



Wellbeing with Fatigue

Booklet for Participants

Session 3. Mood and Activity. Bust and Boom. Plan, Pace and Prioritise. Rest.

steps2wellbeing
Southampton & Dorset

Action Plan

- Home Practice review
- Activity and Mood Cycles
- Link between Activity, Mood and Symptoms of LTC
- Boom and Bust Cycle
- Overcoming Reduced Activity and Boom and Bust Cycles
- Summary
- Home Practice

Questions?

Do you have any questions from last week's session?



Home Practice Review

How did your home practice go? Did you achieve your goals?

What did you learn from your home practice?

Activity and Mood

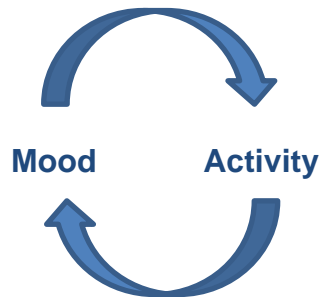
Activity and mood cycle in depression and anxiety

The symptoms of depression and anxiety can have a huge impact on our life, particularly in terms of our behaviour.

When we feel low in mood, it is common to feel low in motivation and energy. We may lose interest in our usual activities, or want to withdraw from other people.

Low mood often leads to a reduction in activity; we may stop doing the things we would usually do, avoid other people, and stay at home more.

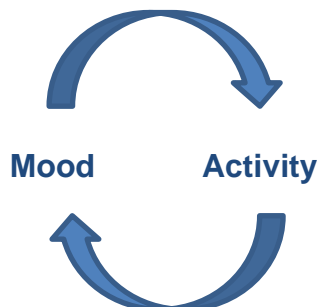
Low mood leads to changes in activity. Loss of interest, motivation and energy



Reduced activity maintains low mood. Less enjoyment and sense of achievement

Sometimes the opposite may happen, and we may become over-active, keeping busy and trying to distract ourselves from our emotions or thoughts. Being overly-busy can be exhausting! It can also prevent us from addressing underlying problems, and therefore these problems stick around.

Feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, not achieving everything



Keep busy, go out all the time

Link between activity, mood and symptoms of long term condition

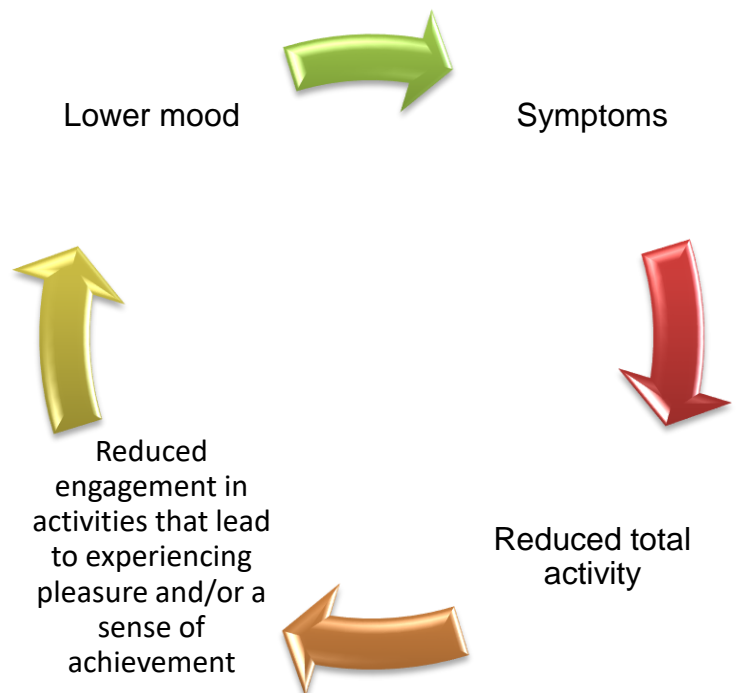
Symptoms of a long term health condition, like chronic fatigue can often affect our activity levels and restrict what we can do in life. They can lead us to reduce or stop doing things we used to do. These changes can cause feelings of frustration, low mood and anxiety.

