

Feeling low

Learning about low mood and
depression





My name

Clinical Psychology
Oldham Integrated Learning Disability Team

Maximising potential

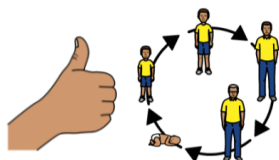
About this booklet

- This booklet will help you learn more about what low mood is.
- It is split into 3 sections:
 1. What is low mood?
 2. Difficult thoughts
 3. Ways to cope
- It can be helpful for anyone who feels low or depressed a lot of the time.
- If you see the symbols  or  then there is an activity for you to try.
- You can do these alone, or ask your worker for help.

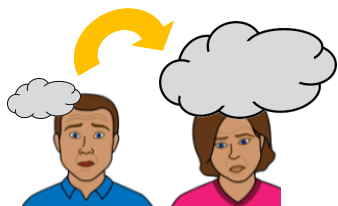


1. What is low mood?

The first section of this booklet explains what low mood is.



Feeling low or sad is a normal feeling. **Everyone feels like this sometimes.**



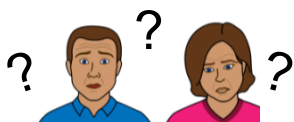
Sometimes this feeling can take over, and it can be the only thing we feel.



When this happens, it can be called 'depression' or 'low mood'.



It can be hard to cope when this happens. It can feel like a big struggle.



We don't always know why we feel depressed or low.



1. What is low mood?

There can be lots of different signs that you are feeling low or depressed.

Tick the feelings below which you feel a lot:

 **I am feeling...**

- Sad
- Guilty
- Numb
- Tired
- Restless
- Angry or irritable
- Lonely

 **I have been...**

- Crying a lot
- Hurting myself
- Avoiding seeing people
- Sleeping a lot
- Not enjoying what I used to do

 **I am finding it hard to...**

- Enjoy things
- Sleep well
- Eat properly
- Concentrate
- Make decisions
- Find the energy to do things

 **I am having thoughts like...**

- "I'm not good enough"
- "I hate myself"
- "I want to hurt myself"
- "Everything is hopeless"
- "What's the point"

If you have ticked most of these boxes, and are feeling them a lot, then you may have depression.

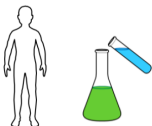
1. What is low mood?

Lots of things can cause low mood. Like:



- Losing someone close to you.
- Stressful events - like a relationship ending or losing your job.
- Problems at home or with friends
- Feeling under pressure - like at work.
- Being lonely.
- Having money troubles.

Some people may be more likely to get depression, due to things like:



- Family history of depression.
- Things that happened when you were a baby or child.
- Your body's chemistry.

Sometimes there is no clear reason for feeling low in mood.

1. What is low mood?



Lots of people have studied depression to learn more about it.

They have learnt that:

- ✓ Our bodies
- ✓ Our thoughts
- ✓ And our behaviours/actions

are **all** important when we are thinking about depression.



When we are well, we think and act a certain way.



When we are depressed, we think and act differently.

For example:

A woman is normally a very kind, caring and good Mum to her children.

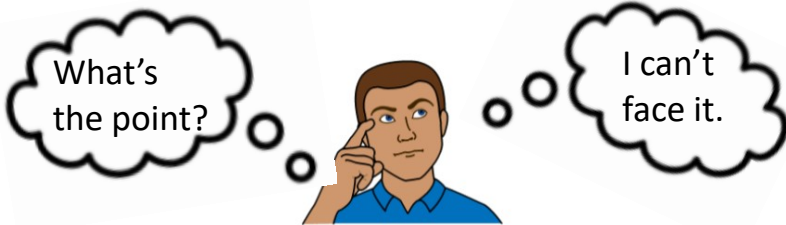
- She starts to **think** “I am a rubbish mum”.
- She **feels** useless and has no confidence.
- Her **behaviour** changes—she stops playing with her kids.

2. Difficult thoughts

Sometimes we have difficult thoughts.

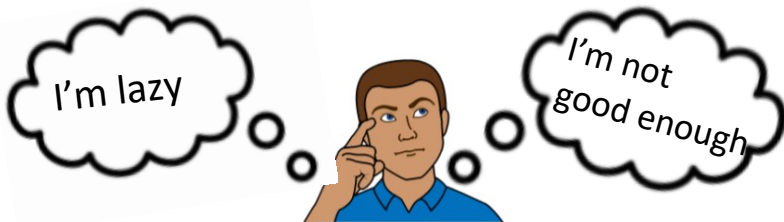
Sometimes these thoughts can stop us doing what we would normally do.

