

UNDERSTANDING LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION

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Health Association**
Québec Division
Mental health for all

In partnership with:

Québec 

I'M NOT SLEEPING

I HATE
HOW
THINGS
ARE

I FEEL SO DOWN

I JUST CAN'T COPE

I FEEL SO WORN OUT

I CAN'T KEEP UP AT WORK

I JUST CAN'T RELAX

ARE YOU FEELING LIKE THIS? IF SO... THIS WORKBOOK IS FOR YOU.

I'M NOT DOING
ANYTHING

HOW WILL I
MANAGE ON
MY OWN?

I'M SUCH A TERRIBLE
PARENT!

MY SEX DRIVE
IS GONE

I KEEP MESSING UP!

I'M STRESSED ALL
THE TIME

MY PARTNER
IS USELESS

I FEEL SO
ANGRY



THIS WORKBOOK WILL HELP YOU TO:

- Find out how feelings of low mood, stress and upset are affecting you.
- Choose targets for change that will help you feel better.

FEELING OUT OF BALANCE—WHEN THINGS FEEL WORSE AND WORSE

The first step to feeling good is working out why you are feeling bad. Anyone can feel depressed and stressed if their emotional balance is upset. Normally, most people feel able to cope with the problems they face. When you are in balance, you know you can deal with your problems. So it isn't your situation or problem alone that causes you to feel down or stressed. Instead it's how you think about these things that also makes you feel like you do. And dwelling on problems and getting things out of perspective doesn't help you feel better or make your problem go away.



Do I feel in balance at the moment? Yes No Sometimes

If you feel out of balance some or all of the time, this program can help you get your balance back.

UNDERSTANDING HOW YOU FEEL USING THE FIVE AREAS™ APPROACH

Let's start by finding out more about how your lowered mood affects five key areas of your life.

THE FIVE AREAS™ ARE:

- Area 1: The situations, relationships and practical problems you face. This includes the **people and events** around you.
- Area 2: Your **thinking**. This can often become extreme and unhelpful when you feel distressed.
- Area 3: Your **feelings** (also called moods or emotions).
- Area 4: Any **altered physical symptoms** in your body.
- Area 5: Your altered **behaviour or activity levels**. This includes both—the helpful things you can do to make you feel better, and the unhelpful things you do, which backfire and make you feel even worse.

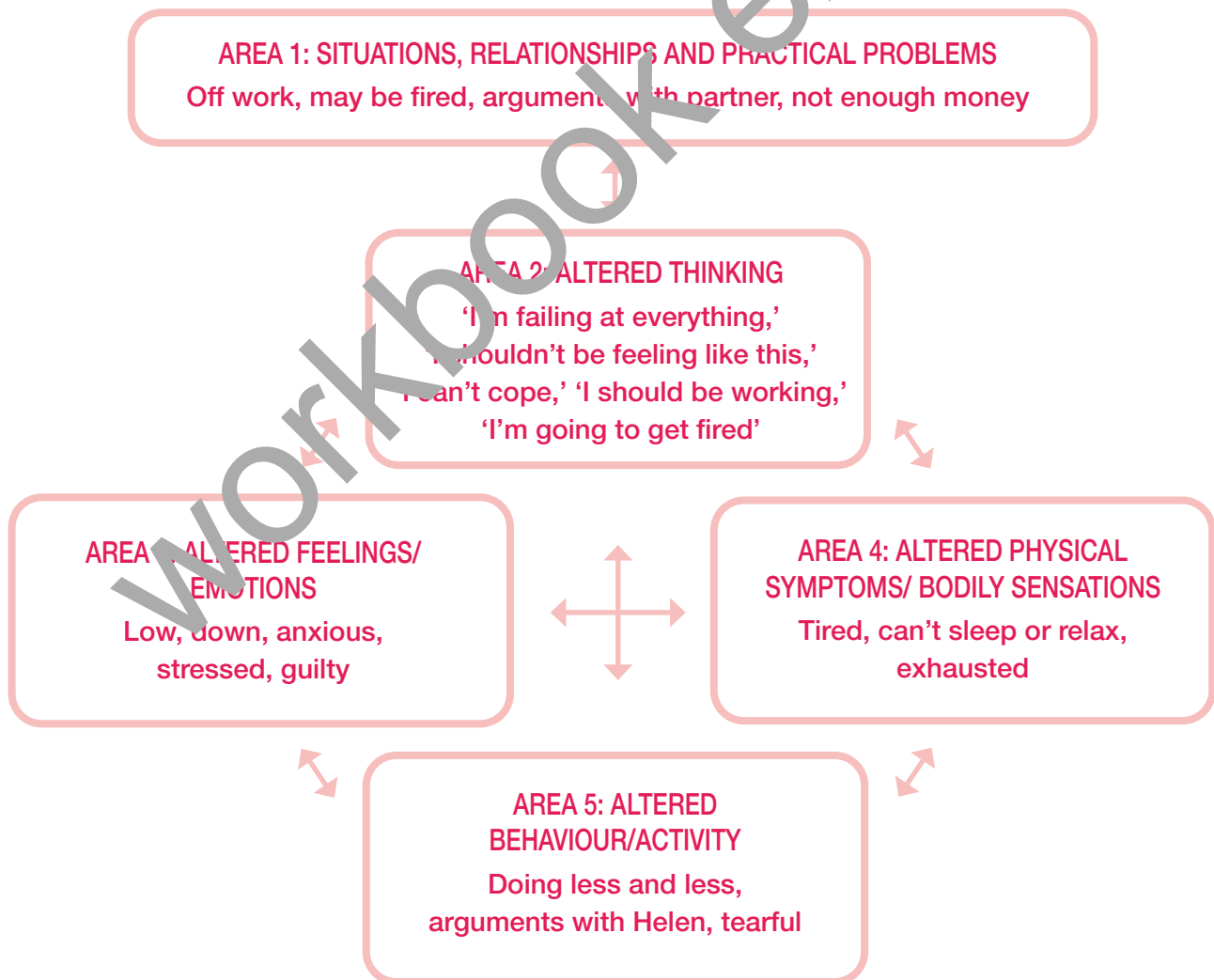
Try to think about how the Five Areas™ Assessment can help Paul understand how he is feeling.

