

COPING WITH DEPRESSION

15 ideas that you can use today...

Source: Various talks, books, brochures & web sites.

How to use this guide

Depression sucks every piece of joy out of us. So being given a list of 15 things to do will feel overwhelming.

But take heart! Just choose one and work on that until you conquer it – and then pick another until you conquer that too... and so on...

Don't forget:

The TCC Interventions Team are here to help. If you feel you can't cope with life anymore please do come and make an appointment to speak with us.

We love nothing more than connecting with our parents in helpful ways. Our aim is to assure you that there is hope even in this dark place you find yourself today.



1. SLEEP

Getting too much OR not enough affects your mood.

Try going to bed and getting up at the same time ... *even if you don't feel like it.*

- Avoid caffeine, eating or working hard (like exercise) for a few hours before bedtime. Use the time to relax and wind-down after the day.
- Practice a simple meditation, like a prayer or guided mediation to calm your mind.

2. DO ONE THING

Depression can leave us feeling paralyzed, powerless and helpless.

Make a list of things you can do no matter how hard things seem to be. Then do at least one thing each day and check them off your list.

Can you take a walk? Can you write visit a friend or send one Whatsapp? Can you make sure you eat?

Make a plan and do one thing to gain back some control of your life.



5. JOURNALLING

Writing down your thoughts, hopes, dreams and worries can help clear the mind and heart.

Journaling can also help with sleep, as you put the concerns and worries of the day on paper you can 'hand them over'. As you journal, pray to the God who listens and is concerned with your well being.

6. PEER SUPPORT

Don't forget to meet up with friends who love you.

Depression drives us into ourselves and away from others. Make a plan to meet up with a friend or relative this week, somebody you know who cares about you. Make sure you meet up – even if on the day, you feel like you don't want to... keep the appointment!

3. FIND ONE THING TO APPRECIATE

Make it a habit to look for one thing which you appreciate each morning – write it down, pray it out loud and speak to someone about it.

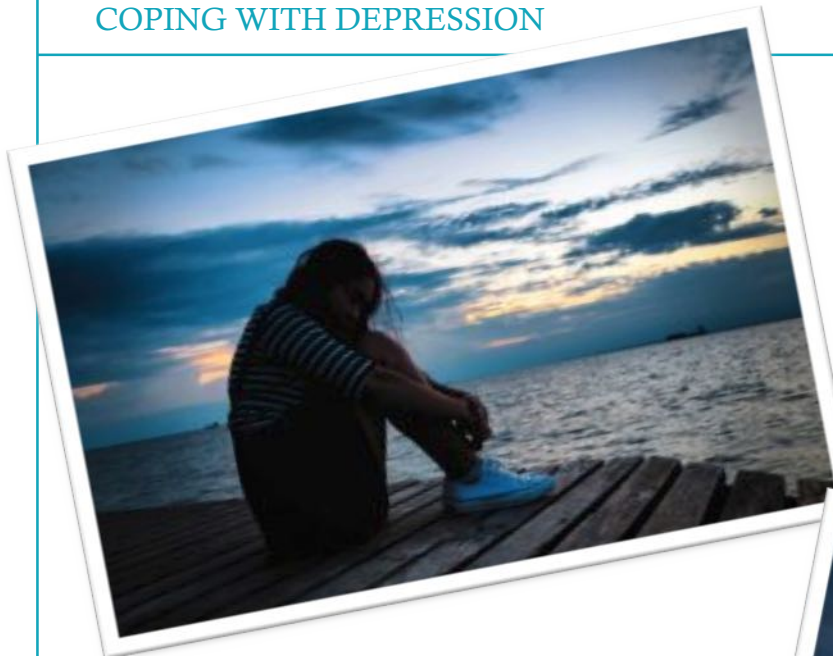
Did you see a child smile? Was someone kind to you? Did you wear something you love? Work on seeing things differently with gratitude or joy.

4. EXERCISE

Gentle exercise, including walking is a great way to get rid of nervous energy. If we exercise in nature the benefits we feel (body AND soul) is even greater!

You can practice "finding one thing to appreciate" as you walk, or create your plan to "do one thing". You can walk a dog or walk with a child or a friend to spend time with them.





7. PRAYER

There's no right or wrong prayer – just speak to God from the heart.

- God promises he hears those who love Him, even when it doesn't feel like it.
- God promises he will answer you – usually in surprising ways.
- If you struggle, ask a friend to pray with you once a week.



8. PESSIMISTIC OPTIMISM!

Admiral Jim Stockdale tortured over 20 times during his 8-year imprisonment in a prisoner of war camp in Vietnam. He survived to become a very important leader in America.

He credits being pessimistically optimistic as something that helped him endure these terrible hardships. He absolutely believed things would eventually get better (the optimistic part), but he did not expect them to get better soon, or quickly, or on any timeframe (that's the pessimistic part).

