

Depression Workbook

Assess, understand, and alleviate your symptoms with ten activities and exercises tailored to depression.

Assessing Depression

Self-Care for Depression

Communication Exercises

Cognitive Exercises

Depression Workbook

Depression can be challenging and overwhelming, affecting various aspects of life. Using worksheets as part of your self-help or therapeutic routine can be a powerful tool in managing and alleviating symptoms of depression. **This workbook is designed to address different areas that can contribute to or help manage depression.** By engaging with these worksheets, you can take active steps toward better mental health and well-being.

Here is a brief introduction to each worksheet included in this package:

What is Depression?

This worksheet helps you understand depression and how you experience it in your thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors.

Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Assess your symptoms and pattern of depression, and **learn which of the worksheets below are the best fit for you based on your answers.**

self-care worksheets

Self-Care Inventory

This worksheet will guide you in identifying and implementing activities that nurture your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. By establishing a self-care routine, you can build resilience and improve your overall mood and energy levels.

Practicing Gratitude

This worksheet guides you in recognizing the small things you appreciate each day. By making gratitude a regular practice, you can improve your mood, foster positivity, and reduce feelings of hopelessness.

Setting SMART Goals

This worksheet helps you set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals. This structured approach makes it easier to achieve your objectives and build a sense of accomplishment and progress.

communication worksheets

Setting Healthy Boundaries

This worksheet helps you identify areas where you need to set or reinforce boundaries and provides strategies for doing so effectively. Healthy boundaries can protect you from stress and improve your relationships and overall well-being.

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*



Depression Workbook

Cognitive Distortions

This worksheet helps you identify and challenge negative thoughts, a hallmark of depression, and replace them with more balanced and positive ones. This exercise can reduce negative thinking and promote a healthier mindset.

Cognitive Restructuring

This worksheet guides you in challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with more balanced, realistic ones. By changing how you think, you can reduce depression and improve your overall mindset.

Behavior Activation

Discover which activities and behaviors improve your mood and which drain your mood. This worksheet helps you track your mood and activities, find new mood-boosting activities to try, and schedule them in advance.

Personal Strengths Inventory

This worksheet guides you in identifying your unique strengths and talents. By focusing on your positive attributes, you can boost your self-esteem and build a foundation for overcoming challenges associated with depression.

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What is Depression?

When depressed, we may feel sad, down, low, uninterested, or hopeless. Depression may arise during stressful situations and resolve when they are over, or may be more long-lasting or pervasive.

Why do we get depressed?

Sadness is our nervous system's way of responding to loss or disappointment. When we're sad, we slow down, take a break, and signal our need for social support. However, depression occurs when sadness, hopelessness, or apathy become pervasive and get in the way of daily functioning.

What does depression feel like?

Depression shows up in our thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and behaviors or behavior urges. Check whether you have the following experiences when you are feeling sad or depressed:

Thoughts

- ☐ Guilt or worthlessness
- ☐ Preoccupation with the past
- ☐ Negativity or pointlessness
- ☐ Slow thinking or mind going blank

Feelings

- ☐ Sad, down, low, empty
- ☐ Tearful, distressed, irritable, tense
- ☐ Uninterested, apathetic, "blah"
- ☐ Despairing, hopeless, helpless

Sensations

- ☐ Low energy, apathy, fatigue
- ☐ Changes in appetite or sleep
- ☐ Feeling slowed down or fidgety
- ☐ Aches, discomfort, heaviness

Behaviors

- ☐ Isolate, avoid, hide
- ☐ Slow down, stop, get stuck
- ☐ Criticizing oneself
- ☐ Self-harm

How common is depression?

Most people experience sadness from time to time, especially when stressful situations or losses arise. Depression is a fairly common disorder, with **20.6%** of adults in America struggling with Major Depressive Disorder at some point in their life. Some people are at higher risk of experiencing depression (e.g., women; those with parents or siblings with depression).

What can I do to work on my depression?

Sadness or mild depression can be managed in a variety of ways, including self-care and a healthy lifestyle, coping and mindfulness skills, problem-solving, and social support. When depression becomes a **disorder** (that is, it occurs most days, becomes very distressing, or gets in the way of functioning at school, work, or home), research shows that treatment like psychotherapy, medication, and support groups can be highly effective.

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Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Depression is different for everyone. This worksheet is designed to help you understand your feelings, and direct you to worksheets in this workbook that may be the most helpful to you.

First, consider your recent thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors:

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?	Not at all	Some days	More than half the days	Nearly every day
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	0	1	2	3
Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless	0	1	2	3
Trouble falling asleep, or sleeping too much	0	1	2	3
Feeling tired or having little energy	0	1	2	3
Poor appetite or overeating	0	1	2	3
Feeling bad about yourself - or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down	0	1	2	3
Trouble concentrating on things, like reading or watching TV	0	1	2	3
Moving or speaking so slowly that other people could have noticed. Or the opposite - being so fidgety or restless that you have been moving around a lot more than usual	0	1	2	3
Thoughts that you would be better off dead, or of hurting yourself**	0	1	2	3

If you circled any problems, how difficult have they made it for you to do your work, take care of things at home, or get along with other people?

☐ Not difficult at all
 ☐ Somewhat difficult
 ☐ Very difficult
 ☐ Extremely difficult

A modification of the PHQ-9. Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., & Williams, J. B. (2001). <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.15251497.2001.016009606.x>

Take a look at your answers above.

