



My Depression Cycle



Low mood can create a cycle in which reduced activity, less connection and difficult thinking reinforce one another. Understanding your cycle can help you identify where change may be possible.

1. LOW MOOD / LOW ENERGY

Feeling down, empty, flat or hopeless. Motivation and energy may be lower.

2. DOING LESS / WITHDRAWING

Pulling away from people or activities, postponing tasks, staying in bed longer or doing fewer things.

3. LESS ENJOYMENT, CONNECTION & ACCOMPLISHMENT

Fewer opportunities to feel connected, experience pleasure or get a sense that something has been achieved.

4. MORE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS & SELF-CRITICISM

Harsh self-judgement, hopeless predictions or thoughts that little will change.

5. MOOD & MOTIVATION DROP FURTHER

The cycle can deepen, making it feel even harder to take action.

The cycle can be interrupted at different points.

Change often starts small. A manageable action, moment of connection or different response to a difficult thought can begin to shift the pattern.



Mapping My Own Cycle



Think about a recent period when your mood was low. Work around the cycle and describe what happened for you. Keep it specific and use your own words.

1. WHEN MY MOOD OR ENERGY DROPS...

What do you notice emotionally or physically? What tells you that your mood is beginning to drop?

2. I TEND TO DO LESS OR WITHDRAW BY...

What activities, tasks, routines or people do you pull away from? What becomes harder to start?

3. THEN I HAVE LESS...

What happens to connection, enjoyment, accomplishment, structure or other things that usually support you?

4. MY MIND STARTS TELLING ME...

What self-critical, hopeless or negative thoughts tend to show up?

5. THIS AFFECTS MY MOOD BY...

What happens next to your mood, energy or motivation?

Using this with your psychologist

Your cycle may not follow this exact order. Use it as a starting point for identifying patterns and possible points for change.



Where Could I Interrupt the Cycle?



You do not need to change every part of the cycle at once. Choose one area where a small, realistic change might be possible.

ONE THING I COULD DO A LITTLE MORE OF

Consider something that may provide connection, enjoyment, structure, self-care or a sense of accomplishment.

ONE PERSON OR SOURCE OF SUPPORT I COULD CONNECT WITH

Who could you contact, spend time with or let know that things have been difficult?

ONE DIFFICULT THOUGHT I COULD NOTICE DIFFERENTLY

Write the thought, then consider a more balanced or compassionate response.

MY SMALLEST NEXT STEP

What is one action small enough that it feels possible, even if motivation is low?

Remember

The goal is not to wait until you feel motivated. Sometimes a small action can come first, with changes in mood or motivation following later.