He says that people who said they would get free by a specific date or time were the ones who would break down fastest. You can't control time, but you can control your attitude and perspectives-- and you can do everything in your power to make things a little bit better right now.



9. CATS & DOGS

No one loves you the way a dog loves you!

Dogs are great, they demand you take them for walk, they calm your nerves when you stroke them and they are *always* happy to see you!

Stoking a pet, whether it's a cat, a dog or even a hamster has been proven to lower blood pressure!

10. KINDNESS

Being grumpy is normal when we are feeling depressed, and results in us being irritable with those whom we love.

Practicing being kind is a simple way to focus our thoughts outwardly rather than on what we are feeling.

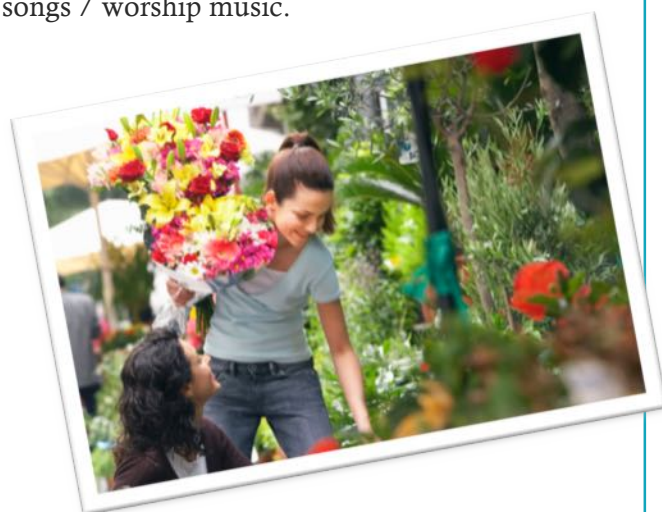
When we focus on ourselves, we tend to become very negative. But when we focus on the needs of others (when we love our neighbour), we will find positive blessings returned upon us.



11. MUSIC

Where words fail, music speaks

The Psalms are a set of songs that were written to be sung out to the Lord. God knows that music speaks to our soul. Try taking some time to listen to some gospel songs / worship music.



12. SPEND TIME WITH A FRIEND

Don't isolate yourself – force yourself to spend time with friends and loved ones.

Even if you want to be alone, ask them to persist with you. You don't have to talk about your feelings, speak about lighter things, or plan to do something more active together.



13. FIND THE GIFT

There's always a gift in any pain we experience.

This doesn't mean pretending – For example, was it a gift that a friend's baby son died? NO! Was there a gift in the fact that they got to live with this baby for a time? You bet.

Do the work to find the gift in the depression.

FOODS & MOODS

The following foods have been proven to lift your mood:

- *Dark Chocolate*
- *Nuts & Seeds*
- *Avocados*
- *Bananas*
- *Spinach*
- *Fish*
- *Blueberries*
- *Dried Apricots*
- *Kidney Beans*

14. BREAK NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

When we are depressed our self-talk leads to downward spirals. No matter how crazy the thought is, we think it's true! *Like I'm never going to be happy again, nobody loves me, I'm utterly alone!*

What we should do instead is speak biblical truth :

I tell myself that I am.... But the Bible tells me that....

I feel.... But the Bible tell me that I need to practice....

Remember God is sovereign:

Whatever is happening to us is not by chance, but by the hand of God.

Remember who we are in Christ:

We have been rescued from sin (2 Cor 5:17). We are adopted, beloved sons & daughters of God (Rom 8:15 & John 17:23). God looks at us, but sees Jesus (2 Cor 5:21). And so we can share his Kingdom (1 Pet. 1:4).

Remember God's Character:

God has revealed himself to be good, holy & just, powerful, all knowing, forever faithful (Dan 4:37 & Heb 10:23). He is gracious, merciful & kind, just as he is in Jesus (Ps. 103:8, John 14:9).

Remember God' Promises:

He has promised salvation for everyone who calls on his name (John 6:37). He is always there, he will never leave us (Joshua 1:9, Rom 8:35-39). He hears us when we cry out to him and will meet all our needs (Ps. 34 & Phil. 5:19). He has promised us eternity with him in heaven (1 John 2:25).



15. SUICIDE IS *NOT* THE ANSWER

- Remember to not 'listen to our own lies', but to speak 'truth' to ourselves.
- Check the physical: I am hungry, am I tired... and deal with that first.
- Make a call. Tell someone. Tell your family or a close friend. Don't suffer in silence (*You can also use any of the numbers below*).
- SA Depression & Anxiety Group (8am to 8pm, Mon to Sun) 011 234 4837.
- SA Depression & Anxiety Group (24hr helpline) 0800 121 314.
- SA Depression & Anxiety Group (24hr suicide helpline) 0800 567 567.

You are not alone – Read Psalm 88.