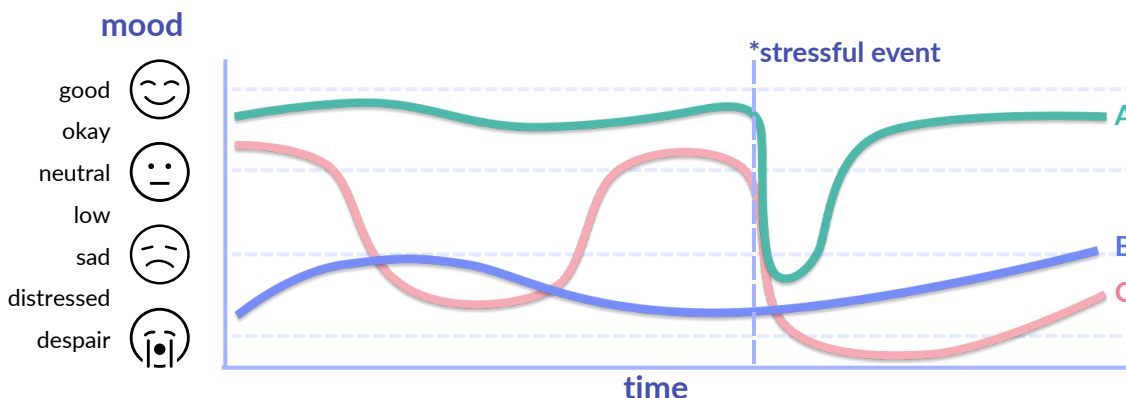
- ☐ If you answered with mostly 0s and 1s, or you checked “not difficult at all” or “somewhat difficult”, you might benefit most from our [Self-Care](#) worksheets below.
- ☐ If you answered with mostly 2s and 3s, or you checked “very difficult” or “extremely difficult,” you might benefit from [all](#) worksheets below. You may also benefit from [therapy for depression](#).
- ☐ **If you answered that you are experiencing thoughts of death, [suicidal ideation](#), or self-harm and you need immediate help staying safe, contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) (988), 911, or your nearest emergency room or inpatient psychiatric hospital.

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Assessment and Worksheet Navigator

Next, consider your mood pattern over time. Does yours resemble the patterns below?



Pattern A

Generally I feel okay, but stressful events in my life can increase my feelings of sadness or depression for a while.

Pattern B

Generally I feel sad, down, low, uninterested, or hopeless. I've had these feelings for a long time, usually whether I'm experiencing stress or not.

Pattern C

Sometimes I feel okay or neutral for a while, but sometimes I feel sad or depressed for a long time. Depressed feelings can come up after a stressful life event, or can arise on their own or for no apparent reason.

- ☐ If your experience is like Pattern A, you might benefit most from our [Self-Care](#) worksheets below.
- ☐ If your experience is like Pattern B or Pattern C, you might benefit from [all](#) worksheets below. You may also benefit from [therapy for depression](#).
- ☐ If your experience is very different from Patterns A, B, or C, consider drawing it below. This may help you or a therapist better understand your feelings. Mark significant events if this is helpful.



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Self-care is any activity that supports your well-being and helps restore balance to your mind and body. For those dealing with depression, self-care can be especially powerful, as even small actions like taking a daily walk can help lift your mood and ease symptoms. Self-care routines aren't one-size-fits-all; it often takes trying different strategies to see what helps you feel more balanced and at ease.

This worksheet is designed to help you explore specific self-care activities that can improve your well-being. You'll rank each activity on a scale from 1-3 to see how well you're currently engaging in these practices. After ranking, "star" any activities you'd like to try more often. The goal of this worksheet is to help you recognize different types of self-care, celebrate what you're already doing well, and find new ways to support your mental health and overall mood.

Ranking

- 1 I rarely engage in this, and it is not a regular part of my routine.
- 2 I occasionally engage in this, but it is not consistent.
- 3 I regularly engage in this, and it is a frequent part of my routine.
- ★ I want to do this more frequently.

1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care: Improving your physical health.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engaging in regular physical activity such as walking, running, yoga, or strength training.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensuring you get enough restful sleep each night to rejuvenate your body.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eating a balanced and nutritious diet, including plenty of fruits, vegetables, and grains.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Drinking enough water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining good hygiene practices such as bathing, brushing teeth, and grooming.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Attending regular check-ups and following medical advice from healthcare professionals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking time to relax and unwind, through activities like taking a bath and getting a massage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limiting or avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spending time outdoors in natural sunlight to enhance vitamin D levels and improve mood.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paying attention to your body's needs, such as stretching when tense or resting when tired.

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1 2 3



Emotional Self-Care: Processing & expressing your emotions.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in activities you enjoy to boost your mood and provide a sense of fulfillment.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Spending time with friends and family to build support and reduce feelings of isolation.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Practicing mindfulness to stay present and manage negative thoughts.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Writing down thoughts and feelings to process emotions and gain insights.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Keeping a gratitude journal or reflecting on things you are thankful for.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Using positive affirmations to counter negative self-talk and build self-esteem.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Using music to relax, uplift your mood, or express your emotions.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Expressing your emotions through art, music, writing, or other creative outlets.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Set achievable goals and celebrate your progress, no matter how small.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Regular sessions with a therapist or counselor to explore and address emotional challenges.

1 2 3



Social Self-Care: Fostering & maintaining healthy relationships.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Spending time with people you like and make you feel good about yourself.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Asking for help from friends or family when you're feeling down or overwhelmed.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Learning to say no and establishing boundaries to protect your emotional well-being.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in support groups to gain insight and emotional support from others.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in clubs or organizations that align with your interests to meet new people.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Giving your time to help others in your community to foster connection and purpose.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Going to social gatherings, parties, or community events to build your social network.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Scheduling regular get-togethers, such as a weekly coffee date, or a monthly dinner.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Actively listening when talking with others, which helps strengthen your relationships.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Scheduling intentional alone time with your romantic partner.

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1 2 3



Professional Self-Care: Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and pursuing career development opportunities.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Clearly defining work hours and sticking to them to ensure a healthy work-life balance.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Stepping away from work to recharge, through daily short breaks and using vacation time.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Talking to a supervisor or HR about mental health challenges (if it feels safe).

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Exploring available support options, such as employee assistance programs (EAP).

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Organizing and prioritizing work tasks to manage workload effectively and reduce stress.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Ensuring your work environment is comfortable and conducive to productivity.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Establishing achievable work goals and celebrating small accomplishments.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Being kind to yourself during work and avoiding excessive self-criticism.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Building positive relationships with coworkers for mutual support and camaraderie.