We might think things like:



This might make us do less, and then we feel even worse.

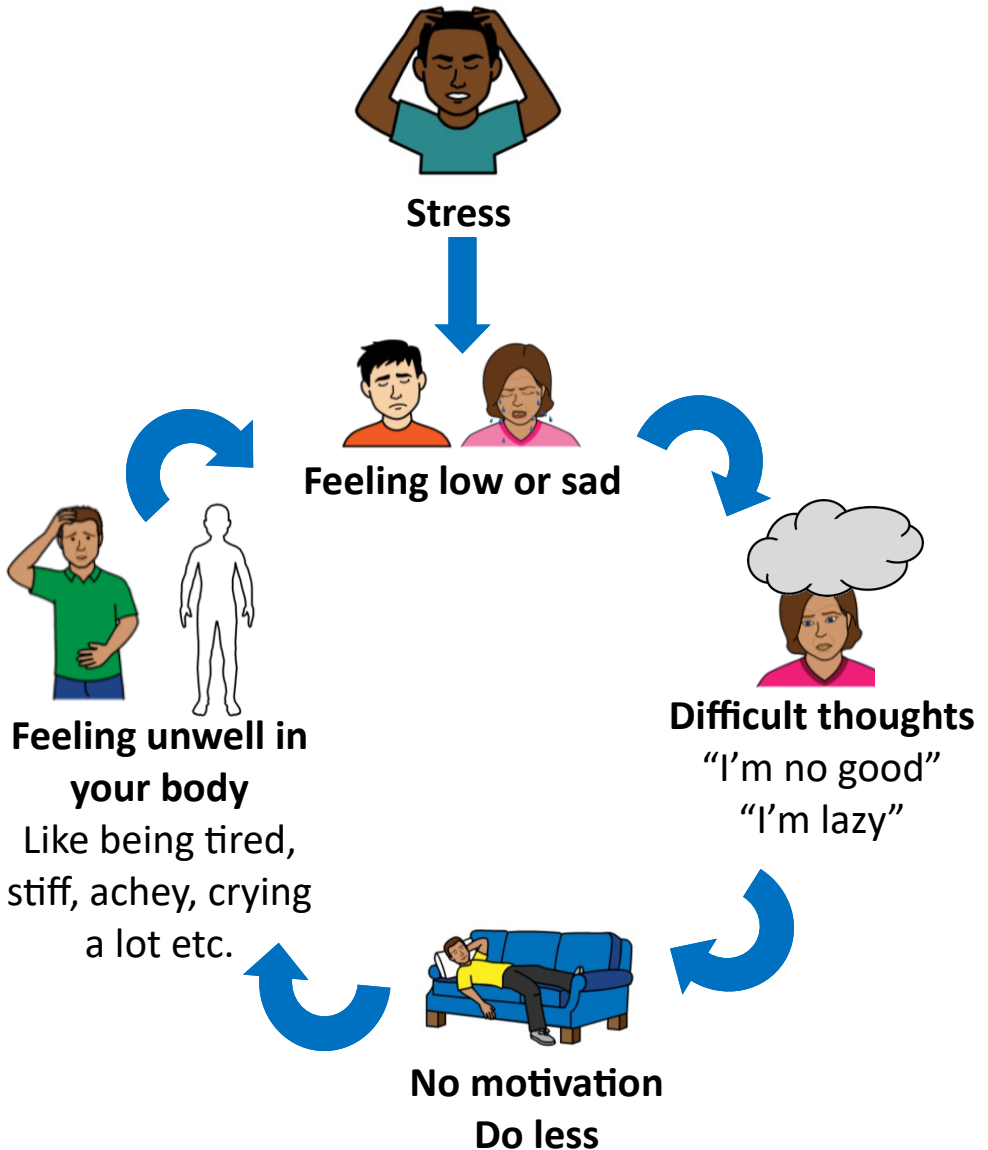
Then we might then think things like:



This can be called a 'cycle'. Sometimes we can get stuck in this cycle.

2. Difficult thoughts

It can be helpful to picture this cycle.




2. Difficult thoughts


Has a similar cycle happened to you?




Try talking this through with someone and writing your examples down below.


