

# Understanding Depression





# Contents

About Depression . . . . .	1
Taking Care of Yourself . . . . .	10
The Mind-Body Connection . . . . .	18
Resources . . . . .	31

# About Depression

## What's depression?

Depression is a medical illness. The condition can affect your body, feelings, thoughts and behavior.

Due to myths and stigma about depression, some people incorrectly view depression as a character flaw or a sign of personal weakness. Depression is neither of these.

A medical illness, depression can cause emotional and physical pain. Suffering and disability can last for months or even years. Severe depression may include repeated thoughts of death or suicide—or attempted suicide. When you have depression, you may have:

- Problems with activity levels in certain parts of your brain.  
Or
- Chemicals in your brain called *neurotransmitters* out of balance.

Depression can affect anyone—young or old, people from all backgrounds and racial or ethnic groups, and in any profession. It's 1 of the most common mental disorders in the United States.

When depression is correctly diagnosed, the illness almost always is treatable. If you have a diagnosis of depression, recovering on your own may be challenging. With treatment, recovery is possible. Treatment may include prescription medication and talking with a behavioral health care professional.

Depression is a medical illness, not a character flaw or a sign of weakness.

## Symptoms of depression

Everyone experiences periods of sadness (sometimes called *feeling down* or *feeling blue*). However, if you have these feelings for more than 2 weeks or they affect your daily life, you may have depression.

Symptoms of depression include:

- No longer enjoying most or all activities that previously gave you pleasure.
- Tiredness or lack of energy.
- Change in sleep patterns.
- Change in appetite, or weight loss or gain.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Difficulty working.
- Change in personal relationships.
- Persistent feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness or hopelessness.
- General irritability.

**If you ever feel you're at risk of harming yourself, call your clinician or clinic. If you can't reach your clinician or clinic, go to the nearest emergency center.**

My clinician's or clinic's phone number:

---

Find additional crisis resources on Page 31.





## Causes of depression

We don't always know what causes depression. Many risk factors can lead to depression, including:

- Family or personal history of depression.
- Chemical imbalances in the brain.
- Poor self-image or negative view of self.
- Being easily overwhelmed by life's challenges.
- Chronic illness.
- Domestic abuse or violence.
- Major life changes or stressors, such as death, divorce or moving to a new home.
- Pregnancy or after giving birth.

Depression almost always is treatable when correctly diagnosed.

## myStrength

Build a healthier mind for a stronger you with myStrength. This digital program has proven tools and activities to support your mental health. Choose from focus areas such as managing depression, reducing stress, controlling anxiety, improving sleep and more. myStrength is free for all our patients and is completely confidential.

What to expect:

- Learn from hundreds of activities, articles and videos.
- Practice techniques to help shift your thinking, get inspired and feel more hopeful.
- Access myStrength whenever and wherever you need it. The program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Get started today:

- Visit [mystrength.com/signup](https://mystrength.com/signup) to create an account.
- Use access code **HEALTHPARTNERS-PATIENT**.



*Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com*



## Treatment for depression

Treatment for depression can help you feel better and stay well. The aim of treatment is for you to enjoy life again and be able to resume your regular work schedule, hobbies and other activities.

You'll know your treatment is working when your symptoms of depression start to improve.

- **The short-term goal of treatment** is to resolve (get rid of) your symptoms. Resolving symptoms is called achieving remission.
- **The long-term goal of treatment** is to maintain remission as long as possible. Maintaining remission lessens the chance that depression will return (called *relapse*).

Your treatment may include psychotherapy and prescription medication. Often, a combination of psychotherapy and medication is the best treatment for depression.

**Psychotherapy.** Your clinician may recommend or refer you to a behavioral health professional for psychotherapy. Psychotherapy with a psychologist or other behavioral health professional involves talking and then taking action to make changes based on your therapy discussion. This treatment can take 8 to 10 weeks before you start feeling better.

