

LOW MOOD

A self-help resource to support you on your journey

What's inside?

Complete self-help resource

- ▶ *What is low mood?*
- ▶ *How can we support low mood?*
- ▶ *Personalised activity planner*

YMCA

Recommended for 12 - 18 year olds
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WELCOME TO YOUR VERY OWN RESOURCE

In this pack, we will look what what worry is, how to support worry and how to personalise support to your own lifestyle and needs.

This pack can be used on your own, or with the help of a parent or adult you trust (like a teacher). It's totally up to you and how you prefer to use it.

It might be more helpful to break this into steps rather than reading it all in one go, so we've broken it down for you to make it easier. It's up to you how to use it, but it might be helpful to complete one step per week to give yourself chance to do the activities.

So, find yourself a comfortable spot, grab a snack and let's get to it...



Step 1: Signs of Low Mood

Low mood is a common experience that can happen to anyone. There are lots of reasons why people might feel low, sometimes it can happen after an upsetting event or sometimes we're not sure what caused it! Let's take a look at the signs of low mood

Lack of Energy

Low mood can drain our bodies of energy, making us feel drowsy or unmotivated. This might mean people don't want to do the things they normally enjoy

Change in appetite

Low mood can make people feel hungrier, or not hungry at all. This is because we release Cortisol (a stress hormone) which changes our appetite

Feeling angry

Low mood can make people feel irritable. This might mean people lash out or feel more argumentative than normal

Negative thoughts

Low mood can make people feel hopeless, or like things will never get better. People might have thoughts about hurting themselves and this can be really difficult



Sleep

Low mood can make people feel drowsy, they might be sleeping a lot more than usual or taking more naps. Or, they might be waking up very early in the morning



Low confidence

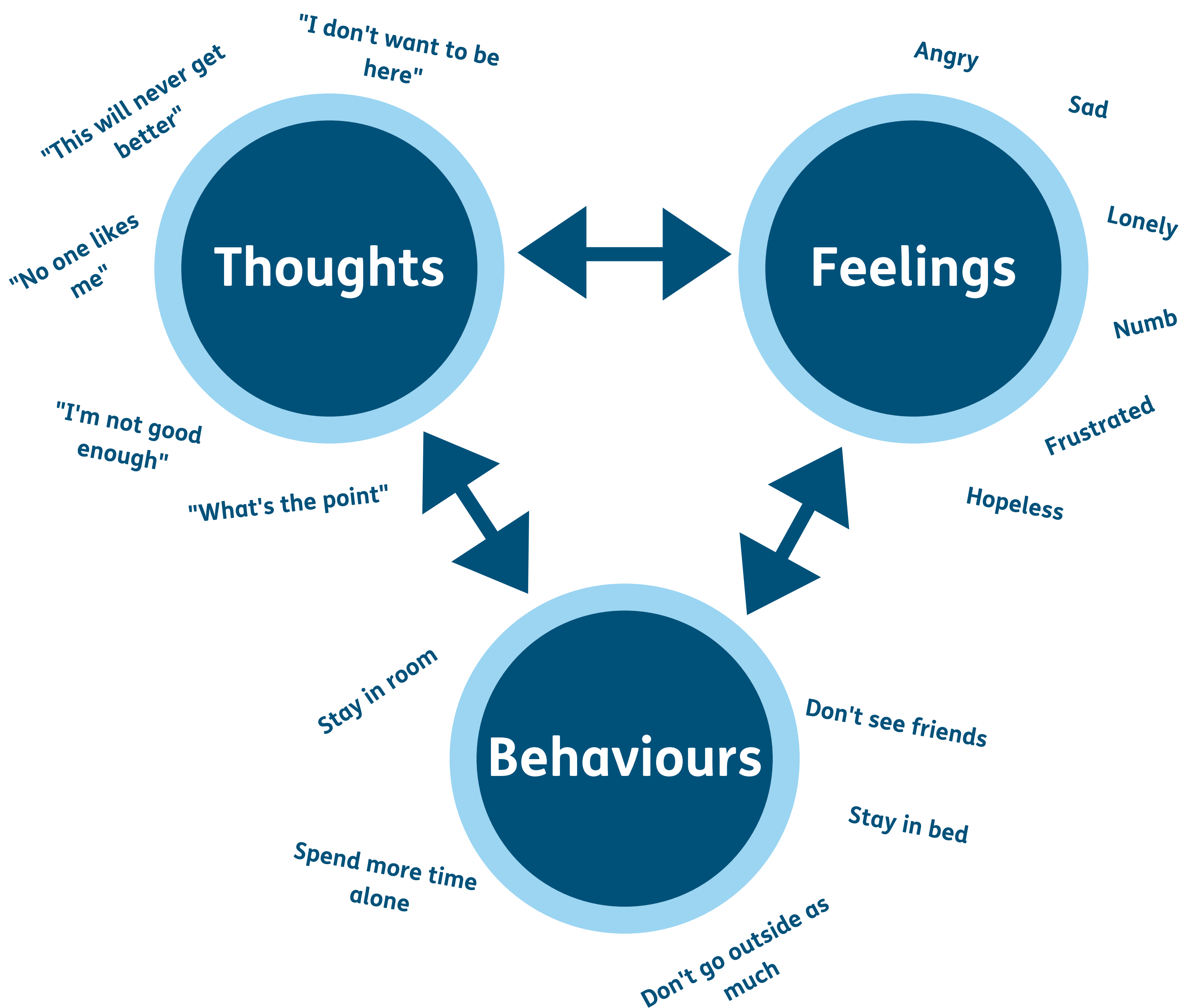
Because of negative thoughts, people might feel bad about themselves and this can impact their confidence. This might mean they avoid doing things they normally do



