



The Salvation Army
**POSITIVE LIFESTYLE
PROGRAM**

SESSION

3

Depression and loneliness

Experience of depression

There are a number of factors or situations that can cause people to feel down or depressed for short period of time. These include:

Physical causes

Lack of sleep, improper diet, low blood pressure, and glandular disorders.

Childhood experiences

Separation from family, being deprived or abused, not being cared for as a child or not able to please parents / caregivers.

Helplessness

Being powerless, defenseless, or beaten down or giving up.

Negative thinking

It is easy to focus too much on the 'not so good' side of life and to overlook the positives. This is usually done by forgetting the good things in our lives and concentrating on the negative.

Life stress

Death of a loved one, separation, financial difficulties, loss of schooling or job.

Anger

When we feel hurt or cheated and there is unresolved anger and bitterness.

Guilt

We often have negative thoughts about ourselves when we feel that we have failed or done something wrong. This can lead to feelings of guilt and shame.

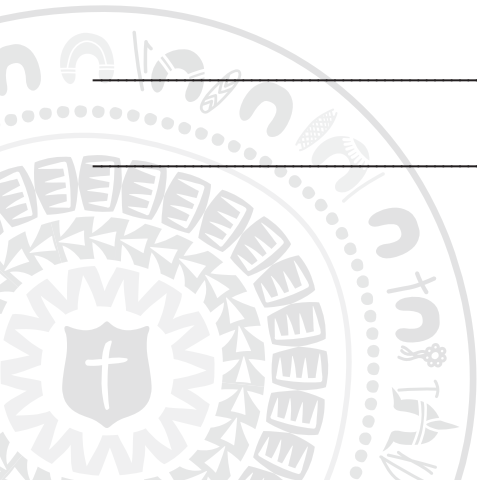
1. If you have felt sad, or down, which words from this list describe how you felt at the time?

- sick
- angry
- tense
- hopeless
- anxious
- flat

other: _____

2. We all have our own ways of expressing sadness or feeling down. How do you respond to those feelings.

3. Unfortunately, feeling down can even stop us from doing our normal, everyday activities. What is something you stop doing when you experience these feelings. For example, eating or showering.



Depression

Continually feeling down may be one of the signs of depression. Depression can affect us in many ways and interrupt various aspects of our lives. For example, it can affect our:

Motivation

- ☐ Apathy
- ☐ Loss of energy
- ☐ Loss of interest in things that brought joy before
- ☐ Things seem pointless and hopeless

Feelings

- ☐ Depressed mood
- ☐ Emptiness
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Resentment
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Shame
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Loss of Pleasure

Thinking

- ☐ Poor concentration
- ☐ Negative ideas about self, the world and the future
- ☐ Indecisive

Physical

- ☐ Changes in sleep patterns
- ☐ Changes in appetite
- ☐ Changes in physical routines
- ☐ Changes in hormones and brain chemicals

Wellness Continuum

Depressed

Feeling Blue

Feeling OK

Feeling Great

Everyone has days when they feel they cannot cope. Sometimes there's a specific reason - money worries, difficulties with a relationship or problems at work. These situations may cause us to feel down. It's easy to get caught in a spiral of unhappiness and to feel that there is no escape. This session helps you put in place strategies to help improve your mood.

On the other hand, when depressive symptoms are affecting every aspect of your life and persist for several weeks, it's important to make an appointment to discuss how you are feeling with a health professional.

5 Ways to Wellbeing

Often, there are people, activities or places that can help to lift our feelings. Rate the usefulness of each strategy for you
(0= not at all useful 10 = extremely useful)

Step 1- Connect

Connecting with others can help us feel close to people and valued for who we are.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 2 - Get active

Many people find that physical activity helps them maintain positive mental health

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Step 3 - Take notice of how I'm feeling

Reminding yourself to take notice can help you to be aware of how you're feeling

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 4 - Learn

Learning and developing can boost your self-esteem

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Step 5 - Give

People who help others are more likely to rate themselves as happy

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Which of these could you develop this week?

3. Places

What places lift your spirits and make you feel better? These might be a particular beach, park, music venue, river, café or national park. Where could you go when feeling down or lonely?

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4. Activities

What activities lift your spirits and make you feel better? These might be listening to music, bike riding, computer games, praying, watching a movie, walking, swimming, going to the gym or dancing. What activities could you do when feeling down or lonely?

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5. Self-talk

The way you speak to yourself in your mind is called 'self-talk'. Negative or critical self-talk can bring you down while positive self-talk can help keep you from feeling down. Positive self-talk is important in challenging negative attitudes and thoughts. You can learn to do it.

Instead of negative self-talk such as 'I'm hopeless' or 'My life is pointless,' try saying the following:

'I know that this is tough . . . but I will get through it.'

'This is just a phase I am going through . . . but I will make it.'

6. Prayer and meditation

For thousands of years, people have found prayer and meditation to be important. What has been your experience?

Christian prayer is based on the promise of a loving God who is always with you and knows your needs. This is a great comfort and encouragement to many people when they are feeling down and lonely. This merciful and compassionate God forgives and wants you to live a full life.

*'The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God'*

(Philippians 4:6 NIV).

This week, commit to put two or three of these strategies into practice – and write them down here. They are all good and healthy ways to live – no matter how you are feeling.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