**Prescription medication.** Soon after your diagnosis, your clinician may prescribe antidepressant medication. However, feeling the benefits may take some time. You may have some side effects.



*iStock.com/Yamato1987*

## **Antidepressant medication**

If you've been prescribed an antidepressant medication, you may have questions. The following are some answers to frequently asked questions. Contact your care team if you have other questions or concerns about your medication.

### **Will an antidepressant medication work for me?**

Most people are able to find at least 1 antidepressant medication that helps them feel better. About 6 out of 10 people start to feel better with the 1st antidepressant medication they try.

No test can tell you how you'll respond to an antidepressant medication. You may need to try several antidepressants before finding 1 antidepressant that works for you.

### **When will I start to feel better?**

You may feel better just a few days after starting an antidepressant, or you may need to take an antidepressant for 4 to 8 weeks before you feel better. Sometimes, you may need your dose increased before you start to feel better.



## How long do I need to take an antidepressant?

Most people take an antidepressant medication for at least 9 to 12 months. Some people continue taking medication for the rest of their lives.

To decide how long to take medication, talk to your clinician about your symptoms and whether you previously have had periods of depression.

## Am I likely to have side effects?

Side effects are not uncommon in the first 1 to 2 weeks of starting an antidepressant medication. Most side effects get better in a few weeks. You may need to decrease your dose, or change or add a medication.

Side effects of antidepressant medication may include:

- **Weight changes.** Changes in weight most likely occur over 6 to 12 months and depend on your actual weight.
- **Sexual problems.** Loss of libido (sexual desire) or ability to reach orgasm.
- **Sleep problems.** Sleepiness or insomnia (difficulty sleeping).
- **Stopping approach.** If you skip a dose of your antidepressant medication or stop taking it all at once, the following may occur:
  - » Headache
  - » Nausea
  - » Dizziness
  - » Anxiety
  - » Light-headedness

Be sure to take your antidepressant medication as prescribed. The medication helps improve your symptoms **and** keep them from coming back. Don't take your medication just when you have symptoms.

## Completing a Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)

Your care team may ask you to complete the PHQ-9, also known as the *Quick Depression Assessment*. The PHQ-9 is a brief 9-question survey that helps rate how often you may be experiencing symptoms of depression and which symptoms.

The survey asks you to rate your symptoms related to depression for the previous 2 weeks. Answering the questions openly and honestly is important. Your answers help your care team:

- Identify or diagnosis your depression.
- Determine the severity of your depression.
- Check the progress of your treatment over time.
  - » Your care team may ask you to complete the PHQ-9 multiple times, including at or between appointments.
- Modify your treatment.



Alex Hinds/Shutterstock.com





## Scheduling follow-up appointments

We know scheduling and attending appointments can be challenging. However, regular appointments:

- Help make sure your care plan is meeting your needs.
- Can be an important part of your recovery, even if you're taking prescribed antidepressant medication.

Attending regular appointments with your clinician or therapist is valuable even when you don't feel like going or you feel better.

- Getting support provided at appointments is key when you aren't feeling your best.
- Giving yourself credit for what you're able to accomplish is important, as is sharing that with your clinician or therapist.

You can meet with your clinician or therapist in person, or by phone or video visit.

# Taking Care of Yourself

Medication and psychotherapy, often in combination, are the best treatments for depression. In addition, you can take steps on your own to feel better.

## Improving your mood

Taking care of yourself can be difficult when you have depression. However, by trying different techniques, you can improve your mood and feel hopeful about your treatment and recovery.

- **Be kind to yourself.** Keep in mind:
  - » Your depression is not likely to disappear right away. Feeling better takes time. Your mood will improve little by little.
  - » Don't blame yourself for not feeling your best.
  - » Depression isn't something you can overcome with willpower alone.
  - » A long-term approach to treatment is important to help you feel better and stay well.