Not finding things enjoyable that you usually enjoy doing

Remember, this can be different for everyone. There are lots of ways to feel and they are all valid. Can you think of any other signs?

Low mood can impact thoughts, feelings and behaviours



Does any of this feel similar for you? Noticing how low mood can make people feel is an important first step. Take some time to write your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours around the examples

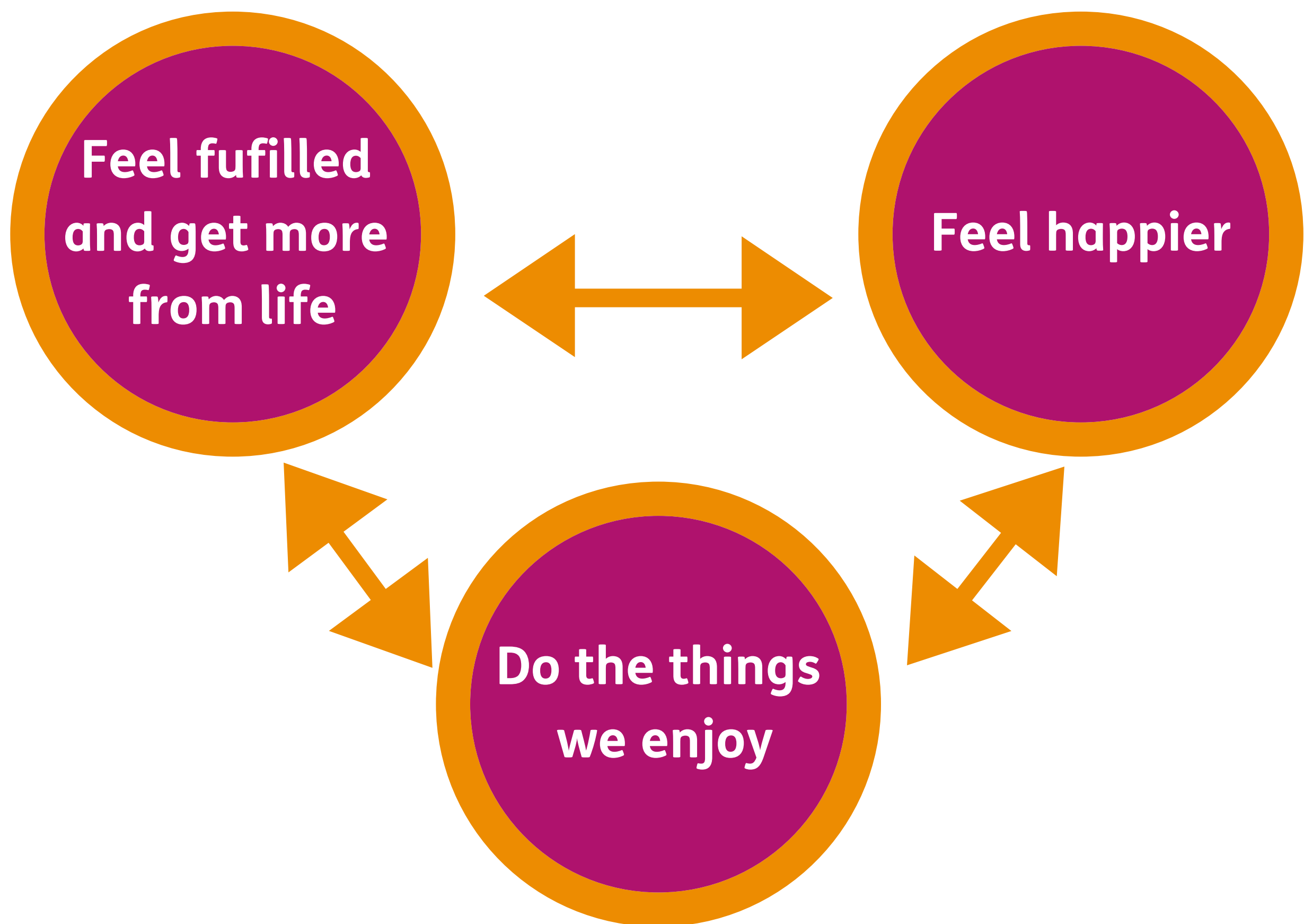
Activity Planning

So how can we support it?

As we have learnt, when people feel low, they tend to do less of the things they enjoy.

This might help in the short term, as doing less can make them feel better. But in the long term, this can make them feel worse.

Activity planning helps us to restart doing the things we enjoy, and help us feel better again long term.



This can be difficult at first, but the more we do it, the better we will feel

Lets try making this more personal so we can tackle what's going on for you - We can start with some goals on the next page.

Goals

In the page above we saw low mood can make people stop doing the things they enjoy. The focus of the next steps will be helping you return to activities that you enjoy.

