



Feeling Low

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01. How to stay motivated while feeling low and stop intrusive thoughts and anxiety

Unfortunately, we can't always rely on motivation, as this comes and goes for all of us. Think about things that you enjoy and make an effort for yourself to schedule those activities in. Doing things, we like can lift our mood. It might be worth looking at the 5 ways to wellbeing on the NHS website. With regards to your intrusive thoughts, remember, thoughts are not facts! Catch one of those thoughts and challenge it, "is this actually true" "what evidence do I have to support this".

02. Chronic pain and feeling drained all the time

Some studies suggest there is a link between chronic pain and low mood. So, you aren't alone with this! I would firstly say please be kind to yourself, this is never easy. But think of things you are able to do or find enjoyable, boost the feel-good behaviours and activities. I would look at spotting any unhelpful thoughts or thinking.

03. I'm struggling with sleep at the moment and procrastinating due to ADHD, any advice?

Plenty of rest breaks! See how long you can do an activity for until you find yourself feeling distracted or procrastinating, and schedule in a rest break. Try engaging in physical activity to help with your sleep, avoid coffee before bed and reduce your screen time. However, studies have shown some individuals with ADHD do struggle to fall asleep, I would suggest creating a bedtime routine, making sure you avoid naps during the day too.

04. How do you balance everything when feeling low?

Balance is all about finding what your priorities are and leave the other things that aren't. When you are feeling low, you might want to set yourself small goals, and ask yourself "What do I need to do today and what can I leave for today". Be kind to yourself, create positive and healthy habits, and spot what might be causing stress or low mood.

05. I can feel emotionally hungover after feeling low, what's the best way to bounce back quickly?

Remember to not put too much pressure on yourself by saying "quickly". Take your time and do what feels good for you, show yourself self-acceptance and trust that you aren't alone with feeling low. I would suggest journalling and reflecting on your low mood and then thinking of moving forward from it. I would look into 'Emotional Resilience' which isn't about not being emotional, it's how to manage and accept it.

06. I can feel emotionally hungover after feeling low, what's the best way to bounce back quickly?

I think a good thing for all of us to remember is that everyone feels low at some point for many different reasons, and it does pass after a few days. Remember that this is not forever, it might mean you need to step up your self-care, prioritise enjoyable activities, taking some time for yourself to reset. Low mood can actually be a good indicator of making sure we are meeting our own needs.

07. Find it hard to do basic chores when feeling down like cleaning and then feel worse because of this

This can be a vicious cycle. Please try and set yourself small targets, for example, instead of trying to do everything at once, pick one thing to do. I always say to pair up a chore or task with something enjoyable, a bit like a reward for doing it. A tip from me is to maybe listen to a podcast or music when you are cleaning to make it easier for yourself.

08. How to keep motivated when life feels hard

We can't always rely on motivation as this is unrealistic. Motivation can be fleeting depending on internal and external factors. You aren't alone with this, we will all have days of feeling unmotivated and not wanting to do much, and this is completely normal! When life feels hard, we need to engage in mood boosting activities! For example, hobbies, social connections, mindfulness, relaxation, self-care, exercise.

09. My friend often has low mood swings and won't talk to me, how can I help her?

It can be difficult when we want to help a loved one, but they aren't being responsive. Unfortunately, as hard as it is, they must be ready to get help and support, we can't force this. All we can do is be a listening ear when they are ready, advise them to seek professional help or to go the GP, and keep in contact with them. Everyone has their own path, and everyone can feel ready at different times. Maybe encourage your friend to journal, as this way she can reflect on her own if she isn't quite ready to talk yet.

10. Always feel low and anxious for two days after socialising and drinking, is this normal?

Drinking alcohol can 100% make us feel like this! Alcohol is a depressant which can affect the level of serotonin and dopamine in the brain (happy hormones). Alcohol can also impact sleep, raise anxiety, and in excess can impact our health. I'm not saying don't go out socially and have a drink, as having social connections is important but remind yourself that alcohol can be the reason for your low mood and maybe decrease your weekly units.

11. How to get team morale up when everyone's feeling down at work

I think I speak for most of us when I say "it's the small things that count". Making sure everyone in work feels appreciated and knows their work and effort is never unnoticed. Maybe suggest having staff wellbeing time, have treat carts in work, but also taking ideas from the team in a big team meeting. If a staff member is really struggling point them in the right direction of getting further support. E.g, GP, NHS website, EAP, etc.

12. Unsure whether I feel down a normal amount of times or if it's a serious amount?

It is common for everyone to feel stressed, sad, or anxious. We would describe this as low mood which usually passes. If you are feeling depressed this is usually when you feel persistently sad for weeks, months etc. I would visit your GP and they can help you identify this and offer support.

13. Really down about money with increasing bills and Christmas coming up, is there any way to ease this?

You aren't alone with this; I think most of us are feeling the hit from inflation. One thing I don't want you to do is avoid or decrease enjoyable activities due to money worries as this will also impact your mood. Of course, it is easier said than done, but try doing enjoyable things that might cost less or nothing at all, e.g. walking, being in nature, games at home, YouTube workout videos, mindfulness. Another tip to help increase your mood is to not avoid financial difficulties, try sitting down and looking at your finances, don't put this off or wait until your mood improves, get started as soon as you can as this will boost your mood in the long run. If you need help and support for money issues, you could speak to Citizens Advice.

14. Find it hard to keep up socialising with friends and family when I'm in a slump

Social connections can actually boost our mood, I would ask yourself how you feel when you do socialise, does it make you feel happier or worse? We all need time to ourselves, so don't feel you always have to be socialising. Maybe when you are feeling low but want to be social, go to the cinema so you can sit and relax watching a film, or ask your friends to maybe come to your house to relax.

15. Find it really hard to sleep when feeling down and can often be up all night, any tips?

I would say lying awake in bed unable to sleep is difficult, but don't force yourself to sleep, maybe get up and do something and then go back to bed when you are tired. If you can't sleep due to worries, try not to lie in bed and ruminate, get out of bed and write these worries down and return to bed afterwards. Other things would be to look at your caffeine intake, how much exercise are you doing, do you have a good bedtime routine?

16. How to cope with brain fog that comes when I'm in a low mood, can't focus on work or anything

I think a good place to start would be addressing why you feel low in mood? If there is no reason for low mood, then ask yourself "Am I getting adequate sleep?" "Am I fuelling my body with enough food and water?" "Am I taking enough breaks?" "Am I close to burning out and need to take some time for me?"

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