

About Depression Alliance Scotland

Depression Alliance Scotland is the only charity working across Scotland for people affected by Depression. We offer support and understanding through our national information based services and group work in the community. We are committed to raising awareness of Depression and challenging the stigma that surrounds the condition. We also work to help people find practical ways to cope better and improve their well-being.

We produce a series of factsheets on Depression:

- About Depression
- Depression and Older People
- Caring for Carers
- A Good Night's Sleep
- Depression and Alcohol
- Food and Mood
- Depression at Christmas - A Survival Guide
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender - Me and My Mental Health
- "Look OK... Feel Crap?"- Depression in Young Adults

Single copies are free to addresses in Scotland. A small charge applies for multiple copies. For more information, please contact us on 0845 123 23 20 or email info@dascot.org.



When things get on top of you

Ever feel like things are getting on top of you? If so, you are not alone. Demands of work, family and money, amongst other things can sometimes leave us feeling like things are getting too much. When you feel like this it is important to try to take action and do something about it to feel better. Taking action now can stop things building up and may prevent you from feeling worse later on. This booklet provides a 'Menu for Mood', suggesting different things you can try out to improve your mood. The aim of this booklet is to help you identify small steps you can take to improve your mood and enable you to cope better with life's ups and downs.

Me and my mood

How do you know when you start to feel low? For everyone it will be different. Some people might become more irritable whilst others might feel like they can't feel bothered. You might feel physically different, perhaps having less energy or feeling continually stressed or tense. This is because what we think affects how we feel physically and emotionally and may alter what we do. If you start to recognise these feelings and signs as warning signals you can take action, no matter how small and do something to feel better today. Why not keep a mood diary to get an idea of how your mood changes? Over the period of a week, rate your mood on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being very low to 10 feeling really good.

“Life can be tough with its many challenges. Just like anyone else, these impact on my mood and overall well-being.”

Feel better

There really are lots of things you can do to feel better: however, it is important to discover what works for you . It doesn't have to be a major change. In fact it is probably better to start off with something small and achievable. You will find it easier to motivate yourself to do something if you enjoy it. Don't be put off by trying something new or a bit challenging either. You won't know if it works for you unless you try. Try and introduce one or two small changes a week. Here are some ideas for things that you can do:

You are what you eat! Eating a balanced diet really can help improve your mood. Eat three meals a day, at regular intervals to stop your blood sugar levels from getting low. Also, keep a food diary and record how what you eat and drink affects your mood on a daily basis. For more information, see our food and mood factsheet available at www.dascot.org/publications.

Sleep Better. When you are feeling low, anxious or depressed, your sleep can often be affected. It is important to take time to wind down before you go to bed. Establish a clear bedtime routine and stick to it where possible. For other practical ways to improve your sleep, get yourself our factsheet on a 'A Good Night's Sleep' available at www.dascot.org/publications

“If I'm feeling a bit stressed or pre-occupied then swimming is a great way to relax. My thinking always seems to become more balanced after being in the water and I tend to sleep well too”

Go outside! The great outdoors can refresh and revitalise. You could try some gardening, go for a stroll in your local park or even sit somewhere where there is a nice view.

Invite your friend round for a cup of tea. Socialising and humour can lift our spirits when we start to feel fed up.

Make some time for you and indulge yourself in a luxury item/treat, even if it is only for ten minutes! Read a good book or watch a feel good movie. You deserve it!

Learn something new. Try out a new recipe or explore a new interest. You might surprise yourself!

Get Active! Exercise releases feel-good endorphins which can give you an overall sense of well-being. It can also assist with maintaining and losing weight and therefore help boost your self confidence and self esteem. Visit www.activescotland.org.uk for ideas of things you can do in your area. Even a ten minute walk at lunchtime is a great start.

Circle one of these ideas and set time aside to do it in the next week. Give yourself a mark out of 10 for how much you enjoyed doing it and felt a sense of achievement after. That way you will get an idea of how different activities can change the way you feel!



Coping Better

It would be nice if things in life always ran smoothly but more often than not they don't. Sometimes things happen to us that can affect how we feel. Things like a bereavement in the family, money problems and unemployment can face us all at some point in our lives.

Problems are essentially a part of life. Many people think they have to 'just get on with it' and put up with feeling down, anxious or depressed, but mood matters! So if you are finding that you feel like this regularly, take these feelings as a warning signal and explore what steps you can take to feel better. Here are some ideas for how you can help yourself to manage some of those difficult times in life.

A problem shared is a problem halved. Get talking! It can be hard to do but it really can help. Speak to a friend or family member you trust.

Get informed. Browse the internet and learn about different ways to improve your well-being. Discover your passion!

Ask for help. Everyone needs a little extra help from time to time. Talking to someone you don't know might help. You can speak to your doctor in confidence or ring a helpline like our own. If you are having problems with debts or getting into employment contact one of the relevant agencies listed at the back of this booklet.



Consider talking therapy. Why not try out a talking therapy such as counselling, problem solving therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy or some other psychological support? There are many different types of psychological therapy and it is important that you choose a therapy which feels right for you.

