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Mood Hygiene Worksheet

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BURNS DEPRESSION CHECKLIST	0 – Not At All	1 – Somewhat	2 – Moderate	3 – A Lot
1. Sadness: Have you been feeling sad or down in the dumps?				
2. Discouraged: Does the future look hopeless				
3. Low self-esteem: Do you feel worthless or think of yourself as a failure?				
4. Inferiority: Do you feel inadequate or inferior to others?				
5. Guilt: Do you get self crucial and blame yourself for everything?				
6. Indecisiveness: Do you have trouble making up your mind about things?				
7. Irritability and frustrations: Have you been feeling resentful and angry a good deal of the time?				
8. Loss of interest in life: Have you lost interest in your career, your hobbies, your family, or your friends?				
9. Loss of motivation: Do you feel overwhelmed and have to push yourself hard to do things?				
10. Poor self-image: Do you think you're looking old or unattractive?				
11. Appetite changes: Have you lost your appetite? Or do you overeat or binge compulsively?				
12. Sleep changes: Do you suffer from insomnia and find it hard to get a good nights sleep? Or are you excessively tired and sleeping too much?				
13. Loss of libido: Have you lost your interest in sex?				
14. Hypochondriasis: Do you worry a great deal about your health?				
15. Suicidal impulses †: Do you have thoughts that life is not worth living or thing that you might be better off dead?				

Add up your total score for the 15 symptoms and record it here: _____ **Date:** _____

After you have completed the test, add up your total score. It will be somewhere between 0 (if you answered "not at all" for each of the 15 categories) and 45 (if you answered "a lot" for each one). Use this key to interpret your score. You may want to test yourself again from time to time.

Total score Degree of Depression

- 0 – 4 Minimal or no depression**
- 5 – 10 Borderline depression**
- 11 -20 Mild depression**
- 21- 30 Moderate depression**
- 31 – 45 Severe depression**

Goldberg's Depression Scale

You might reproduce this scale and use it on a weekly basis to track your moods. It also might be used to show your doctor how your symptoms have changed from one visit to the next. Changes of five or more points are significant. This scale is not designed to make a diagnosis of depression or take the place of a professional diagnosis. If you suspect that you are depressed, please consult with a mental health professional as soon as possible. The items below refer to how you have felt and behaved DURING THE PAST WEEK. For each item, indicate the extent to which it is true, by circling one of the numbers that follows it.

0 = Not at all 1 = Just a little 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately 4 = Quite a lot 5 = Very much

I do things slowly.	0	1	2	3	4	5
My future seems hopeless.	0	1	2	3	4	5
It is hard for me to concentrate on reading.	0	1	2	3	4	5
The pleasure and joy has gone out of my life.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have difficulty making decisions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have lost interest in aspects of life that used to be important to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel sad, blue, and unhappy.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I am agitated and keep moving around.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel fatigued.	0	1	2	3	4	5
It takes great effort for me to do simple things.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I am a guilty person who deserves to be punished.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like a failure.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel lifeless - - - more dead than alive.	0	1	2	3	4	5
My sleep has been disturbed too little, too much, or broken sleep.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I spend time thinking about HOW I might kill myself.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel trapped or caught.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel depressed even when good things happen to me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
Without trying to diet, I have lost, or gained, weight.	0	1	2	3	4	5

SELF-HELP AND COPING TIPS

Depression drains your energy, hope, and drive, making it difficult to do what you need to feel better. But while overcoming depression isn't quick or easy, it's far from impossible. You can't beat it through sheer willpower, but you do have some control—even if your depression is severe and stubbornly persistent. The key to depression recovery is to start small and build from there. Feeling better takes time, but you can get there if you make positive choices for yourself each day and draw on the support of others.

Making a depression recovery plan

Recovering from depression requires action. But taking action when you're depressed is hard. In fact, just thinking about the things you should do to feel better can be exhausting: *Exercise... Eat right... Sleep right... Get out into the world... Be more social... Stop thinking negatively... Do things that you enjoy...*

You probably already know that these things will help you overcome depression. But that doesn't make them any easier. After all, when it's tough to get out of bed in the morning, taking on anything more than the bare minimum for daily survival is overwhelming. This is the Catch-22 of depression recovery. The symptoms of depression (such as fatigue, hopelessness, clouded thinking, and self-loathing) make it difficult to take the necessary steps to wellness. There is a difference, however, between difficult and impossible.

If you understand what it takes to cope with and overcome depression, neither underestimating the illness nor your own capacity to heal, you can make a workable plan for recovery. A realistic recovery plan involves taking responsibility for the choices and changes you do have control over, while avoiding self-blame and guilt over the mistakes you've made or the things you can't control.

Taking baby steps

The key to depression recovery is to draw upon whatever energy and resources you do have. *Start with small goals.* You may not have much energy, but you probably have enough to take a short walk around the block or pick up the phone to call a loved one.

If you're severely depressed, focus on adding more activity into your life. You don't need to start training for a marathon to get a benefit. Activities can be as small as going out into the sunshine for ten minutes when you'd rather stay inside on the couch, taking a shower and getting dressed, or grabbing coffee with a friend.

Take your recovery day by day, be patient, and reward yourself for each accomplishment. Baby steps are fine. Put enough of them together and you'll find yourself well on the way to getting out from under depression's shadow.

Ten Steps to Accomplishing a Depression Recovery Goal

1. State as clearly as possible in a positive manner what it is that you want to create in your life.
2. Be clear why you want this and how your life will be different once you achieve this goal.
3. Understand what you have going for you to help you achieve this goal.
4. Understand the challenges that exist.
5. Be especially aware of the negative self-talk that sabotages and undermines your attempts to succeed.
6. Be clear about what you need to achieve this goal in terms of skills, resources, support systems
7. List the 3-5 major actions that you need to take to start moving toward this goal.
8. Think of ways to care for yourself as you work to achieve this goal.
9. Stay focused on what you want to create, not on the difficulties you might be having.
10. Be easy on yourself! Have fun! Enjoy the journey!