1 2 3



Spiritual Self-Care: Nurturing your spirit and providing purpose.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Practicing meditation to connect with your inner self and find peace and clarity.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Engaging in prayer or other forms of communication with a higher power.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Spending time in nature to experience connection to the world around you.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Regularly reflecting on what you are thankful for to cultivate an appreciative mindset.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Reading inspirational books, scriptures, or quotes to uplift and inspire your spirit.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Participating in spiritual or religious community activities.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Engaging in artistic activities, such as painting, music, or writing.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Performing acts of kindness and service to others, fostering a sense of purpose.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Acting in accordance with your morals to create a sense of integrity in your life.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐

Spending time with the people who give your life meaning.

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Gratitude is more than just a positive feeling; it's a valuable tool that can help manage depression and improve your mental well-being. When you practice gratitude regularly, it can gently shift your focus away from negative thoughts and help you notice the good things in your life, even when things feel challenging. This worksheet is designed to guide you in recognizing and appreciating the positive aspects of your daily experiences, building resilience and a more hopeful outlook over time.

PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 1	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M	Ex: The taste of fresh coffee this morning.	The kind text my friend sent me.	The relaxing bath I took to unwind.
T	A productive meeting where I felt heard.	My blanket keeping me warm while I read.	A surprise call from Mom to check on me.
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

Ex: Kind messages and calls reminded me that I have a support system and people who genuinely care about me. Sometimes I get caught up in my own struggles, so being reminded of these connections really lifted my mood and made me feel valued.

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PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 2	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 3	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 1: Daily Gratitude List

Write down three things you are grateful for each day.

WEEK 4	Gratitude 1	Gratitude 2	Gratitude 3
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			
S			

How did practicing gratitude affect your mood and outlook over the week?

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PART 3: Monthly Summary

At the end of each month, summarize your gratitude practice.

What patterns do you notice in the things you are grateful for?

How has your perspective changed since you started practicing gratitude?

What challenges did you face in practicing gratitude, and how did you overcome them?

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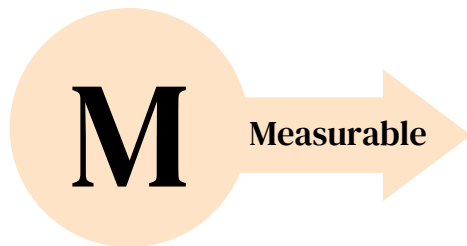


SMART Goals is a structured goal-setting method that helps individuals create clear, actionable objectives. **For individuals with depression, SMART Goals is particularly helpful as it breaks down larger tasks into manageable steps, making them less overwhelming.** This structured approach can also enhance motivation, improve focus, and provide a sense of accomplishment, all of which are crucial for managing and alleviating symptoms of depression.



What is your goal? Write down exactly what you want to achieve. Be clear and detailed about what you expect to accomplish.

Example: "I will go for a 10-minute walk in my neighborhood every morning."



How will you measure your progress? Determine how you will track your progress and know when you have achieved your goal.

Example: "I will track my daily walks in a journal and aim to complete at least 5 walks per week."



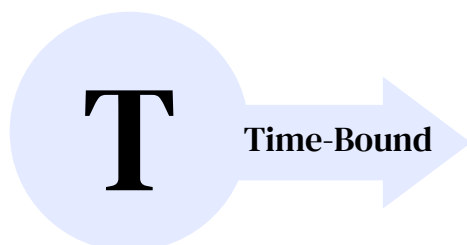
Is your goal realistic? What steps can you take to make your goal achievable? Break down your goal into smaller, manageable tasks.

Example: "I will start with a 10-minute walk and gradually increase the duration by 5 minutes each week, aiming for a 30-minute walk by the end of the month."



Does this goal align with your broader objectives? Ensure that your goal is relevant and meaningful to your overall life or career goals. Reflect on the value and impact of achieving this goal.

Example: "I will focus on walking because physical activity has been shown to improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression."



What is your deadline for achieving this goal? Set a specific date by which you plan to achieve your goal. Identify immediate actions you can take to begin your progress.

Example: "I will achieve my goal of walking 30 minutes every day by the end of the next 4 weeks."

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S

Specific

What is your goal?

M

Measurable

How will you measure your progress?

A

Achievable

Is your goal realistic?

R

Relevant

Does this goal align with your broader objective?

T

Time-Bound

What is your deadline for achieving this goal?

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Be Flexible

If you're struggling to reach a goal, don't be afraid to adjust it. It's okay to change the timeline, make the goal smaller, or alter the steps as needed.

Celebrate Milestones

Reward yourself for every step or milestone you reach, no matter how small. This could be as simple as taking a break, enjoying a favorite treat, or planning a fun activity.

Give Yourself Enough Time

Make sure you have enough time to achieve your goals without feeling overwhelmed. It's better to allow extra time and feel accomplished than to set an unrealistic deadline and feel discouraged.

Stay Patient & Be Kind to Yourself

Progress may be slow, and setbacks can happen. Remind yourself that change takes time, and be kind to yourself if things don't go perfectly.

What obstacles have I encountered, and how have I handled them?

What progress have I made so far? What am I proud of?

What support or resources might help me continue making progress?

