



Coping Well During Covid: *Managing Low Mood*

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What to expect



- Toolkit of **evidence-based resources, ideas and tools**
- The content of these webinars is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT focusses on making changes to our thoughts and behaviour to improve our mood.

Objective of this webinar

- **Understanding cycles of reduced activity and boom and bust.**
- **How to break into those vicious cycles and improve our mood.**



What do you hope to get out of this webinar?

You said....

“How I can support myself, friends, family”

“Coping strategies to help with the bad days and the feeling of isolation/loneliness”

“For myself, and also things I may be able to suggest to patients.”

“Tips for carrying on as 'normal”

“Signs & Symptoms, Tips to look out for”

“How to be more resilient to the effects of low mood”

“Hoping to be able manage my low mood better that has increased since COVID-19 and pressure on the service I work for”

“Coping with working at home as a people person I'm struggling with this”

“How to not let my bad mood affect others negatively”

“Feeling so tired all the time – unmotivated”

“How to get myself out of periods of low mood when identified before it gets worst”

“How to return to work after being signed off for a month with clinical depression“

“I'd like to not feel like life is not one enormous chore”

“Motivating myself to get up, go out, take exercise, even do my job - impossible to make myself do much more than watch tv”



What are you finding the most difficult?

You said....

“The isolation, and disruption to routine and "normality"”

“Usual ways of helping my mood like socialising, exercising, going out for walks are more stressful and difficult”

“Feeling of life being on hold - so used to being able to plan things”

“The social aspect and loneliness as a consequence”

“There wasn't light at the end of the tunnel, the worry we will go back to where we were a couple of months ago with winter approaching”

“Worrying about the future and missing "normal" social interactions.”

“Monotony and my world feels very small”

“Working from home, home-schooling children and studying, struggling with motivation”

“Finding an inner motivation and being able to maintain in a good mood.”

“Interacting with others when I am feeling withdrawn, feeling de-motivated and frustrated about my job”

“Think the uncertainty is the most difficult thing to manage. Not being able to see family who live far away. Not knowing when I'll be able to see colleagues again etc.” ⁷