Source: [Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#)

Developing a “wellness toolbox”

The idea of a wellness toolbox can be helpful as you plan for recovery. For your wellness toolbox, come up with a list of things that you can do, or have done in the past, to relieve your depression. Include any strategies, activities, or skills you can use for a mood boost. The more “tools” for coping with depression, the better. Try and implement a few of these ideas each day, even when you’re feeling good.

A few wellness toolbox ideas for coping with depression:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk to a supportive friend. ● Spend some time in nature. ● List what you like about yourself. ● Write in your journal. ● Read a good book. ● Watch a sitcom or funny movie. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a long, hot bath. ● Listen to music. ● Get a massage. ● Take care of a few small tasks. ● Enjoy the company of a pet. ● Do something nice for someone else

Doing things you enjoy (or used to)

While you can’t force yourself to have fun or experience pleasure, you can choose to do things that you used to enjoy. Pick up a former hobby or a sport you used to like. Express yourself creatively through music, art, or writing. Go out to dinner or a movie with friends. Take a day trip to a museum, the mountains, or the ballpark.

Push yourself to do things, even when you don’t feel like it. You might be surprised at how much better you feel once you’re out in the world. Even if your depression doesn’t lift immediately, you’ll gradually feel less sluggish and blue as you make time for fun activities. *Don’t wait until you feel better to do things you used to love doing, do them and you may feel better. Take the action and it will lead to improved mood.*

Depression Self-Help Tip #1: Changing negative thinking

Depression puts a negative spin on everything, including the way you see yourself, the situations you encounter, and your expectations for the future. But while depression causes negative thinking, negative thinking also triggers and fuels depression, causing a vicious cycle that’s tough to escape. Making it even tougher is the fact that our negative thoughts can be so automatic that we’re not even aware of them or that we can choose to control them.

The pessimistic thinking of depression is based on *cognitive distortions* that transform neutral, impersonal, or even positive events or situations into negative ones.

Top Ten Cognitive Distortions that Lead to Depression			
Date	Distortion		Notes
	All-or-nothing thinking	There’s no middle ground. You’re either a hero or a loser. The situation is either ideal or a disaster. If you make any mistakes at all, you look at yourself as a failure.	
	Overgeneralization	Generalizing from a single negative experience, expecting it to happen over and over again in all situations. If you got turned down for one job, no company will ever hire you.	

Cont. next page

Date	Distortion		Notes
	The mental filter	Dwelling on the negatives while filtering out all the positives. For example, you got an A on a term paper, but all you can think about is the one small criticism your professor made.	
	Diminishing the positive	Coming up with reasons why positive events don't count. If you were praised at work for a great presentation, you tell yourself that you just got lucky or it was an easy job that anyone could have aced.	
	Jumping to conclusions	Despite any proof to back it up, you go straight to a negative interpretation of events. You act as either a mind reader (assuming that someone is reacting negatively to you) or a fortune teller (you "know" that things will turn out badly).	
	Magnification or minimization	Also known as the binocular trick. You either magnify problems, blowing them way out of proportion, or you minimize your own achievements and positive qualities until they seem insignificant.	
	Emotional reasoning	You buy into the idea that the way you feel reflects reality. If you feel like you're worthless, that means it's true.	
	'Should' and 'must' statements	You constantly beat yourself over the head with the things you should or shouldn't do. This rigid to-do list of "shoulds" and "musts" leads to guilt, shame, and stress.	
	Labeling and mislabeling	You label yourself according to what you do or don't do. If you make a mistake, you slap on a negative label (failure, idiot, loser). These labels stick, long after the negative event is forgotten.	
	Personalization	You assume guilt and responsibility for things that are outside your control. Whenever something goes wrong, you blame yourself.	

Cognitive Distortions

If you're depressed, cognitive distortions are probably part of your lifelong pattern of thinking. But you can't break this bad habit by "just thinking positive." Happy thoughts or wishful thinking won't cut it. Rather, the trick is to replace negative thinking with realistic thinking. You can do this by identifying the cognitive distortions you tend to use, and systematically challenging them with the facts. This is a key component of cognitive behavior therapy, one of the most successful treatments for depression.

Ways to change negative thinking for the better:

- **Think outside yourself.** Ask yourself if you'd say what you're thinking about yourself to someone else. If not, stop being so hard on yourself. Think about less harsh statements that offer more realistic descriptions.
- **Keep a "negative thought log".** Whenever you experience a negative thought, jot down the thought and what triggered it in a notebook. Review your log when you're in a good mood. Consider if the negativity was truly warranted. For a second opinion, you can also ask a friend or therapist to go over your log with you.
- **Replace negatives with positives.** Review your negative thought log. Then, for each negative thought, write down something positive. For instance, "My boss hates me. She gave me this difficult report to complete" could be replaced with, "My boss must have a lot of faith in me to give me so much responsibility."
- **Socialize with positive people.** Notice how people who always look on the bright side deal with challenges, even minor ones, like not being able to find a parking space. Then consider how you would react in the same situation. Even if you have to pretend, try to adopt their optimism and persistence in the face of difficulty.

Challenge Negative Thoughts

Here are some typical negative thoughts you might experience when preparing to give a major presentation:

- **Feelings of inadequacy:** Have you trained yourself as well as you reasonably should have? Do you have the experience and resources you need to make the presentation? Have you planned, prepared and rehearsed enough? If you have done all of these, you've done as much as you can to give a good performance.
- **Worries about performance during rehearsal:** If some of your practice was less than perfect, then remind yourself that the purpose of the practice is to identify areas for improvement and problems so that these can be sorted out before the performance.
- **Problems with issues outside your control:** Have you identified the risks of these things happening, and have you taken steps to reduce the likelihood of them happening or their impact if they do? What will you do if they occur? And what do you need others to do for you?
- **Worry about other people's reactions:** If you have put in good preparation, and you do the best you can, then you should be satisfied. If you perform as well as you reasonably can, then fair people are likely to respond well. If people are not fair, the best thing to do is ignore their comments and rise above them.

