



# Low mood

A self-help guide

# What is low mood?

Everyone feels low or down from time to time. It does not always mean something is wrong. Feeling low is common after distressing events or major life changes, but sometimes periods of low mood happens for no obvious reason. It is important to know that experiencing low mood is normal. Here are some things you might experience:



## Feelings

Sad, guilty, upset, angry, losing interest, crying a lot or not at all, feeling alone



## Physical symptoms

Tiredness, lack of energy, restless, sleep difficulties, weight loss or gain



## Thoughts

Losing confidence, expecting the worst, hating yourself, poor memory



## Behaviour

Not able to make decisions, can't be bothered, putting things off, avoiding people

# Causes for low mood

Most people feel some of these from time to time. Usually there is more than one reason that someone may experience low mood and this differs from person to person. Life is sometimes difficult and things such as, bereavement, loneliness, relationship problems and/or bullying can make people more likely to experience low mood. Some people may be more vulnerable due to a family history of depression, early childhood experiences, personality factors or body chemistry. Sometimes there is no obvious reason to experience low mood.

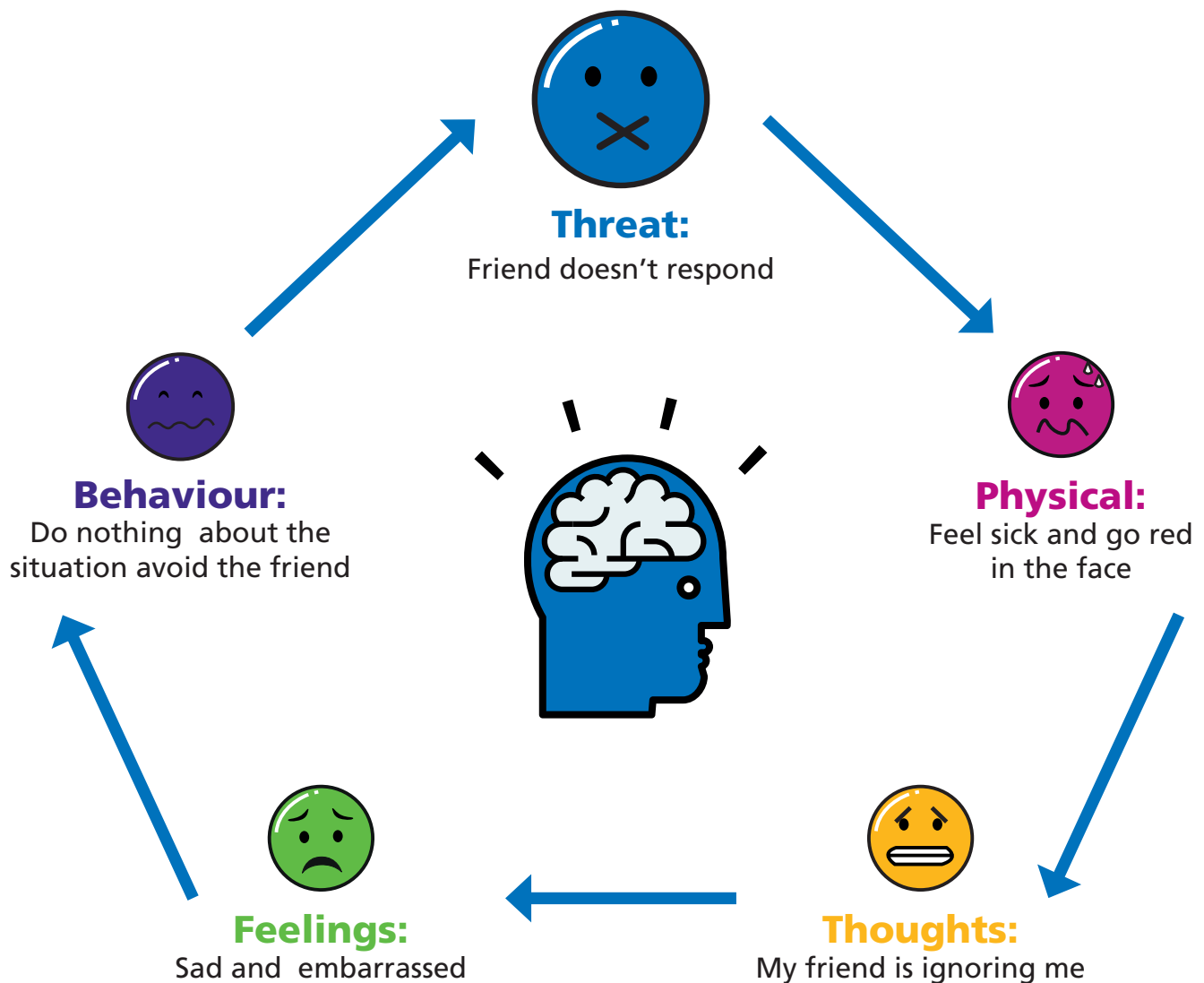
# How can I understand my feelings?