Some of these therapies may be available on the NHS or offered by local charities. For more information on different options available contact us.

Helping you to help yourself. Perhaps it might be worth trying out some self-help. This can be as simple as picking up a self-help book from your local library or joining a local self-help group.

We are currently offering a free online self help package with telephone support called Living Life to the Full Interactive. See www.daslltfi.co.uk for more information.

Complement your efforts. Many people say that complementary therapies are a great way to relax, unwind and generally improve mood. Why not try something new such as aromatherapy, acupuncture, massage, relaxation or another alternative therapy?

“Talking to someone I didn’t know on a helpline helped me to see the changes I needed to make”

Renewable energy *by Dr. Brian McMullen*

Imagine your mood as energy circulating through your body. On days when we feel totally alive this energy is whooshing around. Low mood is likely to be associated with a blockage of energy and there are several things you can do to move this energy around your body.



Movement

Think of renewable energy like wave power, wind power or hydro-power. These all involve movement. Moving your body is important. This is challenging because at times of low mood most of us would rather curl up in bed and hide under the duvet. Anything will do.... walking, dancing. Do what you enjoy, and if you enjoy nothing then just start walking anyway!

Food and Mood

You can look upon food as the fuel needed for the movement. Some foods will encourage energy stagnation. Most food that is processed, high in simple sugar and fat falls into this category. Not only the kind of food, but the reasons for choosing it and the way we eat can affect our moods.

Community

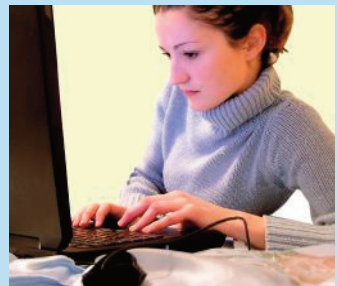
Surrounding yourself with friends that support you is an important part of mood maintenance. It is also important to examine relationships you have that are destructive and where you feel drained of energy. Relationships can be like money that you deposit in a bank account. Some people have described this as “social capital”. How do you manage your social bank account?

So next time you feel like an oil well running dry remember the DAS symbol. It’s a sun coming out behind a cloud - a symbol of renewable energy.

How DAS can help

We listen, support and encourage people to take control and make positive decisions so they can live the best quality of life.

- **Telephone and email support:** contact our confidential helpline for information, or just to talk. Phone 0845 123 23 20 or email info@dascot.org.
- **On the web:** find a vast amount of information about Depression on our websites. Visit www.dascot.org to learn what you can do to get help, or go to www.lookokfeelcrap.org for information on Depression in young adults.
- **Community groups:** We offer community self-help groups and courses in various parts of Scotland, giving you the chance to meet people with similar experiences and to learn some positive strategies for overcoming Depression. Contact us to find out if groups are running in your area.
- **Computerised cognitive behavioural therapy:** Get individual support over the telephone as you work through an online self-help course. Our self-help coach will encourage and help you to achieve your planned goals and learn more about how to manage your mood. Visit www.daslltffi.co.uk to find out more.
- **Online chat:** Delivered through our young adult website, the chat gives people from all over Scotland the chance to talk about how Depression affects their lives. Runs the first Wednesday of each month.
- **Publications:** We have a series of factsheets, newsletters and promotional material giving you information about various aspects of Depression. Download these publications free from our website, www.dascot.org, or contact us to order.



For help and support

Help and Support from DAS

Depression Alliance Scotland

Tel: 0845 123 23 20 or 0131 467 3050

Email info@dascot.org, Website: www.dascot.org

“Look OK... Feel Crap?” www.lookokfeelcrap.org

DAS campaign looks at things young adults can do to feel better.

Living Life to the Full Interactive

Free telephone support sessions from our DAS community coach as you work through our online course based upon Cognitive Behavioural Therapy self-help. www.daslltffi.co.uk

Other helplines

Samaritans

08457 909090 (Open 24 hours), jo@samaritans.org.uk

Breathing Space

0800 83 85 87 (Open 6pm-2am Mon to Thurs and from 6pm Fri to 6am Mon morning).

Information on Well-being

Steps for Stress

A simple guide for stressing less and enjoying life more. This website covers practical ways for you to start dealing with stress.

www.infoscotland.org.uk/stepsforstress

BBC Headroom

BBC campaign to help you cope with the everyday stresses and strains of life. www.bbc.co.uk/headroom.

Exercise and Diet

Take Life On

Website providing handy tips to help you improve your diet and fitness. Everything you need to take life on, one step at a time.

www.takelifeon.co.uk

Active Scotland

Get ideas for ways you can exercise and search for activities you can get involved in near you.

www.activescotland.org.uk

Bereavement

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland

Offers free confidential counselling and support to anyone experiencing difficulty with the grieving process.

Tel: 0845 600 2227

www.crusescotland.org.uk, info@crusescotland.org.uk

Employment and Finance

Citizens Advice Call Citizens Advice Direct on 0844 848 9600 for advice or search for your local Citizens Advice Bureau on their website, www.cas.org.uk.

Jobcentre Plus

Help and advice on job hunting and extra support.

Tel: 0845 60 60 234, www.direct.gov.uk/employment





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