Depression Self-Help Goal #1: Changing negative thinking What am I willing to do on this goal?

Depression Self-Help

Tip #2: Cultivating supportive relationships

As human beings, we have a biological need to feel connected to others. Depressed human beings need the support of other people even more. On your own, it's difficult to maintain perspective and sustain the effort required to succeed in treatment. But when you're depressed, retreating into your shell is more appealing than socializing. The problem is that social isolation fuels depression and makes it even worse. When they're alone, depressed people tend to revert to negative, unrealistic thinking, which only exacerbates feelings of worthlessness, shame, and alienation.

Finding Support

To locate a depression support group in your area, visit the [Depression and Bipolar Alliance](#). Maintaining relationships and incorporating social activities into your life is therefore one of the most important coping strategy for depression.

To get the social connection and support you need:

- **Turn to trusted friends and family members.** In your depressed state, you've probably retreated from your most treasured relationships. However, it is these relationships that can get you through this tough time. Communicate your needs to the people you love and trust. Ask for help when you need it.
- **Don't turn down opportunities to socialize.** Depression often causes people to isolate. Keep in touch with friends you do have and don't shut the door to opportunities to make new friends and contacts.
- **Join a support group.** Find a group you can of other people working toward depression recovery. Being with others in the same boat can go a long way in reducing your sense of aloneness. You can also encourage each other, give and receive advice on how to cope, and share your experiences. Having a caring group of people who can be there to listen to you and support you is perhaps the most important thing you can do outside of medical treatment to help you with your depression. There are numerous groups, both online and in your community, dedicated to supporting those with depression and other mental illnesses.
 - [Locate Other Online Support Groups](#)
 - http://depression.about.com/od/onlinesupport/Online_Support_Groups.htm
- **See a therapist.** Therapy can help keep you on track with depression recovery. A supportive, thoughtful therapist can help you work through issues the depression has caused, change negative ways of thinking, and explore the root of your depression.
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Life Skills Groups**
- **Illness Management & Recovery Groups**
- **AIAnon Family Groups**, Tues. 8pm St. Mark's 10th & Eugene
- **Alcoholics Anonymous**, <http://district14aa.org>

Depression Self-Help Goal #2: Cultivating supportive relationships

What am I willing to do on this goal?

Depression Self-Help Tip #3: Healthy lifestyle habits

There is an undeniable link between physical and mental health. Depression can cause physical symptoms such as aches and pains, frequent illness, weight loss or gain, and insomnia. But on the flip side, making healthy lifestyle choices can dramatically improve your mood.

- Regular exercise. (See information below and on **Exercise and Mood**, next pages)
- Healthy sleep habits. (See information on **Sleep Hygiene Worksheet**).
- A nutritious diet. (See information on **Nutrition and Mood**, next pages)
- Avoiding alcohol and drugs.
- Daily sunlight.
- Regular exercise can alter your brain chemistry by increasing serotonin levels and lead to feelings of wellbeing. According to [Better Health Channel](#) other factors that may help explain the benefits of exercise include:
 - Taking an active role in your own recovery boosts your self-esteem
 - Some forms of exercise, like team sports, are also social events.
 - Physical activity burns up stress chemicals, like adrenaline, which promotes a more relaxed state of mind.
 - Enjoying exercise may be distracting enough to break the vicious cycle of pessimistic thinking.

Exercise as an Antidepressant

The following six exercise tips offer a powerful prescription for boosting mood:

1. **Exercise now...and again.** A 10-minute walk can improve your mood for two hours. The key to sustaining mood benefits is to exercise regularly.
2. **Choose activities that are moderately intense.** Aerobic exercise undoubtedly has mental health benefits, but you don't need to sweat strenuously to see results.
3. **Find exercises that are continuous and rhythmic (rather than intermittent).** Walking, swimming, dancing, stationary biking, and yoga are good choices.
4. **Be wary of competitive sports.** Exercise that pits people head-to-head with opponents may be too stressful, leading to a bad mood in the face of defeat.
5. **Add a mind-body element.** Activities such as yoga and tai chi rest your mind and pump up your energy. You can also add a meditative element to walking or swimming by repeating a mantra (a word or phrase) as you move.
6. **Start slowly, and don't overdo it. More isn't better.** Athletes who over train find their moods drop rather than lift.

Source: Adapted from [Johns Hopkins Health Alerts](#)

Depression Self-Help Goal #3: Healthy lifestyle habits

What am I willing to do on this goal?

Depression Self-Help Tip #4: Reducing stress

Stressful life events are hard for everyone, but stress poses a particular risk for who are depressed or prone to be. Not only can stress prolong or worsen depression, but it can also trigger it. In fact, stress is a major factor in depression relapse following recovery. In order to get over depression and stay well, it's essential to learn how to minimize and [cope with stress](#).

What am I willing to do on this goal?

Coping with the Stress that Triggers Depression		
Date	Tip	Notes
	<p>Reduce Your Stress When the body is under stress, the adrenal gland increases secretion of cortisol. Short-term, this hormone can help aid in survival. Long-term elevation of cortisol, however, can have detrimental effects. Although the exact mechanism that causes depression is uncertain, clinical studies suggest that chronically elevated cortisol may induce clinical depression by somehow affecting the neurotransmitter serotonin. Learning stress reduction techniques may be helpful in reducing depression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Is Stress Making You Sick? ■ How to Cope With Stress ■ Holiday Stress Survival Kit
	<p>Identify your stressors Figure out all the things in your life that are stressing you out. Examples include: work overload, unsupportive relationships, substance abuse, taking on too much, or health problems. Once you've identified your stressors, you can make a plan to avoid them or minimize their impact.</p>	
	<p>Go easy on yourself Many depressed people are perfectionists, holding themselves to impossibly high standards and then beating themselves up when they fail to meet them. You can battle this source of self-imposed stress by challenging your negative ways of thinking.</p>	
	<p>Plan ahead If you know your stress triggers and limits, you will be able to identify and avoid many landmines. If you sense trouble ahead, protect yourself by dipping into your wellness toolbox and saying "no" to added responsibility.</p>	
	<p>Learn how to relax Since some stress is inevitable, knowing how to deal with it is important. There are many relaxation techniques that can help, including yoga, deep breathing, and meditation. Mindfulness meditation is particularly effective for relieving depression and stress</p>	

