

# How my depression spiral works

The How Depression Works section explains how depression can develop and become entrenched in a complex self-reinforcing downward spiral of interacting factors.

This worksheet helps you identify the different elements contributing to and maintaining your depression. Understanding this better will help you identify the best strategies for tackling your depression.

## Context

*What circumstances in my life may contribute to me feeling low?*

List things causing you stress currently as well as any possible events/experiences in your life which you think may contribute to your current mood.

## Mood / Feelings

*What is my dominant mood and what are the main feelings that I am experiencing?*

List your mood and feelings with the most prominent first (eg. sad/tearful, empty/numb, hopeless, uninterested, low, guilty, worthless, helpless, anxious, angry)

## Thinking / Attitude

*Can I identify any examples of unhelpful 'depressed thinking' habits?*

For example: negative tunnel vision, all-or-nothing thinking, emotional reasoning, perfectionism, self-bullying, jumping to conclusions etc.

## Body / Physiology

*What ways does my body respond to these circumstances, thoughts & feelings?*

List things like fatigue or lethargy; chronic illness; or any indications of stress/'fight or flight' in your body – frequent anxiety signals like racing heart, restlessness, shallow breathing or else irritability and hyper-aggression

## Behaviour / Actions

*How does the depression show in how I behave and what I do?*

List examples of avoidance (like procrastination, skipping lectures or other commitments, social withdrawal), as well as changes in sleep habits, eating, hygiene etc.

STUDENTS AGAINST DEPRESSION .ORG