

Problem solving and getting sorted

fact sheet

8

If you're depressed, anxious or stressed, you can sometimes feel a bit overwhelmed and find it hard to deal with everyday life. It can help to learn new ways of sorting out issues in your life.

This Fact Sheet introduces two techniques that many people find helpful. They are Structured Problem Solving, and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT).

Sorting problems through Structured Problem Solving

Something that a lot of young people have found helpful is what's known as Structured Problem Solving.

Here's how it works:

1. Single out one problem that's worrying you and write it down. Say, for example, you're upset about an argument with a friend
2. Think of the options you have to solve that problem and write them down too
3. List the pros and cons of each option, taking into account the resources you've got that might help the situation (such as friends, people you can talk to, money or transport)
4. Choose the best option to deal with the problem
5. List the steps you need to take to carry out this option
6. Put your plan into action
7. Afterwards, review how it went and whether you'd use the same plan again.

Changing your thinking

If you're depressed or anxious, you tend to have a lot of negative thoughts about yourself ("I'm a failure"), the world ("there's nothing good out there") and the future ("it will never get better").

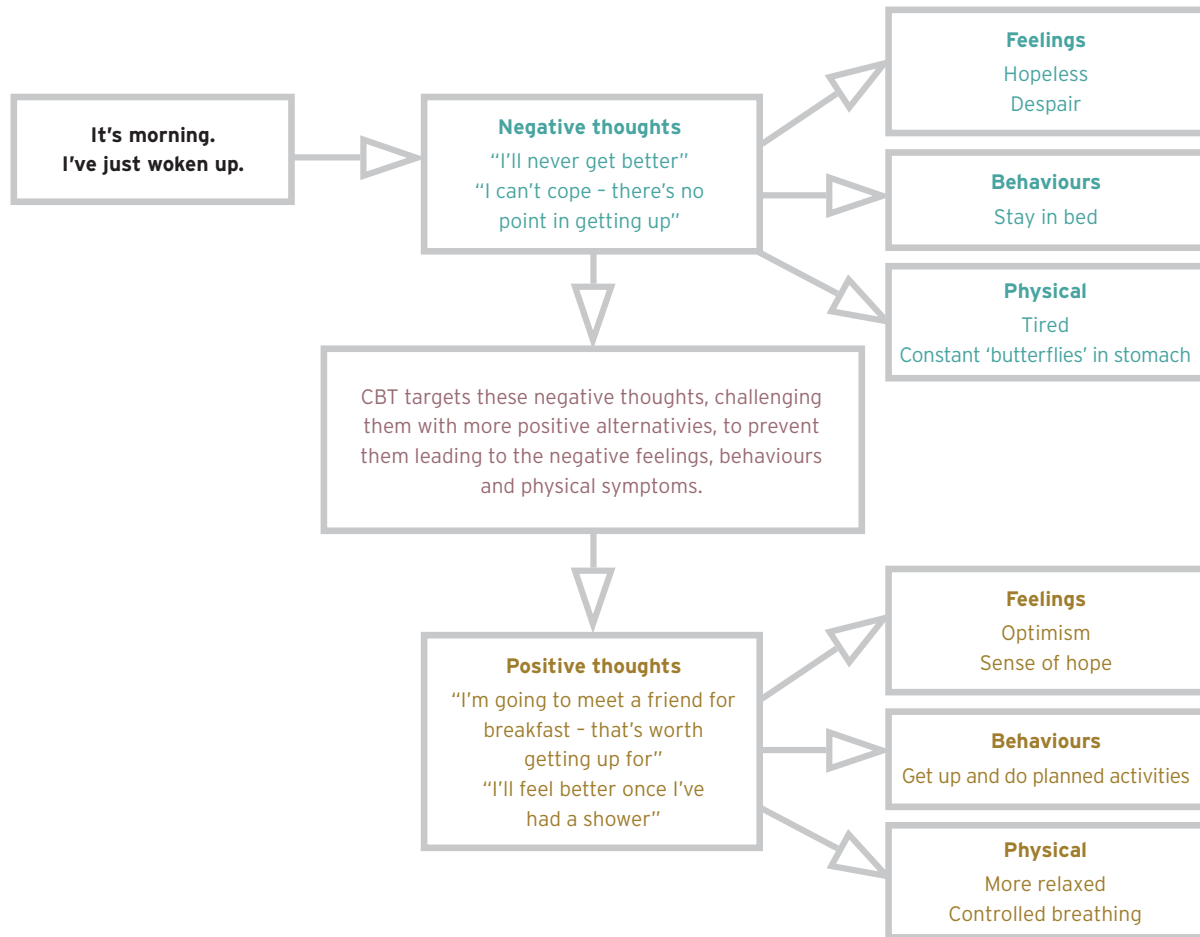
These negative thoughts can get in the way of your recovery, and increase your chances of becoming depressed again later on. So it's really important that you recognise when you are having these unhelpful thoughts, and to challenge them with different ways of thinking.

One treatment that helps you change your thinking is called *Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (also known as CBT)*. CBT is based on the idea that the way you think affects the way you feel. For example, if you are thinking "I'm completely useless", chances are you will be feeling pretty bad. You'll probably be feeling tired and miserable too. Once you have worked out what these thoughts are, and turned them around so they're not so negative, you can have a bit more control over how you feel.

Even if you are not depressed, CBT can help you to cope with any kind of problem you are up against. Learning about and using CBT strategies can also reduce your chances of developing depression later on. You can learn more about CBT by visiting www.moodgym.anu.edu.au. This is an Australian interactive CBT programme.

Problem solving and getting sorted

How does CBT work?



Where to get help

Depending on how strong your negative thinking has become, you might want to talk to a counsellor or your doctor. They can help you with CBT or other ways of helping you to change your thinking.

To find out more:

If you want to chat about how you're feeling, or you've got any questions, you can;

Text The Lowdown team for free on 5626

Email The Lowdown team in the Chat section of www.thelowdown.co.nz. You can also ask them to give you a call back if you want to talk on the phone.

Call the Depression Helpline on 0800 111 757