

A woman with long, wavy brown hair and round glasses is sitting in a red leather chair, looking intently at a laptop screen. She is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is a dark brick wall. A blue gradient overlay covers the bottom half of the image.

Mood & Motivation

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We all have mental health and we all sit on this fluid spectrum of mental health which ranges from positive healthy mental health, down to really struggling with out mental health. We're all up and down on this spectrum, and along with that, we may notice changes in our mood or motivation. Mood fluctuations and changes are normal, we all have times when our mood feels low or we're feeling sad. Usually these feelings pass. If these feelings persist or return frequently it may be a sign that we're experiencing depression and it may be that seeking some further support could be helpful.

It may be helpful to keep a mood diary, this can help increase our awareness of any changes in our mood and recognise anything that may make things feel worse, or makes things feel better.

If we're experiencing low mood we may notice our day to day activities start to reduce alongside our reduction in motivation and what we find is the less we do the worse we feel. It's a little bit like cogs in a wheel, once the cogs turn one way they can start to build momentum, but we can get those cogs turning back the other way. Sometimes we can do it on our own, sometimes we may need professional support. This can be really difficult but if we slowly and gradually start to do a little bit more, this will help to get those cogs turning back the other way. It's important that we're kind to ourselves, and set ourselves small goals that we can achieve before we gradually start to increase these goals.

It can be helpful to schedule our time. If we schedule our goals into a diary or planner, we're far more likely to stick to what we have planned.

Part of these goals could be around practicing self-care. We often avoid self-care or attach feelings of guilt to self-care. It can be helpful to think about

self-care a little bit like plugging ourselves into charge. None of us would allow our phones to go down to 0% battery and never plug them back in again. By practicing self-care, whether this is reading a book, having a bath, practicing a hobby, allows our batteries to re-charge a little. We can't share our battery with others if there is no charge left in it.

There is evidence to show that mindfulness can also help with feelings of depression and low mood. Mindfulness is about being present and grounded in this very moment. There are some great apps and resources that can help us to be more mindful, for example headspace, or calm. There are also a number of free resources available on YouTube. Part of scheduling our goals could be protecting some time to practice mindfulness.

Putting pressure on ourselves can also make things feel worse and different things work for different people, it's about finding what works for us and being kind to ourselves. There are so many resources available to help lift our motivation and mood, the mental health charity Mind and the NHS every mind matters websites have so much information and self-help tips about looking after our mental health.

Remember you're not alone in how you're feeling, talking to others and sharing how we're feeling is helpful. Whether this is family, friends or professional treatment and support. There are services there to help.

Why not start right now, write down a small, achievable goal that you would like to complete before the end of the day, whether this is 10 minutes to sit down with a book and have a coffee, try mindfulness for 2-3 minutes or go out for a short 5 minute walk.