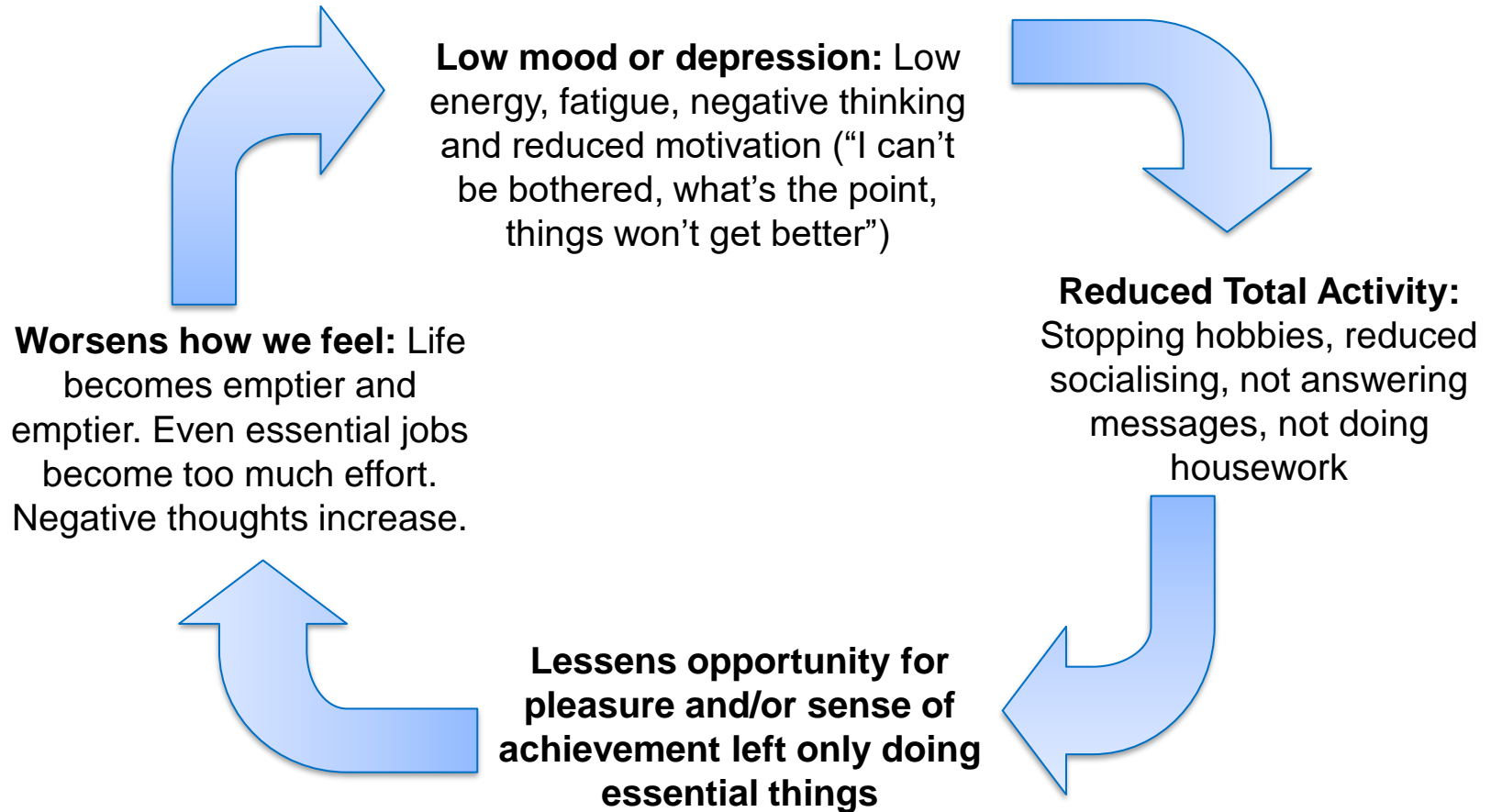


It's OK to not feel OK

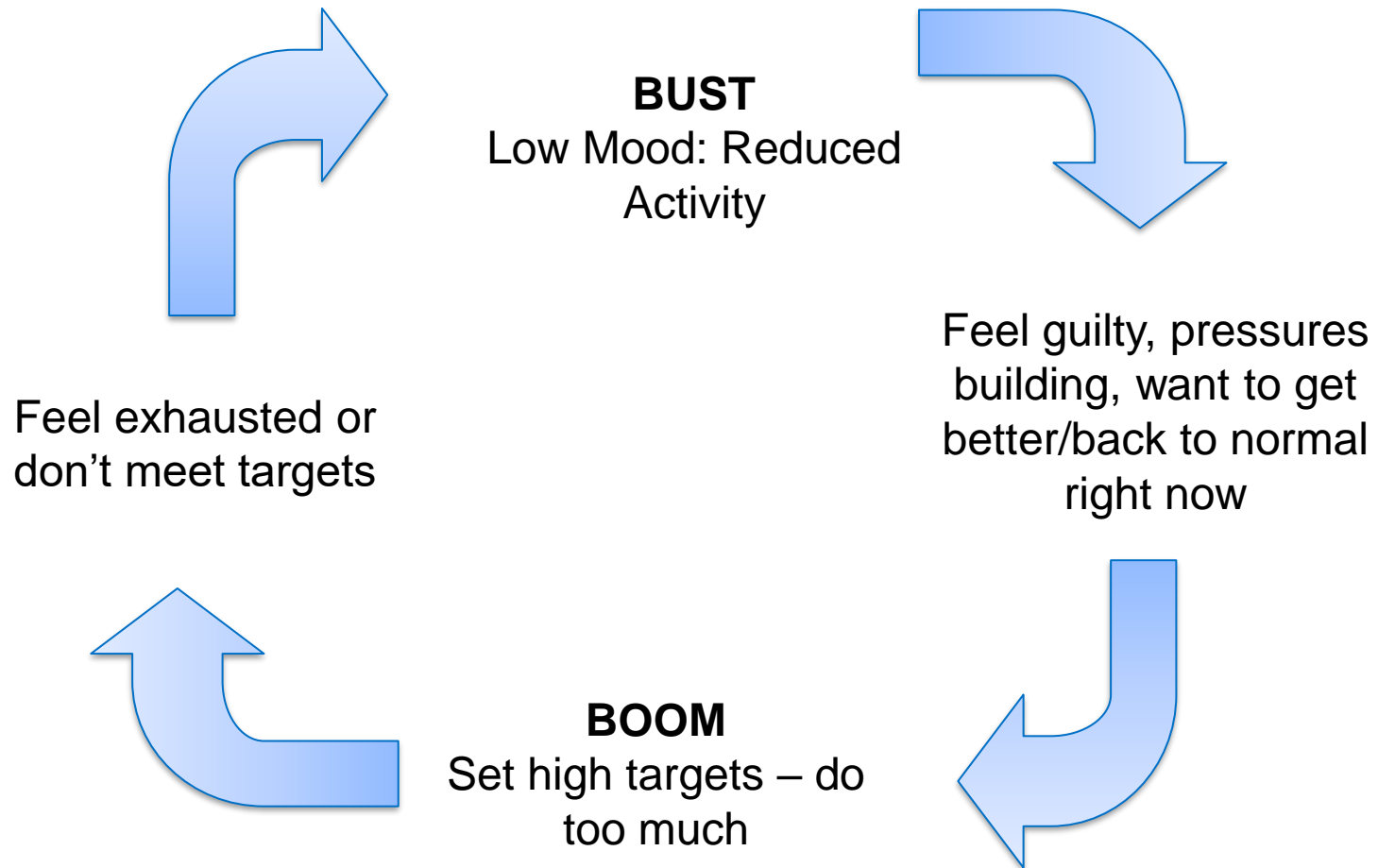
If you need urgent support right now...

