

### Talk to people.

They want to help and support you. Sometimes you might want to talk about how you're feeling, and sometimes you might not – that's ok and it's up to you to tell people.

### Thought challenging.

This can sometimes take a bit of practice. When you notice that you have a negative thought, be a scientist. Look at the evidence for that thought. Is it true, or is it just the low mood talking? Try and tell yourself opposite thoughts.



### Keep a diary.

This will help you think about what has made your day good or bad. Write down your achievements too, so you can see that you have things to be proud of.

### Get some help.

Ask people you love and trust to write you a letter or note saying something nice about you. When you have a negative thought, you can use this.

### Make sure you're not doing anything that makes you feel worse.

Some behaviours don't help fight low mood (like staying in bed or maybe listening to sad music). Try and stop doing things that keep the cycle going.

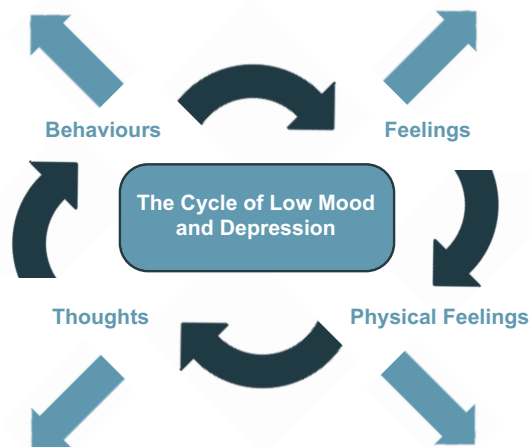


## My Coping Plan

Try and fill in this blank copy of the cycle with your own thoughts and feelings. You can add some coping strategies, or "exits" to help you plan how you will break the cycle.

Things I can do:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

How other people can help me:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



Things I can tell myself:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Anything else that might help:  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

# Managing DEPRESSION

The aim of this guide is to help young people who have experienced a distressing incident manage the thoughts and feelings that they may have.



## Managing Depression

You might notice that you are sad and feel low after something like this happens. This is a normal way to feel. For a lot of people, these feelings will go away after a bit of time.

Sometimes these feelings might develop into depression, which is a little bit more than feeling sad sometimes. When someone is depressed, this can affect lots of different areas in their life.

The guide will talk you through:

- What depression / low mood is
- Signs and symptoms
- Coping strategies
- My coping plan



## Signs and Symptoms

It is normal to feel sad at times, especially when an upsetting event has happened, and there are lots of changes in your life. Sometimes the sadness might take over, which makes it harder to feel happy and enjoy things.

Depression and low mood can affect you in lots of ways:

- **Physical feelings in your body** - tiredness, lack of energy, sleep problems, no appetite
- **Thoughts** - feeling hopeless, hating yourself, negative thoughts, hard to concentrate
- **Feelings** - guilty, upset, not enjoying things, crying, feeling irritable
- **Behaviour** - no motivation, not doing things you enjoy, spending a lot of time alone



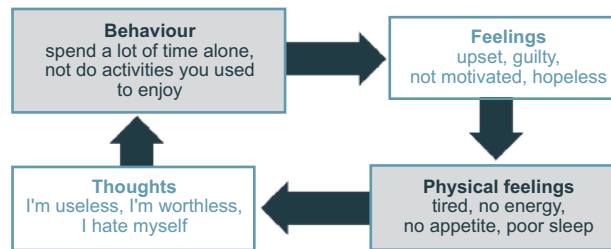
If you have felt this way for more than a few weeks, most days and most of the time, then you might be feeling depressed. Make sure you talk to somebody about how you're feeling as soon as possible.



Sometimes people might ask you why you are sad – with depression, there isn't always an obvious cause to your feelings, so don't feel bad if you don't know what has caused it.

## Understanding Depression and Low Mood

Sometimes depression is described as a vicious cycle. This means that it just keeps going round and round, keeping the bad feelings going - unless you find a way to break the cycle.



## Coping Strategies

It can be hard to think about doing anything when you feel low or depressed, but it is really important that you try. By changing your behaviour and challenging negative thoughts, you will start to feel better - this will break the cycle.

Make a list of what you like doing. If you write down things you usually enjoy, you can use this list as a reminder to yourself when your mood is low. Aim to try and do something on your list when you notice yourself feeling low.



Do something from your list. Being active and doing things is a good way of fighting low mood and depression. You should try and do a mix of activities - try something you're really good at, something that involves other people, or something that you have to concentrate on.

Stick to your routine. If you stop doing things you used to do (like going to school or college), this will probably make you feel worse, as then you have more time on your hands to think negative thoughts. Avoidance will make things feel worse, not better.

It's also really important to have a proper bedtime routine too. Pick a time to go to bed, switch everything off and do something relaxing.

