

Overcoming Depression

Relevant to: Depression:  Anxiety:  Irritability/Anger:  General emotional control: 

Depression is often referred to as the common cold of mental health - so many people suffer it from time to time and so little seems able to be done about it. In fact that is incorrect in that, nowadays, a lot is known about it and people can do a lot to help themselves fully overcome it.

What is depression?

Far from simply 'being miserable' depression has a number of symptoms which can include: apathy and inactivity, poor sleep, physical pains, avoidance of social activity, an inability to get pleasure from things, low self-esteem, and generally seeing things 'negatively'.

Is it inherited?

Some people who experience depression feel they have inherited a tendency to be depressed from their parents. This may or may not be the case but, even if it is, it simply means that you need to especially good at the kinds of things listed here, to counteract that tendency.

Sessions of relevance

Many of the MoodMaster sessions have a bearing on depression, so this information sheet simply highlights those sessions and provides a brief taster. It may be that, for some of them, you can already start acting on them.

1. Overcoming depression. Depression is referred to as 'the common cold of mental health' - lots of people have it. Yet, now, there are great things to overcome it.

2. What's the best thing to do when ... ? In a range of situations, from severe to trivial, this is a terrific question to ask - and to act on.

3. Sleep. Getting a good night's sleep is one of the most helpful things you can do, and yet a surprising number of people find it very difficult to do.

4. Perfecting your life commentary. Some people give themselves a depressing or worrying 'commentary' on their life, others train themselves to give an upbeat energising one.

5. Plan yourself a great life. John Lennon said that life is what happens while you're busy making

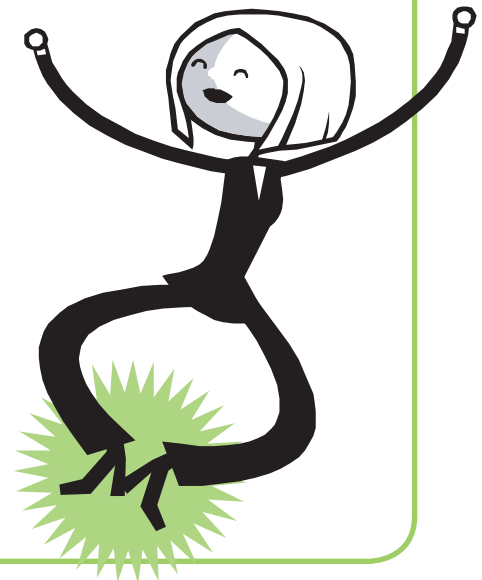
better plans. This module looks at how to have a good life right now.

6. Diet: Eating well. Even people who eat too much can be having insufficient of the necessary nutrients to keep them emotionally and physically healthy.

7. Problem Solving. Often enough, people have real problems to solve, and it is important to know how to work out good solutions.

8. Music: a powerful natural drug. How to capitalise on the fact that music has massive effects on us, either good or bad depending on what the music is.

(Continued overleaf)



Sessions of relevance (continued)

9. Exercise. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) says that exercise is one of the important factors for us, but what sort – and how can we keep it up?

10. Looking forward to things. Looking forward to things is a 'psychological tonic', and especially if you learn to look forward to small, everyday things.

11. All or nothing thinking and how to correct it. Epictetus famously said that "it is not events themselves that distress us; it is the view we take of those events". All or nothing thinking causes us to view things in a way that causes us more distress than needs be, and can be put right very easily.

12. Developing our friendships. The human species is fundamentally a social one, so relationships, or the lack of them, can be overwhelmingly important. There are rules.

Causes of depression

There are a number of causes, and here are the main ones.

1. Leading a depressing life.
2. Having problems we can't fix.
3. Not looking after yourself physically (eating, sleeping, exercising etc).
4. Being genetically predisposed to depression.
5. Going through one or more traumatic experience.
6. Bereavement, or the break up of a relationship.
7. Social isolation, lack of friends, arguments.
8. Being inclined to see things in a depressing way.

Some people tick all of those, that is not uncommon. But just one can be sufficient to cause a high degree of depression. MoodMaster addresses all these causes.

In session

Even though there is limited information yet, which of the topics listed in the green panels do you think will prove most relevant to you? Write the numbers here if you want.

Project

If any of the above headings makes you realise anything you could do to benefit yourself, write it here and act on it over the coming week.

What about antidepressants?

It has, unfortunately perhaps, become fashionable in some quarters to criticise antidepressants, whereas in fact many people obtain considerable help from them. At MoodMaster we emphasise psychological methods, but that is not meant to criticise pharmacological ones. GPs and Psychiatrists know most about antidepressants.

Self help books

In some ways MoodMaster sessions, being live, are 'a step above' self help books. Nevertheless, there are numerous excellent books available, one of the best of which in our opinion is Paul Gilbert's Overcoming Depression.