

A GUIDE TO SELF-HELP RESOURCES FOR DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

A PRACTITIONERS' RESOURCE

DOING WELL
BY PEOPLE WITH
DEPRESSION



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SELF-HELP RESOURCES FOR
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Introduction

About this Guide

Self-help is a very general term and covers a wide range of approaches that people use to improve how they feel. This guide concentrates on providing a [resource pool](#) of self-help materials for people in 'helping professions' who are involved in the treatment of patients with mild to moderate depression and other common mental health issues.

[Click here to go to the Resources](#)

The guide makes use of a range of written and other materials that use an evidence-based approach. The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) cites guided self-help as an evidence based approach to the treatment of mild to moderate depression in its [guideline for Depression](#).

This is a prototype edition of this resource. Further editions will be greatly enhanced if users of this edition complete and return the [Feedback Questionnaire](#).

How this guide was developed

This guide was developed as part of the [Doing Well by People with Depression Programme](#), which aims to build the capacity for self help to better meet the needs of those with mild to moderate depression. There exists a confusing array of self help materials available on the market, so a working party of clinicians involved in the Doing Well Programme undertook the task of reviewing a variety of these materials with regard to suitability and effectiveness in the treatment of mild to moderate psychological problems. Upon review, the materials fell into four distinct categories - described as 'Levels' depending on the 'level' of intervention offered by the individual resources. [Levels 1 to 3](#) are included in this guide and are described on page 4. Level 4 is known as 'guided' self-help and is not within the scope of this document. However, it will be subject of further review and comment at a later stage in the Doing Well Programme.

All materials were evaluated against a list of '[inclusion criteria](#)' drawn up as part of this exercise. ([Appendix A](#))

The production of this guide was also influenced by research studies that found that¹

- (a) of 2,311 general practitioners in Scotland, who responded to a postal study nearly 9 out of 10 thought a holistic approach was essential in delivering high quality care (Mercer *et al* 2002)
- (b) 78% of GPs have prescribed an antidepressant in the last three years despite believing that an alternative treatment might have been more appropriate.
 - 66% have done so because a suitable alternative was not available
 - 62% because there was a waiting list for the suitable alternative
 - 33% because the patient requested anti depressants
 - 60% of GPs surveyed would prescribe anti depressants less frequently if other options were available to them (Mental Health Foundation 2005)

1. Social Prescribing in Scotland: A Feasibility Study (National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being in Scotland and Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health (2005))

Who is it for?

This guide is an easy-to-use resource for use by anyone working in the ‘helping professions’ who comes into contact with people with mild to moderate common mental health issues, including depression and anxiety.

How is it to be used?

It is envisaged that the guide be used as part of a care package for people with psychological issues. The toolkit can be flexible in its use and is designed to be used with people who are experiencing a range of depressive symptoms of varying severity. The information and materials in each level can be used alone or in combination as part of any individualised care package. They can also be used individually and together with medication treatments when these are appropriate.

Definition of Levels

Level 1

Information on Common Mental Health Problems: The main focus of the materials at this level is to provide information to citizens about mental ill-health problems.

Level 2

Advice and Coping: This material provides advice on coping with psychological problems, and includes some sign-posting to additional supports and services.

Level 3

Self-Directed Structured Plan: This material is self directed (i.e. does not require another person when using). It is reflective. The user records progress through observation of changes. When using the material, the user plans and implements changes to their behaviour/routine.

Guidance Notes

General Guidance

The use of these materials in mild to moderate depression has to be tailored to every individual as part of their care package. The materials recommended or used should complement individual clinical skills and build on what is covered in treatment sessions.

The materials referenced are not an exhaustive list of what is available from websites, publishers, health centres and so on. However, all materials in this publication have been judged appropriate for inclusion by the working group.

As new materials become available they will require to be reviewed for inclusion in this resource against the criteria at [Appendix A](#).

Written materials are produced in English and clients would need to be able to read written English.

Health practitioners should familiarise themselves with all materials prior to suggesting them for use by a client.

Level 1

General information about common mental health problems

Who is it for?

This material is useful for people who would like more information about psychological difficulties associated with depression and/or anxiety.

What is it?

The main focus of the materials at this level is to provide information to citizens about mental ill-health problems.

How is it delivered?