 **Stress**




 **Feeling low or sad**



 **Feel unwell in body**

 **Difficult Thoughts**



 **No motivation / Do less**

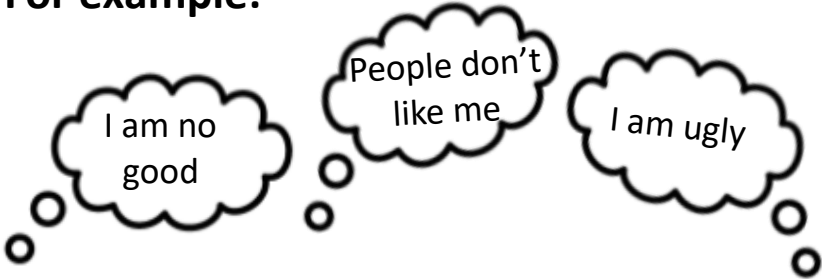


2. Difficult thoughts

There are some other types of difficult thoughts.

- **Gloomy thoughts** - often about yourself.

For example:



- **Jumping to conclusions** - this means thinking things are much worse than they are.

For example:

- You make a small mistake at work. You keep thinking “I am going to lose my job”.
- **Mind reading**—imagining what other people are thinking of us. **For example:**
 - A friend is quiet. You keep thinking “they think I am boring”.

3. Ways to cope

There are a few things you can try to help cope with depression. These include:



Medication

For example, anti-depressants. You can talk to your GP about this.



Talking therapy

This could be talking to family, friends or a support worker about how you're feeling.

You might see a Psychologist or Counsellor. You might have therapy alone or in a group.



Ways to help yourself

This might be looking after yourself better, or changing your habits.

There are some ideas in this booklet.

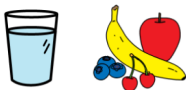
3. Ways to cope - Lifestyle changes

Firstly we are going to think about our lifestyle.

Some food and drinks can make our mood worse. These include:



- Caffeine - like tea and coffee
- Alcohol
- Sugary foods
- Junk food

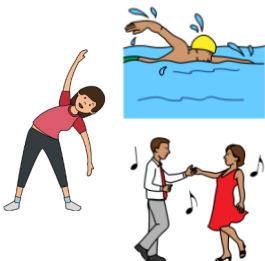


Try swapping these for water and healthier snacks whenever you can.



Lack of food can affect our mood too. Try eating regularly and don't skip meals.

Exercising can improve our mood.



- Exercise gets our blood flowing.
- It increase 'feel good' chemicals in our brain.
- It also boosts our energy levels.

3. Ways to cope - Lifestyle changes



Think of one thing for each of these lifestyle areas that you want to try, change or improve.



You can discuss them with your worker if you want. Then write them below:

I want to try, change or improve ...

Diet

For example: only having 1 takeaway a week or not having sugar in your tea.



Exercise

For example: going for a 30 minute walk every day, or trying a new type of exercise on YouTube or at a gym class.



Sleep

For example: keeping a sleep diary, or making a good evening and bedtime routine.



3. Ways to cope - Practical steps

There are some practical things you can try which might also help your low mood.

1. Make a plan or list of what you want to do each day


At the end of the day think:

- ? What have I achieved?
- ? What have I enjoyed?
- ? What could I do differently tomorrow?




2. Solve difficult problems

Talk to others about your problems. You can use a problem solving worksheet to help you think about the best option.

Solving a problem


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What is the problem?

Think of 3 things you could do...	 What are the good things about this solution?	 What are the bad things about this solution?	 Which is the best solution?
1.			<input type="checkbox"/>
2.			<input type="checkbox"/>
3.			<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Ways to cope - Practical steps

3. Keep a diary

Write down behaviours, as well as your mood. Think about what helps and what makes things worse.

For example:

	Mood	Unhelpful behaviours	Helpful behaviours
Daytime	Feeling very low Thinking "I am worthless"	Drinking alcohol (5 cans of beer) Wore PJ's all day	
Evening	Still feeling low— but a bit better		Got dressed Went for a walk Rang friends for a chat

When we feel depressed it can be hard to think about what is good in our lives.

At the end of each day write down:



- 3 good things about your day
- Or**
- 3 things you are grateful for

3. Ways to cope - Be kind to yourself

Sometimes we can be unkind to ourselves. This can be worse when we are feeling low.

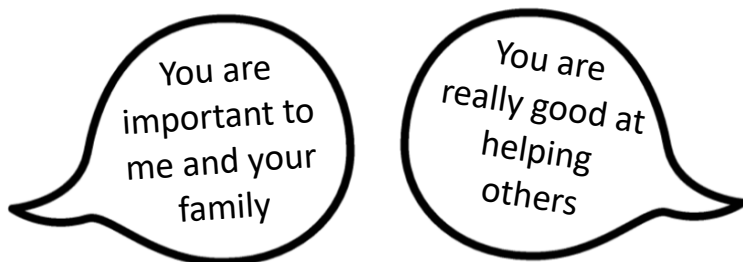
We might say or think unkind things like:



Stop and think...