### Tips to help manage your depression at work

- Try to set realistic goals, whatever kind of work you do.
- Avoid taking on a lot of responsibility, if possible.
- Divide your workload by breaking large tasks into small ones. Set priorities.
- Don't be hard on yourself if you aren't able to finish your to-do list.

Other ways to help you feel better include the following:

- **Find pleasurable activities.** People tend to feel healthier when they do activities they enjoy and spend time with people who are supportive. Having depression, though, can make doing the very activities that help you feel better difficult. Start by choosing 1 short activity you typically enjoy, such as going to the movies or a sporting event, or visiting a library or bookstore.
- **Increase your physical activity.** Studies suggest that being physically active can help with depression symptoms. Even taking a short walk can help improve how you feel.
- **Write in a journal.** By writing down your thoughts and experiences, you may notice what triggers your depression and what makes you feel better. You'll also have some history that may help you recognize progress or ongoing problems.
- **Practice good nutrition.** You can benefit from even small changes in your eating. Aim to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean protein. Eat fewer fried foods and sugary drinks. If you've lost your appetite, eat small snacks rather than large meals.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs.** Don't take medications that haven't been prescribed for you. They may affect the prescribed medications you're taking for depression or make your depression worse.
- **Improve your sleep habits.** Getting a good night's sleep can help you feel better. See more about sleep on Pages 14 to 15.

You can improve your mood and feel hopeful about your treatment and recovery.

## Tips for talking with friends and family

Reaching out to family or friends you trust and who can be supportive is important. People close to you often will be the 1st to sense something is wrong and want to help.

- Try not to isolate yourself. If talking about your depression doesn't feel comfortable with those close to you, ask your clinician to refer you to a behavioral health professional (see next page for more information). Write down the names of some people you can talk to:

---

---

---

- Consider sharing with those close to you how your depression and treatment are affecting you. This may be an opportunity to help dispel myths about depression. Views of depression vary across cultures. Suggest they read the books or visit the websites recommended in this booklet (see Pages 31 to 33). Write down the names of any people you want to help understand your depression:

---

---

---

- Talk over a major decision you can't delay with supportive loved ones. They may be able to help you look at the overall picture. Write down the decision you need to make and some names of people you can talk to about it:

---

---

---

## Tips for talking with your therapist

Getting the most out of psychotherapy is important to your recovery. Medication alone isn't always a quick fix for depression. Connecting with the right therapist is key for learning how to:

- Change your feelings and attitudes.
- Develop healthier thinking and more effective behaviors.

Different therapists have different styles and goals. Finding a therapist is very personal. Here are some important points to consider in choosing a therapist and understanding what to expect in therapy.

- Look for a therapist:
  - » Who can help you open up comfortably and feel at ease, even when sharing painful emotions.
  - » Who understands you, shows compassion and can help you see issues in perspective to make healthy changes.
- Trust your instincts. Know that your relationship in therapy grows in trust and comfort over time.
  - » View talking about painful feelings as an opportunity for self-exploration, healing and practicing new behaviors.
  - » Remember, some goals take more time to reach than others. Decide with your therapist at what point you may expect to experience progress.
  - » Avoid, however, staying with a therapist if you're not comfortable or aren't making progress.
- Identify the best treatment approach for you.
  - » Therapy isn't just about you doing all the talking. The process is a joint effort between you and your therapist.
  - » Therapists use different scientifically validated ways to help you change your thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

## Resting well: Getting enough sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is important for overall health and well-being. Most adults need 7 to 9 hours a night.

Many people have trouble sleeping at night. If you're depressed, you may have even more difficulty sleeping. Try these tips to improve your sleep.