Nutrition Tips to Improve Your Mood		
Date	Tip	Notes
	VITAMINS AND MINERALS Most people can get all the vitamins and minerals they need by eating properly. If they don't, their moods can be affected. With out enough B vitamins (found in lean meats, peanuts and dark green leafy vegetables), you can feel depressed, grouchy and nervous or forgetful. Thiamine (found in enriched breads, whole wheat, brown rice and legumes) helps you feel calm, sleep well and fight depression. Vitamins B-12 (found in fortified breakfast cereals and cooked beef) gives you energy. If you don't have enough B-12, you can feel grouchy and have problems sleeping.	
	CARBOHYDRATES, FATS & PROTEIN Different types of food affect you in different ways. Carbohydrates (including wheat, pasta, bread, sweets) tend to calm you down. Low-fat proteins (including meat, fish, low-fat dairy products) give you energy. Fats slow you down and can make you feel sluggish.	
	A HEALTHY DIET It's important to eat a balanced diet, especially when you are under stress. A healthy diet includes low-fat protein (including meat, fish, beans), complex carbohydrates (vegetables, fruit, whole grains), and small amounts of fats (olive oil, safflower oil or other vegetable oils), Avoid added sugar, sweets and caffeine, which add to stress. Understand how foods affect your moods and you'll improve your physical and emotional health.	
	EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS to get the energy, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need for good health.	
	MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT to reduce your chances of having high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain cancers, and the most common kind of diabetes.	
	CHOOSE A DIET LOW IN FAT, SATURATED FAT, AND CHOLESTEROL to reduce your risk of heart attack and certain types of cancer. Because fat contains over twice the calories of an equal amount of carbohydrates or protein, a diet low in fat can help you maintain a healthy weight.	
	CHOOSE A DIET WITH PLENTY OF VEGETABLES, FRUITS, AND WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS which provide needed vitamins, minerals, fiber and complex carbohydrates, and can help you lower your intake of fat.	
	USE SUGAR IN MODERATION. A diet with lots of sugar has too many calories and too few nutrients for most people and can contribute to tooth decay.	
	USE SALT AND SODIUM IN MODERATION to help prevent cardiovascular disease and reduce incidence of hypertension.	

Nutrition Tips to Improve Your Mood Cont.		
Date	Tip	Notes
	<p>EAT OFTEN (Every 3-4 Hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prevents nutrient deficiencies, which contribute to anxiety and depression •Prevents hypoglycemia, which contributes to anxiety and anger •Lowers levels of adrenaline and cortisol, which contribute to the flight or fight response •Prevents physical diseases such as cardiovascular disease 	
	<p>EAT PROTEIN FOR BREAKFAST</p> <p>By eating carbs and drinking coffee in the morning we cause a drop in blood sugar (and rise in adrenalin) by 10 am.</p> <p>Keep your blood sugar even by eating slow-releasing carbohydrates and avoiding stimulants and sugar</p>	
	<p>EAT MORE PROTEIN</p> <p>You may be eating too little protein. In fact, you almost certainly are if you've been dieting or avoiding fatty foods, many of which are high in protein, too.</p> <p>Your brain relies on protein - the only food source of amino acids - to make all of its mood-enhancing chemicals.</p> <p>If you are not getting enough protein, you won't be able to manufacture those crucial chemicals.</p>	
	<p>LIMIT CAFFEINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Coffee is like mild adrenalin 	
	<p>DRINK ENOUGH WATER</p> <p>Failing to take in more water than your body uses can lead to dehydration. Even mild dehydration — as little as a 1 percent to 2 percent loss of your body weight — can sap your energy and make you tired. Common causes of dehydration include strenuous activity, excessive sweating, vomiting and diarrhea.</p>	

Exercise and Mood

- When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals all work together to make you feel good. In addition, after exercising you may feel a sense of accomplishment and your muscles will relax deeper because of the workout – easing tension and strain.
- While exercise is not, on its own, a treatment for clinical depression; studies show that exercise can help improve mood temporarily in depressed individuals. In fact, for people with mild or moderate depression, 30 minutes of intense exercise can be as effective as medication for improving mood.
- Exercise has long been touted as a way to maintain physical fitness and help prevent high blood pressure, diabetes and other diseases. A growing volume of research shows that exercise can also help improve symptoms of certain mental health conditions, including depression and anxiety. Exercise may also help prevent a relapse after treatment for depression or anxiety.
- Research suggests that it may take at least 30 minutes of exercise a day for at least three to five days a week to significantly improve depression symptoms. But smaller amounts of activity — as little as 10 to 15 minutes at a time — can improve mood in the short term. "Small bouts of exercise may be a great way to get started if it's initially too hard to do more," Dr. Vickers-Douglas says.
- Just how exercise reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety isn't fully understood. Some evidence suggests that exercise raises the levels of certain mood-enhancing neurotransmitters in the brain. Exercise may also boost feel-good endorphins, release muscle tension, help you sleep better, and reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol. It also increases body temperature, which may have calming effects. All of these changes in your mind and body can improve such symptoms as sadness, anxiety, irritability, stress, fatigue, anger, self-doubt and hopelessness.
- **Cardiovascular Exercises and Aerobics:** Intense exercise increases the release of those chemicals (endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine) in your body. Cardiovascular exercise and aerobics are great for creating the intensity required for a mood-raising chemical high.
- **Yoga** Yoga has been shown in studies to reduce tension and stress while improving mood. Yoga focuses on a range of stretching, breathing and motion that create a release of negative emotions in the body. Yoga, interestingly, has been shown to be particularly effective for men (compared to other exercises like swimming).
- **Confidence.** Being physically active gives you a sense of accomplishment. Meeting goals or challenges, no matter how small, can boost self-confidence at times when you need it most. Exercise can also make you feel better about your appearance and your self-worth.
- **Distraction.** When you have depression or anxiety, it's easy to dwell on how badly you feel. But dwelling interferes with your ability to problem solve and cope in a healthy way. Dwelling can also make depression more severe and longer lasting. Exercise can shift the focus away from unpleasant thoughts to something more pleasant, such as your surroundings or the music you enjoy listening to while you exercise.
- **Interactions.** Depression and anxiety can lead to isolation. That, in turn, can worsen your condition. Exercise may give you the chance to meet or socialize with others, even if it's just exchanging a friendly smile or greeting as you walk around your neighborhood.
- **Healthy coping.** Doing something positive to manage depression or anxiety is a healthy coping strategy. Trying to feel better by drinking alcohol excessively, dwelling on how badly you feel, or hoping depression and anxiety will go away on their own aren't helpful coping strategies.

