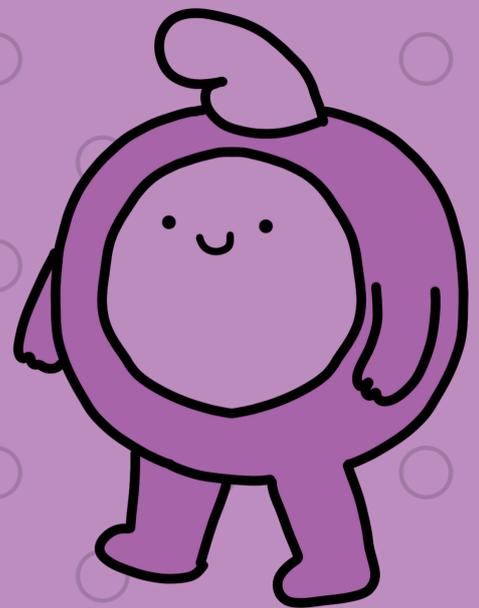


# supporting a child with low mood

A 3 session guide for  
parents/families

Session 3



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## Information for Parents/Families

The resources and strategies detailed in these booklets are based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is evidence based which is why we use it to help children and young people who are struggling with low mood – we know it can work.

These three booklets are made up of three sessions which aim to help you to help your child with their low mood. It involves working openly and collaboratively with your child and needs a commitment to use the strategies repeatedly and consistently. By doing this, you can help your child to feel better.

Every child is different, and the amount of time it takes for these strategies to help with your child's mood will be different for everyone. What is important is that you stick to it. By making these strategies part of everyday life, you can start to see big, positive changes.

It is recommended that you complete a session (booklet) each **week** with your child, with exception of session one which should be spread over **two weeks**. This gives you chance to spread tasks over several days rather than trying to do it all at once.

## Using these Booklets

The first part of each booklet provides an overview of the session including what you should do for each activity, how to spread each activity over several days and some top tips for getting the most out of each task.

The main part of each booklet is made up of the resources you will need in order to carry out each activity with your child. All activities are based on CBT strategies which are evidence based and help children to better manage their mood and feel better.

## Further Help

### **Remember!**

You are never alone in supporting your child with their mental health and if you feel they need specialist support you can make a referral to your GP or directly to your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

## Session Three: Overview

When	What to do	Top Tips
Day 1	Read the information in this booklet and look through each section.	Make sure you have a good understanding of this before discussing it with your child.
Day 2	Complete the 'My List' section together. Help your child to create a list of all of the meaningful activities they know help to lift their mood. Use their completed 'What Matters to Me' section to generate ideas.	It can be a nice idea to get creative with the list. Let your child decorate it how they want (they might want to use colours or make an electronic list) to promote a sense of ownership and get them interested. You could also create your own list to model how it's done.
Day 3	Complete the 'Problem Solving' section together.	Problems can arise that cause children to feel down and low. Helping them to solve these problems in a practical way can help overcome this and also promote their independence and confidence.
Day 4	Use the 'Activity Planner' section to help your child plan in <b>3</b> meaningful activities to do over the next week.	Use the completed list of meaningful activities from the previous section to choose what to plan. Try to encourage your child to plan a mix of different activities.
Day 5	Complete the 'What did you Learn this Week?' section.	Either do this together or complete separately before discussing afterwards.
Next Steps	Continue to use all of the strategies you have learned from these sessions and remember to encourage and praise your child for doing so. The more you use these strategies, the better your child will manage their mood.	You can go back through these booklets and recap any of the strategies any time you need to - think of them as tools in your toolkit which you and your child can now use over and over.

# My List of Meaningful Activities

When we feel low in mood, it can be difficult to plan activities or know what we can do to help us feel better. By creating a list of meaningful activities, it is much easier to choose something to do and make a plan to do it. There are some ideas here which you might want to put on your list but the most important thing is that your list is **YOURS** - it should be full of things that **YOU** enjoy doing.