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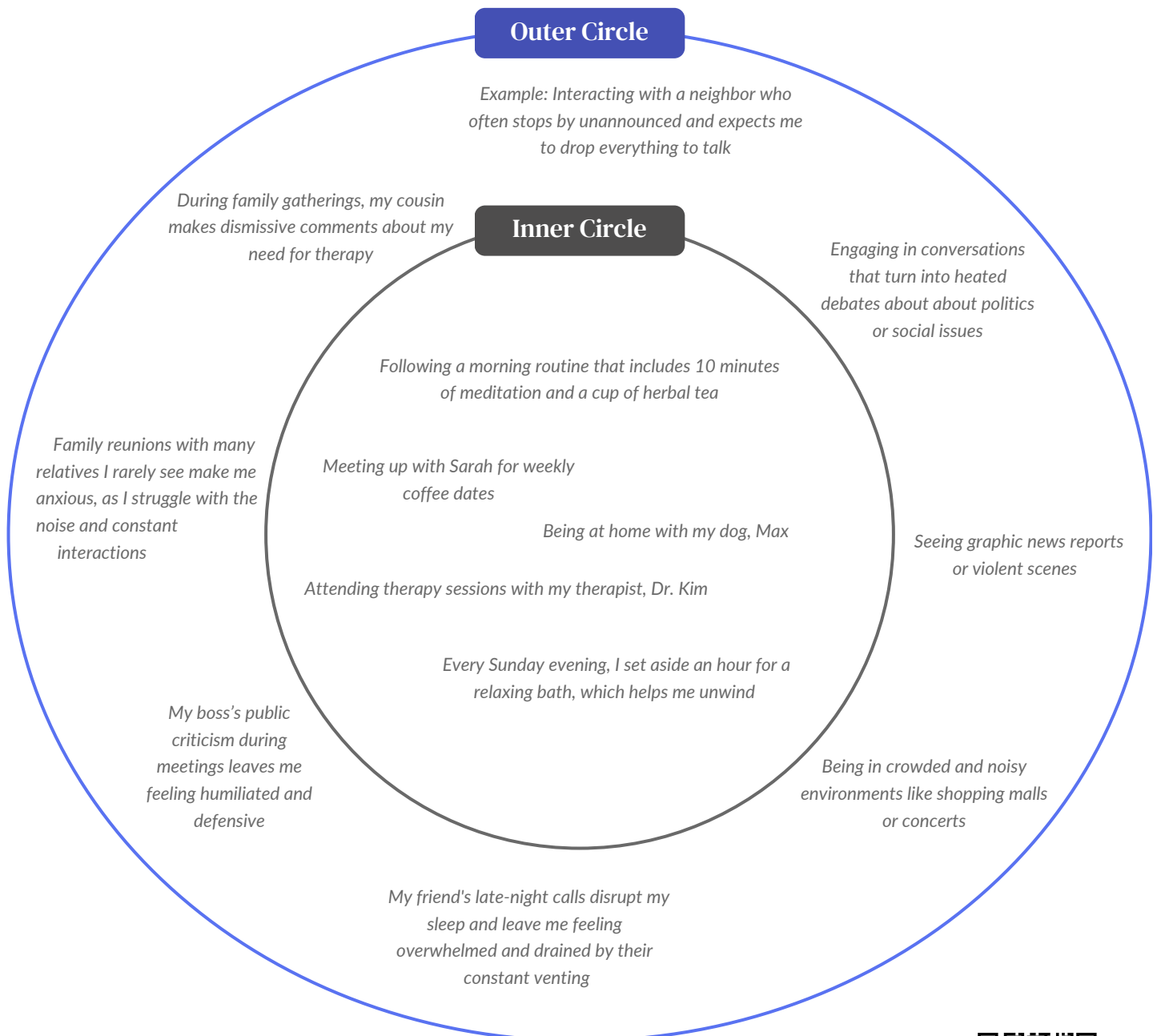


How to Set Healthy Boundaries

Setting boundaries is crucial for managing depression because it helps protect your mental and emotional well-being. When you establish clear limits with others, you can prioritize your energy and time, which is especially important when you're dealing with low motivation, fatigue, and feelings of overwhelm. Use this worksheet to explore your boundaries and develop strategies for maintaining them.

PART 1: Visualize Your Boundaries

Inside the circle, write everything that makes you feel relaxed and safe. On the outside of the circle, write down anything or anyone that makes you feel stressed, uncomfortable, or unsafe. These are people or situations that are pushing your boundaries and need further attention.



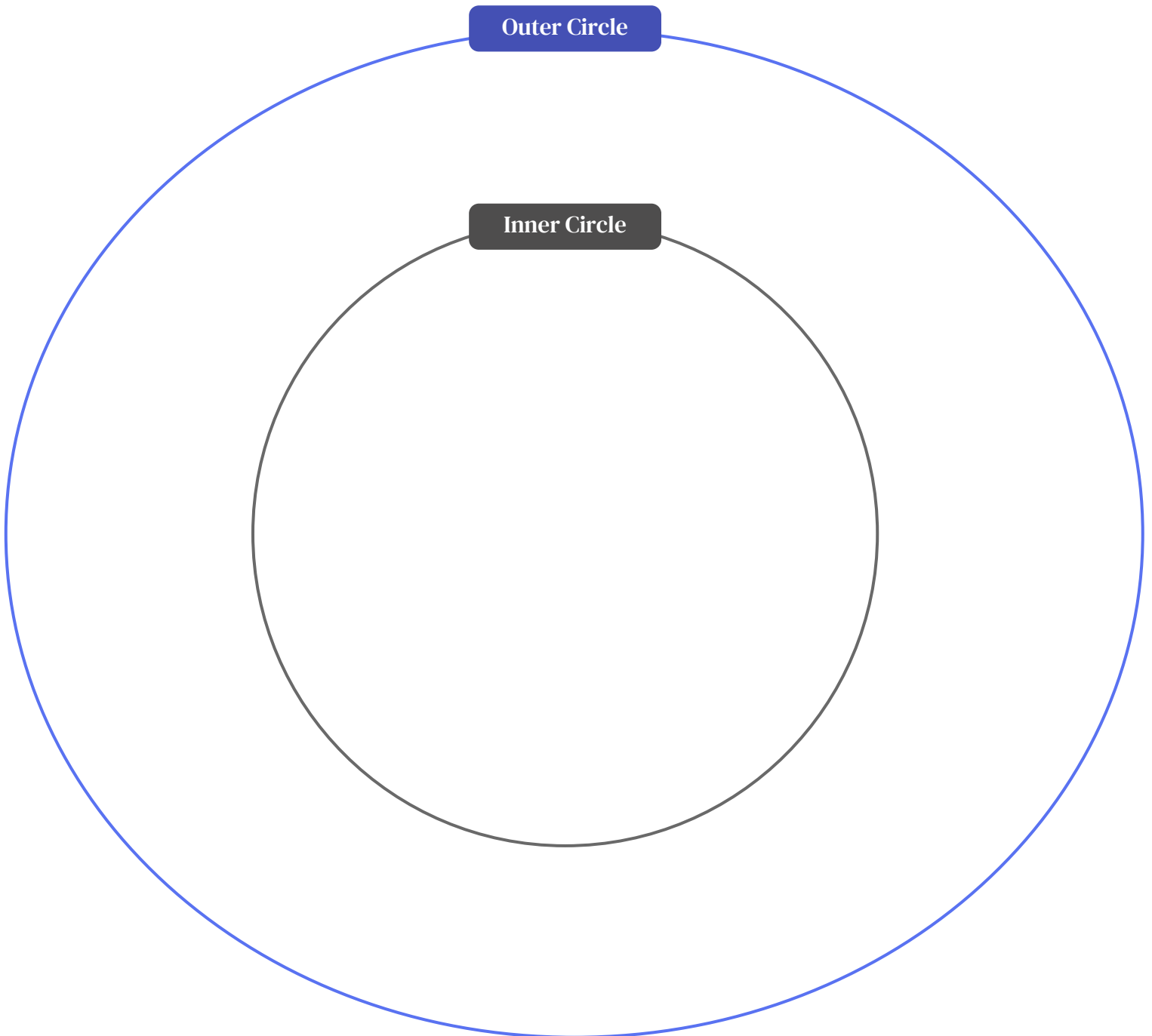
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How to Set Healthy Boundaries