Think about three goals based on activities you would like to start doing again, which will be the focus of this self help resource.

Here's some questions to help you.

How would you know you're starting to feel better? What would you be doing more of?

If you had a magic wand that would make this feeling go away, what would be different for you?

How can we measure this goal?

Empty box for writing the first goal.

Empty box for writing the second goal.

Empty box for writing the third goal.



Step 2: Lets start thinking about what's important to you

When you think of "values", what do you think of?

Lets break it down and start by filling in the boxes below

Me

What do I do for fun? What do I do to look after myself? What do I do to relax?

Things that are important to me

What do I enjoy learning about? What do I want to achieve? What aspirations am I working towards?

People around me

Who is important to me? Why are these relationships important to me? How can i develop these relationships? What kind of friend do I want to be?

Is there anything else important to you?

Activity planning

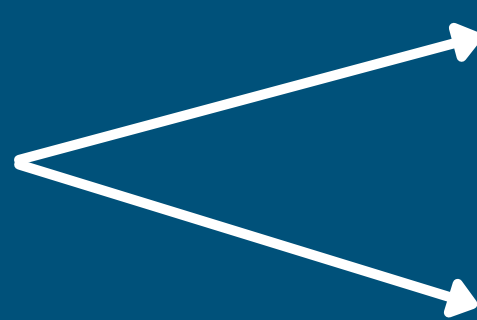
Our next step is to start activity planning based on your personal values and interests.

Pick a value of yours and create an activity based around it.