- Draw or create something
- Go for a walk/jog
- Play a game

- Watch favourite movie/TV show
- Take a relaxing bath
- Do some yoga
- Play with a pet
- Read a book
- Video call/chat with a friend
- Bake a cake
- Meditate
- Lay in the sunshine



- Listen to music
- Play an instrument
- Make a meal

- Write in diary/journal
- Go to the cinema
- Go swimming
- Meet with friends
- Go shopping
- Make new friends
- Start a new hobby
- Knit/crochet
- Take dog for a walk



- Make a healthy snack
- Do some exercise
- Spend time with family
- Visit somewhere new
- Go to the beach
- Go out for a meal
- Have a hot chocolate with a family member
- Visit family



- Do some colouring
- Play some football
- Watch a sports game
- Join a group/class
- Rearrange/organise my room
- Do some gardening
- Go to the park
- Go somewhere new with family
- Write a book/poem/short story



- Make a gift for someone
- Go on a bike ride
- Take some photos
- Go for a picnic



- Plan a trip
- Do a jigsaw
- Dance or sing
- Get dressed up nice

Try to make sure your list has a good mixture of different activities (for example, make sure there's a mix of things you can do with others and things you can do alone, things you can do inside and things you can do outside, things that can be done easily and things that need more planning). This way, you will always have something you're able to do.

# My List

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a purple border, intended for writing a list.

# Problem Solving

## Step by step guide to solving a real problem

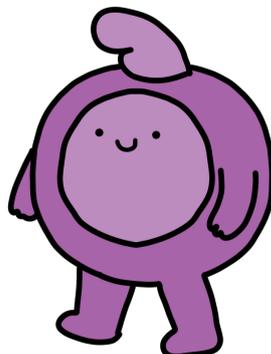
(You'll need some paper and pens/pencils)

- Step 1** Write down your problem in 1 or 2 sentences.
- Step 2** Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem (no matter what they are!).
- Step 3** Make a table and write down ALL of the good things and ALL of the not so good things you can think of for each of your ideas.

	Good things	Not so good things
Idea 1		
Idea 2		

- Step 4** Choose one idea that looks like it could work (if you struggle, see which one has the most good things). Ask yourself, is my idea realistic? If it isn't, choose a different idea.
- Step 5** Make a plan! Write down the answers to these questions to create your plan of action!
- 1) What will you do?
  - 2) When will you do it?
  - 3) How will you do it?
  - 4) Who will you do it with?
  - 5) Could there be any difficulties? If so, what could you do to overcome these?

**Step 6 DO IT!**



# After you've done it...

Well done for giving your idea a go and for trying to solve your problem! Now, think about how it went.

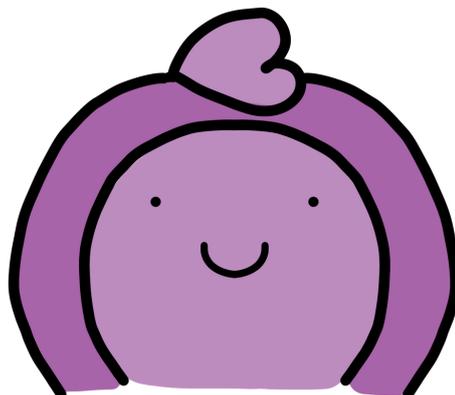
## Review it

Answer the following questions to help you reflect on how it went.

- 1) Was it helpful?
- 2) Did you achieve what you wanted to?
- 3) If not, could you do something differently/change something next time?
- 4) Did you achieve anything (no matter how small) towards solving your problem? Even tiny steps forward are big achievements.
- 5) What did you learn?

## Remember...

Whether your solution worked really well or whether it didn't quite go as you'd hoped, you should be very proud of yourself for giving it a go! Well done!



