



Helping with low mood



Everyone experiences low mood at different points in their life. Mostly, it is okay to feel low in mood especially when a negative life event has occurred. However sometimes it may be difficult to overcome and manage persistent low mood. We may even feel low in our mood even when no event has happened and we are unsure of a reason why.

Lifestyle factors

We need to consider our lifestyle factors and how they can contribute to low mood. Lifestyle factors include sleep, diet and exercise along with alcohol consumption and smoking status. Each of these factors we can change, meaning we can take control over our lifestyle to benefit our Mental health. Being mindful about finding a balance that works for you is important to support both your physical and mental health which come hand in hand.

Sleep- If we have a poor sleep routine or our sleep is interrupted/we are not well rested this can impact our Mental Health in a negative way, causing us to feel “tired, exhausted, lack concentration, irritable/weepy, headaches etc.

Exercise- Lack of exercise means lack of movement of the body, this may impact on motivation and lower energy levels.

Diet- Poor diet or reduced/increased appetite may lead us to eat foods that do not have much nutritional value and can impact on hydration too, which can again cause us to experience negative side effects/symptoms.

Alcohol- is often described as a depressant. It affects the body’s central nervous system which makes us less coordinated and less aware of danger. it can also cause dehydration and low blood sugar that can leave us struggling to move or think. If drinking becomes a habit, we may become dopamine-deficient and this could contribute to us experiencing low mood.

Smoking- Nicotine interferes with chemicals in the brain and can be highly addictive and create cravings. These cravings can make you feel irritable and anxious. Smoking can sometimes be used as a “stress relief” but in fact can impact negatively on memory and learning.

Routine

Routine is another important factor when we are feeling low.

Routines help us to create positive daily habits that promote self-care. We can organise our time around things that we deem important to maintain happiness and feelings of fulfilment. They can also help us to stay focused and motivated in our goals in life.

Time	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
8:00-10:00					
10:00-12:00					
12:00-13:00					
13:00-15:00					
15:00-17:00					
17:00-19:00					

Acknowledge, Accept, Manage

Acknowledge- what you are thinking and feeling e.g. 'I feel sad/angry/anxious'

Accept- Don't judge yourself for the feelings you have just acknowledged - You don't need to label them as 'Bad' feelings or feeling you shouldn't have; just accept this is how you are currently feeling.

Manage- what do you need to do to help you manage through how you are currently feeling? eg, is there someone you can talk to, relaxation techniques, make yourself a cup of tea etc.

It is important to consider all steps - if you just acknowledge, you may dwell on your feelings; if you just manage, you may bury your feelings - whereas doing all 3, help you to both be kinder to yourself through acceptance, and proactive in helping to improve your mood.

5 ways to wellbeing

The 5 ways to wellbeing are simple steps we can take to help improve our mental wellbeing. They can be done at home, in work or in everyday general life. They comprise of; connecting, being active, learning, giving and paying attention.

Connect:

- If possible, take time each day to be with your family, for example, try arranging a fixed time to eat dinner together
- Arrange a day out with friends you have not seen for a while
- Try switching off the TV to talk or play a game with your children, friends or family

Be active:

- Do not feel you have to spend hours in a gym. It's best to find activities you enjoy and make them a part of your life
- Help you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- Causes chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood

Learn a new skill:

- Do not feel you have to learn new qualifications or sit exams if this does not interest you.
- Try new hobbies that challenge you, such as writing a blog, taking up a new sport or learning to paint
- Try learning to cook something new

Give:

- Offering to help someone you know with DIY or a work project
- Volunteering in your community, such as helping at a school, hospital or care home
- Saying thank you to someone for something they have done for you

Pay Attention:

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is about being in the present moment and focusing on what is currently happening. This allows us to forget about issues from the past and future that may be affecting our wellbeing. It aims to help you become more self-aware, feel calmer and respond to thoughts and feelings in a healthier way. A lot of mindfulness techniques involve breath work which can take a while to get used to.

Types of mindfulness

There are a lot of different mindfulness techniques such as:

- Breathing techniques
- Colouring
- Yoga
- Body scans (focusing on the bottom of the body and working up)
- Music and sounds
- Object focusing
- Walking and sightseeing.

How can mindfulness help

- Mindfulness allows us to notice what is going on not just externally but also internally. It can be easy getting caught up in the rush of day-to-day life and we often forget to check in with ourselves. This includes our thoughts, the way we are feeling and our general mental state which will influence our behaviour. Mindfulness allows us to take a step back and reconnect and reset ourselves helping us to think more clearly and organise our thoughts and ourselves.
- By taking a step back, mindfulness can teach us to become more aware of our thoughts and feelings and let them pass without judgement as they happen in the moment as well as help us notice any patterns in our thoughts and behaviours.
- It can bring awareness of any signs of stress or anxiety we may be beginning to feel.
- Helps us become aware of what is happening in the present moment and help us enjoy the world around us by focusing on feelings and moments that we may have taken for granted.

Helpful links :

Samaritan

116 124

24 hours 365 days a year

Open Door Charity (CBT based intervention courses)

0151 639 4545

3 Abbey Cl, Birkenhead CH41 5FQ

opendoorcharity.com

Wirral Mind (Counselling and wellbeing activities)

0151 512 2200

90 - 92 Chester St, Birkenhead CH41 5DL

wirralmind.org.uk

Martin Gallier (Suicide support charity)

0151 644 0294

57 New Chester Rd, New Ferry, CH62 1AB

www.themartingallierproject.org

CWP Crisis line:

0800 145 6485

24 hours 365 days a year

Hub of Hope (app)

<https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

Companeros (Crisis cafe)

0151 488 8135

2a Price Street, Birkenhead, Wirral CH41 6JN