

The Antidepressant Skills Workbook: Helping you deal with depression



The Antidepressant Skills Workbook has been designed by mental health experts to provide depressed individuals with information and tools they can use in overcoming depression. The ASW is meant to work alongside the treatments provided by your family physician and other mental health care providers. It helps you take an active role in your depression treatment, working with your health providers.

What is Depression?

You might be depressed:

If your mood is very low or you have almost no interest in your life almost every day, and this feeling goes on for weeks; AND

You have some other problems including:

- feeling really tired much of the time;
- feeling numb or empty;
- having a lot of trouble concentrating;
- thinking about death or suicide;
- big changes in weight or appetite;
- unable to sleep enough or sleeping too much;
- feeling always restless or slowed-down;
- thinking that you are worthless or guilty;

What Are The Causes of Depression?

SITUATION

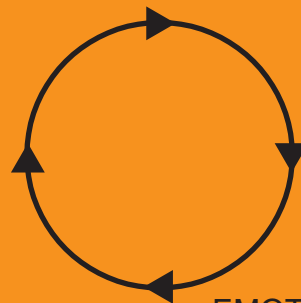
Depression is often triggered by loss, conflict, isolation, or stress. If attempts to cope aren't successful, you may begin to feel overwhelmed and hopeless.

ACTIONS

Depressed people often withdraw from others, reduce their activity level, and take less care of themselves. They refuse social invitations, stop eating well or exercising, give up hobbies, and so on. These changes make the depression worse.

THOUGHTS

Depressed people often have a biased way of interpreting situations. Depressive thinking is unrealistically negative about your current situation, yourself, and your future.



PHYSICAL STATE

Depression often includes a variety of physical symptoms: altered sleep, low energy, changes in brain chemistry, and so on. The physical changes of depression make it harder to cope with life problems.

EMOTIONS

Depression often begins with discouragement and sadness. As depression worsens, these feelings may give way to despair, anxiety and numbness.

The Antidepressant Skills Workbook...

Teaches a set of skills that can stop your mood from sliding down, lessen your depression and help prevent it from happening again. It explains how each of these skills helps fight depression and shows you in a step-by-step way how to use the skill. It also covers:

- the different causes of depression
- information about preventing return of depression
- helpful lifestyle changes

The Antidepressant Skills Are:

⊙ REACTIVATING YOUR LIFE

During depression, most people don't do the things that normally keep their mood positive. If you stop taking care of yourself or doing the things you normally like, your life becomes more dull and depressing. This can keep the depression going and make it worse. Although it may feel as though you're comforting yourself by being less active, in fact you may be helping the depression get worse.

This section of the workbook shows you how to set specific & achievable activation goals, and how to put them into practice.

You will learn to think about yourself and your situation in a more fair and realistic manner.

⊙ RESOLVING PROBLEMS

As people get depressed their ability to solve problems may decline-- they are less able to estimate the severity of a problem, come up with different solutions and plan a course of action.

This section of the workbook shows you how to systematically tackle problems, walking you through the steps of effective problem-solving towards a realistic action plan.

⊙ REALISTIC THINKING

Depressed individuals often have a negatively distorted way of thinking that can trigger or worsen the experience of depression -- we call this depressive thinking.

Depressive thinking includes unrealistic and unfair negative thoughts about your situation, yourself and your future. The aim is to challenge depressive thinking and replace it with realistic thinking.

This section of the workbook shows you how to identify and challenge depressive thinking, then gradually replace it with realistic thinking.

<http://www.comh.ca/antidepressant-skills/adult/resources/index-asw.cfm>



Note.

This handout is intended to deliver up-to-date information on the topic of depression. It does not provide clinical assessment or treatment of depression. If expert assistance or treatment is needed, the services of a competent professional