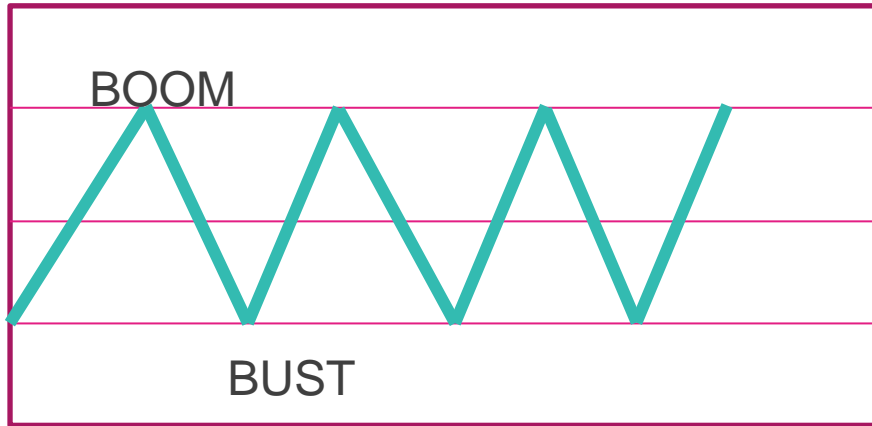
Don't struggle by yourself. The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.