The leaflets are suitable to be made freely available in public locations, e.g. community centres, public libraries, GP surgeries, pharmacies, health centres and colleges.

Best practice

It is recommended that this material be distributed as widely as possible. A routine check of the material is suggested every six months or so to ensure that any phone numbers/contact details listed are still valid.

Warnings and considerations

The material is presented in English and therefore excludes non-English speakers.

Level 2

Specific information and signposting options for common mental health problems

Who is it for?

This material is useful for people who are experiencing a range of psychological difficulties associated with depression and/or anxiety. It is suitable for people to use alone and will be most effective if people are motivated enough to work through the material.

What is it?

This material provides advice on coping with psychological problems, and includes some sign-posting to additional supports and services.

How is it delivered?

As with Level 1 material, it could be made freely available in public places.

Best practice

It is recommended that this material be distributed as widely as possible. A routine check of the material is suggested every six months or so to ensure that any phone numbers/contact details listed are still valid.

Warnings and considerations

The material is presented in English and therefore excludes non-English speakers.

Level 3

Self-directed self-help options for specific problems

Who is it for?

The material is useful for people who are experiencing psychological distress such as depression, anxiety, stress or problems with sleeping. Individuals require to have sufficient literary skills to be able to use these materials and understand information displayed in various forms/charts. It is suitable for people to use alone and works best with people who are motivated enough to work at change themselves. When using the material, the user plans and implements change to their behaviour/routine and records progress through observation of that change.

What is it?

This materials at this level provide a self directed structured plan (i.e. does not require another person when using). It is reflective. The user records progress through observation of changes. When using the material, the user plans and implements changes to their behaviour/routine.

The materials at this level provide a structured, self-directed learning plan (i.e. does not require another person when using). It includes workbooks, tapes, books, book prescriptions schemes and websites.

How is it delivered?

It is envisaged that people are directed to this material by a worker in the caring profession. The different types of written materials can be either freely available via GP surgeries, health centres, community resource centres etc. or given out by various grades of primary care staff, area social work teams, psychologists, guidance teachers, local housing workers and relevant voluntary and charity organisations.

Best practice

A member of primary care staff would make an assessment of the user's ability to understand the nature of these materials and the potential demands made of them in terms of time and personal reflection. The content of the materials would be explained to the client prior to use.

Warnings and considerations

When people are depressed they can have problems concentrating and processing information. Some people may not be happy using these materials. This should be assessed by the primary care worker. The materials should not be seen [by the practitioner] as a 'quick fix' or a solution to all of the individual's difficulties. Explanation of the type and purpose of the materials by a primary care member of staff will greatly enhance the potential benefits of these materials.

Some individuals may be so clinically depressed that they will be unable to use these materials.

Choosing a Level

For information only, go to



Level 1

- For people who want to know more about psychological problems

For simple advice, go to



Level 2

- For people who want to know what to do if they, or someone they know, is distressed

For self-directed learning, go to



Level 3

- For people who are highly motivated and are willing to work at improving their mental wellbeing
- People will need to be familiar and comfortable with pen/paper tasks

The ‘Resources’

[Click here to return to Introduction](#)

Level 1

Please click on the Document Title to download/print. The materials are free of charge unless otherwise indicated.

Depression Leaflet

Produced by NHS Ayrshire and Arran (2005)

- Simple explanation of depression
- How depression affects our thoughts, emotions, behaviour and body
- Who is most at risk of developing depression

Depression Leaflet

Produced by Depression Alliance Scotland (2005)

- Simple explanation of depression
- Signposting to services of Depression Alliance Scotland

Antidepressant Use

Produced by The Royal College of Psychiatrists

- Information on how antidepressants work
- What they are used for
- How effective antidepressant treatments are
- Side effects
- Taking antidepressants during pregnancy

Understanding Anxiety

Produced by NHS Fife Psychology Department (2005)

- A simple explanation of anxiety including:
- How it affects our thoughts, behaviour and body
- What causes it
- How it is maintained

What is a Panic Attack?

