

Overcoming depression guide.

Coping with depression may require a combination of strategies, including **self-care, therapy** and **medication**. Here are some steps you can consider:

Support system



Find people who you feel you can safely explain what you are going through to. This may be family and friends but could be through support groups or online communities. Your support network may offer emotional and practical support.

Lifestyle



Prioritise self-care by maintaining a routine that, where possible, includes proper sleep, a balanced diet, and regular exercise. Limit or avoid misusing substances such as alcohol or drugs. Remember that physical health and mental health are interconnected.

Set realistic goals



Break tasks into manageable steps and set achievable, short-term goals. Small accomplishments can boost your self-esteem and motivation. If you are feeling particularly low, you may need to break tasks into smaller steps than you initially anticipated.

Mindfulness and relaxation



Practice mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga. Find relaxation activities that work for you, such as reading, art, or hobbies.

Challenge negative thoughts



Identify and challenge negative thought patterns and using objective evidence, try to reframe them in a more realistic light. Regular use of a journal or mood diary can help you recognise patterns and bring your awareness to your thoughts more quickly.

Engage in positive activities



Participate in activities that bring you joy and a sense of accomplishment, even if they're small. This can help combat the feelings of hopelessness. You may need to slowly increase your activity levels over time to prevent it feeling too overwhelming.

Time management



Create a daily schedule to help structure your day. This can reduce feelings of aimlessness and provide a sense of purpose.

Limit stress



Identify sources of stress in your life and take steps to reduce or manage them. This may involve setting boundaries, delegating tasks, problem-solving or seeking help from professionals and organisations.



Overcoming depression guide (cont.)

Seek professional help



It can be helpful to consult a professional to discuss possible treatment options. In the UK, health professionals such as your GP can help but you may also want to consider speaking with a psychotherapist, counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist.

Discuss your concerns openly with them, being as honest as you feel you can about your experiences. Let them know about any strategies or treatments you have already tried.

Therapy



Therapy can be very effective in overcoming depression. There are many forms of therapy but in the UK, NICE Guidelines particularly recommends Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Whatever model or approach you opt for, it is important you know the fundamentals of what makes good therapy:

- A confidential space
- Your problems are taken seriously
- You feel stretched and challenged but not totally overwhelmed
- You have your therapists full attention when you are together
- You feel you can safely give your therapist feedback
- Your therapist is consistent and predictable
- There is a collaborative approach to your care
- Progress is reviewed
- There a clear treatment goal and rationale
- You know what you can reasonably expect from the experience

Medication



In some cases, a medical professional may recommend medications, including antidepressants. If prescribed, take them as directed and communicate any side effects or concerns.

Some people find it can take some trial and error to find medication that helps them and some people find it does not help them at all, so good communication with your prescriber is essential.

Crisis support



If you are in crisis or feel you are unable to keep yourself safe from harm, please seek urgent help from a professional.

In the UK, you can request an urgent appointment with your GP, contact your local Crisis Team, call 111, call 999 or attend A&E depending on what feels most appropriate. The Samaritans also operate a free, confidential listening service 24 hours a day, and can be contacted by calling 116 123. It may be helpful to have some of these phone numbers saved in your phone.

Patience and persistence



Coping with depression is a journey. Understand that there will be ups and downs, and recovery may take time. Be patient with yourself.

For more helpful workshops and resources related to mental health and wellbeing, please visit our website www.investinginwellbeing.co.uk.

