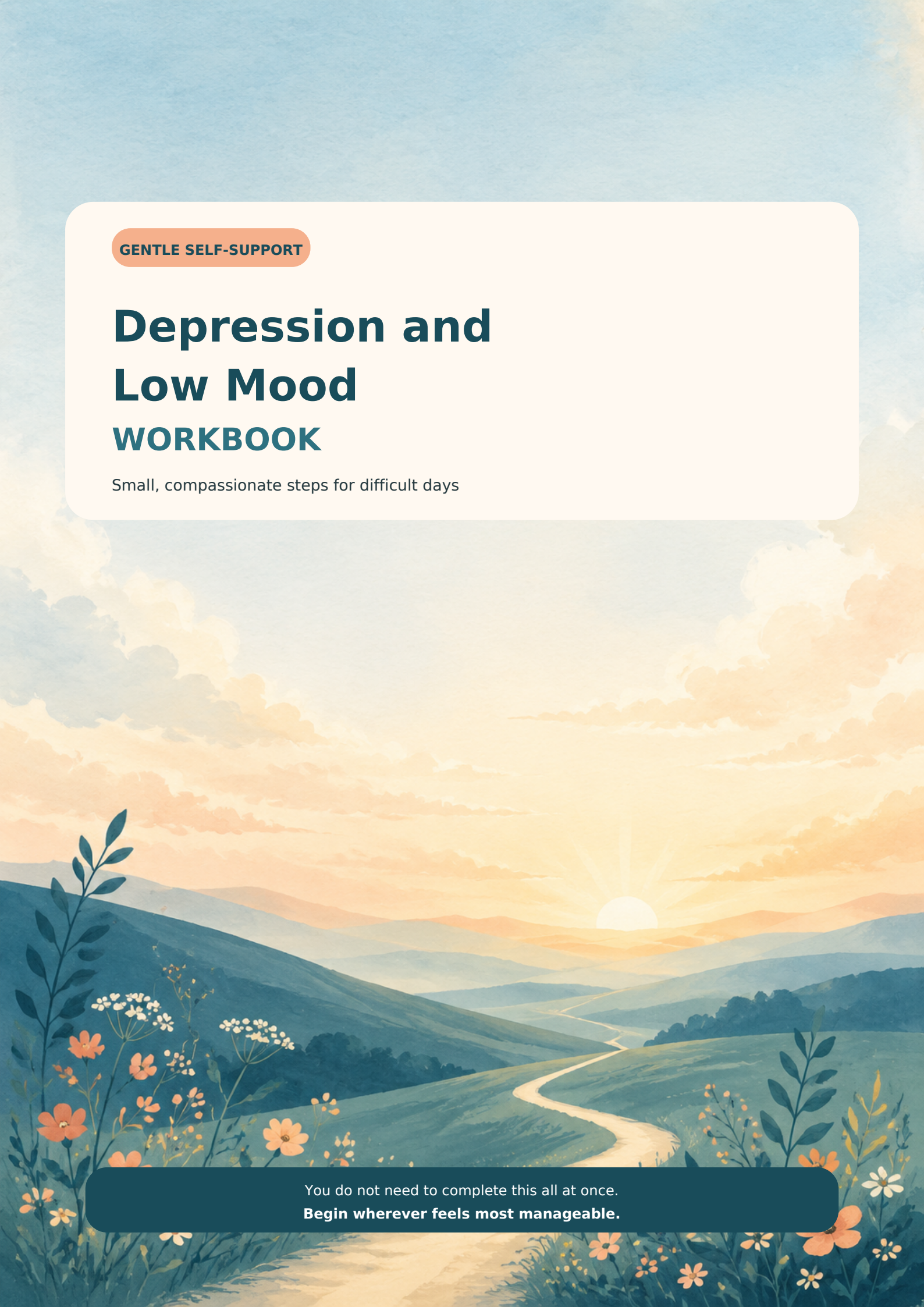




GENTLE SELF-SUPPORT

Depression and Low Mood WORKBOOK

Small, compassionate steps for difficult days

You do not need to complete this all at once.
Begin wherever feels most manageable.

Understanding what I am experiencing

Noticing without judgement can make the experience feel less confusing.

Low mood and depression are not personal failures

Low mood can follow stress, loss, illness, isolation or exhaustion. Depression may feel more persistent and can affect motivation, sleep, appetite, concentration, self-worth and enjoyment. Your experience is real, even if other people cannot see it.

What have I noticed recently?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Less interest or pleasure | ☐ Low energy or heaviness |
| ☐ Changes in sleep | ☐ Changes in appetite |
| ☐ Difficulty concentrating | ☐ Withdrawing from others |
| ☐ Harsh thoughts about myself | ☐ Feeling hopeless or numb |

My low mood can look or feel like...

What may be contributing?

Consider pressure, changes, grief, pain, health, hormones, relationships, work, money, loneliness, sensory overload or masking. You do not need to find one clear cause.

3

My mood patterns

A pattern is useful information - not proof that you are doing anything wrong.

A gentle check-in

Today my mood feels:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

1 = extremely low

10 = feeling well

What tends to lower my mood?

What helps, even slightly?

My early warning signs and needs

When my mood begins to dip, I notice...

At those times, I may need...

One pattern I want to approach with curiosity:

Tiny steps when motivation is low

Action can come before motivation. The aim is movement, not perfection.

The smallest useful step

Depression can make ordinary tasks feel enormous. Shrink the task until your brain and body can begin: 'clean the kitchen' might become 'place one cup by the sink'. Completing a tiny step counts.

Choose one from each area - only if it feels manageable

CARE FOR MY BODY

- ☐ Drink something
- ☐ Open a window
- ☐ Wash my face
- ☐ Eat a safe food

CONNECT

- ☐ Text one person
- ☐ Sit near someone
- ☐ Ask for company
- ☐ Share one honest sentence

GENTLE ACTIVITY

- ☐ Stand and stretch
- ☐ Step outside
- ☐ Do two minutes
- ☐ Put one item away

My tiny-step ladder

A task I want or need to do:

1. Two-minute starting step

2. Next manageable step

3. A fuller version - only if energy allows

Afterwards I will acknowledge...

5

Making room around difficult thoughts

A thought can feel powerful without being the whole truth.

Pause - name - widen

Instead of arguing with yourself, try: 'I am noticing the thought that...' Then ask what else may also be true. The goal is not forced positivity; it is a fairer, more compassionate perspective.

The difficult thought What is my mind saying?

What supports this thought?

Facts rather than feelings or predictions:

What has the thought left out?

Other facts, context, strengths or possibilities:

A kinder and more balanced response

What might I say to someone I care about in the same situation?

My compassionate support plan

You deserve support before things become unbearable.

What helps me feel safer or steadier?

People or services I can contact

My plan for the next 24 hours

One basic need:

One tiny action:

One connection:

A note to myself on a difficult day

If I need urgent support

If you may act on thoughts of suicide, cannot keep yourself safe, or are in immediate danger: call 999 or go to A&E. In the UK and ROI, Samaritans are available free on 116 123. You can also contact NHS 111 and select the mental health option (England), or your local urgent mental health helpline. If calling feels hard, ask someone you trust to stay with you and help you make contact.

My next gentle step:
