



Brisbane City Psychologists
LIVE HAPPY



DEPRESSION RELAPSE PREVENTION TOOLKIT

Although most people recover from depression and have no further issues, some may experience a relapse within the following year. It is therefore important to learn how to prevent it from occurring again.

Relapse prevention is about monitoring and identifying your early warning signs and their triggers, as well as developing an effective and proactive plan of action to prevent relapse or minimise its effects.

There are some things you can do to prevent a relapse or minimise its impact:

1. Monitor your **mood** regularly;
2. Be aware of your own warning signs and their triggers;
3. Develop a plan of action to deal with the triggers (*proactive*);
4. Develop a plan of action to know what to do when you identify early warning signs (*reactive*).

This toolkit will help you monitor and keep track of your depression symptoms and take early action to prevent a relapse.



Mood Monitoring Worksheet

Print this page and record your mood daily by adding a dot on the box that best describes your mood on each day. Connect the dots together with a straight line. Look for patterns and correlations between your lifestyle changes or treatment and your mood ratings over the week.



Your Name:

Month / Year:

Mood / Day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
 Very Positive							
 Mildly Positive							
 Neutral Mood							
 Somewhat Depressed							
 Very Depressed							
<i>Lifestyle or treatment changes</i>							



Symptoms Monitoring Worksheet

Print this page and mark the symptoms that you experience each day over the course of a week.

Your Name:

Month / Year:

Symptoms / Day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Triggers
Feeling down or sad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Feeling irritated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Feeling tense, restless	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Low self-esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Loss of motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Low energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Changes in sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Feelings of worthlessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Changes in appetite / weight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Poor concentration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alcohol / drugs overuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Your Action Plan

Early intervention is the best approach to prevent depression relapse. Having a well thought out plan of action, with as much detail as possible, is a great way to help you manage triggers and overcome the early warning signs of depression.

Use the worksheet below to think and plan early interventions, either in a proactive and reactive manner.

Note whether the identified triggers can be avoided or not. If not, you must clearly state what to do to cope with the situation either before you are exposed to the trigger, during and after.

Triggers you CAN avoid	How to avoid it (i.e. what to do instead)



Triggers you **CANNOT** avoid

Plan what to do before, during
and after the trigger event

Empty box for notes under 'Triggers you CANNOT avoid'.

Empty box for notes under 'Plan what to do before, during and after the trigger event'.

Empty box for notes under 'Triggers you CANNOT avoid'.

Empty box for notes under 'Plan what to do before, during and after the trigger event'.

Empty box for notes under 'Triggers you CANNOT avoid'.

Empty box for notes under 'Plan what to do before, during and after the trigger event'.

Empty box for notes under 'Triggers you CANNOT avoid'.

Empty box for notes under 'Plan what to do before, during and after the trigger event'.



Note below your action plan for those times when early warning signs of depression are identified.

Early Warning Sign and Action Plan

What I would do

What I would ask my friends
or family to say to me

What I would ask my friends
or family to do for me



Tips to Develop your Action Plan

These tips and ideas will help you manage your early warning signs and symptoms of depression.

Problem Area

Loss of interest in pleasurable activities and daily routine

Tips and Ideas

Research shows that increasing activity levels and engaging in activities that you find pleasurable (or used to) and give you some sense of achievement can help reduce depressive symptoms.

1. Make a list of all the things you find enjoyable.
2. Plan out the day in advance to give it structure around these activities.
3. When you have finished a task think about what you accomplished.
4. When you are doing something fun focus on the enjoyment you feel.

Some examples of activities people find helpful are:

- Going to a movie.
- Walking, exercising or playing sports.
- Listening to music.
- Laughing at funny videos.
- Visiting friends and relatives.
- Reading.
- Yoga.
- Meditating.
- Going to the beach.
- Doing arts and crafts.
- Baking.
- Going to the beauty salon.
- Visiting a museum or art gallery.
- Planning your studies or career.



Problem Area

Solutions

Changes in sleeping patterns

Disrupted sleep can be improved by:

- Trying to get up at the same time every day.
- Avoiding napping.
- Reducing caffeine intake.
- Increasing exercise.
- Doing some form of relaxation before bed.
- Turning off all screens and stopping work 30 minutes before bed, and engaging in a 'winding down' routine or activity.
- Not staying in bed for more than 30 minutes if you can't sleep – get up and do something else and only return to bed when you feel a 'wave' of sleepiness come over you (yawning etc.).

Worrying and negative thinking

- Write down the worry or worries, then try to problem solve each one.
- Think about how realistic each one is.
- Try to focus on the alternatives that could happen as well.
- Keep yourself busy focussing on what you can control – taking action in these areas.
- Distract yourself from worry using tasks.
- Set aside a worry time each day of 15 minutes and only worry within these times, if a worry comes up outside of these times note it down, and leave it to your worry time.



Problem Area

Irritability, agitation and fatigue

Solutions

- Let your friends and family know what you are going through (as much as you feel comfortable). Help them understand irritability is part of what you are going through, and not personal.
- Make a list of things that make you irritated and try to avoid as many as possible. Prepare yourself for situations you cannot avoid by telling yourself – “stay calm, breathe, keep your cool”, and be prepared to walk away if you are getting irritated.

About Exercise

A recent review of the research showed that moderate exercise (such as walking, cycling, or using machines such as elliptical trainers, treadmills and stationary cycles) done three times a week for 30-45 minutes, ideally for at least nine weeks, lowers the symptoms of depression.

You can get started on this today, by trying to work it into your routine as much as possible – can you cycle or walk to or from work? Maybe you can sneak a work out into the day by getting up a bit earlier, or exercising in your lunch break? Getting a partner or group going will help you stay motivated and consistent, or you could use a personal trainer for this. The main thing is to make it something you enjoy, or it will be harder to stick to it.