

2. Dealing with Low Moods

All of us will feel low in mood and depressed at some time in our lives. There is no one cause, and we will all experience these things differently.

When we experience low mood it may not impact on our day to day lives, but sometimes it can start to disrupt things.

We may experience symptoms like:

- Tiredness and lack of energy
- Losing interest and enjoyment in things
- Becoming tearful
- Problems with sleep
- Finding it difficult to make decisions and poor concentration
- Having negative feelings about ourselves and becoming self-critical

If these symptoms persist, we may start to:

- Withdraw from others
- Stop engaging in the things we used to enjoy
- Procrastinate, putting things off and finding excuses
- Stop making decisions
- Stop doing daily tasks, such as washing, cooking and so on

It is entirely normal to feel these things from time to time, particularly during periods of stress and upset. However, if any of these symptoms persist they could be a sign of depression.

It is important to be **checked out by the GP** if you are worried about yourself or if you are struggling to manage.

In order to improve your mood and to best help yourself during periods of low mood, you can try the following:

- Speak to family or friends, if you feel able.
- Socialise at a level you feel comfortable – talk on the phone, go for coffee with one or two friends.
- Go outside.
- Do some level of exercise – even just a walk can change our mood and will change our surroundings.
- Do something you love – it may be difficult to enjoy it now, but that love and enjoyment will come back in time.
- Be kind to and patient with yourself. If you were recovering from a physical health problem, it is unlikely you would give yourself a hard time. Try and think about your mental health in the same way.

Trying to help yourself and getting help from others will allow you to manage and improve any difficulties before they get worse.

See the Counselling and Wellbeing website for helpful online resources on Dealing with Low Mood: students.leeds.ac.uk/counsellingandwellbeing