The way you think about things affects the way you feel, which affects the way you behave. It is difficult to change the way you feel, but you can change the way you think. When you are feeling low you might have some negative thoughts, which will affect the way you feel. It is easy to get stuck in a vicious cycle of negative thoughts and feelings.



# Vicious cycle

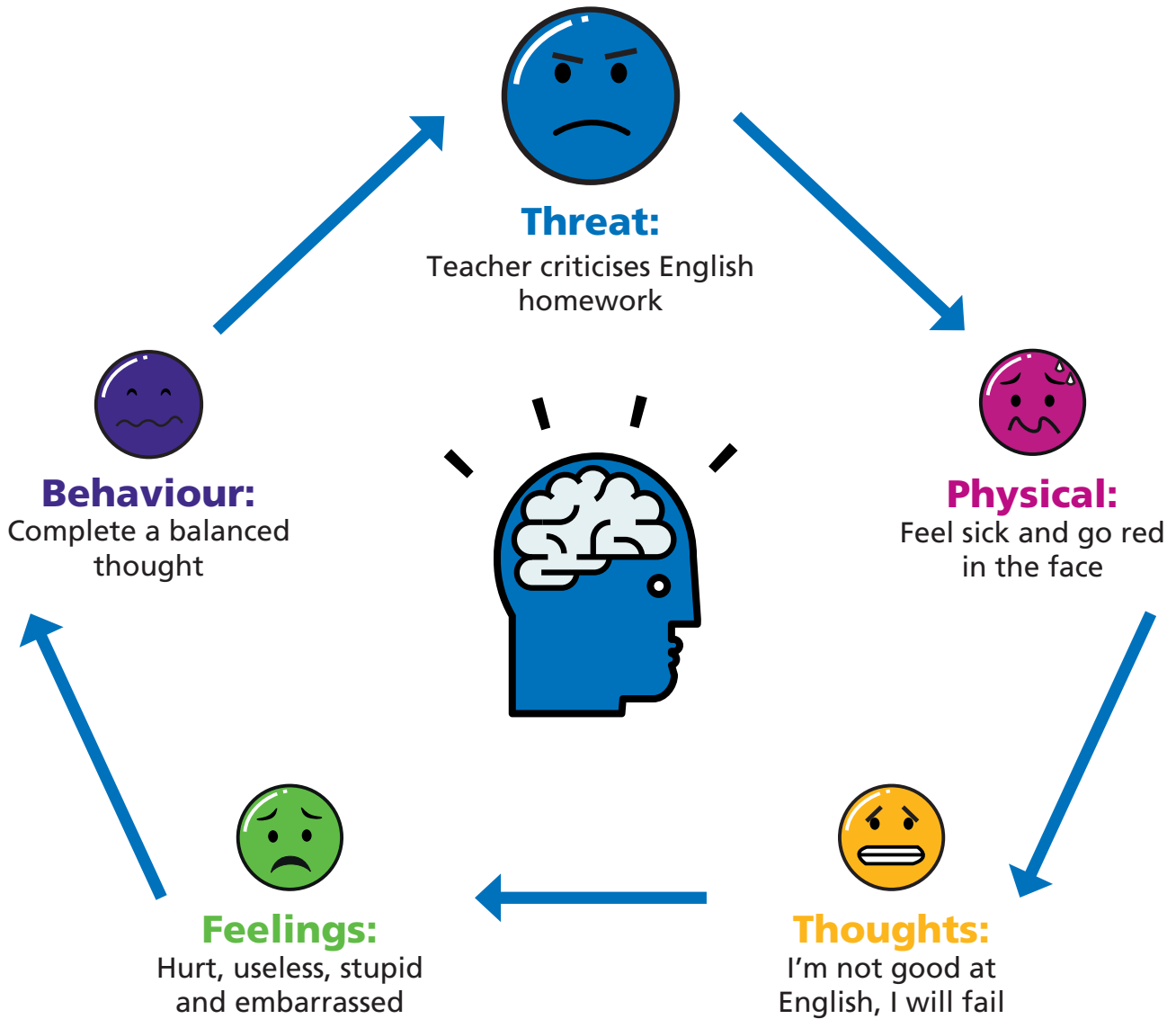
**Example:** You are walking down the street and you see your friend who appears to ignore you completely. You might wonder why your friend isn't talking to you anymore and think that they are no longer your friend (thought) and you start to feel sad or embarrassed that they aren't your friend and that you waved to them and were ignored (feeling).