- Avoid sleeping pills unless prescribed by your clinician. Sleeping pills may make you groggy during the day and affect other medications you're taking.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol and nicotine during the day. Don't drink caffeine or alcohol or use nicotine in the evening.
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Talk to your clinician before starting a new physical activity program.
- Spend time outdoors to get natural sunlight. Exposure to sunlight helps with your sleep cycle. But remember the sunscreen.
- Avoid heavy meals close to bedtime. If hungry, try a light snack before bed.
- Wake up and go to bed at the same time every day, including Saturday and Sunday.
- Avoid using your phone, computer or tablet in the hours before bed. If you read on your device, filter out the blue light.

Get the sleep you need. Sleep can improve your mood, health and safety.





*TORWAISTUDIO/Shutterstock.com*

- Use relaxing bedtime rituals. Try deep breathing, yoga, meditation, tai chi or muscle relaxation. Listen to a relaxation app. Take a warm bath. Play a quiet game or read a book.
- Make a list of worries and concerns earlier in the day and then set the list aside.
- Turn your clock's face around or hide the clock in a drawer.
- Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet. Use a sleep mask or earplugs if needed.
- Consider not letting pets or children sleep with you.

## Setting goals

Writing down your goals for 7 healthy, positive behaviors and keeping track of your progress can be helpful. Choose 1 of the following to work on between now and your next appointment.

	Week 1							Week 2						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<p><b>Get the sleep you need.</b> Sleep can improve your mood, health and safety. Everyone's needs for sleep are different.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Take medications.</b> If medications have been prescribed for you, taking them as instructed is important.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Increase physical activity.</b> Depression symptoms often improve with exercise.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Eat healthy foods.</b> The foods you eat can affect your mood and energy levels.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Avoid mood-altering substances.</b> Use of mood-altering substances interferes with treatment.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Enjoy social activities.</b> Regular contact with family, friends or other people who provide support helps decrease symptoms of depression.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Find healthy ways to relax.</b> Choosing healthy activities that help you relax will improve your well-being.</p>														
My goal is:														

Decide how many times a week you want to do the behavior and check off each day you're successful. Bring to your appointment.

	Week 3							Week 4						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<p><b>Get the sleep you need.</b> Sleep can improve your mood, health and safety. Everyone's needs for sleep are different.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Take medications.</b> If medications have been prescribed for you, taking them as instructed is important.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Increase physical activity.</b> Depression symptoms often improve with exercise.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Eat healthy foods.</b> The foods you eat can affect your mood and energy levels.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Avoid mood-altering substances.</b> Use of mood-altering substances interferes with treatment.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Enjoy social activities.</b> Regular contact with family, friends or other people who provide support helps decrease symptoms of depression.</p>														
My goal is:														
<p><b>Find healthy ways to relax.</b> Choosing healthy activities that help you relax will improve your well-being.</p>														
My goal is:														

# The Mind-Body Connection

So far, we've given you some basic information about depression and some ways to treat it—including psychotherapy, medication and certain kinds of activities. The next section of this booklet focuses on the mind-body connection and ways to improve your well-being. Improving your feelings of well-being can in turn help your depression.

## An overview

We all are affected by what takes place in our bodies cognitively (the *thinking* part of our brains), emotionally and physically. Researchers continue to gain new knowledge about the way these different parts of us interact.

In the following pages, you'll find information about stress, the flight-or-fight response, relaxation, meditation and more. Although relaxation and meditation aren't likely to cure your depression, these techniques can help you respond to stress in healthier ways. Better responses to stress can enhance your well-being.

Improving your feelings of well-being using relaxation techniques can help reduce depression symptoms.

## The stress response

Stress is more than just a feeling of tension, frustration or anxiety. Stress also means your body is physically preparing for a conflict.

In the early days of human evolution, preparing for and responding to conflict was important for survival. Using the fight-or-flight response (say, fighting off or running from a tiger) was effective.

However, nature meant for this behavior to be short-term. The human body isn't meant to stay in the stress response for days at a time, or worse—for weeks or months.

## The relaxation response

The relaxation response describes your state when your nervous system is calm and relaxed. This state is the opposite of the stress response.

