



These guidelines will help you cope with the symptoms of depression:

## Loss of interest, lack of energy and decreased activity

- Make a list of activities to do during the day. (see handout *Activity Schedule*)
- Follow the list as much as you can.
- Do not compare how you behave and feel now with the way you were before you became depressed.
- Ask for encouragement from others and reward yourself for your efforts.
- Break a difficult task down into simple steps.

## Loss of appetite

- Eat small portions.
- Take your time eating.
- Drink fluids, including milkshakes and fruit juices.

## Changes in sleep patterns (see handout)

- Get up at the same time each day.
- Do not sleep during the day.
- Decrease caffeine intake (coffee, tea and chocolate) to 2-3 cups a day. Do not drink or eat caffeine products after 4 in the afternoon.
- Try to do some relaxation exercises to help you sleep.

## Negative thoughts and feelings

- Make a list of your best qualities and refer to this list when you have negative thoughts. (see handout *Positive Self-talk*)
- Keep a journal of the pleasant things that happen to you. (see handout *Journal Writing*)

## Worrying about your problems (see handout *Problem Solving*)

- Write down the problem and list several possible solutions.
- Examine the solutions and choose the best one.
- Plan the steps to solve the problem.
- Review how you did. Did you solve the problem? If not, try again.

## Stress

- Relaxation exercises. (see handout)
- Assertiveness training. (see handout)
- Communication skills training. (see handout)

*Adapted from:* Treatment Protocol Project (1997). *Management of Mental Disorders* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Sydney: WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health and Substance Abuse *by:* Susan Charlton RN, BScN & Elizabeth Emberly RN, BScN (CDMHP, 2003)

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