The cycle will continue unless you take some positive steps to challenge / change your thoughts.

When you have a negative, critical thought, you need to balance the thought out by making a more positive statement to yourself.

# Balance thought



To balance your thoughts it is important to write down an automatic negative thought and then write down a balanced/ realistic/positive thought. Using the example above, see how this is used below.

Negative ✘	Balance ✔
'I'm not good at English, I am going to fail'	'The teacher complimented me on my last piece of work'
'He thinks I am going to fail, he is right'	'This criticism is constructive and will help me improve my grade'
'Everyone else is better than me'	'I got the highest grade in geography, English isn't my best subject'

# Top tips to improve your mood

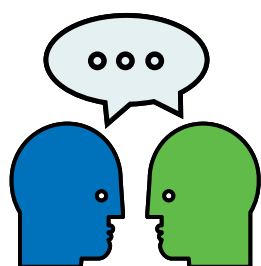
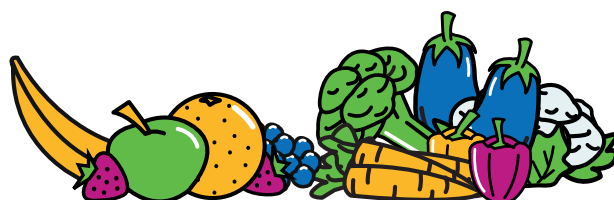
## Increase helpful activities

Try listing things that you enjoy doing and do some of these each day. These could be listening to music, colouring, exercising or playing with pets. It might be useful to have a diary to plan out when you are going to do some activities you enjoy.



## Healthy living

Being active, cutting back on sugar and unhealthy foods making sure we have a healthy balanced diet can help boost your mood.

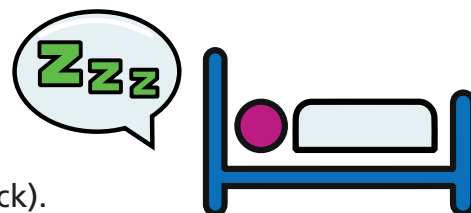


## Talk to someone

It is really important to talk to others and tell them when we are feeling worried. It can be hard to share how we are feeling, but it is important to share these feelings so people around us can help. It's good to have one person for each of your fingers that you can talk to about a worry (please see helping hand and helpline numbers enclosed).