Many techniques are available to try to help with relaxation. Most are based on the same general principles:

- Letting go
- Passive observation
- Staying in the present

Like the stress response, the relaxation response is a natural state for your body. But if you've been so conditioned by stress, you may need help in relearning how to relax.

Lots of relaxation books, websites and apps can help you learn the relaxation response. Also, see Pages 32 to 33 for a list of meditation resources.

In addition, try the exercises included throughout the remainder of this booklet. These exercises provide an introduction to practicing relaxation. See Page 21 for descriptions of different relaxation techniques.

## Relaxed breathing exercise

Practicing relaxed breathing helps slow your breathing and relax your shoulders, neck and upper chest muscles. Practice this technique any time or whenever you feel stressed.

1. Sit in a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Relax your shoulders.
3. Place your hands by your side or in your lap.
4. Breathe in through your nose. Keep your mouth closed. When you inhale, you'll feel your stomach expanding (moving outward). Put your hand on your stomach to check.
5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth. As you exhale, you'll feel your stomach contracting (moving inward).



©Magnus Bråth

## Relaxation techniques

### Progressive muscle relaxation

With this technique, you tighten and relax each muscle group, moving up or down your body. Or image each part of your body, relaxing as you focus on the body part.

Try to alternate between muscle tension and relaxation to help feel the difference. Say words such as *heavy*, *light*, *warm*, *comfortable* and *very relaxed* to help your muscles relax.

### Imagery

This technique uses your thoughts, senses and mental pictures to develop an image of a place that feels safe, healing, peaceful or whatever you need to relax. Think about what you see, hear and smell. "Touch" some of the objects in your imagined place and notice what you feel. Or, try to create a "healing light" and imagine the light enters your body.

Creating a safe, comfortable and relaxing place is important. If you have trouble pushing aside unpleasant thoughts or events connected to the place, try choosing a different scene.

### Meditation

Using any of the basic techniques, create a state of relaxation by repeating a prayer, chanting, talking silently or focusing on a sacred object.

### Auditory or listening relaxation

Use sounds from nature, such as gentle ocean waves, bird calls, falling rain or thunderstorms to help create a relaxed mood.

Slow, gentle, soothing music also can help you to relax. Allow your mind to drift into the sounds and mood of the music.

Write down any techniques you'll consider trying.

---

---

## Learning to practice relaxation

Starting to practice relaxation can be like walking through a woods or meadow for the 1st time with no trail to follow. Initially you may experience:

- The need to use a relaxation app or recording for each practice session.
- A tendency to fall asleep.
- Frustration as you try to develop new behaviors.
- The need to try several different techniques to find the 1 or 2 that work best for you.

Go easy on yourself as you aim to change some of your old thinking and develop new behaviors. The path from stress to relaxation becomes clearer with practice.

In time, you may find you become aware of tension much sooner, and naturally start to use your relaxation techniques. As a result, you might never experience the same buildup of stress and tension you did before.

When you're relaxed, you'll often find yourself refreshed and able to engage in activities with more energy, efficiency and creativity.

Try several different relaxation techniques to find the ones that work best for you.



## Music-assisted relaxation exercise

Music used alone can be an effective way to help you relax. Or, use music as a guide with other relaxation techniques, including imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, focused breathing or meditation. Music that is relaxing often:

- Is slow (50 to 70 beats per minute) and steady, has few volume changes and isn't a recognizable melody.
- Doesn't have words or harsh, clashing sounds.

Carefully choose music that's comforting for you and try this exercise:

1. Lie down, close your eyes and take a breath. As you breathe, relax.
2. Turn your attention to the music. Notice sounds coming and going.
3. Try to avoid thinking about your reaction to the sounds, whether you like them or not. Simply listen.
4. Take another breath.
5. When you're ready, open your eyes.



