



Changing your feelings: Low Mood

Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are all interlinked and can create a cycle of negativity. One way to break this cycle is to become aware of it and try to change our thoughts which will in turn change how we feel about things.

Example

Try to think about a recent event which had upset and depressed you and sort out three parts of it **A-B-C**. For example, imagine someone at work criticises you for a piece of work you have done.

A: The event

The criticism. You may feel hurt and embarrassed.

B: Your thoughts

"He thinks I'm no good at my job, and he's right I'm hopeless, I shouldn't be here"

C: Your feelings

Hurt, embarrassed. (What are you thinking about? You may need to concentrate to discover this.)

Balancing your thoughts

Thinking patterns can be changed through a technique called balancing. When you have a negative, critical thought, balance it out by making a more positive statement to yourself. For example: balance the thought: "I'm no good at my job", with: "he said how much he appreciated the piece of work I did yesterday".

The Double Column techniques

Write down your negative automatic thoughts in one column and opposite each one, write down a more balanced positive thought.

Negative Automatic Thought

He hasn't called. He doesn't love me.

Balancing Thought

He is very busy and thinks I'm doing better than I was last week and so he doesn't need to worry about me



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Try and remember details

- When we are depressed we don't remember detail of events but tend to think in general statements, such as "I've never been any good at anything".
- Try and train yourself to remember details so that good times and experiences are easy to recall. Think of particular times – a **daily diary** can help you to do this.
- Make lists of actual achievements and good aspects of yourself such as "I'm always on time", "I helped my friend on Tuesday".
- Try to keep a diary of events, feelings and thought. It may look a bit like the following table. Use the approaches described to gain more balanced thoughts. Look out for errors in thinking.

Example

Event	Feeling / Emotion	Thoughts in Your Mind	More balanced thoughts
A neighbour ignored me	Low & Depressed	She doesn't like me. I'm unlikeable.	She's probably got something on her mind – I am jumping to a conclusion that she doesn't like me.

Complete an example for yourself on the next page

Summary

Using a daily plan, mastery and achievement notes and keeping a diary of automatic thoughts and more balanced thoughts can help you to fight depression and the negative thoughts that go with it.

Your own examples

Event	Feelings	Thoughts	More balanced thoughts
Your Example			
Your Example			