

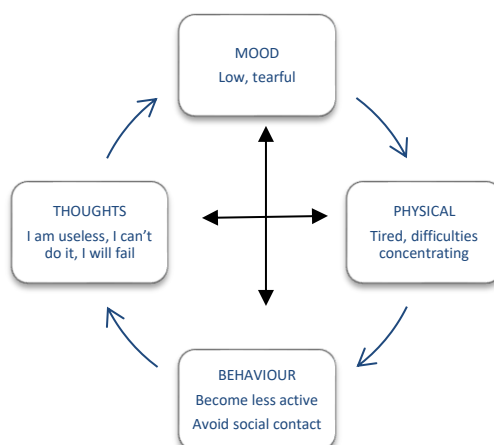
survive & thrive

Moving forward from interpersonal trauma

Depression is a common problem for survivors of abuse and trauma. This is complicated, but some reasons for this may include:

- You have learned not to value yourself because others have not valued you.
- Relationships with other people should be an important protective factor for depression. But you may feel avoidant or fearful in relationships and not trust people enough to 'get the benefit'.
- You may have developed an 'inner critic' who often keeps saying things that you may have heard about yourself from other people.
- Your experience of the world being unpredictable and dangerous leads to beliefs that it will always be that way. It is difficult to keep your mood up when you are constantly alert for danger.
- You may blame yourself for the abuse and trauma, feeling that there is something wrong with you.

Depression, similarly to other feelings, has a 'vicious circle' which keeps it going.



Managing Depression

Managing your behaviour

When you feel low and lacking in energy, activity levels generally fall as you avoid things. But this will feed your unhelpful thoughts about yourself and your abilities. It also makes the effect on your body worse by making your mood lower and leading to less energy.

Increasing your activity levels is a key part of managing low mood. This might require extra support and planning to change but this is about finding a starting point.

What have I stopped doing?

The next thing to think about is what you would like to do (things that you enjoy or used to enjoy) e.g. playing a sport, shopping, walking, hobbies

I would enjoy:

Also think about the things that you need to do, that would make life easier and prevent other bad things happening (e.g. paying bills, doing chores).

Life would be easier if I:

Using 3Ps, use this to plan your activities:

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9-11	e.g. get up						
11-1	e.g. walk to the park						
1-3							
3-5							
5-7							
7-9							

Managing your Thoughts

Thoughts about yourself

Abuse and trauma can lead to you having unhelpful beliefs about yourself. This may require additional support and treatment to overcome, but you can start by

- ✓ Remember you are not to blame for the abuse that happened to you. The decision to hurt you lies with your abuser. There is nothing you could do or say which would justify someone treating you abusively.
- ✓ Learn compassion. We will talk more about this next week.
- ✓ Be aware of your 'inner self talk'. Do you have a stream of thoughts that run through your head? 'I am not good enough, I am not attractive enough', 'I will fail', 'I am a bad person'

Write down some of your thoughts about yourself here:

Are these things that have been said to you by others? Are they thoughts/beliefs or facts? What is the effect of believing these things?

Write down some helpful self-talk here (you don't have to believe it yet):

It can be helpful to put some of the helpful messages to yourself in places where you will regularly see them. Perhaps on your phone, on a note on your fridge or by your bed? Practice saying them.

- How do supportive friends see you?

Managing your Thoughts

Thoughts about the world and other people

As we have seen, abuse and trauma tend to wire our brains for 'red alert' and for looking for things to go wrong, for people to let us down, for the worse to happen. Although these thoughts are understandable due your experiences, they are not facts and they put you at risk of depression and low mood.

Evidence shows that after abuse and trauma people believe

- Things will always go wrong
- That there is little we can do to change things, that we are out of control
- That everyone will let you down/be untrustworthy

People who feel less depressed tend to have a different pattern of thinking about the world and other people

- Sometimes, things will go wrong, but not always
- If something goes wrong, I am able to have some control over things
- Some people will let you down, but not necessarily

Depressed Thoughts

Black and white
'If she does not call on Tuesday she doesn't really like me'

Catastrophic
'If this goes wrong, I will never cope with it', 'if I fail on this, I will fail on everything'

Try some examples here:

Helpful Thoughts

Shades of grey
'she might be busy on Tuesday, will see if she has called by the end of the week'

Realistic
'It will be horrible if this goes wrong, but I will find a way through'
'everyone fails at some things'

Please ask for additional advice and support if you need it.

Here is some space to record your practice of your safe coping skills:

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri Sat Sun

Practiced

Comments