Reduced Activity Cycle

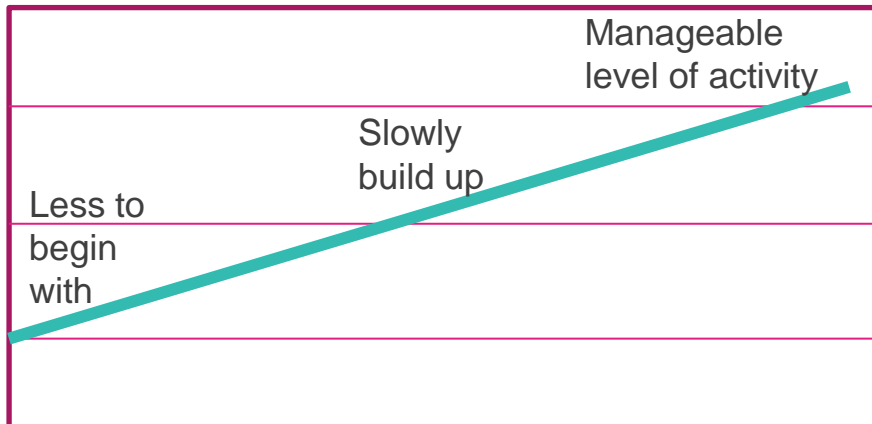


Boom & Bust Cycle






When in a boom and bust cycle, our activity levels can start to look something like this



When it comes to breaking the cycle, we may need to do less overall to being with, to be able to gradually build up to a more manageable level of activity

Find your routine

- **Complete change of routine.**
- **Working from home with children.**
- **You might not be working.**

- A routine can help you to find a balance of activities to keep you busy and stop you dwelling on things.
-  **Build your routine around markers such as regular meal times and regular bed time and wake up time.**
- **It's important to follow the plan and not be led by your mood.**

What is Behavioural Activation: Slowly build in structured activities. Scheduling different types of activities **following the plan and not our mood**, so that we complete the activities and break the cycle which can maintain low mood.

Why do we use it?

- a) A lot of research has shown it to be effective.
- b) It does not require you to concentrate for long periods of time or think too much.

The 'Outside-In' Approach

- When we look at the Boom and Bust Cycle, and Reduced Activity Cycle, in both we allow how we feel inside, to decide what we do
 - **we act from the inside-out**
- Through behavioural activation we want to start to allow our plan to decide what we do, which will then impact on how we feel
 - **acting from the outside-in**

Step 1 – List activities



Routine: These are activities you used to do regularly.

Necessary: These are activities that are often very important and for which there is a consequence if they are not done.

Pleasurable: These are things you used to enjoy before your low mood or could be new things that you think you would enjoy and like to try.

These are very much down to individual choice

Example

Routine: Eating 3 meals, sleeping in a routine, taking out the bins, having a shower, cooking x3 a week, making the kids lunch, food shopping.

Pleasurable: Socialising, running, playing football, playing with the kids, family time, reading the newspaper, watching TV, fixing bikes and cycling, going to the pub, playing guitar

Necessary: Going to work, paying the bills, changing my phone tariff, opening letters, getting the MOT booked, fixing the kitchen sink.

Step 2: Create a hierarchy

- Rate the activities from easiest to most difficult.
- It's important to think about how difficult it would be for you NOW not before or if you were feeling better

Hard: Playing football, going to a social gathering, opening and sorting letters
Paying the bills, cooking and eating 3 healthy meals

Medium: Reading the newspaper, cutting out naps, going to an exercise class,
booking MOT, going for a run, meeting a friend for lunch

Easy: Walking or cycling to work, eating breakfast, calling a friend for a chat,
showering before work, watching a TV show, taking the kids to the park.

Step 3: Schedule the activities

Start with the **easiest** activities first. As you go through the weeks, gradually include activities from the **medium** and **difficult** categories.

If there is a **necessary** activity which needs to be completed within a certain time, we need to schedule this activity even if it is in the medium or difficult category of your hierarchy. We may need to break this task down into stages.

Activities should be appropriately detailed, for example: '**A walk with the dog in the morning at 10am**'.

Step 4: Do the activities

Step 4: **Do the activities!**

Make sure to follow the plan and not the mood!

Step 5: Review

Step 5: Really important - **Review**. Identify the activities you managed to include during the week.

- How did completing these activities impact your mood?
- What other activities could you schedule in for the next week?
- If it was difficult to complete some activities, were the activities too difficult?
- What could you do to make the activity more achievable?
- Could you get a friend or partner to help remind you?

- You might not be able to do the things you used to enjoy

- It might feel like there is no point.

- Don't give in to this feeling,

- Do the opposite

- Find ways of doing the things you used to do that make you happy.

