

Healthy Minds Lincolnshire

Exploring Low Mood

An information and education pack for young people

What is Low Mood?

We all feel fed up, miserable or sad at times. These feelings don't usually last longer than a week or two, and don't interfere too much with our lives. People can often say they're depressed if they are having a bad day or feel sad about something, but depression is much more than that.

With low mood/depression, the feelings don't lift after a few days, and they can carry on for weeks or months. Low mood and depression can impact on your daily life and leave you feeling unmotivated or not enjoying things that you used to.

It can cause conflict in relationships and also lead to isolation and feeling lonely. You might have feelings or thoughts that you are worthless, empty, and even that life is not worth living.



How does Low Mood affect you?

People can experience depression/low mood in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel low! It doesn't just have an impact on one particular thing either, it can cause us to think differently, behave differently, and feel differently in our emotions and also our bodies.



Generally people describe the thinking style of someone with low mood as 'negative'. These thoughts can be about you, but also about other people, what you think other people might think about you, the world around you and also about the future.

Having all these different thoughts, about lots of different things can be overwhelming and so it's no wonder people find it difficult to do other things.

Here are some examples of some thoughts that people experiencing low mood might have. Do any of these sound familiar?

Me	Other People	The World	The Future
"I'm worthless"	"They're better than me"	"The world is a bad place"	"Everything is pointless"
"I'm a failure"	"Nobody likes me"	"Everything is against me"	"Things won't change"
			"Nothing is going to get better"

How does Low Mood affect you?



Let's take a closer look at what depression/low mood is like for you...

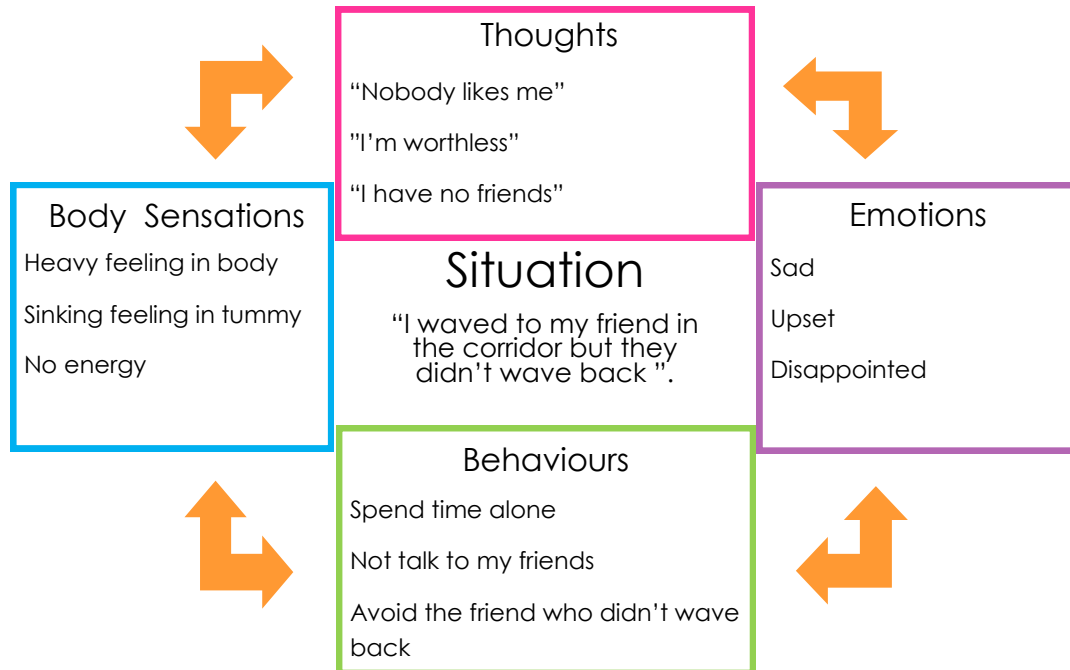
Do you experience any of the following?	Please tick if this applies to you
Feeling sad or empty	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling hopeless or as though everything is going wrong	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling guilty about things	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling worthless, unimportant or not good enough	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling irritable or annoyed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spending more time on your own	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not wanting to talk to, or see anyone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not enjoying things that you used to	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding it hard to concentrate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding it difficult to do your school work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crying a lot, or more easily	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stay in bed a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have difficulty getting to sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waking up in the night or early in the morning and not being able to go back to sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling tired or exhausted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding it hard to remember things	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not feeling hungry, or feeling more hungry	<input type="checkbox"/>

You may find it really difficult to talk about how you are feeling, and that's OK. Sometimes some of the thoughts we have when we are feeling low can make us feel unimportant or that no-one cares about us. We might also feel ashamed or guilty, or simply just not be able to put how we are feeling into words.