We've made an example below for you to see first

Example:

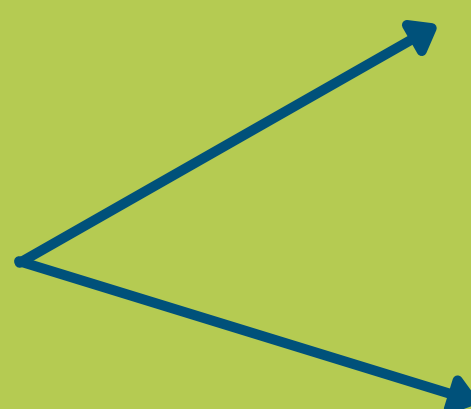
Value:
Being a supportive
friend to Brad



Activity:
Invite Brad to play
xbox on weekend

Activity:
Invite Brad to the
cinema

Activity 1 - pick a value of yours



Now we have an activity, let's choose one of your options and plan it into your week

When will I do this?:

Where will I do this?:

What do I need to do to plan this?:

Will anything get in my way?:

How can I make sure it happens?:

Step 3: (optional step) Boost your mood using ACE activities

As an optional step, let's think about what ACE activities are and how they boost our mood, then we can incorporate them into our value based activities.

Having a spread of activities can keep us motivated and give balance to our week. Let's take a look at some examples and then fill in your own ideas in the boxes at the bottom of this page.

Achievement

doing something that gives us a sense of accomplishment e.g. finishing a project, cleaning our room

Enjoyment

doing something that makes us feel good!

Closeness

doing something that makes us feel close to others e.g. watching a film and having a snuggle, cuddling with a pet, laughing with friends



A

Tidying your room
Taking medication
Going for a walk
Getting up and dressed

C

Facetiming a friend
Cuddling a pet
Playing a board game with others

E

Play a game
Bake a cake
Skateboard
Painting



Step 4: Quick review

So far, we've spent some time thinking about personal values and hopefully now you have done an activity related to your values. Let's review how this activity went and the impact it had on your mood.

How did you feel your activity went?

What went well?

Was there anything that didn't go well?

How did you feel before this activity?

1 ← 10

How did you feel after this activity?

1 ← 10

If you didn't feel this went well, don't give up! Let's rethink and try again, it's really normal that things don't always go to plan. The key is to keep practicing. If you didn't feel it went well, here are three questions to go through

Do I need help next time? And who from?

Do I need to make it easier?

Do I need to plan it into my week?

Feel free to revisit page 7 if you want to try again!

Step 5: Weekly activity planning

Now we can take a look at an activity planner and think about setting time aside each week to complete these activities.

On the next page is your detailed activity planner. There are a few copies so you can do this over the next few weeks.

You don't need to fill it out completely, but aim for one activity per day.

Here are some tips from the team to support you with it! It might be helpful to come back to this page if your struggling with planning

How can you make sure you stick to this plan?

You don't have to do it alone - Who else can support you with this activity?

You're doing your best, and your best is enough

Be patient with yourself, your mood will lift gradually. It's not an overnight fix

Follow the plan and not the mood, motivation will come with time!

There's no harm in starting small and building up to bigger things

Monday	AM	PM	Evening
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Tuesday	AM	PM	Evening
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Wednesday	AM	PM	Evening
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Thursday	AM	PM	Evening
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Friday	AM	PM	Evening
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Saturday	AM	PM	Evening
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Sunday	AM	PM	Evening
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Monday	AM	PM	Evening
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Saturday	AM	PM	Evening
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Sunday	AM	PM	Evening
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If you've made it this far, a big well done to you!
It's not easy working on anxiety, and you might feel your journey
doesn't end here.

You might want to continue a thought challenging for a few more
weeks, or you might feel you need further support.

We have another resource that's a great fit for once you've
completed this one. It's called "Lifestyle Management". You can
find this on our website and work through it like you did with this
one.

If you feel you need further support, you can email us on
wellbeing@ymcaexeter.org.uk, or you can visit our website if you
want to speak with a member of the team.

Other useful numbers and resources for the future

Childline - 0800 1111

Samaritans - 166 123

Young Minds - Text YM to 85258

www.ymcaexeter.org/cwpwellbeing