© [www.JarekMazur.com](http://www.JarekMazur.com)

## Tips for using relaxation techniques

Letting go, being an observer and staying in the present can help you stay focused on current, realistic topics. Follow these tips when practicing relaxation techniques.

### Be in the present

- Try to focus on what's going on right now. Don't think ahead into the future or get stuck in the past.
- Notice how your body feels as you relax. This awareness helps you stay in the present and relax.

### Be a passive observer

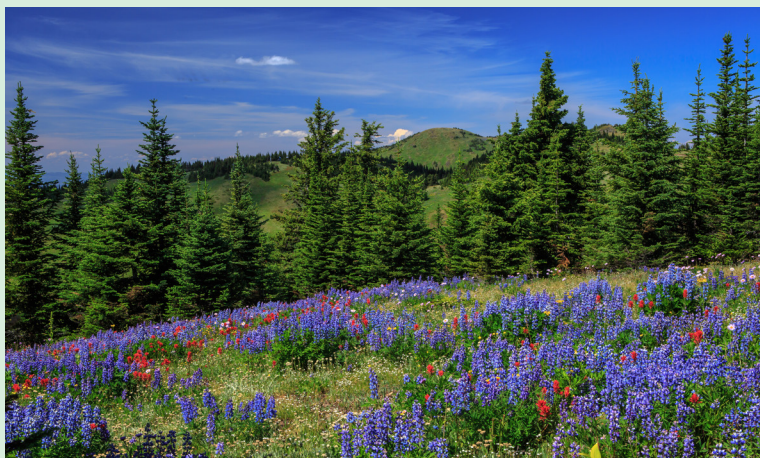
- Let go of having any goals for relaxation.
- Avoid having high expectations for a certain outcome. Disappointment is likely if your desired outcomes don't happen soon enough or in the way you wish. Disappointment in turn can create stress.
- Adopt a passive attitude to give your body a chance to relax. If you show no active interest or have any expectations about what you're supposed to experience, you'll relax.

### Avoid negative thinking

- Push aside negative thoughts such as, "Tomorrow is going to be a terrible day" or "Nobody loves me." Your nervous system reacts to negative thoughts as if your very survival is being threatened, and activates the stress response.

### Recall a pleasant memory

- Avoid thinking about old, painful memories that activate the stress response. You may re-experience the original pain and negative emotions.
- Choose instead a pleasant memory to become more relaxed as you re-experience those positive feelings.



## Body scan meditation

This meditation practice can help you learn to tolerate strong physical sensations. Usually, you practice this meditation lying down.

1. Start by paying attention to your breathing.
2. Then slowly begin to focus on your body, beginning with the toes on 1 foot. Notice all the physical feelings coming from your toes, including how warm and how relaxed they are.
3. Next, focus on the top of your foot.
4. Gradually move your focus upward to scan your entire body. End with the top and back of your head.
5. Be curious and interested about each area of your body you focus on.

If your mind wanders, try to gently bring it back.

*Photo © Murray Foubister*

## Healthy thinking

Healthy thinking is a way to help you stay well or cope with a health problem by changing how you think. The technique is based on research that shows you can change how you think. And how you think affects how you feel.

Cognitive behavioral therapy, also called *CBT*, is a therapy often used to help people think in a healthy way. CBT focuses on thought (cognitive) and action (behavioral) to help you replace negative thoughts with accurate, encouraging ones. CBT also may be able to help you sleep better and lose weight.

### How can healthy thinking benefit you?

If you think in a healthy way, you may be more able to care for yourself and handle life's challenges. You'll feel better. And you may be more able to avoid or cope with stress, anxiety and depression. Healthy thinking also can help prevent or control depression.

- Negative thoughts can make depression worse or can be a symptom of depression.
- Changing your thinking will take some time. Practice healthy thinking every day. After a while, healthy thinking will come naturally to you.

### Three good things

Research shows you can promote healthy thinking and increase your long-term happiness with this simple exercise:

- Every night, for 2 weeks, write down 3 things that went well and explain why.

