

LOW

MOOD



Life can be really tough at times and it can make you feel down and unable to cope. Sometimes you may know what's causing you to feel this way, and other times there may be no clear reason. This can be really worrying, but it's normal. We all feel low at points in our lives.

Although it can be really hard to feel hopeful, there are things you can do to help you feel better. There are many reasons why you might feel down or unable to cope. It might be because of something that you're finding difficult, like exams, or you might be struggling with a mental health problem like depression.

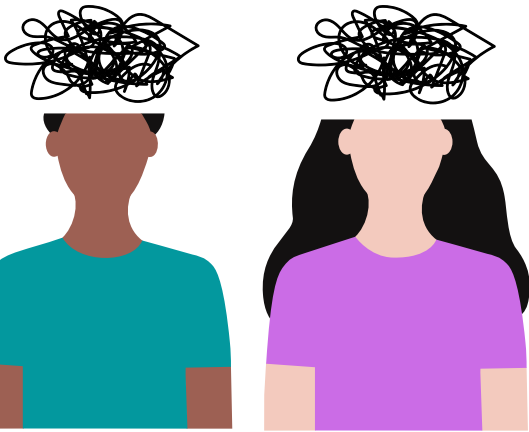
When we feel down, everyday things like going to school, hanging out with friends or even getting dressed can feel harder. We may also find that we don't get as much pleasure from things we used to enjoy.

Understanding what is making you feel this way can really help. If you're not sure, try thinking about how different areas of your life are making you feel, like: friendships, family, home, school, work, or relationships. This can help you to see what makes you feel good in your life but also what might be bringing you down.



IF YOU'RE HAVING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT YOURSELF

Sometimes things happen in life that make us feel guilty, ashamed, helpless, angry, or fearful. When we feel bad, we might start to tell ourselves that everything is our fault, or that we don't deserve to feel good, but that simply is not true.



We all have negative thoughts from time to time, but if these thoughts become overwhelming, it is probably a sign that you need some support.

Things you might be struggling with could include:

- low self-esteem – struggling with confidence, feeling unloved or unlovable, feeling like we get things 'wrong' or that we're a failure
- issues with body image – worries about how we look, or obsessing over food or exercise
- self-harm
- suicidal thoughts and feelings



Take time out

Doing activities that you enjoy can help you switch off and prioritise your happiness. Whether it's going for a walk, drawing, or playing your favourite sport, these things can help you feel good and calm your thoughts.

Talk to someone you trust

Who would you feel most comfortable talking to? Many of us prefer talking to family or friends, but you may prefer to talk to professionals, support groups or helplines.

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING TO LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

We all have things we need to do to look after ourselves, like getting enough sleep, eating well and taking care of our personal hygiene. Staying on top of these things can make us feel good and help us feel more able to take on life's challenges.



But, when you are feeling down, you might find looking after yourself more difficult. For example, you might:

- have problems sleeping – your thoughts might keep you awake at night, or you might sleep too much and struggle to get out of bed
- struggle to do things you usually enjoy – you might lose motivation, find it difficult to concentrate, or not get as much enjoyment as you used to
- find it hard to do basic things like brushing your teeth or taking a shower

Health
and
hygiene



" If you are feeling like this, try setting small goals each day to help you build a routine. Your goals don't have to be big tasks; they can be things like getting out of bed or putting on some different clothes. This may feel strange at first, but it can really help. "

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

Mental health problems like depression can sometimes feel like they are taking over your life. You might feel like they are stopping you from doing things you want to do, or you might feel scared that you will always feel this way. But remember, these feelings are temporary. You can get through this.

Some mental health problem that you may be struggling with could include:

Anxiety - If you feel worried, nervous or panicky all the time, you might be struggling with anxiety.

Depression - if you're feeling down all the time, unable to enjoy life, and you are having a lot of negative thoughts, you might be experiencing depression.

Psychosis - if you're experiencing 'out of the ordinary' things, like hearing voices, or having hallucinations, these could be episodes of psychosis. In some cases, this might also be a sign of schizophrenia.

Bipolar disorder - if you're having very extreme mood swings, it could be a sign of bipolar disorder.

PTSD - if you have experienced something extremely frightening, upsetting or a life-threatening situation you might notice changes to your mood and behaviour.



GETTING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

Sometimes opening up and admitting you're not ok and that you need some help can feel like the most difficult thing. But opening up to someone you trust can make a huge difference.

Why do you need help?

Sometimes things can seem overwhelming, and it can feel like you can't cope. You may simply just be having a bad day, or you may have an ongoing mental health problem that needs support. The important thing is not to try to cope on your own.

When you're struggling, it's not good to spend too much time alone, especially if you are feeling low and vulnerable. It's at times like these that you need to be able to talk to someone. Don't be afraid to ask for help.



What's stopping you asking for help?

You might not like asking for help. You may feel that you don't want to burden other people. You may worry about what they might think about you, or that they could tell other people. You may even be afraid that they'll laugh at you. But the truth is, **people who care about you will want to help you.** You just have to ask.

It may be difficult to talk about your feelings. But, as the saying goes, "a problem shared is a problem halved," and you'll probably feel better simply for having talked to someone.

