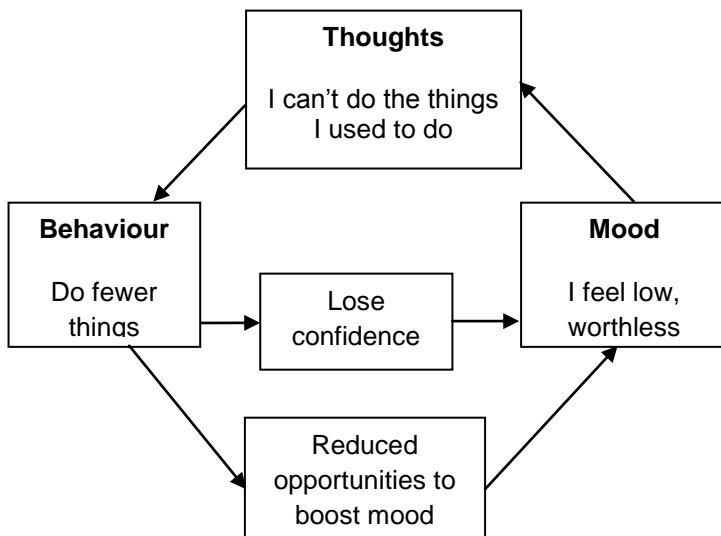


INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Activity scheduling

Feeling depressed is a vicious spiral:



Physical health problems may prevent you from carrying out your normal daily routine of activities. Activities may be more difficult to achieve, which can make the vicious spiral seem harder to break.

What can I do to break the spiral?

Extensive research has shown that choosing small, manageable targets, gradually increasing activity and getting back into a routine can help to break the spiral by lifting your mood, improving your confidence and distracting you from worrying thoughts.

How can I do this?

1. Think about activities you would like to do or used to do, but which feel like too much effort or you lack the confidence to do them. These could be things you enjoy (or used to enjoy) or ones which used to give you a sense of achievement.

When you are choosing activities, consider the pleasure that can be found in simple, everyday activities you **can** achieve, eg speaking to a friend on the phone, sitting in the garden, having a hot bath or shower, eating a favourite food, watching your favourite TV programme.

2. Make a daily plan of what you are going to do. Be realistic in the goals you set and plan things which are not too difficult. For example, reading a book might be hard to focus on, but a magazine or TV programme might be possible. Visiting a quiet garden centre would be easier than a busy shopping centre.
3. Break an activity down into small bits if it feels too big to do all in one go. For example, do some stretches in your chair, walk around the house and build up to going for a walk outside. If you are well enough, drive to a park and have a short walk there, rather

than walking there and *then* going for a walk. Ask a relative or friend to go with you, if that would give you more confidence initially.

4. Don't wait until you feel like doing the planned activity. Depression means that you might be waiting a long time! *Do it in spite of how you feel, rather than because of how you feel.*
5. Write down your plan and tick things off as you achieve them. Stick to the plan as much as possible, but be flexible. If you miss one activity, move onto the next one or reschedule it for another day.
6. It can be useful to give each activity a rating between 0 and 10 for enjoyment (E) and achievement (A). E10 would mean you had really enjoyed an activity and E0 would mean you did not enjoy the activity at all. You could use any number between 0 and 10 to show how much you enjoyed or feel you achieved following each activity. There may be some tasks, for example, cleaning out a drawer or completing paperwork, which may not be very enjoyable (E2), but do give a high sense of achievement (A10).
7. Writing your activities down and rating them in this way is important because it will show you how you are spending your time and give insight into the activities you find enjoyable or give you a sense of achievement. Try to get into a routine of spending as much time as you can doing activities you have rated highly.

Further sources of information

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. Stating a web address does not imply we endorse a particular site. Neither does not stating a web address imply lack of endorsement.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

The PALS team is available to help with any of your comments, compliments or concerns and will ensure a prompt and efficient service. Contact details:

- King's Mill Hospital **01623 672222**
(out of hours answer phone)
Email: Pals.kmh@sfh-tr.nhs.uk
- Newark Hospital **01636 685692**
(out of hours answer phone)
Email: Pals.nwk@sfh-tr.nhs.uk

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact PALS, as above.

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