BECK ANXIETY CHECKLIST	0 Not At All	1 Mildly but it didn't bother me much.	2 Moderately - it wasn't pleasant at times	3 Severely – it bothered me a lot
1. Numbness or tingling				
2. Feeling hot				
3. Wobbliness in legs				
4. Unable to relax				
5. Fear of worst happening				
6. Dizzy or lightheaded				
7. Heart pounding/racing				
8. Unsteady				
9. Terrified or afraid				
10. Nervous				
11. Feeling of choking				
12. Shaky / unsteady				
13. Fear of losing control				
14. Difficulty in breathing				
15. Fear of dying				
16. Scared				
17. Indigestion				
18. Faint / lightheaded				
19. Face flushed				
20. Hot/cold sweats				

Scoring - Sum each column. Then sum the column totals to achieve a grand score. Write that score here _____ .

A grand sum between **0 – 21** indicates very low anxiety. That is usually a good thing. However, it is possible that you might be unrealistic in either your assessment which would be denial or that you have learned to “mask” the symptoms commonly associated with anxiety. Too little “anxiety” could indicate that you are detached from yourself, others, or your environment.

A grand sum between **22 – 35** indicates moderate anxiety. Your body is trying to tell you something. Look for patterns as to when and why you experience the symptoms described above. For example, if it occurs prior to public speaking and your job requires a lot of presentations you may want to find ways to calm yourself before speaking or let others do some of the presentations. You may have some conflict issues that need to be resolved. Clearly, it is not “panic” time but you want to find ways to manage the stress you feel.

A grand sum that **exceeds 36** is a potential cause for concern. Again, look for patterns or times when you tend to feel the symptoms you have circled. Persistent and high anxiety is not a sign of personal weakness or failure. It is, however, something that needs to be proactively treated or there could be significant impacts to you mentally and physically. You may want to consult a physician or counselor if the feelings persist.

How often during the past 2 weeks have you felt bothered by:

GENERAL ANXIETY CHECKLIST Dr. Robert L. Spitzer, Dr. K. Kroenke, et al	0 Not At All	1 Several Days	2 More Than Half Days	3 Nearly Every Day
1. Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge?				
2. Not being able to stop or control worrying?				
3. Worrying too much about different things?				
4. Trouble relaxing?				
5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still?				
6. Becoming easily annoyed or irritable?				
7. Feeling afraid as if something awful might happen?				

Scoring - Sum each column. Then sum the column totals to achieve a grand score. Write that score here _____ .

If you score 10 or above you might want to consider one or more of the following: discuss your symptoms with your doctor, contact local mental health care provider for further assessment and possible treatment. You may have Generalize Anxiety Disorder.

Some Helpful Tips to Overcome Anxiety		
http://anxietytos.com/articles/news/some-helpful-tips-to-overcome-anxiety.html		
Date	Tip	Notes
	Cognitive therapy - this technique focuses on altering patterns of thinking and beliefs that are associated with ad trigger anxiety. The basis of cognitive therapy is that ideas can trigger thoughts, which then trigger feelings, results manifest through action. Cognitive therapy strategies should include rational self-talk, training on attention, reality testing cognitive challenging, and cognitive restructuring. <u>This means monitoring your self-talk</u> , challenging fears and beliefs, and checking out the negative thoughts in terms of their reality.	
	Relaxation techniques - when you feel you are under anxiety, do some relaxation techniques to release muscle tension. Some of the techniques that you can try include regular muscle relaxation, meditation, abdominal breathing, and isometric relaxation exercise.	
	Proper breathing techniques - the physical symptoms of anxiety maybe triggered by hyperventilation or rapid breathing, which raises oxygen levels and reduces the amount of carbon dioxide in the blood. A person with anxiety condition should know how to breathe from their diaphragm, and not from their chest, to prevent hyperventilation. This technique can help you calm down while feeling anxious.	
	Behavior therapy - the major component of behavior therapy is exposure. Exposure therapy involves deliberately confronting your fears in order to desensitize yourself. Exposure lets you redefine the danger or fear aspect of the situation or trigger.	
	Dietary adjustments - inadequate intake of vitamin B and calcium can worsen anxiety symptoms. Nicotine, caffeine, and stimulant drugs should be avoided, since they trigger your adrenal glands to release adrenaline, one of the main stress chemicals.	
	Exercise – aside from being beneficial to your health, engaging in physical activities also burns up stress chemicals and promotes relaxation. Plan to do some physical activities at least 3 to 4 times a week, and vary your activities to avoid boredom.	
	Medication - medication should be seen as a short-term treatment only. This is not a complete solution to anxiety disorder. Studies show that psychological therapies are much more effective than drugs in managing anxiety disorder in the long run. A brief course of tranquilizers or antidepressants may be prescribed by your doctor to help you deal with the symptoms.	

