

DEPRESSION ALERT WORKSHOP

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www.tcd.ie/student-counselling/

•Aims of workshop

- To help us recognise low mood
- To understand links between thoughts mood and behaviour
- To explore management strategies

Typical Negative Thoughts

- What are the typical thoughts that emerge when we get depressed?
- How do they make us feel?
- How do they affect our behaviour?

Depressed or “ just down” ??

- Low mood reactive to stressors are common but generally pass
- About 5-8% of general population get depressed
- Clinical depression:** 5 or more symptoms lasting at least 2 weeks
- Depressed mood, irritability, loss of interest in things, Insomnia, Loss of appetite, fatigue, poor concentration, feelings of worthlessness, futility feelings, suicidal thoughts.

Signs of Depression

- Thoughts** Thinking becomes negative about self others and the world
- Mood** Sad, down, upset, angry, guilty, overwhelmed, low, fed up
- Physical** lethargy, fatigue, memory or concentration disturbances, loss of appetite sleep
- Behaviour** reduced activity, avoidance

Understanding the process.....

- A reaction to many things -theme of loss
- Changes in the way chemicals work in the body
- Increased stress/ exposure to increased demands
- Physical illness
- Trauma, physical or psychological
- Medications/substance misuse
- Inherited risk
- May be associated with loss or rejection
- May be transient

What about negative thoughts?

- They tend to be automatic and uninvited
- They may seem reasonable in the context of how we feel, but serve no useful purpose
- The more we believe the thoughts the worse we feel...
- Negative thoughts can be powerful contributing to an increased sense of hopelessness

Increasing awareness.....

- Keep a diary of negative thoughts
- Write the **day/time**
- The situation:** Where was I?. ,what was I doing when my mood changed?
- The Feelings:** what emotion was I feeling at the time e.g. sad, upset, angry, guilty?
- What **Automatic Thoughts** occurred? What ran through my mind?

Challenging negative thoughts?

•**What is the evidence?** Do the facts of my situation back up what I think or are there any contradictions?

•**What alternative views are there?** There are many different ways to examine any experience- generate possible options

•**Do I engage in thinking errors?**

Such as.....

•Over generalising: "I'm a complete failure"

•Exaggerating: Seeing things in an extreme way

•Selective Abstraction: Focus on negative events only

•Magnification/Minisation: Minimising achievements and focusing more on negative events

•Jumping to conclusions ", they don't like me , I'm rejectable"

What can I do to help myself...

•Get regular sleep, food and exercise

•Aim for a good work, leisure balance

•Hang out with friends that bring you up, not down

•Organize your college work, seek advice from tutors/College staff early if struggling

•Use available College resources

•If low mood is persistent and accompanied by futility feelings-tell someone, but also seek medical advice

•Keep communication channels open towards others

•If someone confides in you while being supportive, encourage them to seek further help professionally

Can medication help.....

•Depression can feel physically and psychologically driven sometimes combining psychological support and medication is sometimes indicated

- Antidepressants work by increasing brain chemicals (serotonin, noradrenalin) which are involved in mood, anxiety and biological regulation of sleep, activity attention and arousal levels. Response can be gradual, with improvements in energy, sleep and mood.

What kinds of therapy are there...

- There are many therapy approaches combining different strategies
- Supportive therapy or Counselling- hear your concerns and help you decide how to handle things more effectively
- Interpersonal therapy-relationship aspects, role transition issues
- Cognitive –Behavioral-looks at connections between thoughts, moods and behavior and offers practical management advice
- Psychodynamic or Exploratory Therapy-looks at how unconscious ways of thinking and acting affect the way we experience things

Resources/reading

- “Mind Over Mood”* by Christine Padesky & Dennis Greenberger
- “The Common Sense approach to Depression”* Tony Bates
- “The Feeling Good Handbook”* David Burns
- Student Counselling, Ph: 8961407 student-counselling@tcd.ie
- Online www.trinity.mentalhealth.com
- College Tutors ext. 2551
- Chaplains chaplaincy@tcd.ie ext. 1260
- Health Centre, Ph: 8961556 Niteline 1800793793 thu-sun
- Student2 Student (S2S) <http://student2student@tcd.ie>
- Samaritans 24 hr helpline 1850609090 jo@samaritans.org

Mood Diary

Situation	Mood	Automatic Thoughts	Evidence supporting thoughts	Evidence against	Alternative thoughts	Mood now

Questions to help identify Automatic thoughts

- What was going through my mind before I started to feel this way?
- What does this say about me if it is true?
- What does this mean about me, my life, my future?
- What am I afraid might happen?
- What is the worst thing that could happen if it is true?
- What does this mean about how the other person might feel / think about me?
- What does this mean about the other person or people in general?

Questions to help find evidence not supporting the core negative thought

- Have I any experiences that show me this thought is not completely true all of the time?
- If my best friend or someone I care about had this thought what would I tell them?
- If my friend or someone who cares for me knew I was thinking this way what would they say to me? What evidence would they point out to me that does not support this thought?
- When I'm not feeling this way do I think about this situation differently? If so, in what way?
- What small things contradict my thoughts that I may be discounting as important?
- Are there any positives or strengths in me or this situation I am ignoring?
- Am I jumping to conclusions that may not be justified by the evidence?
- Have I been in this situation before? What happened? Is there anything different now? What have I learned from prior experience that could help me now?

Questions to help generate alternative more balanced thinking

- Based on the evidence I've listed, is there an alternative way of thinking or understanding this situation?
- Summarize in one sentence evidence supporting the thought and evidence not supporting the thought. Does combining both help evolve a more balanced view considering **all** the information?
- Would someone I trust and respect think of any other way of understanding the situation?
- What would I say to a friend who presented me with a similar situation? How would I suggest to them an alternative view?