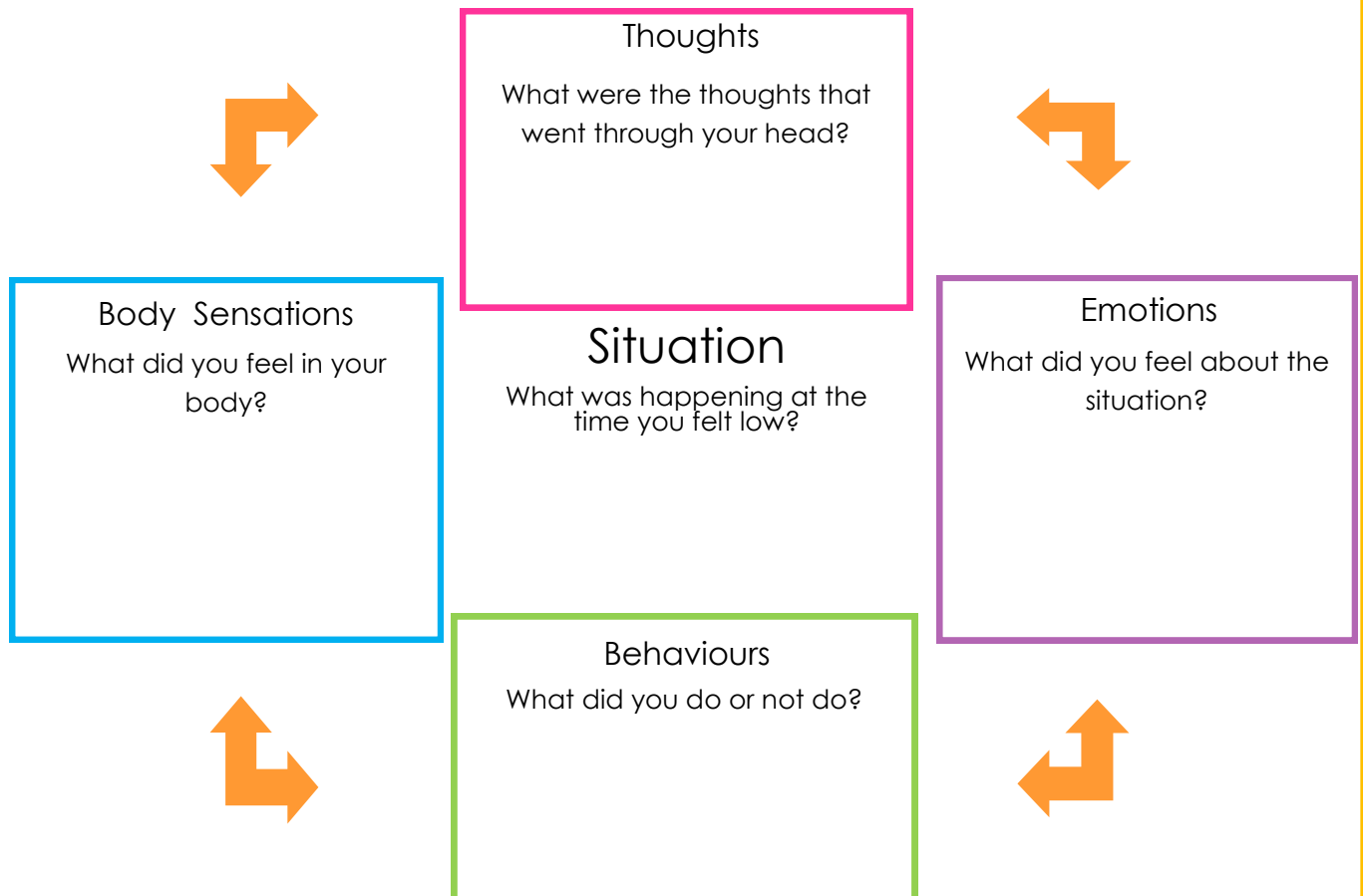


The 5 Areas

We can understand our experience of low mood more by thinking about what situations trigger low mood and exploring our thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physical sensations related to these situations. We can explore this by using the 5 area model. Here is an example:



Now think about a situation when you felt low or sad and fill in your own 5 area model below. You can do this as many times as you like using different situations that make you feel low or sad...



So what do I do about it?

When feeling low in mood, we often think and do things that are actually unhelpful and keep the feeling going. For example, when we feel low we may lack motivation and decide to stay in bed or stop doing activities we used to enjoy but this actually keeps the low mood going.

Now you have explored one or more situations that make you feel low, take a closer look at the thoughts and behaviours you have noted.

Do any of these seem unhelpful?



Are any of your thoughts negative? If so, try and challenge these thoughts - can you come up with some different thoughts that are more positive or more realistic for the situation? If so, make a note of them.



Do you think any of your behaviours are keeping the low mood going? If so, think about what you could do differently. E.g. doing an activity you used to enjoy even if you don't feel like it or speaking to friends rather than avoiding them.



More Strategies

The Healthy Minds practitioner you or your parent/carer have spoken to may have sent some more specific strategies that can help you to improve your mood. Start using these now. Ask someone to help you if you need to. And remember, it is ok to have set backs and forget to use strategies at times. Be kind to yourself and keep going!

Don't forget to check out our website, for lots of other useful information; such as our relaxation videos and our useful apps booklet!

<https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people>



Useful Websites & Numbers

Websites:

- **Get self-help**—www.getselfhelp.co.uk
- **Young Minds**—www.youngminds.org.uk
- **KOOTH** - www.kooth.com
- **LCC Emotional Wellbeing Pathway**—www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/emotionalwellbeing
- **Mood Juice**—<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/>

Numbers:

- **Here4You Advice Line:** 0800 234 63 42
(Healthy Minds & CAMHS)
- **ChildLine:** 0800 1111
- **Samaritans:** 116 123
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger (Shout);**

SHOUT to 85258