Self-Help for Anxiety <http://socialanxietydisorder.about.com/od/selfhelpforsad/a/selfhelp.htm>

Slow Breathing

People with Social Anxiety Disorder may breathe too quickly in anxiety-provoking situations, which in turn exacerbates other anxiety symptoms. This is part of the "fight or flight response." Below are some steps to get control of your breathing.

1. Count the number of breaths that you take in one minute (count an inhale and exhale as one). Make a note of this number. The average person will take 10 to 12 breaths per minute.
2. Focus on your breathing. Inhale and exhale through your nose. Take deep breaths from your diaphragm instead of shallow breaths in your chest. Inhale for 3 seconds and exhale for 3 seconds (use a watch or clock with a second hand). As you exhale think "relax" and release tension in your muscles. Continue breathing this way for 5 minutes.
3. Count your breaths per minute again and see if the number has reduced.
4. Practice this breathing technique 4 times per day when already relaxed.

When in social situations, make sure that you are breathing the way that you practiced. In time, this way of breathing will become automatic.

Conquering Negative Automatic Thoughts

As a person with Social Anxiety Disorder, you are likely to misinterpret comments or facial expressions made by other people. In particular there are two common thought patterns that contribute to your anxiety.

- Mindreading. You assume that you know what other people are thinking about you (such as "Everyone can see how anxious I am").
- Personalizing. You assume that the behaviors of others are related to you (such as "He looks bored, I shouldn't have invited him to this movie").

Challenging Automatic Thoughts

The thoughts that you have are so automatic that you probably don't even realize you are thinking them. Below are some steps to getting control of your negative thoughts.

1. Think back to a recent social situation in which you felt anxious. Write down what your negative thoughts were before, during and after the situation.
2. Ask yourself questions to challenge your negative thoughts. For example, if your negative automatic thought is "People are yawning, they must think that I am boring," ask yourself "Is there an alternative explanation?" In this case your alternative thought may be "It probably has nothing to do with me, they are just tired."
3. Try to notice the automatic negative thoughts that you have before, during, and after feared social situations, and challenge them with alternatives.

Facing Your Fears (Avoid Avoidance)

Although in the short term, avoiding feared situations may reduce anxiety, in the long term it severely limits your life. In addition, the number of situations that you fear grows as your fear becomes generalized. People with Social Anxiety Disorder need gradual exposure to social situations as part of reducing the anxiety associated with them.

Below are some steps to overcoming avoidance.

- Identify the top 10 situations that you avoid.
- For each situation on the list, break the goal down into a series of steps, increasing in difficulty. For example, if you are afraid of being the center of attention, your steps might look like this:
 1. Tell a funny story about yourself to a group of people that you know well.
 2. Tell a funny story about yourself to a group of people that you don't know well.
 3. Voice your true opinion to a group of friends.
 4. Voice your true opinion to a group of strangers.
 5. Make a toast at dinner with people that you know well.
 6. Make a toast at dinner with people that you don't know well.

Practice each step as much as necessary before moving on to the next. If you notice anxiety, challenge negative thinking and use the slow breathing technique to relax

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

Please lean back in your chair. Make yourself comfortable. Place both feet flat on the floor. Rest your hands comfortably in your lap. Take a couple of slow deep breaths and get ready to relax.....

Begin by stretching your legs as far as they can go...Relax. Stretch your legs, again. Move your feet up, towards you, hold...turn your feet down, away from you...Hold...Relax.

Now, tighten the muscles in your calves and those in your thighs. Tight. Hold it, hold it...and relax. Let your legs go back, slowly, down to their original position and relax all the muscles in your feet, all the muscles in your calves, all the muscles in your thighs. Let your legs be completely relaxed. And now, feel that wonderful relaxation coming up from your toes, up your calves and your thighs. Feeling nicely relaxed, very calm...and...very relaxed. Calm and relaxed. Take some time to take your attention away from the screen. Focus on your legs and feel your relaxation.

Now, stretch out your arms. Make two fists, tighten the muscles in your fingers. Feel the tightness...Hold it, hold it...and relax. Let your arms go down to their resting position. Feel that relaxation. Now stretch your arms again. Tighten the muscles in your wrists, in your lower arms, in your upper arms...Hold it, hold it...And, let go, just let go, let your arms go down to their original position. Stop for a second, and take your time to notice that quieting feeling of relaxation through your fingers, your hands; through your lower arms, and upper arms. Let your arms go completely limp. Take your time to increase that feeling of relaxation. Very relaxed, very calm, very relaxed and calm.

Now, arch your back backwards, raise your chest. Tighten the muscles in your chest, your abdomen, your back, and your neck. Hold it...hold it...Let go of the tension. Just let go of the tension. Notice your muscle relaxation. Take time to feel the muscles relax in your chest, in your abdomen, in your neck, all over your back. All your muscles feel nicely relaxed.

Now, tighten the muscles in your face, first the muscles around your forehead, then the muscles around your eyes. Make them tighter. Hold it...hold it...and relax. Now, tighten the muscles of your cheeks, the muscles around your mouth, the muscles of your chin. Make them tighter...Hold it, hold it...and relax. Let all the muscles in your face relax, first the muscles of your chin, then the muscles around your mouth, the muscles of your cheeks, the muscles around your eyes, the muscles of your forehead. Let all the tension drain from your face. Let your chin sag if that feels good. Take your time to enjoy the feeling of relaxation. You are very relaxed and very calm. Relaxed and calm.

Now, breathe in through your nose, slowly, and deeply. Breathe the air down into your abdomen first, then your chest, and your throat. Hold it, hold it...and slowly breathe it out through your nose. Feel the relaxation. Breathe in, tense up...Breathe out, relax. Once again, take a very deep breath, hold it...hold it and slowly let it out. Let go of all your tension, your frustrations, your anxieties, feeling more and more relaxed. Relaxed and calm.

Now, take some time to scan your body. If you notice any tense areas, take your time to release that tension. Very good, you are now very relaxed.

Now, take time to breathe in and out; stretch your body; focus on your surroundings. Be ready to continue your day.