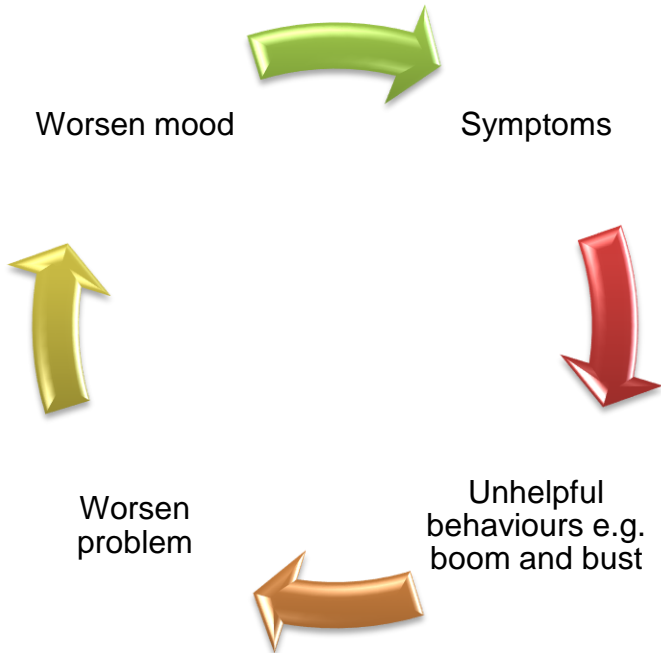
The impact of fatigue on our life (behaviours)

- **Reduced activity**
- **Unhelpful behaviours**
- **Avoidance**

A vicious cycle of reduced activity

When we struggle with symptoms of LTC, e.g. fatigue, they often prevent us from doing things in our life that we enjoy. The fun things can be squeezed out. We focus on our basic activities such as getting better, looking after children, chores. This can mean that we are stopped from doing things that previously gave us a sense of pleasure or achievement.





A vicious cycle of unhelpful behaviours

Symptoms of LTC can be both distressing and challenging. How we respond to them can be both helpful and unhelpful. Helpful activities may include: accepting support from friends and family, maintaining activities that can provide pleasure and achievement, delegate tasks to others, and pacing. At times, we try to improve how we feel, but unfortunately we may act in a way that is unhelpful in a long term, for example checking and over-focusing on symptoms, all or nothing behaviours (boom and bust), taking on too much, excessive resting.

A vicious cycle of avoidance

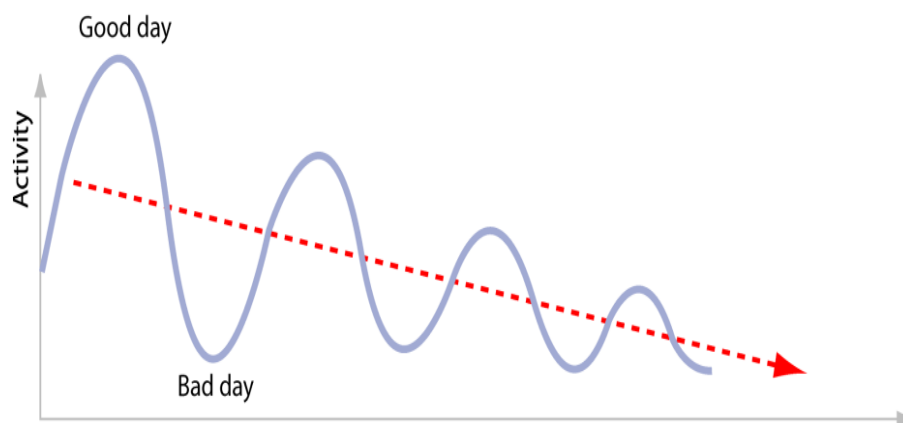
Sometimes people avoid situations when they feel their symptoms might get worse, or they may stop doing certain things either because of symptoms or their worries about them. For example; avoidance of physical activities, not allowing people to help us with tasks. This avoidance adds to the problems because although we may feel less anxious or unwell for a short period of time, in the longer term such actions may worsen the problem. The problem with avoidance is that it teaches us that the only way of dealing with a difficult situation is to avoid it. Our worse fears very often do not occur and when bad things occasionally do happen we usually cope far better than we expect.