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Information and simple explanation of a panic attacks
- Signposting and suggested further reading

Hyperventilation

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Simple advice of how to deal with hyperventilation
- Signposting and suggested further reading
- Clear summary

Controlling Anger

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Comprehensive workbook on anger
- Includes examples and explains causes
- Explores unhelpful beliefs and offers advice on using breathing techniques to reduce symptoms and angry behaviour
- Signposting to books and helplines

Level 2

Help Yourself to Better Health

Produced by NHS Ayrshire and Arran (2005)

- A workbook for people with mild mental health issues
- Considers ‘Lifestyle Factors’, e.g. diet, physical activity, alcohol, caffeine, negative thinking, relaxation and socialising
- Section 1: - A simple self assessment on lifestyle factors
- Section 2: - Provides self-help techniques to address lifestyle factors

Depression

Produced by the Royal College of Psychiatrists

- A 22-page booklet for anyone who is troubled by feelings of depression
- Information on what it feels like and how you can help yourself or someone else
- Covers talking therapies, antidepressant use and other relevant topics

Dealing With Worry

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Education and basic self-help for dealing with worry
- Basic Step-by-Step guide
- Signposting and additional reading appropriate
- Could be used in conjunction with other workbooks or self-help materials

Tips for Better Sleep

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Education and basic self-help for better sleep
- Practical advice
- Signposting and additional reading appropriate

Self Harm

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Education and self-help advice for coping with self-harm
- Practical advice
- Signposting, additional reading suggestions, Helpline and websites included

Coping with Trauma

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Education and self-help advice for coping with trauma
- Practical advice
- Signposting, additional reading suggestions, Helpline and websites included

Coping with Bereavement

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Education and self-help advice for coping with bereavement
- Good illustrative quotes
- Signposting, additional reading suggestions, Helpline and websites included

MIND Troubleshooters – Stress

Produced by MIND (National Association for Mental Health)

- Information on what is stress
- 10 tips for tackling stress
- Cost £0.50 each

MIND Troubleshooters – Panic

Produced by MIND (National Association for Mental Health)

- Information on what is panic
- Explanation of the physical and emotional symptoms of panic
- First aid for panic attacks
- 10 tips on preventing panic
- Cost £0.50 each

MIND Understanding Depression

Produced by MIND (National Association for Mental Health) (2005)

- This is a 16-page booklet which explains how depression can affect people
- Describes both physical and psychological symptoms
- Gives advice and information on things that can help
- Cost £1 each

MIND Understanding Anxiety

Produced by MIND (National Association for Mental Health) (2005)

- This is a 16-page booklet which looks into the causes of anxiety
- Describes its effects and what to do to reduce it to a manageable level
- How to reassure and support friends and relatives who suffer from it
- Cost £1 each

Level 3

1. Workbooks

Depression

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2004)

- Education and basic self-help for depression
- Good illustrative quotes
- Signposting and additional reading appropriate
- Could be used in conjunction with other workbooks or self-help materials

Cognitive Therapy

Produced by Depression Alliance UK

- 28-page leaflet
- CBT basis – encourages increased activity and challenging negative thinking
- Provides appropriate sign-posting and further resources
- High reading age
- Available from www.depressionalliance.org for £0.70
- [Click here to download order form](#)

Self-esteem

Produced by NHS Dumfries & Galloway Department of Psychology

- Education, awareness and advice on improving self-esteem
- Easy to follow sections
- Sign-posting

Available by clicking [here to download](#)

Panic

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Comprehensive booklet on panic
- Looks in depth at understanding the causes of panic and what keeps it going
- Introduces coping strategies
- Signposting to further help in book, helpline and website format

How to solve problems: A simple DIY technique:

Produced by NHS Borders Psychology Services (2005)

- Workbook on identifying and solving problems
- Simple step-by-step guide
- Suggested further reading

2. Audio Tapes

Coping with stress at work

Produced by Royal College of Psychiatry (1997)

- Includes time management, communication skills, relaxation techniques
- Available from website <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk> for £13.99

3. Books

There are many good self-help books available. In 2004, Professor Neil Frude, a Clinical Psychologist in Cardiff, identified many books in order to compile a book prescribing list.

This list provides a comprehensive selection of self-help books for various mental health problems.

In Scotland, there are a number of areas that have established book prescription schemes.

South East of Glasgow and East Renfrewshire

Click on the above link to access a webpage describing the service in this area. The following libraries are participating in the scheme.