When filling out your inner and outer circle, here are some questions to consider:

- What is currently causing me stress or unease?
- What am I excited about each day?
- What do I find myself dreading each day?
- Who or what energizes and uplifts me?
- Who or what leaves me feeling drained and exhausted?
- Who or what helps me feel safe, supported, and valued?



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How to Set Healthy Boundaries

PART 2: How to Communicate Your Boundaries

Here are some basic rules and examples for communicating your boundaries effectively.

Use Confident Body Language

Stand or sit up straight, maintain eye contact, and use firm but calm gestures to convey confidence and assertiveness.

Be Clear & Set Consequences

Be specific about what behavior you want to change and clearly state what will happen if your boundary is not respected.

Keep Your Tone Calm and Respectful:

Speak calmly and assertively, avoiding raised voices or aggressive tones to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

Practice Active Listening:

Listen to the other person's response without interrupting and acknowledge their perspective while staying firm on your boundary.

Physical Boundaries

- "Please give me some physical space"
- "I am not comfortable with being touched right now."
- "I need to step away for a moment."
- "I prefer to keep a bit of distance, thank you."
- "I would appreciate it if you didn't stand so close."

Emotional Boundaries

- "I feel overwhelmed and need to take a break from this conversation."
- "I'm not comfortable discussing this right now."
- "I appreciate your concern, but I need some time to process my feelings alone."
- "Please respect my feelings on this matter."

Interpersonal Boundaries

- "I feel uncomfortable with this behavior and need it to stop."
- "I need you to respect my decision."
- "I am not okay with how you spoke to me."
- "Please do not involve me in this situation."
- "I need clarity and honesty in our communication."

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How to Set Healthy Boundaries

PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries (Example Page)

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

Example: My sister, who lives nearby, frequently drops by unannounced. Her unexpected visits often disrupt my personal time and the quiet environment I need to relax and recharge after work. Last week, she came over right when I was about to start a long-awaited self-care routine, and it completely threw off my evening.

Boundary I will set:

I will have a conversation with my sister to let her know that I need my home to be a space where I can relax and unwind without unexpected interruptions. I will ask her to call or text me before coming over to ensure it's a good time. I will emphasize that I still want to spend time with her but need to plan our visits in advance.

Any potential challenges:

My sister might feel hurt or think that she is not welcome anymore. She may perceive my request as a sign that I don't enjoy her company or that our relationship is less important to me. Additionally, she might not understand why this change is necessary if she feels that her visits haven't been a problem in the past.

How I will handle these challenges:

During our conversation, I will explain to my sister that her visits are important to me and that I value our time together. I will let her know that my request for advance notice allows me to take care of my mental health and personal needs. I will suggest specific times that work better for me. For example, I could say, "I really enjoy our time together and want to make sure I am fully present when we hang out. Could you call or text me before coming over to make sure it's a good time? I usually have more free time on Saturdays or after 6 PM on weekdays."

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How to Set Healthy Boundaries

PART 3: Develop Strategies for Maintaining Boundaries

Use the following prompts to create a plan for reinforcing your boundaries consistently and effectively.

Situation:

Boundary I will set:

Any potential challenges:

How I will handle these challenges:

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When we are feeling depressed, sometimes our brains can get stuck in certain “modes,” or ways of thinking. These are ways of thinking that aren’t *actually* true, but *feel* true in the moment as a result of the cognitive symptoms of depression. For example, if you make one mistake, your brain might distort the meaning of this mistake and see it as evidence of “always” making mistakes and getting things wrong. When we can name cognitive distortions, it can be easier to pause and look at a situation from a new perspective. Here are six common distortion “modes” and some examples of what they sound like.

Fortune Teller Mode

Our brains are in fortune teller mode when they predict that the *worst* possible outcomes are going to happen in the future. This is also called “catastrophizing.”

I think I failed my presentation at work today. I just know I’m going to get fired soon. What if I can’t ever find a job like this again?!



Mind Reader Mode

Our brains are in mind reader mode when they take guesses at what other people are thinking. However, our brains feel *really sure* that their guesses are right.

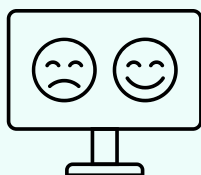
Meeting new people at that party was awkward. I bet no one thought I’m worth getting to know.



All-or-Nothing Mode

Our brains are in all-or-nothing mode when they only see things in extremes. This is also called “black and white thinking.”

Everyone else is so active on the weekends. Sure, I’ll walk the dog, but that doesn’t count. I guess I’m just lazy.



All My Fault Mode

Our brains are in all my fault mode when they are *sure* something is all our fault, even if that’s not really true.

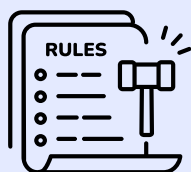
I missed my friend’s text when he was upset. If I had answered, I could have talked him through it. It’s my fault he’s feeling down.