- Be creative.



It might be hard to feel joyful right away, start small



Does anyone have any creative ideas about how to still do some of the things you enjoy?

You said...

“Daily walks and motivational podcasts”

“Rather than buying takeaways, practicing new recipes to do a home takeaway yourself”

“I have taken a corner of my home to put my workout mat and workout there. I have started to do some exercise videos that are apartment friendly.”

“Do workouts in the park and go for runs with my partner instead of going to the gym/yoga classes with friends”

“Under desk cross trainer or bike”

“I took up painting and found a group who do fun online tutorials”

“Arranging games/quiz nights with friends and family”

“Zoom, for me, has become a standard way of staying in touch with family and friends who are more difficult to spend time with now. With practice, it's become a key part of my social life.”

“I have been doing painting by numbers”

“Zoom choir rehearsals, quizzes, virtual board games mixed in with physical meet ups such as social distancing walks in the countryside”

Before lockdown	What I enjoyed about this activity	Adaptation to restrictions
Playing football	Spending time with my friends doing an activity we enjoy	Arranging with my team mates to play a video game together online.
Going to a social gathering	Being able to connect with friends and laugh with them	Send a letter, postcard or gift to a friend to let them know you are thinking of them.
Going to an exercise class	Opportunity to exercise/stretch	Go for a brisk walk with some stretching at the beginning and the end.





- **Exercise is one of the best things we can do for our mental health.**
- **Exercise helps condition our body to handle stress better.**
- **Exercise increases the amount of Serotonin our body produces.**
- **Going on walks is a fantastic start.**
- **If you can't get going then try the '5-minute Rule'.**
- **If you are not sure you can find time then include exercise as part of your routine**



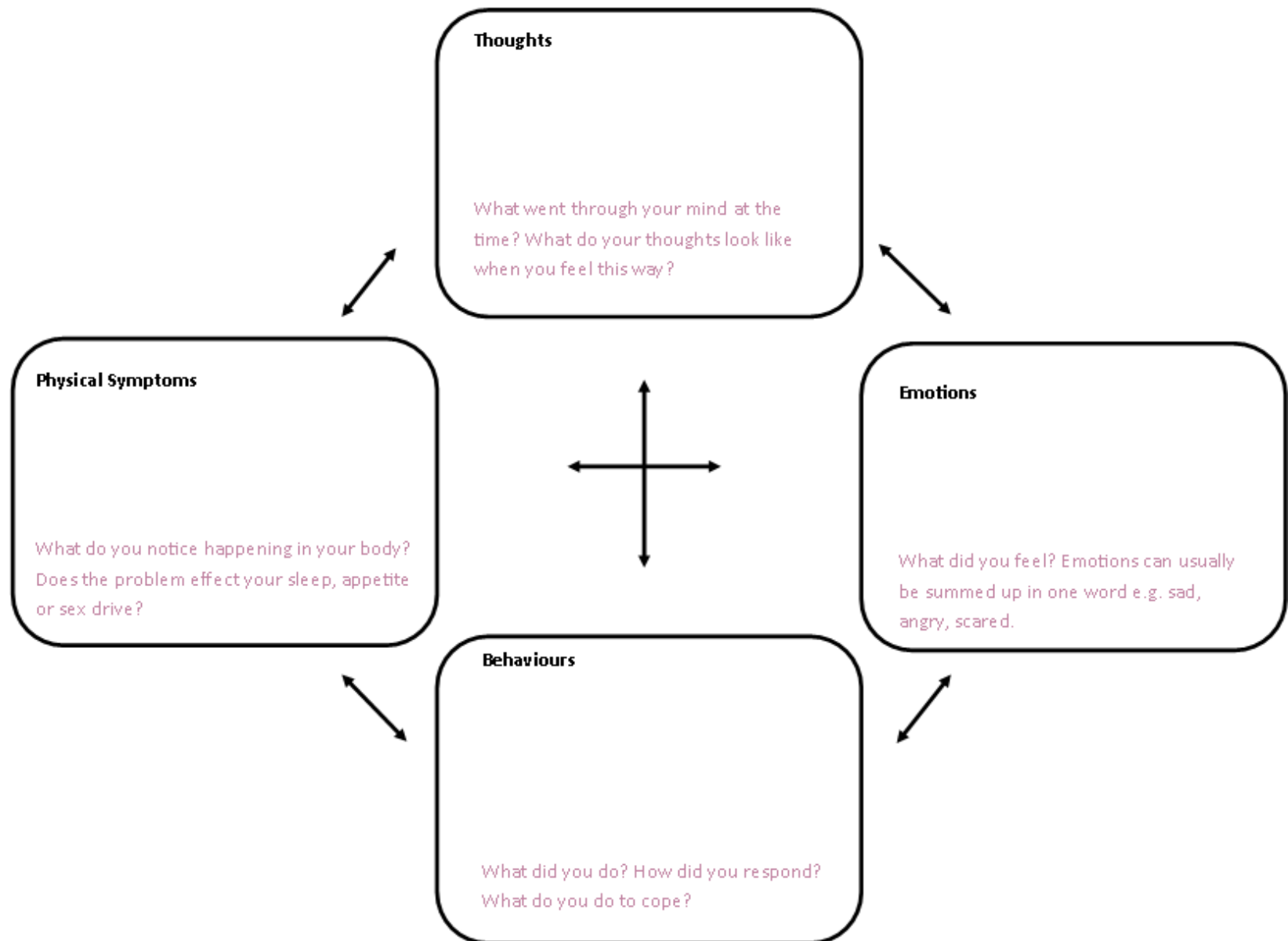
Scheduling first week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8am Shower	8am Shower	8am Shower	8am Shower	8am Shower		
8.30 Breakfast	8.30 Breakfast	8.30 Breakfast	8.30 Breakfast	8.30 Breakfast		
	12:00 message friends to arrange catch up		12:00 Yoga class on YouTube			
		13:00 book MOT				
				9pm Online hangout with friends		




