

Patient Self-Management for Depression



You can do several things to help yourself feel better, even when you're not at your best. Start by selecting one of the activities from this list. Remember to take it slowly and add new things as you begin to feel better.

(Make copies of this worksheet, and review it weekly with your mental health provider or a trusted family member or friend to track your progress.)

1. Tell someone if you are thinking about death or hurting yourself.

If I am thinking about death or hurting myself, I will call _____

(Friend or family member), or dial "988" to be connected to the National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

2. Make time for physical activities and exercise.

For ____ days next week, I'll spend at least ____ minutes doing _____

(Remember to make your goal reasonable.)

3. Find time for pleasurable activities.

For ____ days next week, I'll spend at least ____ minutes doing _____

4. Spend time with people who can support you.

During the next week, I'll make contact at least ____ times with _____ (name)

to do/talk about _____

5. Practice relaxation.

For ____ days next week, I'll practice physical relaxation at least ____ times for at least ____ minutes each time.

6. Take small steps to take care of larger problems.

The problem is: _____

My goal is: _____

I can achieve this goal by taking the following steps:

Step 1: _____

Step 2: _____

Step 3: _____

7. Avoid making major life decisions when you are feeling depressed.

If I need to make a major life decision, I will reach out to _____

8. Eat nutritious, balanced meals.

During the next week, I will improve my diet by: _____

(Example: "Strive for five." Eat at least five fruits and vegetables a day.)

9. Avoid or minimize use of alcohol.

I will avoid drinking alcohol or limit my alcohol intake to no more than _____ drinks on no more than _____ day(s) per week.

10. Follow your health care provider's instructions about your treatment and communicate openly.

I will take my medication each day at _____ (time), even when I begin to feel better.

I will keep my appointment with my health care provider and be honest about how I am feeling.

11. Practice positive thinking.

When I have negative thoughts, I will tell myself _____

(Example: "Depression is highly treatable. I am taking steps to help myself feel better.")

Self-Care Activities for Depression: Why Are They Important?

Self-care is important for your overall positive outlook and well-being. People who are depressed tend to feel less pleasure in doing things and may not maintain communication when it is most important. It can be easy to fall into a trap or become easily bored when you're depressed. Below are some activities that you can incorporate that may help you help you feel better, maintain communication/ connections, or may help to remind you that there are times in life where you could have fun and take things less seriously. These activities may open up creative parts of your mind to allow you to see things from a different perspective. Here are some activities to try to strengthen your well-being:

1. Be Creative (find your inner child):

- Draw something, anything - without fear of being judged by others about what you create
- Write a poem or a story
- Play an instrument or sing a favorite/silly song
- Color in a coloring book using crayons or markers
- Create a collage or a board full of creative inspirations
- Create a paper-mache, a clay or dough mold

2. Be Entertained – don't be afraid to laugh and let loose:

- Listen to your favorite music and dance
- Watch funny videos on television or online
- Watch/re-watch a comedy movie
- Remain connected with your family and friends: Talk about something funny that happened recently
- Laugh at silly things

3. Learn New Things: Challenge Your Ongoing Growth and Development:

- Learn a new recipe
- Enroll in a free online educational course
- Watch a DIY video and attempt to learn a new skill
- Pick up a new hobby and set time aside to work on it – Remain active

4. Be Persistent:

- Keep doing things that were once enjoyable to you – even if you don't feel like doing them right now – don't give up. Notice that your mood is likely better after you participate in this activity
- Stay committed to keeping plans rather than cancelling them. Being around healthy friends or family member may improve your mood