

Changing routines & behavioral therapies

Stress management - Some simple steps to reduce stress:

- Postpone major life changes
- Engage in an enjoyable and distracting activity
- Avoid working long hours
- Decrease work load and responsibilities
- Allow time for rest and relaxation
- Incorporate regular gentle exercise
- Learn and practice
 - Slow breathing exercise - (separate sheet)
 - Progressive muscle relaxation exercise - (separate sheet)
- Avoid excess alcohol - (aggravates depression)
- Avoid Cannabis - (reduces motivation)
- Problem solving - (see sheet on Structured problem solving)

Activity Planning, pleasant event scheduling

Generally the less you do, the worse you feel, It helps to plan your day - Set out time that you will do:

- Shopping, cleaning, attending to mail
- Physical activity (eg. walking) - each morning and/or late afternoon
- Include at least one pleasant activity every day - something you used to enjoy (eg. listen to music)

- Nb. 1. At first, you won't find these activities as enjoyable as before, but if you persist the pleasure will return
2. Try to stick to your plan, but do not get upset if you cannot do so.

Improving sleep

Depression is usually associated with poor quality sleep (not enough deep sleep & dream sleep).

Your sleep will be improved if you:

- Get out of bed as soon as you wake up in the morning
- Try to get up about the same time each day
- Do not nap during the day
- Try to be active while the sun is up
- Avoid drinking caffeine after 4pm
- Allow yourself time to wind down before going to bed
- Avoid watching television till late
- Go to bed at approximately 10 - 10.30pm
- Minimise use of sleeping tablets, alcohol
- Try to make your bedroom quiet, dim and cool
- Avoid too many blankets and electric blankets

Further information on sleep hygiene:

- See sheet on sleep-wake cycle management
- Website: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/nsdc>