[Castlemilk Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Couper Institute Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Gorbals Library and Real Learning Centre](#)
[Govanhill Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Langside Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Pollokshaws Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Pollokshields Library and Learning Centre](#)
[Thornliebank Community Library](#)

Paisley and West Renfrew

Renfrewshire's libraries have been stocked with self-help books about depression. The books have been chosen by *Doing Well* staff to help people understand depression and make a full recovery. They are not filled with jargon and are accessible to everyone.

The books can be borrowed directly from Paisley Central and Johnstone, Bargarran and Glenburn Community Libraries – or requested from any library in Renfrewshire.

Websites

1. Information, advice and self-help

To print out a paper copy of these websites click [here](#).

Blue Pages

<http://www.bluepages.anu.edu.au>

A good site for someone who already knows quite a bit about depression and is interested in finding out more about diagnosis and treatment. It has information on symptoms, prevention and treatment of depression and a good page of links and further resources.

Depression Alliance Scotland

<http://dascot.org>

Contains good information about symptoms and treatments as well as Depression Alliance campaigns and local events, including self-help groups.

Depression Alliance London

<http://www.depressionalliance.org/>

Doing Well – Argyll & Clyde

<http://www.doingwell.org.uk>

The website offers extensive advice and information on depression, its treatments and how it is managed. Useful personal stories are used extensively with an option to share experiences. Self-assessment and management of depression feature throughout.

Fife Clinical Psychology Department

<http://www.clinical.dunfermlinelhcc.org.uk>

Contains self-help material and information on a range of common psychological problems plus links to other websites. It also has a list of books recommended by practitioners in the Department. This information covers children and older people as well as working-age adults.

MIND – National Association for Mental Health

<http://www.mind.org.uk/>

Comprehensive site giving information and ‘self-help’ on depression, related issues. Good resource for the public for all mental health problems.

Mental Health Foundation

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

This site claims to be the ‘biggest, most comprehensive website in mental health in the UK’. It does have a lot of good information on problems, treatments and strategies as well as the latest news and events.

Breathing Space Scotland

<http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk>

Good resource for information, advice, and sign-posting for various mental health problems and a range of related issues (financial and work issues, bereavement, pain). Breathing Space also provides telephone support for sufferers of low mood and depression.

Joe Panic

<http://www.joepanic.com>

Information and advice on coping skills, an introduction to cognitive therapy and worksheets that can be downloaded. Explains the importance of good breathing and gives exercises. Good links and resource pages.

2. On-line courses and interactive resources

Living Life to the Full

<http://www.livinglifetothefull.com>

This website provides free access to an online mental health life skills course. Based on the evidence-based CBT approach, teaching sessions include:

- discovering why we feel as we do
- building problem solving skills
- rebalancing relationships
- becoming more active and rediscovering the fun in life
- developing helpful responses to life stress
- discovering how to sleep better
- learning how to change unhelpful and undermining thinking
- focusing on key elements of healthy living

MoodGYM

<http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au>

Developed in Australia and available free of charge, MoodGYM is an interactive program designed to help the user to:

- identify whether they are having problems with emotions like anxiety and depression,
- overcome these problems and develop good coping skills for the future.

MoodGYM is based on two programs which are successful in preventing and treating depression and anxiety. These are: cognitive behaviour therapy and interpersonal therapy.

Assessment Tools

There are a number of assessment measures which provide a means of a more structured assessment of symptoms. Assessment of severity can support decisions as to appropriate interventions.

Within the new Quality Outcome Framework agreed for General Medical Services there are three suggested severity measures validated for use in a primary care setting. These are the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the Beck Depression Inventory Second Edition (BDI-II).

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

Is a nine question self-report measure of severity that takes approximately three minutes to complete. It uses DSM-IV criteria and scores are categorised as minimal (1-4), Mild (5-9), moderate (10-14), moderately severe (15-19) and severe depression (20-27).

Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS)

The HADS has been validated for use in community and primary care settings. It is a self report and takes up to five minutes to complete. The HADS allows you to establish the severity of both anxiety and depression simultaneously, whilst giving a separate score for each.

Beck Depression Inventory Second Edition (BDI-II)

The BDI-II is a 21 question self report instrument that uses DSM-IV criteria and takes about five minutes to complete. A total score of 0-13 is considered minimal range, 14-19 is mild, 20-28 is moderate, and 29-63 is severe.