I Should / I Must Mode

Our brains are in I should / I must mode when it seems like there are rigid rules about how you are always supposed to behave, with no room for mistakes.

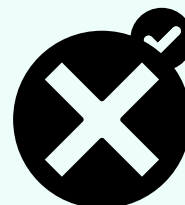
I can’t believe I dropped that pass. I should always give 100 percent. There’s no excuse, I should be better than that.



Ignoring the Positive Mode

Our brains are in ignoring the positive mode when a mix of good, bad, and neutral things happen, but only the bad things seem to matter.

Things have been going well with my new girlfriend, but she canceled our date for tomorrow. This relationship is failing.



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To get more familiar with these concepts, draw a line to match the examples to each mode.

To be a good friend, I always have to be available. I can't miss anything.

1

It doesn't matter that I was chosen for the new project. I'm not the team lead.

2

My coworker got written up at work. He must be a really bad person.

3

She didn't laugh at my joke. She must hate my sense of humor.

4

I was polite, but he was so mad when I said no. Maybe I should have been nicer.

5

I haven't dated anyone in so long. I'll probably never find a partner.

6

A



All-or-Nothing Mode

Black and white; no room for gray

B



Mind Reader Mode

"Knowing" what someone is thinking

C



Ignoring the Positive Mode

When only bad things seem to matter

D



Fortune Teller Mode

Predicting the worst future outcome

E



All My Fault Mode

Being sure something is your fault

F



I Should / I Must Mode

Rigid rules about what you have to do

Answers: 1=F, 2=C, 3=A, 4=B, 5=E, 6=D

Are you experiencing a cognitive distortion? Write down your thought below.

.....

.....

Which cognitive distortion does the thought match? Why?

.....

.....



If you are experiencing a cognitive distortion, you can practice looking at a situation in a new way. Use the ideas and examples below to try a new perspective.

Ask, what would you say if your best friend said this?

Focus on what you know in the present moment

Get more flexible by brainstorming “maybe”s

Balance the positives and negatives with “and”

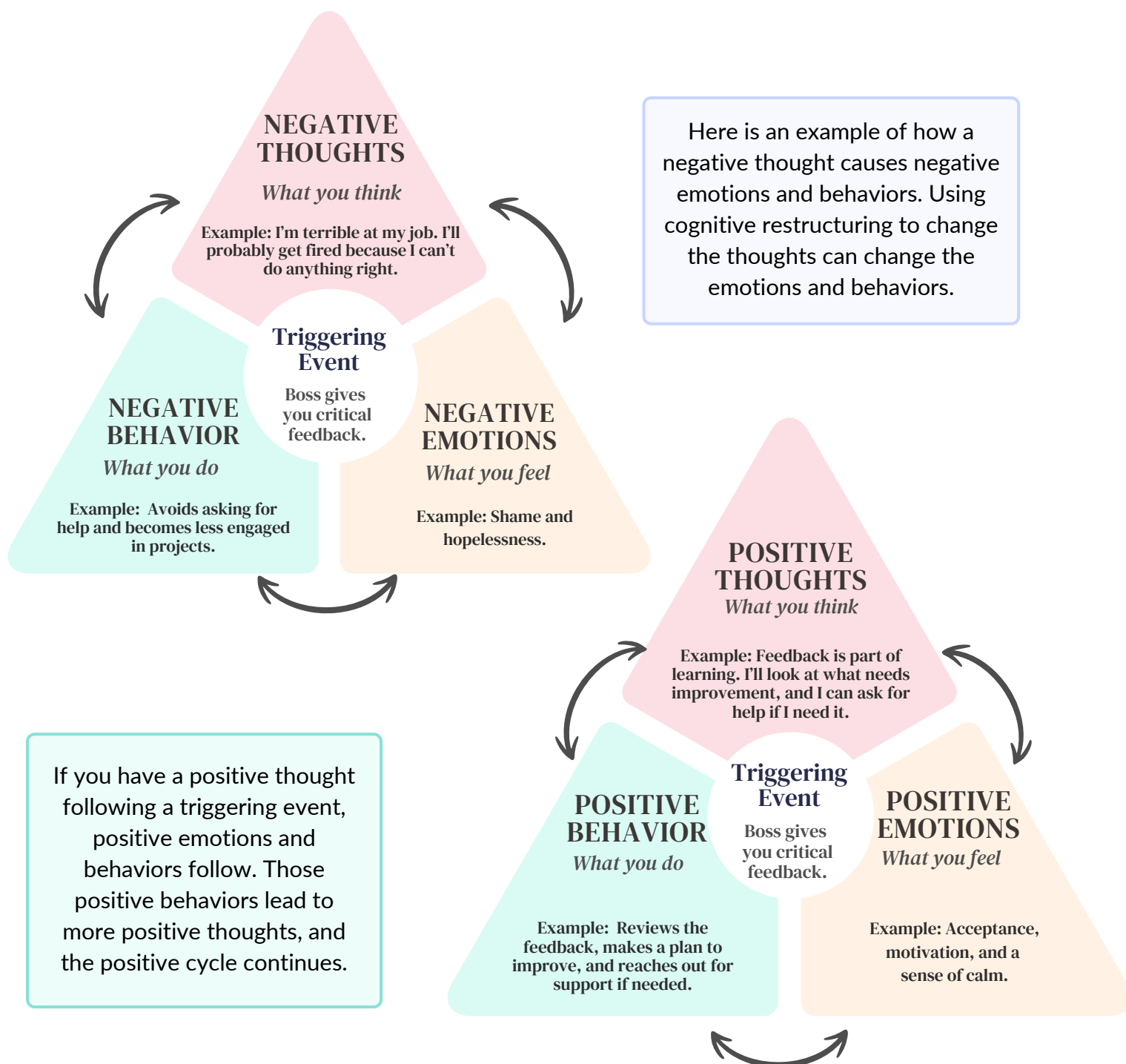
Mind Reader Mode “Knowing” what someone is thinking	<i>She didn't laugh at my joke. She must hate my sense of humor.</i>	→	<i>Maybe she didn't like that joke or she's heard it before. Maybe she just has a different sense of humor from mine.</i>
Ignoring the Positive Mode When only bad things seem to matter	<i>It doesn't matter that I was chosen for the new project. I'm not the team lead.</i>	→	<i>I wasn't chosen for the team lead - AND - I was chosen to be on the project and it was competitive.</i>
Fortune Teller Mode Predicting the worst future outcome	<i>I haven't dated anyone in so long. I'll probably never find a partner.</i>	→	<i>If I want to date someone, I can put myself out there. I'll keep trying.</i>
All My Fault Mode Being sure something is your fault	<i>I was polite, but he was so mad when I said no. Maybe I should have been nicer.</i>	→	<i>His feelings are his responsibility. Being polite but firm is totally okay.</i>
I Should / I Must Mode Rigid rules about what you have to do	<i>To be a good friend, I always have to be available. I can't miss anything.</i>	→	<i>Everybody misses things sometimes. That doesn't mean you're a bad friend, just human!</i>
All or Nothing Mode Black and white; no room for gray	<i>My coworker got written up at work. He must be a really bad person.</i>	→	<i>Maybe he was just having a bad day. Maybe people make mistakes. Maybe management was being unfair.</i>