Boom and Bust Cycle

Few more words about the Boom and Bust Cycle

A boom and bust cycle can happen when we may feel relatively well, do lots, and possibly feel quite good for a while but then, unfortunately, the energy levels crash and the 'bust' part of the cycle occurs and exhaustion kicks in. Sometimes this exhausted state can last for a long time, then some energy may return and we may try to accomplish many outstanding tasks again, and the cycle starts again.



- **The boom and bust cycle is a very typical pattern for people living with fatigue**
- **There is a tendency to do as much as possible when energy levels are higher, which then leads to periods of fatigue and enforced rest**
- **If rests are taken only when we are exhausted it takes a long time to 'recharge'**
- **Over time the overall energy levels will go down.**

Take a break.
You deserve it!



Targeting low mood and unhelpful behavioural patterns

What can we do to break the vicious cycles?

In this section we are going to focus on how to overcome low mood and reduced activity and boom and bust cycles. We are going to talk about changing the avoidance cycle later in the course.

3 Ps' approach

- **Plan**
- **Pace**
- **Prioritise**



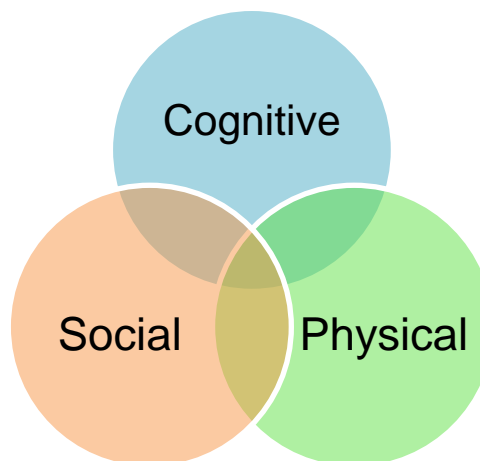
Step One: **Plan**

To manage energy levels better, break the negative vicious cycles and consequently improve our emotional and physical wellbeing we need to understand what we do in a day and how much energy each of those tasks involves. Keeping an activity diary can help with this.

It is helpful to write down any activities that we do and how much energy we think we use doing them.

Once we know 'our activity baseline', we can plan our days in advance, e.g. what MUST be done and consider what can be delegated to other people. Routine can be really helpful here!

What is an activity?



- **Activity can be defined as anything that stimulates the brain as well as our body. This includes mental activity as well as more physically energetic tasks,**
- **Thus walking, watching TV, reading and even eating are regarded as ‘activities’,**
- **Recreational activities are what we may have previously described as relaxation. These are the ‘stress relievers’ – e.g. undertaking exercise, watching TV, gardening. They tend to be activities that we enjoy and that give us pleasure. Recreational activities are important in daily life and they play a significant part in overcoming depressed mood.**

Cognitive – e-mails, making decisions, thinking, reading, reflecting, and watching TV.

Social – Connecting with others in person, via virtual means or messaging.

Physical – daily living tasks such as washing and dressing, chores such as shopping and cooking as well as physical exercise.

- **Activities can be categorised as High and Low Energy Activities.**

High Energy Activity

Physical - walking, running, sport, showering, brushing hair, car journeys

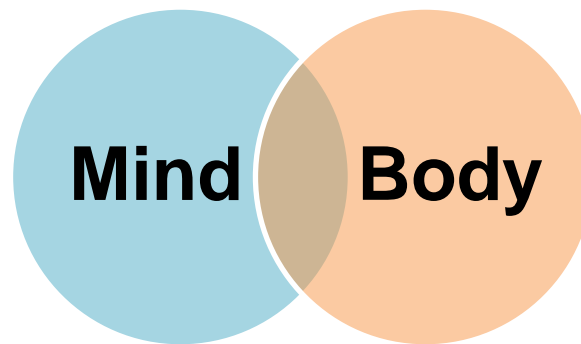
Cognitive - TV we are engaged in, school work, using a computer, worrying

Social – chatting with friends, on-line meetings, games

Low Energy Activity

Watching TV that we are not really interested in, watching a DVD or TV programme we’ve seen lots of times before, reading magazines, getting ready for craft activities, colouring in.