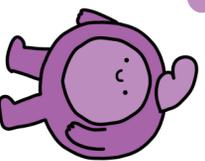
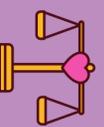
## Activity Planner

When we are feeling low, it is important to plan and do activities that we know help to lift our mood. This way, we can start to break the negative cycle and change it to a more positive one. There will always be essential activities we have to do in our lives (like going to school or appointments and doing homework/revision) but the important thing to remember is that we need to have a **BALANCE**. This means we should have a good balance of essential activities we have to do, as well as activities that are enjoyable, meaningful and help lift our mood.

Use the table to plan in some meaningful activities this week which will help to lift your mood. Remember, it's about finding a good balance that works for you.

Day Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

Remember!  
It's about balance.



Follow the Plan  
and Not the  
Mood!

# What did you learn this week?

Use this space to:

- 1) Write/draw about what you have found out this week.
- 2) Write/draw about what you have found useful.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick purple border, intended for writing or drawing. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower two-thirds of the document.

# keeping things going

Everyone is different and makes progress at their own pace. It's important to keep the things going which you have put in place during these sessions. The more you use these strategies, the more it will become part of everyday life and the better you will feel. Here are the main things you need to remember.

## follow the plan and not the mood

Keep making plans every week to do more of the activities that are meaningful to you. Remember, by following the plan and not the mood, you will feel increasingly better. You might want to make or buy a wall calendar to write your plans on or maybe get a nice diary/notebook. If you plan it, you're more likely to do it!



## do more to feel better

Keep adding to and changing your list of meaningful activities. It can be a good idea to keep your list somewhere you can see it. This way, if you're feeling low, you can easily choose something from your list to do there and then to help lift your mood. It can be a good idea to keep it up on your bedroom wall or in the kitchen.



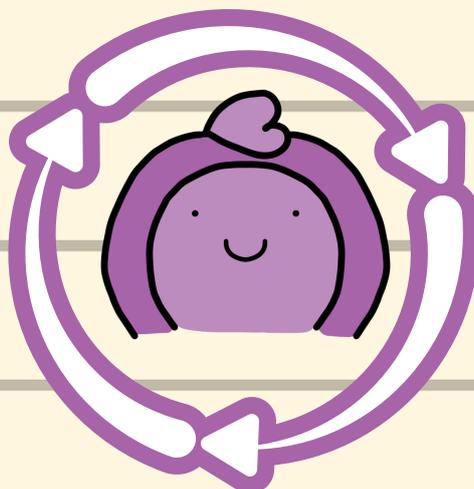
## practical problem solving

If problems arise which are stopping you from doing activities or are causing you to feel low in mood, use the problem solving steps to help overcome the problem. Write down each step from the handout to break the problem down and help to solve it. This is important because solving problems helps us to feel better.



The journey to feeling better can be full of ups and downs and it's important to recognise that we all have bad days and good days. When bad days happen, don't beat yourself up! The next day is a new day and remember to break the negative cycle by **DOING MORE TO FEEL BETTER**.

do more of  
what matters



feel better  
and happier

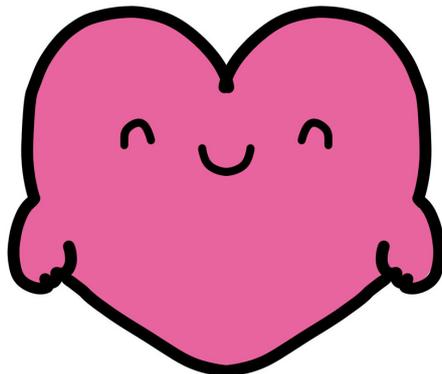
get more from life

# Next Steps

It's important to continue to put all of these strategies into practise to help your child manage their mood. Make a note of the things you will continue to do or things you are going to do next.

## Be Proud of Yourself!

As a parent, it can be difficult knowing what is best for your child when they are struggling with low mood and many parents report feeling overwhelmed. Be proud of yourself for taking the time and effort to put these strategies in place - a HUGE well done! Take some time to reward yourself and recognise that you are doing the right things by making changes to help your child feel better.



Don't forget! If you continue to feel your child needs support with their mental health, you can make a referral to access this by visiting your GP or contacting your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).