rate your mood on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Weakest mood</b>									<b>Strongest mood</b>

Day/Date:	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<b>Average mood (Time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							
<b>Worst mood (time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							
<b>Best mood (time)</b>							
<b>Rating (0-10)</b>							
<b>Trigger/Event</b>							

## Mood Record Form B

Use the rating scale below to complete this form:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Utter depression	Tremendously depressed	Depressed	Spirits low	Feeling a little bit low	Feeling pretty good/ok	Feeling very good	Elated	Very elated	Completely elated

Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:	Day:	Date:																																
When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):		When I felt at my best (time of day):																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):		When I felt my worst (time of day):																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:		Overall mood today:																																	
Rating:		Rating:		Rating:		Rating:																																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



## Thought Record Form

<b>Emotion(s)</b>  What do you feel? How bad was it (0-10)?  <b>Rating:</b> <table border="1" data-bbox="190 560 678 603"> <tr> <td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> </tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<b>Situation</b>  What were you thinking about?	<b>Automatic Thoughts</b>  What exactly were your thoughts? How far did you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	<b>Rational Response</b>  What are your rational answers to the automatic thoughts? How far do you believe each of them (from 0-100%)?	<b>Outcome</b>  4. How far do you believe the thoughts (0-100%)? 5. How do you feel (0-100%)? 6. What can you do now?
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					

## Practice Sheet for Assertiveness Techniques

Date / Time	Technique Used	Situation and how used	Things to remember for next time
<i>Example: Tuesday 10am</i>	<i>Basic assertion</i>	<i>At work. Complimented Mary on her report.</i>	<i>My voice was probably too soft and I didn't look at her much. Next time speak more loudly and make good eye contact.</i>
<i>Example: Wednesday 2pm</i>	<i>Discrepancy assertion</i>	<i>At work. My boss told me to do one thing then told me another 5 minutes later</i>	<i>I think I got a bit angry and might have sounded annoyed. I need to keep calmer.</i>