



DEPRESSION

What Keeps Depression Going?

People struggling with depression often believe very negative things about themselves.

For example:

- I'm a failure.
- I'm not good enough.
- I'm unlovable.

These beliefs haven't come from nowhere – you can think of them as the answer to the question “what has life taught me about myself?”

The problem is that despite these beliefs not being accurate or fair, they have profound effects on how you feel.

Many people who are depressed try to ‘solve the problem’ by asking themselves questions like:

- Why is my life like this?
- What is wrong with me that I feel like this?

Psychologists have found that particular types of thinking can keep people stuck in depression.

Asking questions like “Why am I feeling this way?” tends to be less helpful than asking questions like “What can I do right now that will help me?”

All of us have ‘automatic thoughts’ that pop into our minds. When you are depressed, your thinking can become distorted or biased without you realising it. It is like your mind starts taking unhelpful ‘shortcuts’ with thinking. This causes your thinking to become negative or self-critical, leaving you feeling hopeless.

When you are depressed, you feel less motivated to do the things you used to enjoy, or to spend time with people you like. Without feelings of motivation it is often easier to avoid doing things.

Following the demotivated feeling and avoiding these activities means that you are missing out on key ingredients for wellbeing, making you feel even less energetic, and even more demotivated.



The CBT approach to depression begins with a focus on the here-and-now because that's where your depression is.

CBT recognises that the way you feel hasn't appeared from nowhere: your early life, past experiences, significant experiences, and relationships with other people all have an effect on who you are and how you think and feel.

It isn't possible to do anything about what has got you to where you are. However, we can explore what sense you have made of your experiences and how they affect your thoughts, feelings, and engagement with the world. Through these experiences we form beliefs and assumptions about ourselves and the world, but they are often hidden or unspoken