What is 'rest'?



- Rest means relaxing the body and mind.
- Often, when sat at rest our minds can be very active. For example – reading the news on your phone you might feel physically inactive but if you read something about your condition, this can lead to a stress response/fight and flight.
- During rest, stop and do nothing, calm your mind, and try breathing or guided relaxation techniques.

Regular – Take regular rest periods during the day

Essential – Rest is a an essential part of recovery and managing fatigue

Structured – Rest periods they must be structured into your activity diary

Taken – Taking your rest period like you would with prescribed medication

- Allow yourself between 2 minutes, 5 minutes or 10 minutes to rest. These need to be taken regularly.
- You need to stop what you are doing and minimise contact with the environment around you.
- Rest periods can be structured into your routine using your activity diary.
- It may also help to set reminders on your phone or to have the rest periods at natural breaks in your day such as after or before meal times.
- While we can't fully remove ourselves from our environment it helps to minimise distraction including mobile phones, TV and radio
- Having said this, rest periods can be taken in busy places if needed. It is the conscious choice to stop what we are doing. It may be helpful to focus on noticing your breath or doing a mindfulness exercise to help you rest.

Baseline Activity Diary

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am-7am	Sleep						
7am-8am	Awake In bed Worrying F=5 M=20%						
8am-9am	Shower & Breakfast F=6 M = 40%						
9am-10am	Meditation practice and yoga F = 3 M = 60%						
10am-11am	Work meetings on Zoom F = 7 M = 50 %						
11am-12pm	Work Report writing F = 7 M = 40%						
12pm-13pm	Lunch F = 5 M = 70%						
	Nap						
13pm-14pm	Work Zoom F = 7 M = 50%						
14pm-15pm	Work Zoom F=8 M = 40%						

Rating of Fatigue When a Change Noticed **F0 = No fatigue F10 = Worst Fatigue ever experienced**

Rating of Mood When a Change Noticed **M0% = Very low mood M100% = Very Happy**

Key to amount of energy expended. This incorporates mind, body and emotional energy use.


Red – High Energy Activity

Blue – Low Energy Activity

Green – Rest/Relaxation

Step Two: **P**ace

- **Pacing is an energy management strategy aimed at achieving a balance (that works for us) between rest and activity.**
- **The pacing approach allows us to find a happy medium between ‘all or nothing.’ This may mean increasing what we do on bad days but decreasing what we do on good ones.**
- **It is important to use this approach for things that we value and enjoy as well as chores.**
- **Setting a structure which breaks an activity into smaller steps and ‘pacing’ them will increase the chances of success.**
- **Don’t forget about scheduling rest activities!**



Pacing can make some people feel frustrated at the start. But most find they improve very quickly and benefits are lasting.

Let’s practice!

A one – minute meditation

Step Three: Prioritise

- **What activities are most important to you? What activities are in line with your values? Do these when you have the most energy.**
- **Can others be delegated?**
- **Consider including tasks known as “the Fabulous Four” – moving your body, connecting with others, pleasurable and achievement activities**



Summary of Session Three

In this session we looked at the link between activities and mood, and how symptoms of a long term condition may affect our wellbeing. We spoke about a range of psychological techniques that can help us break the negative cycles.

Write down one or more key points that you have learnt today:

Suggested Home Practice

You may find useful to read this handbook, reflect upon your thoughts and the psychological techniques discussed.

Consider keeping Activity Diary

Use the 3 Ps approach to balance your activities

Practice 'rest' and one-minute meditation