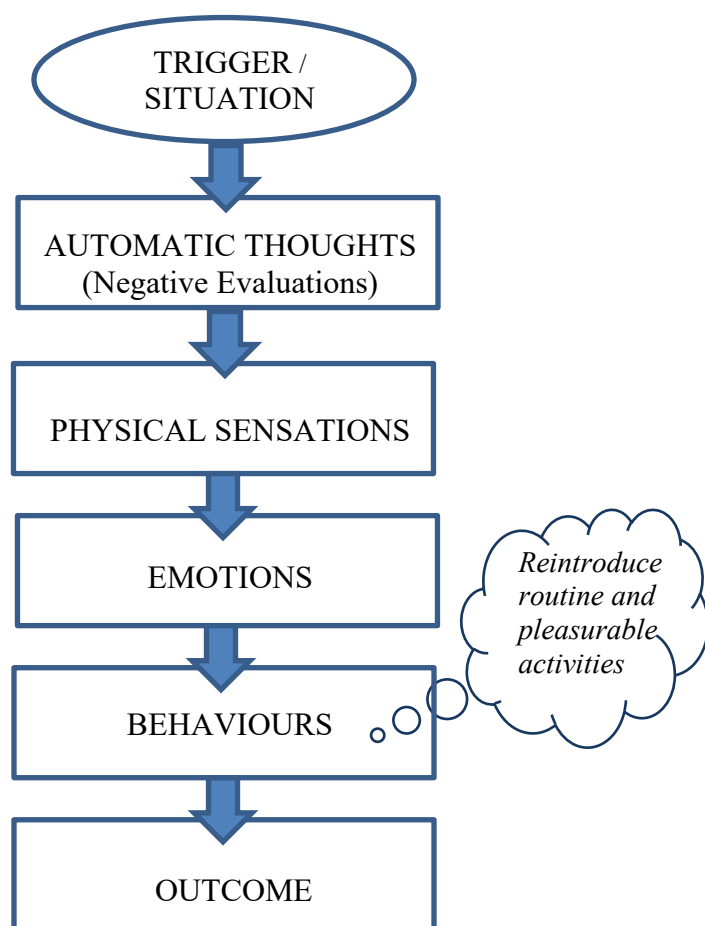




OVERCOMING DEPRESSION – 2

TAKING SMALL STEPS AND NOTICING SMALL CHANGES



Even small changes in the way we act might increase confidence that we'll need to tackle more serious concerns. We can achieve this by restoring some of our everyday routines and reintroducing previously pleasurable activities into our lives.

Routine activities are things that we do frequently, almost on everyday basis, without thinking much about them. Routine activities might be pleasurable or not (e.g., having a nice breakfast every morning vs. cleaning a washroom). Routine activities might be necessary or not (e.g., reading at breakfast is routine but not necessary, monthly bill payment is both routine and necessary). Use the Routine Review Worksheet to make lists of routine activities you were doing before you were depressed and a list of routine activities that you still do when depressed. Indicate how often you were doing this activity as compared to now. Rate how necessary, difficult, bothersome and pleasurable you used to view these tasks and how you view them now.

This exercise shows that *persons with depression tend to first let go of pleasurable tasks that they do not view as necessary as well as of the necessary tasks that they dread. This leaves you with little pleasure and a lot of dread and eventually creates a sense of chronic apprehension and disengagement.*

Unless there is a major time sensitive task that you need to tackle, the best way to get out of this vicious cycle is by starting with pleasurable activities. This is likely to, at least slightly, increase your motivation and energy. Chances are that you are starting to perceive most of pleasurable activities as requiring too much effort and bringing very little pleasure. It is true, *when you do something when you are depressed, you will experience less pleasure than when you do the same thing when you are not depressed BUT doing something pleasurable usually feels better than doing nothing at all.* Use the Pleasurable Activities Review Worksheet to help you come up with things that are relatively easy to do but might be enjoyable.

Before we begin, let's look at some beliefs that keep people from engaging in previously pleasurable activities:

- *I should not be doing this when I have so many other things to do.* (It's good to be dutiful but people who say that usually end up by doing nothing at all, be it chores or pleasurable activities. In order to jumpstart our ability to do things, we have to start with something that is pleasurable.)
- *It's not worth it. It won't feel the same.* (You're right. It will not feel the same but it will feel better than doing nothing at all. The little steps you take now will eventually add up.)
- *It's too much work.* (This is where your Pleasurable Activities Review Worksheet comes in handy. If it were not too much work before, why should it be now? If needed, start with something that does not require that much effort. Use the effort/difficulty ratings from when you were well as everything might look equally overwhelming when you are depressed).
- *I need to feel better before I do this.* (And you need to get in shape before you go to the gym... This activity is meant to help you feel better. Granted, some days feel better than others but this is your opportunity to feel a little better on a day that might otherwise be quite lousy).
- *I need to feel ready.* (People never feel ready to do things they do not want to do. They do these things because they do not have many other options. Unfortunately, that means that if you wait to feel ready, you never will.)

PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES REVIEW WORKSHEET

ACTIVITIES / TASKS WHEN WELL		ACTIVITIES / TASKS WHEN DEPRESSED			
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?	7	8	7	8
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?	3	3	3	0
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?	3	2	7	8
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?	9	7	3	?
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?	Twice per week	weekly	attempted	Monthly
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?	7	6	8	3
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?	3	2	7	7
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?	9	7	3	4
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?	Every two weeks	Not yet	Not yet	Not yet
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?	0	0	0	0
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?	1	1	10	10
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?	8	8	?	?
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?				
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?				
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?				
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?				
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?				
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?				
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?				
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?				
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?				
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?				
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?				
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?				
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?				
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?				
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?				
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?				
TASK / ACTIVITY	How often do you do it?				
	Is it necessary (0 to 10)?				
	Is it difficult (0 to 10)?				
	Is it pleasurable (0 to 10)?				

KEEPING SCORE: DO MY ASSUMPTIONS MATCH THE OUTCOME?

Remember that table? We are going to adapt it to test your assumptions about your ability to experience pleasure and set an experiment.

Triggering Circumstances	Reaction			Outcome (Change in Circumstances)
	Thoughts	Physical Reactions	Emotions <small>Write down what emotions you felt and rate your mood from -10 to +10 using <i>Personal Mood Scale</i></small>	

First of all, select a pleasurable activity from your Pleasurable Activities Review Worksheet that used to be rated as not very difficult but quite pleasurable. Decide on the day and time when you are going to do it. Before you do your activity, complete the first part of GETTING RE-ENGAGED worksheet. Complete the second part after having completed the activity.

GETTING RE-ENGAGED (sample)

Write down what you are planning to do, when, where and with whom. <i>Meet friend for coffee on Tuesday evening at Starbucks</i>				
PART 1: INITIAL REACTION	Write down any thoughts that come to your mind as you are thinking about doing what you plan to do. <i>I am well too tired to do things like that. I won't have much to say. It's a waste of time. Now, I have to take the bus.... We will just both feel uncomfortable. I need to get better before I do things like that.</i>	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be difficult (0-10)? <i>Yes - 8; I have to take a bus and talk to someone who is doing better than me</i>	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be bothersome (0-10)? <i>Yes - 8; I will likely feel quite tired and prefer to stay at home.</i>	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be pleasurable (0-10)? <i>3; not sure - with all that effort it might be a 2 or even 0</i>
	What physical reactions are you feeling when you are planning your activity? <i>Yawning, tired, tension headache</i>	What emotions do you feel when you're planning your activity? <i>Irritated; overwhelmed</i>	What do you feel like doing when you're planning your activity? <i>Just go to bed, might be watch some movies on the laptop; come up with an excuse and cancel.</i>	
PART 2: OUTCOME	What actually happened? Where did you go? What did you do? <i>We met and caught up. It was OK for me to talk a little bit about my problems and to ask my friend about hers. I did not have to pretend too much. Coffee was good.</i>			
	Write down what you think about your experience. <i>I can get out of the house and talk even when I am not feeling the greatest. It was OK. Not as good as before but better than expected. I might enjoy things despite having to put in more effort than before.</i>	How difficult was it (0-10)? <i>7 - I don't like the bus</i>	How bothersome (0-10)? <i>7 - I still do not like the commute</i>	How pleasurable (0-10)? <i>6 - It was quite enjoyable</i>
	What are your physical reactions after having completed your activity? <i>Little tired; generally OK</i>	What are your emotions after having completed your activity? <i>Neutral, little pleased after the fact.</i>	<u>What do you feel like doing now?</u> <i>Rest</i> <u>What do you feel like doing next?</u> <i>Meet someone else, try movie at a theatre.</i>	

GETTING RE-ENGAGED WORKSHEET

Write down what you are planning to do, when, where and with whom.				
PART 1: INITIAL REACTION	Write down any thoughts that come to your mind as you are thinking about doing what you plan to do.	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be difficult (0-10)?	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be bothersome (0-10)?	Do you think that what you're planning to do will be pleasurable (0-10)?
	What physical reactions are you feeling when you are planning your activity?	What emotions do you feel when you're planning your activity?	What do you feel like doing when you're planning your activity?	
	What actually happened? Where did you go? What did you do?			
PART 2: OUTCOME	Write down what you think about your experience.	How difficult was it (0-10)?	How bothersome (0-10)?	How pleasurable (0-10)?
	What are your physical reactions after having completed your activity?	What are your emotions after having completed your activity?	<u>What do you feel like doing now?</u>	
				<u>What do you feel like doing next?</u>

SELF-MONITORING LOG

Planned **Actual**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 noon							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10 pm							
11 pm							
12 midnight							
1 am							
2 am							
3 am							
4 am							
5 am							
6 am							
Mood rating (-10 to + 10)							

SELF-MONITORING LOG

Planned **Actual**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7 am							
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 noon							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							
8 pm							
9 pm							
10 pm							
11 pm							
12 midnight							
1 am							
2 am							
3 am							
4 am							
5 am							
6 am							
Mood rating (-10 to +10)							

PERSONAL MOOD SCALE

It is important to be able to measure your progress and fine tune strategies that you will be learning. As everyone feels depression differently, these ratings should refer to your own experiences. Keep in mind the concept of change blindness – your progress is going to be gradual. If you are not using a personal scale to assess your progress, you are not likely to notice your progress and might end up by giving up.