Take home messages

- Are you in a **reduced activity cycle**?
- Are you in a **boom and bust cycle**?
- Act from the **outside-in**
- **Schedule** a balance of activities: routine, necessary and pleasurable
- **Be creative** in finding ways of doing the things you used to do that make you happy
- **Exercise** is just as effective as medication for improving mood.





Try it for yourself....



Getting more help and information

-  IAPT Psychological Therapy Services are available and free if you need more help.
-  IAPT stands for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies. These NHS funded national services offer free access to evidence based therapies for low mood, anxiety and depression across England. They offer treatment over the telephone, via online platforms and video links. If you think that you or someone you know needs support for low mood, sleep problems depression or anxiety you can self refer to your local IAPT Service.
-  Local IAPT services are listed on the NHS website and you can search with your postcode here: [https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

Getting more help and information

-  If you need **urgent** help for your mood, are having thoughts of suicide, are harming yourself or have thought about self-harm, it's important to tell someone. Don't struggle by yourself. Contact your GP if you can. If you cannot wait to see a doctor or feel unable to cope or keep yourself safe, you can contact the organisations below to get support right away.
-  The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.
-  Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance. Text "**SHOUT**" to **85258**
-  NHS urgent support guidance - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/urgent-support/>

Other useful resources and links

- i** NHS Every Mind Matters - https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlkjMo-Di6QIVnIBQBh01HQQFEAAYASAAEgKXUfD_BwE
- i** Mental Health Helplines - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>
- i** The NHS information about COVID-19 is available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- i** CALM have lots of advice and information about mental health - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- i** Mind are a mental health charity with a wide range of information about mental health - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- i** Citizens Advice offer support and financial advice, if you have problems with your rented home or you need to find out what benefits you can get - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- i** National Debtline is a charity offering free and independent advice over the phone and online - <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>
- i** Money Supermarket have collated the latest information and advice with how coronavirus might impact your financial situation - <https://www.moneysupermarket.com/money-made-easy/coronavirus-and-family-finances/?from=onsite-banner>

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