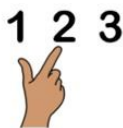
What would I say to a friend if they said this?

You might say something like...



Try changing “you” to “I”, and saying these kinder things to yourself.

3. Ways to cope - Be kind to yourself



1 2 3 Write down three kind things you can say to yourself when you are feeling low.

1.

2.

3.

You can also try doing activities which are kind to yourself, for example:

- Having a bubble bath
- Drawing or painting
- Going for a walk
- Listening to music

3. Ways to cope - Difficult thoughts



The difficult thoughts we have can keep us feeling depressed.



But we can challenge these thoughts and change them over time.



This can take lots of practice, but it can really work.

A good way to do this is to write down your difficult thoughts.

Then next to them you can write down a 'challenged thought'.

Like the example below:

My difficult thought		My good thought	
	I am rubbish at my job.		My boss said they were happy with my work last week.
	I am worthless. Nobody loves me.		My friend rings me to check I am okay, I know she cares about me.

3. Ways to cope - Mindfulness

Sometimes as much as we try, we can't always change our difficult thoughts.



We can try something called **mindfulness.**



Mindfulness means paying attention to what you feel at this exact moment.



It can help us to stop and notice things around us.



It can help us remember that all thoughts and feelings come and go, and not to 'get stuck'.



It can help us feel calm, warm and remind us to be kind to ourselves.



Mindfulness takes practice, but it can really work.

3. Ways to cope - Mindfulness



Stop and think... "is my mind..."



Busy?

Or



Calm?

Try these things:



Going for a mindful WALK.

Use all of our senses to notice what we see, hear, feel, smell, taste.



EAT a meal mindfully.

Slow down. Use all of your senses. Describe what you notice and taste.



Listening to MUSIC mindfully.

Try to listen to all of the different musical instruments there are.



COLOURING IN mindfully.

Pay attention to all the different shapes, patterns and colours.



Mindfully WASHING your hands.

What do you see, feel, hear, smell?

4. Moving forward



By completing these booklets you will have learnt some new skills.



It is important to keep using these skills.



Like with any skill, the more you practice it the better you will get.



Some ideas of how you can practice these skills include:

- Reading this booklet again
- Making posters or cards to remind you
- Keeping a diary of what skills you have used and which ones you like
- Using videos or apps
- Sharing these skills with a carer so they can remind you what to try when you feel anxious

4. Moving forward - Videos and Apps



Watching videos, like on YouTube can be helpful.

Try searching for things like:



- “mindfulness”
- “relaxing music”
- “easy yoga”
- “dancing” or “zumba”



The Learning Disability Team has made some videos about coping skills.



You can watch them by searching **“Pennine Care coping skills”** on YouTube.

4. Moving forward - Videos and Apps

Some people like using apps to help them cope.



You could use these on a smart phone or a tablet.



Remember not all apps are free, and you may have to pay for them. Ask for help if you are not sure.



Headspace – mindfulness, exercises and help sleeping.



What's up? – help with difficult feelings and to practice coping skills like grounding and breathing.



Calm Harm – help with managing difficult thoughts and wanting to harm yourself.



Woebot – help to manage anxiety and depression.

4. Moving forward—Who to talk to



Below are phone numbers you can ring for advice and information.

These are **not** emergency numbers.

Name of service 	Phone number 	What time can I call? 	Who can use this number?
Learning Disability Team	0161 770 3770	Monday-Friday 9am- 5pm	Anyone with a LD or a carer
Samaritans	116 123	Every day Any time	Anyone
The Mix	0808 808 4994	Monday-Friday 1pm-11pm	People under age 25
SANE Mental health helpline	0300 304 7000	Every day 4:30pm-10:30pm	Anyone
Silverline UK	0800 470 8090	Every day Any time	Older people
CALM Helpline	0800 58 58 58	Every day 5pm—midnight	Men only

4. Moving forward—Who to talk to

Remember, talking to others can help if you feel low, worried or stressed.

Talk to someone you trust, like a family member, a support worker or a health professional.



Who can you talk to when you feel like you are struggling?

Write down their phone numbers here.



My GP's phone number is:

NOTES

Acknowledgments

This booklet was produced by the Oldham Integrated Learning Disability, Clinical Psychology Team in 2020.

It was developed based on, and for use alongside existing team resources.

This booklet was made using Boardmaker symbols.

If you have any questions about this booklet you can ring the team on 0161 770 3770.



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