EXAMPLE: HOW DEPRESSION IS AFFECTING PAUL'S LIFE


Paul started feeling depressed and was struggling at work. He felt more and more tired. He found it hard to sleep or even relax—even when he went on vacation. He was exhausted and tearful over things he would normally cope with.

By this time, Paul felt he was failing in everything. He was struggling to cope, couldn't sleep and was lying awake, beating himself up about feeling like this. He also felt he was letting his partner Helen down. They had many arguments and often lay in bed not speaking. Two months later Paul took sick-leave, and two months after that, he still can't cope with returning to work. He sits at home dwelling on thoughts that he will be fired. He is doing less and less and stays in all the time. Because he is off work, money worries are also beginning to mount up. This makes him feel even more guilty as he thinks he should be working and bringing in a full wage.

The figure below shows how Paul's problems can be summarized using the Five Areas™ Approach.



The Five Areas™ diagram also shows that what you think about a situation or problem can affect how you feel physically and emotionally. It also shows that your thinking affects what you do (your behaviour or activity levels). Look at the arrows in the diagram. Each of the five areas of your life affects each other.



TASK

Can the Five Areas™ Approach help you understand why you feel as you do? Take a look at what's happening for you in each of the five areas, starting with area 1.


AREA 1: SITUATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

All of us from time to time face problems such as:

- Problems with family and life at home.
- Challenges of bringing up young children.
- Problems in relationships with partners, neighbours, friends or colleagues.
- Other life challenges, for example problems at work, college, etc.

Low mood and stress can affect any kind of relationship. You may become confused about your feelings towards others, and you can lose interest in your relationships. Some can feel subdued. For example, Paul's depression was affecting his feelings for Helen. Similarly, those who are spiritual may feel they struggle to get the support that they usually get from their faith.

ARE ANY OF THESE RELEVANT TO YOU?



Situation, relationship, or practical problem

Do you ever face these problems? (check off the corresponding box if these problems are present in your life—even if just sometimes).

Write down an example

1. There is no one around whom I can really talk to	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I am struggling to cope with my work	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I worry about work or money or debts	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There are problems where I live/housing problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It's hard to get along with another person or people in my family	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I am having problems with my neighbours	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I have problems with colleagues at work	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My family has unemployment/work worries	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My family has housing problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. My baby isn't eating/sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. My children won't do what I tell them	<input type="checkbox"/>



YOU CAN DO IT!

MAKE A PLAN

1 WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

4 WHAT PROBLEMS/DIFFICULTIES COULD ARISE, AND HOW CAN I OVERCOME THIS?

What could get in the way? Write your possible blocks here:

Do you need to re-write your plan to deal with these possible blocks?

2 WHEN AM I GOING TO DO IT?

5 WRITE DOWN YOUR FINAL PLAN HERE

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it? (day and time)

3 IS MY PLANNED TASK:

	Yes	No
Useful for helping me move forward?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear, so that I will know when I have done it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Something that I value, or need to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Realistic, practical and achievable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR BACKUP PLAN

Think of another backup solution you could turn to if, for whatever reason, there are problems with your plan.



KEYPOINT

If you feel worse you can still choose to do the planned activity anyway—because it's important.



OK, HOW DID IT GO?

1 WHAT DID YOU PLAN TO DO?

Write it here:

2 DID YOU TRY TO DO IT?

If yes:

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

What have you learned from what happened?

How are you going to apply what you have learned?

If no, what stopped you?

Internal things (forgot, not enough time, put it off, didn't think I could do it, couldn't see the point, etc.)

External things (other people, work or home issues, etc.)

How could you have planned to deal with these things?

USE THE PLAN, DO, REVIEW APPROACH
TO HELP YOU MOVE FORWARDS

A FIVE AREAS™ ASSESSMENT OF A SPECIFIC TIME WHEN I FELT WORSE PHYSICALLY OR EMOTIONALLY

AREA 1: SITUATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS AND PRACTICAL PROBLEMS

What time of day was it? Where was I? Who was I with?
What was I doing? What was said/happened?



AREA 2: ALTERED THINKING

What went through my mind at the time?



AREA 3: ALTERED FEELINGS

How did I feel emotionally at the time?
Was I anxious/ashamed/depressed/angry?



AREA 4: ALTERED PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

What strong physical sensations did I notice at the time?



AREA 5: ALTERED BEHAVIOUR

What did I do differently? Did I stop doing what I was doing, or start doing something different?



Workbook excerpt