

UNDERSTANDING LOW MOOD

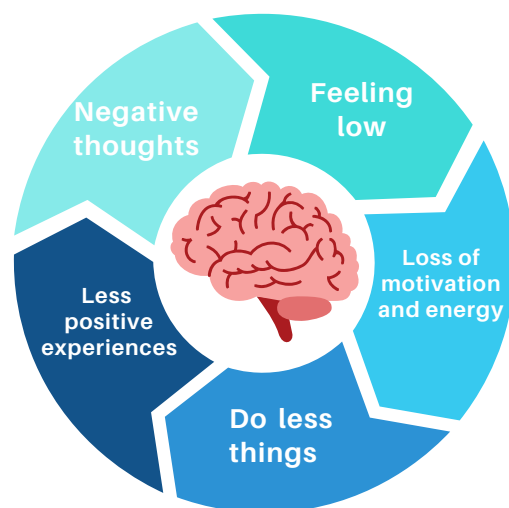
WHAT IS LOW MOOD?



Low mood is a mild form of depression that most people experience from time to time. It can be described by common symptoms such as: feelings of sadness, tiredness, irritation, low motivation, loss of interest, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating, wanting to be alone, difficulty feeling enjoyment and fulfilment, changes in appetite, struggling to look after yourself, and having negative thoughts about yourself and the world. Quite often there may be something happening in our life that causes us to feel low in mood such as friendship fall outs, changes at home or at school, exam stress, illness or physical injury, low self-esteem, or feeling anxious for a prolonged period of time. Low mood is a normal response to these stressors, but over time, it can have a negative impact on our overall mental and physical health.

WHAT KEEPS LOW MOOD GOING?

When we are feeling low and experiencing negative thoughts and feelings, our activity levels naturally decrease due to our loss of energy and motivation. However, when we do less things, we have less positive experiences, and less positive thoughts, which makes us feel more low and even less motivated to do anything. We then end up in a vicious cycle of low mood which we need to reverse to feel better again.

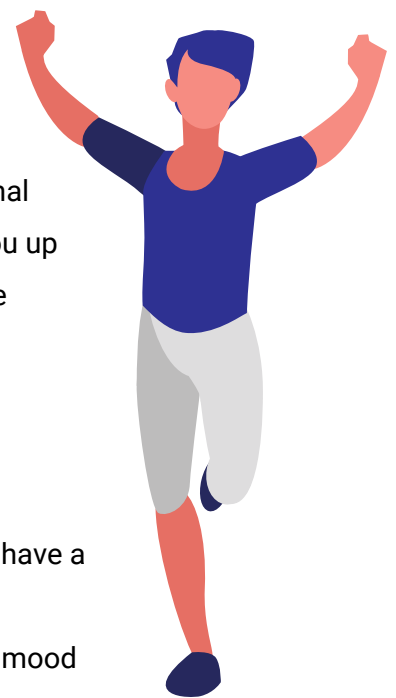


WHEN DOES IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

Everyone experiences low mood from time to time, and how we manage low mood is key to preventing it from affecting us. Low mood becomes a problem when the symptoms of low mood (thoughts, emotions, and behaviours) interfere with normal daily life, such as attending school, looking after ourselves, and engaging in social and leisure activities. Low mood also becomes a problem if the intensity of the symptoms are disproportionate to the reason why you are feeling low, and when the episodes of low mood become frequent and/or prolonged.

TOP TIPS TO HELP LOW MOOD

- 1 **Discover what is important to you - these are called values.** Our values give meaning, purpose, enjoyment, and fulfilment to our lives and when we live in alignment with our values, we have more positive emotions and experiences. An example of a value is "friendship" and examples of activities that align with this include: calling a friend; arranging to socialise with friends; giving a friend a compliment; attending a party; and helping a friend.
- 2 **Create a healthy living routine** by eating a balanced diet, taking care of your personal hygiene, and improve your sleep routine. Doing these things consistently will set you up for success with improving your mental and physical health. Try making a schedule that includes your new routine and your values activities.
- 3 **Engage in helpful activities.** This can be anything that aligns with your values, your healthy living routine, or anything that needs to be done, such as tidying your room, or doing your homework. You may not feel that these activities will make you feel better, but you will experience a sense of achievement after doing them, which will have a positive impact on your mood.
- 4 **Be aware that engaging in activity helps to generate motivation and interest.** Low mood might make you feel like doing anything at all, even if it is something that is important to you. Don't let this stop you from engaging in the activity as you will feel better afterwards.

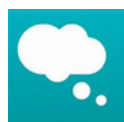


WHERE CAN I FIND MORE SUPPORT?

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.YoungMinds.co.uk
www.TheMix.org.uk
www.Kooth.com

USEFUL APPS:



Catch it
(12+)



MOVE MOOD
(12+)



Mindshift
(12+)



Smiling Mind
(3+)

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNABLE TO MANAGE LOW MOOD ON YOUR OWN, SPEAK TO A TRUSTED ADULT AT SCHOOL ABOUT BEING SUPPORTED BY THE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS TEAM.

