

DEPRESSION

Making treatment work – taking charge of change

There are two approaches to making treatment work

1. Work with experts who know how to help you and where shared responsibility is established.
2. Be informed by experts and work together with your teenager where you are responsible for his/her mood and there is an agreement on how to manage a variety of behaviours.

Working with experts

There are a number of treatments available, most commonly outpatient, although day patient and in patient treatment may be offered depending on severity. These treatment settings may usually include a mix of psychological and medical treatments at an individual, family and/or group level.

This document focuses on:

Working with your teenager

Here is how you can be directly involved in collaborating with your teenager in implementing change.

STEP 1: Establish a baseline

STEP 2: List your aims

STEP 3: Recognise change

STEP 4: Evaluate change

STEP 1: Establish a baseline

1. Make sure your teenager is physically not at risk by consulting your GP.
2. Get a psychiatric/psychological evaluation of your teenager and discuss with the professional involved what you plan to do and how this is in line with what the professional may identify as your teenager's needs.
3. Get shared backing from your partner/spouse and the rest of the family.
4. Explain what you intend to do with your teenager and get them involved in the steps ahead.
5. Devise some specific targets for change.
6. Be available and prepared to invest in making the programme work. This may mean significant change to your and the whole family's schedules.
7. Know when to begin to back off.
8. Take care of yourself.

STEP 2: List your aims

Firstly, establish the length of time you are going to allocate to implement the programme

EXAMPLE: We will allocate the next thirty days to implement the following steps.

We will aim for a short-term strategy to help manage some of the worrying symptoms and a long-term strategy for finding out and changing what may be contributing to the depression.

We will allocate the next thirty days to implement the following steps.

Aims: Short term – Dealing with depressive episodes. There are three areas that need focus:

- 1 Your teenager's activities
- 2 Your teenager's thoughts
- 3 Your teenager's support systems

All these areas will need help with focus.

Take small steps that lead in the right direction. The aim is to feel better now.

Your teenagers activities

- Work out some simple daily tasks for your teenager to do. These should include: an agreed getting out of bed time; dressing time; small tasks such as writing something; making a telephone call; sorting something etc. Be realistic, they have to be achievable goals.
- Agree beforehand what your involvement with this will be, e.g. you will remind him/her three times.
- Agree on distractions and eliminate them – e.g. if long hours are spent watching tv, on the computer, or listening to music, then agree that this will be done in agreed 'rest breaks' or at the end of the day rather than at the beginning.
- Draw up a timetable of these activities (see box on the right) implementing this will need practice.

Remember! You are aiming for consistency. Once this is done, items can be changed as appropriate.

Remember! The items on the timetable have got to be achievable, small and what your teenager feels they can do.

Remember! Your teenager is in a different place to where they've been before their mood changed.

- Low mood takes away pleasure so its difficult to see the positive of doing anything.
- Low mood creates tiredness which makes it difficult to activate yourself.
- Low mood creates a loss of direction, so irs easier to become disorganised –having a routine helps.

Example of Daily Activity Diary

Time	Activity
0800 – 0900	Wake up
0900 – 0930	Brush teeth and get dressed
1000	Have breakfast
1100 – 1200	Catch up on email / facebook / read / make some phone calls
1200 – 1300	Go for a walk
1300 – 1400	Lunch
1400 – 1430	PM rest
1500 – 1600	College work
1700	Free time
2200	Bedtime

Troubleshoot! Increase the proportion of positive or pleasurable activities to start with followed by trying to balance harder activities that require application and mastery.

Troubleshoot! Schedule small tasks to start with, eg. having a bath, getting dressed more often. Then balance out with bigger tasks for example, taking the dog out for a work.

Troubleshoot! Start with low energy tasks, such as catching up with email and build onto higher energy tasks, eg. going out for a brisk walk

Your teenager's thoughts

Sam had been unhappy since he broke up with his girlfriend. He moped around the house all day and listened to gloomy music. He stopped bothering to get dressed and when his father lost his cool over this, shrugged his shoulders and said 'What's the point?' His room was an even bigger tip than it make anyway?' When his brother forced him to come downstairs to play on the Wii he got angry with himself, every time he lost saying 'this is how it always is, I'm such a loser.' He told his brother 'Why are you bothering? Remember the last time we played I

was rubbish too.’ When a friend called to say he would join and then he cancelled, Sam said ‘well, I didn’t expect any different really, that’s how it usually is for me, people let me down. ‘When mother brought back some films for him to watch he said ‘these are boring, I don’t think they make good movies anymore.’

As you can see from Sam’s story, depression affects what we remember.