Try writing a new, more balanced thought to replace your distorted thought:



Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more helpful alternative thoughts. **For someone with depression, cognitive restructuring can help interrupt and change the negative thought patterns that contribute to feeling sad, hopeless, or lonely.**



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Cognitive Restructuring

THOUGHT

What you think in a situation
Ex: I can never do anything right.

EMOTION

How you feel
Ex: I feel sad and hopeless

BEHAVIOR

How you handle the situation
Ex: Procrastinating on other tasks

It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are making your depression symptoms worse by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Thought:

**Is my thought
factual?**

**What evidence
do I have to
support my
thought?**

**What would
someone else
say about the
situation?**

**Is it possible to
view this
situation
differently?**

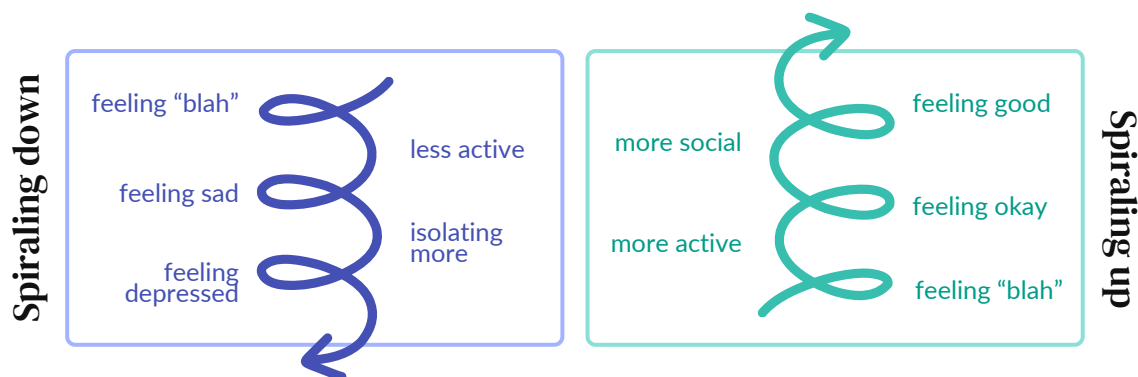
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Behavior activation, or activity scheduling, is a cognitive behavioral technique that has been shown to help people overcome depression. Often, we wait to engage in activity until we “feel like it” - that is, until our mood is high enough to feel motivated. Behavior activation encourages us to do the opposite, and shows us that acting *first* can be a powerful way to improve mood, especially for people dealing with sadness or depression.

Spiraling down and spiraling up

One of the most challenging aspects of depression is how **symptoms can reinforce one another**. When we feel down, we are more likely to withdraw, slow down, or isolate. As a result, we feel even more down. This does not mean that depression is your fault - withdrawing is often a *part of* depression. However, we can intentionally take advantage of the connections between our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors to “spiral up.”



Think of a day you “spiraled down.” What happened? Which behaviors showed up?

Think of a day you “spiraled up.” What happened? Which behaviors helped?



Tracking your moods and behaviors

Continue to discover connections between your behaviors and moods by tracking for one week. Note your activities during each time period and your mood, from 1 (very low) to 10 (very good).

Sat									
Fri									
Thu									
Wed									
Tue									
Mon									
Sun	Ex: sleeping	social media, 4	eating, chores, 6						
	6am to 8am	8am to 10am	10am to 12pm	12pm to 2pm	2pm to 4pm	4pm to 6pm	6pm to 8pm	8pm to 10pm	10pm to 12am

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Review your data

Look at your week of tracking, and consider the following questions:

Which activities were associated with low mood? What about the lowest mood?

Which activities were associated with high mood? What about the highest mood?

Did anything surprise you?

Which behaviors or activities are most effective in raising mood?

You can combine your findings above with insights from research on the connections between activities and mood.

Depression often results in feeling less interested in previously enjoyed activities, less confident, more isolated, and less active. It is *expected* that **pleasurable, challenging, social, and active behaviors** are more difficult for someone experiencing depression. However, if we can engage in these behaviors in small ways, consistently, we can support a healthier mood and “spiral up.” On the lists on the next page, check off or write in any behaviors you are interested in experimenting with to boost your mood.