Feedback Questionnaire

→ How useful did you find this toolkit?

Please rate this, for each Level, using the 5-point scale below:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Not at all Quite Useful Very Useful Extremely
Useful Useful

- Level One
- Level Two
- Level Three

Additional comments:

- Is it helpful to have materials presented in this way?
 - If not, what would have been more helpful?
- What do you use most often?
- What, if anything, do you think could be added?
 - And where?
- Did you encounter any difficulties in using the toolkit?
 - If so, please describe:
- Have there been any problems accessing the materials/toolkit?
 - If so, which ones?
- Have there been any problems accessing any of the links?
 - If so, which ones?
- What, if any, feedback have you had from people who have used the materials?
- Any other comments?

Please return your completed questionnaire to dianne.tullis@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Self-Help Resources Workgroup

This guide was developed by the 'Doing Well' Self-Help Resources Workgroup consisting of nominees from each of the 10 pilot sites. In alphabetical order:

Lynn Ackland	NHS Argyll & Clyde
Pamela Barnett	NHS Borders
Frances Baty	NHS Fife
Gillian Brennan	NHS Lanarkshire
Margaret Carey	NHS Fife
Karen Hamilton	NHS Highland
Mike Henderson	NHS Borders
Louise Jackson	NHS Argyll & Clyde
Ann McCreath	NHS Greater Glasgow
Stephen McGinness	NHS Argyll & Clyde
Lyndsey McNair	NHS Argyll & Clyde
Neil Millar	NHS Argyll & Clyde
Pamela Mills	NHS Lothian
Theresa O'Brien	NHS Borders
Liz Rafferty	NHS Greater Glasgow
John Tonner	NHS Greater Glasgow
Dianne Tullis	NHS Grampian
Sylvia Verrecchia	Scottish Executive Health Department
	NHS Lanarkshire

Appendix A - Criteria for Inclusion

Consideration	Measure	Comments
Readability	Ideally a Flesch Score between 60 & 70 (see Appendix B)	Material may not be appropriate for individuals with limited education or literacy problems. Other formats such as audio tape or DVD may be offered.
Potential for harm	Does not advise actions that are acknowledged to be harmful (evidence based) or omits recommended action	
Uses positive and accessible language	Should not have potential to 'scare' user	e.g. Material should not give the impression that everyone who experiences depression commits suicide. Instead, it should clearly recognise that most people who suffer from the condition recover
Acknowledges alternatives	Not rigid in recommendations	
Availability	Items/references that are made have to be current. Users need to be able to access recommended items at no significant cost	Regular checks will be required to ensure that material is current and available
Reduce use jargon	Includes glossary	Avoids the use of technical and complex language that constantly has to be defined
Cost of production/distribution	There is a need to state any costs involved in access	e.g. licence cost
Links to other information	Links need to be up-to-date and relevant	Websites must be kept up to date
Evidence for use	Evidence is apparent, up-to-date and stated	Usually materials based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy self-help
Cultural differences (See Appendix C)	Takes account of culture of target audience	e.g. avoids being too culture specific - needs to be appropriate for a broad British audience
Stories/vignettes	Material will be favoured if it includes relevant stories	Case examples can really engage people
Comments	Comments section is included where appropriate	

Appendix B

Readability

The main function of readability tests is to give you a quick assessment about the density of your writing. Readability tests cannot tell you how easily a reader can understand the information in the text.

Flesch Reading Ease Score

The Flesch Reading Score is one measure of the readability of written material. The score bases its rating on the average number of syllables per word and words per sentence.

It rates text on a 100-point scale; the higher the score, the easier it is to understand the document. For most standard documents, the aim is for a score of approximately 60 to 70.

100	Very easy to read	Average sentence length is 12 words or less. No words of more than two syllables.
65	Plain English	Average sentence length is 15 to 20 words. Average word has two syllables.
0	Extremely difficult to read	Average sentence length is 37 words. Average word has more than two syllables.

Click [here](#) for link to the Plain English Campaign

Appendix C

Cultural Considerations

It was beyond the remit of the group that produced the toolkit to develop materials that are designed for specific minority groups within the UK. All of the materials in the 'toolkit' are in English. Some of the concepts may not be appropriate for the understanding of mental health shared by some specific cultures.



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