That's it. Give it a try. The key is to retrain your brain to remember good things and lessen depressing thoughts.

## How can you use healthy thinking to cope with depression?

- **Notice and stop your thoughts.** The 1st step is to notice and stop your negative thoughts or self-talk. *Self-talk* is what you think and believe about yourself and your experiences. Self-talk is like a running commentary in your head. Your self-talk may be rational and helpful. Or your self-talk may be negative and not helpful.
- **Ask about your thoughts.** The 2nd step is to ask yourself whether your thoughts are helpful or unhelpful. Does the evidence support your negative thought? Some of your self-talk may be true. Or it may be partly true but exaggerated.

Self-talk also may include several kinds of irrational thoughts. Here are a few types to look for:

- » **Focusing on the negative.** This is sometimes called *filtering*. You filter out the good and focus only on the bad.  
**Example:** "I'm sad that I don't have many friends. People must not like me."  
**Reality:** You have some friends. So that means you're likable and can make more friends if you want them.
- » **Using should.** People sometimes have set ideas about how they should act. If you hear yourself saying that you or other people "ought to" or "have to" do something, then you might be setting yourself up to feel bad.  
**Example:** "I should get married before I'm 30. If I don't, it means I'm a loser."  
**Reality:** Having a timeline in mind is OK. But you're not being fair to yourself if you make your self-worth depend on meeting a deadline.

- » **Overgeneralizing.** This is taking 1 example and saying it's true for everything. Look for words such as never and always.

**Example:** "I got laid off. I'll never get another job."

**Reality:** Losing a job may be due to downsizing and other factors beyond your control. Losing a job doesn't mean you won't be able to get another job.

- » **All-or-nothing thinking:** This is also called *black-or-white thinking*.

**Example:** "If I don't get a big raise at my next review, then it means I have no future with this company."

**Reality:** Wanting a big raise is a normal desire. But if you don't get the raise, the reasons why may have nothing to do with you.

- **Choose your thoughts.** The last step is to choose a more helpful thought to replace the unhelpful one. Keeping a journal of your thoughts is 1 of the best ways to practice stopping, asking and choosing your thoughts. Journaling makes you aware of your self-talk.

- » Write down any negative or unhelpful thoughts you had during the day. If you think you might not remember at the end of your day, keep a notepad with you so you can write down any negative thoughts as they happen. Then write down a helpful message to correct the unhelpful thought.
- » If you do this every day, accurate and helpful thoughts will soon come naturally to you. Keep in mind there may be some truth in some of your negative thoughts. You may have some behaviors you want to work on.
- » If you didn't do as well as you would like on something, write that down. You can work on a plan to correct or improve that area. If you want, you also might write down what kind of negative thought you had.

Read the "Thought diary" on the next page for examples of what some journal entries might look like.

## Thought diary

Notice and stop your negative thought	Ask what type of negative thought you had	Choose an accurate, helpful thought
"I'm sad that I don't have many friends. People must not like me."	Focusing on negative	"I have some friends, so I know I can make friends."
"I should get married before I'm 30. If I don't, it means I'm a loser."	Should	"There's no guarantee I'll meet the right person by the time I'm 30. If I don't get married by then, I still have time to find a good relationship."
"I got laid off. I'll never get another job."	Overgeneralizing	"Our company ran into financial trouble, so I got laid off. It may take some time to get another job, but I know I will."
"If I don't get a big raise at my next review, then it means I have no future with this company."	All or nothing	"I would love to get a big raise. But it might not be in the company's budget this year."



## Loving-kindness meditation

Loving-kindness meditations can help you focus on feeling kind and compassionate toward yourself and others.