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Pleasure activities you genuinely find joy in

- ☐ Playing, listening, or dancing to music
- ☐ Going to a concert, show, or play
- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Arts and crafts
- ☐ Getting out into nature
- ☐ Sitting in the sun
- ☐ Going to the movies
- ☐ Planning a party
- ☐ Playing with pets
- ☐ Going out to eat or cooking your favorite food

Challenge building skill and accomplishment

- ☐ Doing crosswords or puzzles
- ☐ Playing board games
- ☐ Learning a new language
- ☐ Learning to code
- ☐ Cooking something new
- ☐ Completing chores or odd jobs around the house
- ☐ Trying a new exercise or sport
- ☐ Organizing things
- ☐ Learning more about my interests

Social connecting with others

- ☐ Coffee or tea with a friend
- ☐ Visiting family
- ☐ Singing in a choir
- ☐ Volunteering in my community
- ☐ Joining community groups or clubs
- ☐ Calling, texting, or messaging a friend
- ☐ Going to the library
- ☐ Going to a sporting event
- ☐ Going on dates

Active moving your body

- ☐ Yoga or stretching
- ☐ Walking or hiking outside; mall walking
- ☐ Running or jogging
- ☐ Roller skating, biking, skateboarding
- ☐ Playing team sports (soccer, football, kickball)
- ☐ Playing tennis, squash, or pickleball
- ☐ Lifting weights
- ☐ Swimming or water aerobics
- ☐ Dancing

Plan in advance

Now that you know which activities already support your mood and which you'd like to try, it's time to schedule activities in advance!

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is to *start small*. As with any lifestyle change, it is much easier to maintain a just few new activities over time. Although it may be tempting to make many changes at first, the likelihood that this is sustainable is low, resulting in becoming discouraged and giving up. **Even one new activity is better than none!**

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On this page, schedule pleasant, challenging, social, active, or other mood-boosting activities in advance. When complete, rate your mood. Remember to start off small, with only a few activities that are easy to complete!

Monday

Ex: neighborhood walk after work, 5

Sunday

Ex: cook new recipe for dinner with partner, 6

Tuesday

Ex: Video chat with friend in the evening, 7

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

At the end of the week, review your data. Are your activities associated with pleasant mood? Are there any you would like to continue next week? Are there any you would like to try instead next week? Do you have a healthy mix of pleasant, challenging, social, and active activities?

Also, remember that you can always go back to the first tracker if you need more detail, or you would like to focus on identifying “spiraling down” activities to replace with “spiraling up” activities.

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Personal Strengths Inventory

When you're dealing with depression, **self-criticism often becomes a constant inner voice**, making you focus on what you see as flaws or mistakes. This pattern of negative thinking can deepen feelings of sadness and make it harder to feel motivated or see yourself in a positive light.

Creating a personal strengths inventory can be a helpful way to counter self-criticism. By identifying and acknowledging your strengths, you can start to shift your focus from perceived weaknesses to positive qualities. Recognizing and valuing your strengths can boost self-confidence, quiet negative self-talk, and support a healthier, more resilient mindset.

PART 1: Discovering Your Strengths

Take some time to read through the list of attributes carefully and circle at least 6 strengths that you believe apply to you.

Because depression often involves all-or-nothing thinking, you may feel you do not have the strengths below unless you match the description *100%, all the time*. **Challenge yourself to push back against those thoughts**. One way to do this is to identify the strengths of someone you know and admire, and consider whether you hold them to the same impossible standard.

Self-Control

I manage my emotions and impulses, which allows me to make thoughtful choices.

Confidence

I believe in my abilities and have positive expectations of success.

Flexibility

I adapt to change, adjust my approach, and think creatively in new situations.

Ambition

I have a strong desire and determination to achieve success and accomplish my goals.

Wisdom

I use knowledge and experience to make sound judgments and decisions.

Creativity

I think outside the box and generate original ideas.

Curiosity

I desire to ask questions, discover new things, and expand my knowledge.

Bravery

I face fear, uncertainty, or danger with determination and resolve.

Fairness

I believe in just treatment, and that everyone has equal opportunities.

Forgiveness

I let go of resentment and anger, choosing to understand and move on from a hurtful experience.

Gratitude

I appreciate and am thankful for the positive aspects of life.

Honesty

I am truthful and sincere in my words and actions.

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Personal Strengths Inventory

Optimism

I expect the best possible outcome and believe in a brighter future.

Humility

I have a modest view of my importance, which allows me to learn from others.

Humor

I have the ability to find and share amusement, and create a lighter perspective on challenges.

Kindness

I am caring, considerate, and desire to help others.

Patience

I stay composed while waiting or facing challenges, without getting frustrated or giving up.

Love of Learning

I have an enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and skills, driven by a desire for understanding.

Perseverance

I am committed to see things through, despite obstacles and setbacks.

Open Mindedness

I am willing to consider new ideas and perspectives with receptiveness.

Teamwork

I collaborate effectively with others to achieve a shared goal.

Social Awareness

I understand the emotions, needs, and perspectives of others.

Spirituality

I believe in a purpose or connection to something larger than myself.

Enthusiasm

I have a zest and passion that fuels my excitement and motivation.

Generosity

I give my time, resources, or skills to help others without expecting anything in return.

Problem-Solving

I am able to analyze situations, identify solutions, and overcome challenges effectively.

Dependability

I am reliable and others can count on me to fulfill my commitments and responsibilities.

Authenticity

I live and express myself genuinely, being true to my values and beliefs.

Adventurousness

I am eager to experience new and exciting things, with a sense of curiosity and daring.

Assertiveness

I communicate my needs, wants, and opinions clearly and confidently.

Independence

I am self-sufficient and resourceful, taking responsibility for my own well-being.

Logic

I am able to think clearly and reach sound conclusions based on reason and evidence.

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Personal Strengths Inventory

PART 2: Applying Your Strengths to Relationships

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths in your romantic relationship(s), friendships, and family. Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve relational growth.

Lists the strengths you possess that help you in your relationships

Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help your relationships

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you in your relationships

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Personal Strengths Inventory

PART 3: Applying Your Strengths to Your Profession

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths in your professional endeavors (at work or school). Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve professional growth.

Lists the strengths you possess that help you in your profession

Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help your profession

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you in your profession

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Personal Strengths Inventory

PART 4: Applying Your Strengths to Achieve Personal Fulfillment

Use the prompts to explore how you currently use your strengths to increase your sense of purpose and enjoyment. Then, discover how you can apply your strengths in new ways to achieve personal growth.

Lists the strengths you possess that help you achieve personal fulfillment

Describe a specific time your strengths were able to help you with personal fulfillment

Describe two new ways you could use your strengths to help you with personal fulfillment

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy for Depression](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.

