



MIDUS

Self-Management Activity Guide



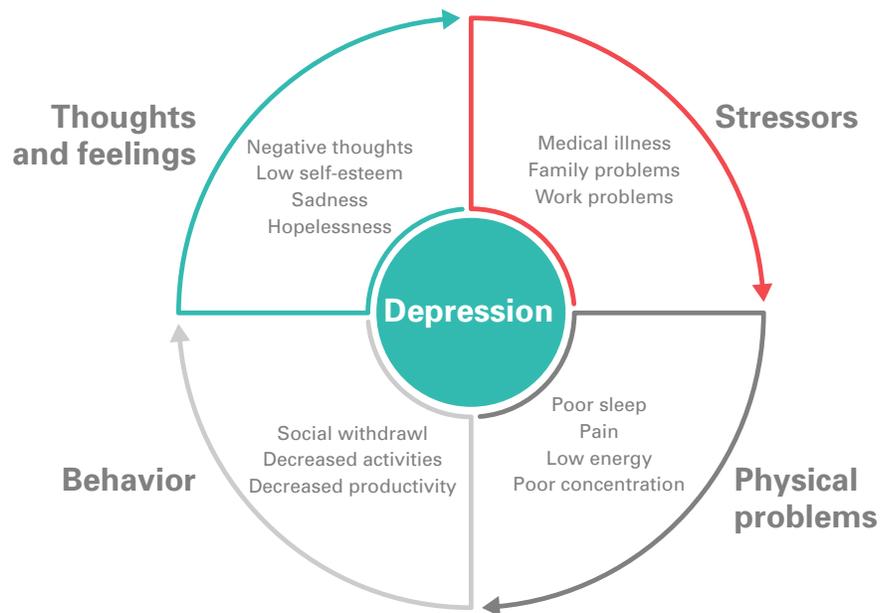
What is Depression?

Depression is a medical condition that affects a person's mood, thoughts, behavior and body. It is more than the temporary sadness people normally feel when unpleasant or stressful things happen in their lives. Everyone sometimes feels sad, blue or edgy for a while. However, when a person has depression, these feelings are more intense and long lasting. Things that used to be easy or enjoyable, like spending time with family or friends, take great effort. There are often physical problems like appetite loss, sleeplessness and extra aches and pains.

Approximately 10% of the general population suffer from depression. For individuals living with chronic illness, as many as 20-40% of the population suffer from depressive symptoms.

Depression is a Medical Problem

The truth is depression is a medical problem. It has to do with an imbalance in brain chemicals called neurotransmitters. Life stresses, hereditary factors and medical problems can lead to a change in levels of these normal chemicals in the brain. This chemical change leads to some of the common symptoms of depression, like depressed mood, sleep and appetite problems, loss of energy, trouble concentrating and pain. Physical symptoms and negative thoughts make people feel like withdrawing and deepen their depressed mood. All of these factors can worsen each other in an ever-deepening cycle of depression.



Medications

If self-management does not completely alleviate your symptoms your provider may suggest prescription medications called antidepressants, psychotherapy, or a combination of both. Together with your provider, you can choose the treatment that best fits your symptoms and lifestyle. It usually takes a few weeks to begin to feel better, and full recovery may take a few months of treatment.

Symptoms of Depression

- Sad or empty feelings
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities like outings, music, reading or sex
- Difficulty thinking, remembering and making decisions
- Poor energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Thoughts of suicide or self-harm
- Sleep problems (sleep more OR less than usual)
- Appetite/weight change (eat more OR less)
- Physical agitation or slowness
- Anxiety
- Somatic (bodily symptoms, such as aches and pains or stomach problems)

Self-Management and Scheduling activities

Scheduling Activities is important because when people are stressed or depressed they often stop doing activities they used to enjoy and that helped them feel good.

Social Activities

Breaking the cycle is not easy. It can be helpful to notice the stresses in your life, and to make a list of the relationships and pleasant pastimes you are interested in resuming.

For many depressed people, getting better involves purposely planning pleasant activities into their daily routine. Perhaps you can visit your grandchildren more often, plan more outings or phone calls with friends, or join a social group or recreation center.

Physical and Health Activities

Physical and general health activities are critical to help recover from depression. These include activities such as developing and maintain a more healthy sleep routine, eating better, exercising more, journaling and developing a good support group.

We have tools to help you incorporate these into your daily routine.

Fun Activities

There may also be pleasant activities you used to enjoy doing by yourself that you can put back into your life. Maybe you enjoy gardening, taking walks or listening to music. Putting pleasure and support back into your life can be a big help in breaking the cycle of depression.



Your Self-Management Portfolio

Depression is manageable but you play a critical role in managing your treatment plan. This is called self-management and as the name implies you are the expert.

Many people fear that their depression is somehow their fault. They think it is due to weakness or a character flaw. This is not true, depression is a real illness and can be managed.

- **Educating yourself** – learn about your diagnosis and your treatment plan.
- **Sleep** – develop healthier sleep habits.
- **Exercise** - physical activity is critical to emotional wellness. Learn how to develop an exercise program that is right for you.
- **Nutrition** – learn more about good nutrition, and develop your own healthy eating plan.
- **Sticking with your plan** – do what it takes to follow your treatment plan.
- **Managing stress** – identify the signs of stress, and the many different techniques you can try to manage it.
- **Positive self talk** – learn how to recognize negative or unproductive thought patterns and turn them around.
- **Journaling** – learn the benefits of writing down your thoughts and feelings, and how to get started keeping a journal.
- **Spirituality** – find out what is involved in developing your own spiritual practice, and why many people find it helpful.
- **Support systems** – think about the role other people play in your recovery, and how to build a strong support system.
- **Setting goals** – understand the importance of setting goals, and learn how to make goal-setting work for you.



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Plan at least one activity each day. It is an important way to deal with stress and depression. Schedule out a weeks' worth of daily activities. Each day should contain at least one activity. These can be pleasant, social, or physical activities. For example, a pleasant activity might be putting together a puzzle or some hobby, a social activity might be catching a movie with a friend, and a physical activity might be going for a walk.

Rate how you felt that day after doing the activities

EXAMPLE	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
SOCIAL ACTIVITY							
WHAT: Breakfast out	WHAT:						
WHERE: Coffee shop	WHERE:						
WITH WHO: Michelle	WITH WHO:						
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY							
WHAT: 15 min. walk	WHAT:						
WHERE: Local park	WHERE:						
WITH WHO: Spot	WITH WHO:						
FUN ACTIVITY							
WHAT: Played guitar	WHAT:						
WHERE: Home	WHERE:						
WITH WHO: Myself	WITH WHO:						
RATE YOUR MOOD 0 = DISSATISFIED TO 10 = SATISFIED							
8							

Your Health Consultant: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

For more information, contact:

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