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Relax your whole body. Take a deep breath in, and breath out.
2. Start by thinking of a loved one or close friend. Imagine that person sending you wishes for your well-being, happiness and safety. Use a phrase to start the process, such as: "May you be happy, may you be free from pain." Bask in the warm wishes.
3. Next begin to send the love you feel back to that person. Use a similar phrase, such as: "May your life be filled with happiness, health and well-being."
4. Take a deep breath in, and breath out. Notice your state of mind and how you feel. Open your eyes when ready.

As you practice this meditation, you may find unloving and unkind feelings arise too. Try to be tolerant of those feelings in yourself.

*Photo ©liquidcrash*



# Resources

## Crisis resources

- **Crisis Text Line**

- » **Minnesota residents:** Text MN to 741741; Twin Cities residents can also call \*\*CRISIS (\*\*274747) from a cell phone
- » **Wisconsin residents:** Text HOPELINE to 741741

Mental health support via text message 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also available via Facebook Messenger at [facebook.com/crisistextline](https://facebook.com/crisistextline).

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

800-273-8255

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Crisis hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Online chat available on website.

## Informational websites

- **Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)**

[dbsalliance.org](https://dbsalliance.org)

Information, wellness tools and research on bipolar illness.

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**

- » **Minnesota residents**

[namimn.org](https://namimn.org)

651-645-2948

- » **Wisconsin residents**

[namiwisconsin.org](https://namiwisconsin.org)

(608) 268-6000

**Help line:** 800-950-6264

Local branches offer free classes, support and education to individuals with depression and their family members.

- **National Institute of Mental Health**

[nimh.nih.gov](https://nimh.nih.gov)

National government research agency on mental health.

- **Now Matters Now**

[nowmattersnow.org](http://nowmattersnow.org)

Online resources and tools to help with depressed or suicidal thoughts. Also offers education and tools to help tolerate distress, and information about mindfulness.

## Meditation and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) resources

### Meditation apps\*

- **buddhify**

[buddhify.com](http://buddhify.com)

Guided meditations grouped by what you're doing or how you're feeling. Meditations last from 4 minutes to 30 minutes. Download the app for a small fee. Additional content and features are available with an annual membership fee.

- **Calm**

[calm.com](http://calm.com)

A meditation, sleep and relaxation app. The app is free to download but a paid subscription provides access to additional content.

- **Headspace**

[headspace.com](http://headspace.com)

Hundreds of meditations on everything from stress to sleep. After a brief free trial period, Headspace charges a subscription fee.

- **InsightTimer**

[insighttimer.com](http://insighttimer.com)

Guided meditations plus music and sounds to help calm your mind, focus, sleep better and relax. The app is free to download and offers additional features with a paid subscription.

### Meditation websites

- **The Mindfulness Solution: Everyday Practices for Everyday Problems**

[mindfulness-solution.com/DownloadMeditations.html](http://mindfulness-solution.com/DownloadMeditations.html)

\*Apps are available for download from the App Store or Google Play.

- **UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC)**  
marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations  
Guided meditations available in several different languages.
- **YouTube**  
youtube.com  
Guided meditations with relaxing video images.

### CBT apps\*

- **CBT-i Coach**  
mobile.va.gov/app/cbt-i-coach  
Proven strategies to alleviate symptoms of insomnia and improve your sleep. The app is free to download.
- **CBT Guide to Depression Self-Help: Mood Log, Diary**  
Mindfulness training plus practical tools for learning CBT methods. Also provides resources to use in collaboration with a health professional. The app is free to download.

### Books

**The Feeling Good Handbook** by David Burns, MD. Penguin Publishing Group, 1999.

**Hope and Help for Depression: A Self-Care Handbook.** Channing Bete Company, 2007.

**Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think** by Dennis Greenberger, PhD and Christine A. Padesky, PhD. The Guilford Press, 2016.

**The Mindful Way through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness** by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn. The Guilford Press, 2007.

**The Relaxation Response** by Herbert Benson, MD with Miriam Z. Klipper. William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1975, revised foreword 2000.



## Education Resources