## Getting better sleep

Tiredness can have a bad impact on your mood. Try coming off your devices an hour before bed time, set a schedule for bedtime, avoid caffeine and napping and use your bed for sleeping only (please see sleep hygiene sheet enclosed with pack).



## Be kind to yourself

Try to break down big tasks down into manageable chunks (such as homework or cleaning bedroom). Don't try to do everything at once and remember to give yourself credit.



# Planning ahead

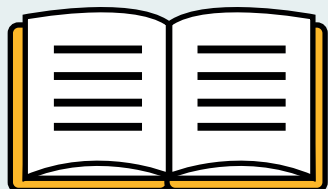
It is important to make a plan on how to deal with your low mood. It is also good to talk this plan through with your parent/carer, so they can support you with it.

The plan should consider:

- Situations that make you feel low or worried
- Physical symptoms you may experience
- A list of distractions and healthy living techniques
- A list of people you can talk to about a worry
- Create a self-soothe box

It is useful to create a self-soothe box, to help when you are feeling low, anxious or worried. Below are some useful things to include within the box.

- Something you can touch and that feels nice (teddy or blanket)
- Memories (pictures or a letter)
- Something smelly (perfume)
- Music you like to listen to
- Calming technique cards (enclosed with the self-help pack)
- Activity (play dough, colouring book or writing pad)
- Relaxation activities (face mask, bubble bath or reading)
- List of people you can talk to
- Positive quotes
- Something nice to eat



# Self care plan

## Warning signs

Physical symptoms:

Thoughts:

Feelings:

## My high risk situations:

## Things I can do to help myself:

## Things I can say to myself:

## Something I am looking forward to:

## Who can help me?

Useful contact numbers:

We hope that you have found some of the techniques within this booklet useful. If some of the techniques have not been particularly helpful, it is worth continuing to try them for a few weeks. If you feel that your situation hasn't improved following a few weeks of trying new techniques contact your GP, CAMHS, school or any other professional involved in supporting you.

## Useful websites, apps and contact details

### CAMHS single point of access

Call: 01977 735865

9am-5pm

### Samaritans

Free anytime phone number

Call: 116123 Text: 07725 909090

### Kooth

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com) (free, safe and anonymous online support for 11 to 19 year olds)

### Childline

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) for email or to use the 1-2-1 counsellor chat or call:

0800 1111 (free, anytime for help with any worry for under 19s)

### Papyrus

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org) for online text or phone support to young people.

Call: 080 0684 141 or text: 07786 209697

### Young Minds

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) (resources for children and young people, parents and professionals)

### CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

[www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net) (help via website and helpline for people aged 15-35)

### Heads Above the Waves

[www.hatw.co.uk](http://www.hatw.co.uk) (online advice, support and coping strategies for young people suffering with depression and self-harm)

### Self Harm UK

[www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

### Elefriends

[www.elefriends.org.uk](http://www.elefriends.org.uk)

(safe place to listen, share and be heard)

### The Mix

[www.themix.org.uk](http://www.themix.org.uk)

Helpline: 080 8808 4994

Text: THEMIX to 85258 for crisis support.

### Mindout

[www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)

(online instant message service that is confidential and anonymous to support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities)

### Cruse

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk) or

[www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)

(bereavement support)

### Doc Ready

[www.docready.org](http://www.docready.org)

(helps to prepare people to talk about mental health to the GP).

### Stay Alive App (app to download)

### Change Grow Live (CGL)

[www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)

Call: 07917 200696

(If you are using drugs or alcohol as a way to cope CGL offers confidential support)

### Victim support

Call: 01924 614440 or 0300 0303 1971 (for emotional and practical support for anyone under 18 who has been affected by a crime)

[www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/services/camhs-wakefield/](http://www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk/services/camhs-wakefield/)