Anticipatory Anxiety

“Anticipatory anxiety” is the anxiety one experiences *before* starting a challenging activity. Most often, anticipatory anxiety is a lot higher than what you actually end up experiencing.

Why do we experience anticipatory anxiety? I think it’s because the panic response is over-zealous about doing its job: trying to locate any danger, in order to protect us. When it can’t find any danger in the present, it looks into the future. Sometimes, the *only* possible “danger” it can find is something you haven’t done yet!

Each time you actually start the new activity – bringing the activity into the present – the anticipatory anxiety fades away.

Creating your "Cue Card"

Once you begin to learn your cognitive skills, it’s essential to make your techniques ‘portable.’ I think the best way to do this is to create a ‘cue card,’ with some key words or phrases to remind you of your most powerful tools and techniques.

A 4 x 6 index card works beautifully. It’s easy to fold and keep in your pocket. Your cue card can be a very powerful reminder of all you have learned, whenever the “panic monster” – who, like a 5-year-old, whines and flails his arms, trying to get your attention – makes you momentarily forget.

It’s important to make your ‘cue card’ your own, with words or phrases that are especially powerful reminders for you.

Here is a cue card that I used when I was healing. You are welcome to use all of it or any part of it. I used the acronym “**ACTS**,” with each letter representing an aspect of my healing:

A: Allow anxiety and panic. The fear of panic is *all there is* to this condition. Anxiety and panic are never dangerous – unpleasant yes, but never dangerous. As you begin to adopt an attitude of "allowing" towards the experience of anxiety, a very amazing thing starts to happen: the anxiety lessens!

Panic is an amazing paradox. It's the scariest experience we are capable of, and yet it is completely harmless. Adopting the attitude of allowing panic dramatically *reduces* panic. Panic is never dangerous, so there is no reason not to allow it. When you allow panic, it's like popping a big, inflated balloon.

A panic attack can only occur if you are running from it. Panic is like a big dog that will chase you only if you run.

When you allow panic instead of running from it, the experience is transformed. Physiologically, panic is very similar to exhilaration. As I healed, I began to experience *exhilaration* in situations where I had previously experienced panic.

C: Cognitive work:

Observe my anxiety level (from 0 to 10)
Identify the sensations and scary thoughts: get specific
Challenge the scary thoughts:
 “What are the chances that...”
 “So what would happen if...”
Each sensation is harmless.
Each scary thought is completely false.

T: Truth:

Panic is not dangerous. (See <http://www.paniccure.com/approaches/Education/Education.htm>)
Panic is only an emotion, and it only lasts a couple of minutes.

S: Success:

Any experience of panic is a success! (See [Re-framing Panic as a Success](#))

At the core of panic disorder is the *fear* of panic. A big part of this fear of panic is the fear of failure. As long as we think of a panic response as a failure, it's difficult to overcome the fear of failure. No matter how much healing work we do, we can never completely control our panic response, just as we can't completely control any other emotion.

Still having panic disorder means still having the fear of panic, even if our panic responses are few and far between. Being cured means no longer having this fear – no longer caring whether or not we have a panic response. But how do we get there? How do we ever cross this "great divide"?

The answer is one last, big cognitive re-structure. We achieve our cure *by re-framing the panic experience as a success*.

A big part of the panic response is the thought: "Oh my God, I'm having a terrible failure." How could we *not* have that thought if we've been defining our success and failure this way?

By starting to re-define and re-frame the panic experience as a success, we take the wind right out of the sail of the panic response. It's the last cognitive re-structure, and it leads us to cure.

We are not used to thinking of panic as a success. The "old mold" of our thinking – panic as *failure* – keeps the panic disorder going and gives it power. Beginning to think of a panic response as a success breaks this mold. If you break the mold, you don't have panic disorder anymore, because an essential "glue" that's holding panic disorder together is the thought of failure. Interrupt that old belief that panic is a failure, and the whole mold of panic disorder falls apart!

There are some pretty paradoxical aspects of healing from panic disorder and agoraphobia. By doing what we fear, our fear is greatly reduced. By intentionally bringing on aspects of our panic response (see "[MAP](#)" essay), we learn to overcome panic. By inviting panic instead of resisting it, we begin to experience a new level of safety and trust. Finally, by starting to re-frame the panic experience as a success, we begin to realize our cure.

By allowing panic, I began my healing. By inviting panic, I learned to overcome it. And by counting panic as a success, I achieved my cure.

How Alcohol Causes Depression

It has been proven that alcohol causes depression. Depression is ongoing feelings of hopelessness, sadness, unhappiness, and causes a bleak outlook on life. And when you are suffering from depression you can't be at the top of your game. It is hard to function in high gear when you are fatigued and are experiencing a general lack of interest, also caused by depression. It may also be important to point out here that depression causes anxiety. So many who suffer from depression will also have episodes of anxiety.

Since alcohol is a known depressant, it stands to reason people with depression shouldn't drink. This applies to people suffering from manic depression as well. Studies have shown that doctors miss diagnosing correctly roughly 65% of people who are depressed.

The depression caused by alcohol actually starts with your physical body. First, alcohol lowers the serotonin and norepinephrine levels in your brain. These chemicals are the chemicals that give you your good feelings - a feeling of well being, and they help you to feel normal. The anti-depressant drugs were designed build these chemicals back up. After a long drinking career, since alcohol can take these brain chemicals down to ground zero, it can take a long time for the anti-depressants to bring these brain chemical levels back to where they need to be.

Alcohol also temporarily nullifies the effects of stress hormones. This is why after drinking you feel worse than ever, because alcohol depresses your nervous system and your brain. A study was done that followed people who were only drinking one drink a day and after these people stopped drinking for 3 months, their depression scores improved. And that is only at one drink a day, so it is easy to imagine the impact the kind of volume an alcoholic takes in every day can have.

Alcohol all but wipes out every vitamin in your system after a drinking session. A folic acid deficiency will contribute the brain aging and in older people, dementia. The folic acid deficiency also contributes to overall depression. Further, the alcohol in your system also breaks down and speeds the elimination of antioxidants in your blood. Antioxidants are critically important to our health because antioxidants fight free radicals and free radical damage causes diseases and aging. Our immune system actually creates the antioxidants which then neutralize the free radicals.

Alcohol can activate a gene that has been linked to depression and other mental issues. The result of this activation can cause not only depression, but seizures, and manic depressive episodes as well.

Although the majority of problem drinkers associate depression with their mental and emotional states, the fact is this kind of depression originates in your physical body's response to drinking alcohol.

<http://ezinearticles.com/?How-Alcohol-Causes-Depression&id=1294741>

Anxiety Signs and Symptoms

The symptoms of anxiety disorders may sometimes be ignored, as they often develop gradually over time. Given that we all experience some anxiety, it can sometimes be hard to know how much is too much.

Below are some simple checklists for common types of anxiety disorders. They are quick and easy and are designed to help you reflect on your situation or that of someone close to you. They will not provide a diagnosis - for that you need to see a doctor. However, they will tell you if you have symptoms in common with people who have an anxiety disorder.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

For SIX MONTHS or more on more days than not, have you

- felt very worried
- found it hard to stop worrying
- found that your anxiety made it difficult for you to do everyday activities (e.g. work, study, seeing friends and family)?

If you answered 'YES' to ALL of these questions have you also experienced THREE or more of the following:

- felt restless or on edge
- felt easily tired
- had difficulty concentrating
- felt irritable
- had muscle pain (e.g. sore jaw or back)
- had trouble sleeping (e.g. difficulty falling or staying asleep or restless sleep)?

Panic Disorder

Within a 10 MINUTE PERIOD have you felt FOUR OR MORE of the following:

- sweaty
- shaky
- increased heart rate
- short of breath
- choked
- nauseous or pain in the stomach
- dizzy, lightheaded or faint
- numb or tingly
- derealisation (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (feeling detached from yourself or your surroundings)
- hot or cold flushes
- scared of going crazy
- scared of dying?

If you answered 'YES' to ALL of these questions, have you also:

- felt scared, for ONE MONTH OR MORE, of experiencing these feelings again?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Have you:

- experienced or seen something that involved death, injury, torture or abuse and felt very scared or helpless
- had upsetting memories or dreams of the event for at least ONE month
- found it hard to go about your daily life (e.g. made it difficult for you to work/study or get along with family and friends)?

If you answered 'YES' to ALL of these questions, have you also experienced at least THREE of the following:

- avoided activities that remind you of the event
- had trouble remembering parts of the event
- felt less interested in doing things you used to enjoy
- had trouble feeling intensely positive emotions (e.g. love or excitement)
- thought less about the future (e.g. about career or family goals)?

AND have you experienced at least TWO of the following:

- had difficulties sleeping (e.g. had bad dreams, or found it hard to fall or stay asleep)
- felt easily angry or irritated
- had trouble concentrating
- felt on guard
- been easily startled?

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Have you:

- had repetitive thoughts or concerns that are not simply about real life problems (e.g. thoughts that you or people close to you will be harmed)
- Done the same activity repeatedly and in a very ordered, precise and similar way each time e.g.:
- constantly washing your hands or clothes, showering or brushing your teeth
- constantly cleaning, tidying or rearranging in a particular way things at home, at work or in the car
- constantly checking that doors and windows are locked and/or appliances are turned off
- felt relieved in the short term by doing these things, but soon felt the need to repeat them
- recognised that these feelings, thoughts and behaviours were unreasonable
- found that these thoughts or behaviours take up more than 1 hour a day and/or interfered with your normal routine (e.g. working, studying or seeing friends and family)?

Phobia

Have you felt very nervous when faced with a specific object or situation e.g.:

- flying on an aeroplane
- going near an animal
- receiving an injection
- going to a social event?

Have you avoided a situation that might cause you to face the phobia e.g.:

- needed to change work patterns
- not attending social events
- not getting health check-ups
- found it hard to go about your daily life (e.g. working, studying or seeing friends and family) because you are trying to avoid such situations?

Some people who have symptoms of anxiety disorder can also experience symptoms of other disorders too. For more information on other mental health problems see [beyondblue depression checklists, signs and symptoms of postnatal depression and signs and symptoms of bipolar disorder](#).

If the symptoms of anxiety are left untreated, they can start to take over the person's life. Not only can it affect the person with the disorder, but it can also start to affect relationships with family and friends. For example, untreated anxiety disorders can lead to:

- marriage problems
- family problems
- financial problems
- difficulty finding and holding down a job
- drug and alcohol abuse
- a person losing their temper too easily
- suicide.

Goldberg's Mania Scale

You might reproduce this scale and use it on a weekly basis to track your moods. It also might be used to show your doctor how your symptoms have changed from one visit to the next. Changes of five or more points are significant. This scale is not designed to make a diagnosis of mania or take the place of a professional diagnosis. If you suspect that you are manic, please consult with a mental health professional as soon as possible. The items below refer to how you have felt and behaved DURING THE PAST WEEK. For each item, indicate the extent to which it is true, by circling one of the numbers that follows it.

0 = Not at all 1 = Just a little 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately 4 = Quite a lot 5 = Very much

My mind has never been sharper.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I need less sleep than usual.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have so many plans and new ideas that it is hard for me to work.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I feel a pressure to talk and talk.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been particularly happy.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been more active than usual.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I talk so fast that people have a hard time keeping up with me.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have more new ideas than I can handle.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been irritable.	0	1	2	3	4	5
It's easy for me to think of jokes and funny stories.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been feeling like "the life of the party."	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been full of energy.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been thinking about sex.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been feeling particularly playful.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have special plans for the world.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I have been spending too much money.	0	1	2	3	4	5
My attention keeps jumping from one idea to another.	0	1	2	3	4	5
I find it hard to slow down and stay in one place.	0	1	2	3	4	5