

# Depression Self-Monitoring Record

Everyone feels ‘down’ sometimes, but depression is much more than that. When you are depressed, your mood can be very low and might stay that way for weeks at a time. At its most severe, depression can leave you feeling hopeless, suicidal, or unable to function normally.

Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) suggests that the way we think and act influences our mood. One way to learn more about your depression is to use a *Self-Monitoring Record*. It’s like a diary that can help you become more aware of what triggers your low mood, your response to it, and the role your thoughts play.

Depression – Self-Monitoring Record

| Situation<br><small>Describe the situation that triggered your low mood.</small> | Thoughts<br><small>What went through your mind? (Thoughts, images or memories)</small> | Emotions & body feelings<br><small>What did you feel? (How strong were your feelings?)</small> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <small>What were you doing? What were you doing?</small>                         | <small>What were you thinking? What were you thinking?</small>                         | <small>How strong were your feelings? (Rate them on a scale from 0 to 100%)</small>            |

PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS



## How could this tool help me?

- It can help you to understand the influence of your thoughts and actions upon your mood.
- It can help break ‘big’ emotional experiences into smaller parts that you can work with (e.g., your thoughts, feelings, and responses to particular situations).
- It can help you and your therapist learn more about what contributes to your depression, and how you can overcome it.



## How should I use it?

To start, you will need to choose a prompt – the thing that will remind you to complete the self-monitoring record. It’s often helpful to choose a particular type of situation that you want to monitor. For example, “times when I feel like life is not worth living”, “times when my mood drops”, or “times when I don’t feel like doing anything”.

Each column will prompt you to record a different part of your experience.

- **Situation.** What was happening just before you experienced a drop in your mood? What might have triggered it? Your triggers might include people, places, objects, smells, thoughts, feelings, or other sensations.
- **Thoughts.** What automatic thoughts, images, or memories went through your mind in that moment?
- **Emotions and body feelings.** What did you feel, physically and emotionally? How strong were your feelings? (Rate them on a scale from 0 to 100%)
- **Responses.** What did you do? How did you cope with those feelings?
- **Consequences.** How did responding in that way make you feel (immediately, later on)? What was helpful or unhelpful about responding in that way?



## Helpful tips

- If possible, practice completing the record with your therapist at least once.
- Try to fill the record in as soon as possible after your mood changed, while your memory of what happened is still clear.
- Self-monitoring takes time to master: the more you practice, the easier and more helpful it will become.

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <div>Who were you with? What were you doing?<br/>Where were you? When did it happen?</div> | <div>If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?</div>           |                                                                                         |                                                                        |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 9:00pm<br>At home on a Friday night watching TV.                        | I'm always going to be alone.<br>Everyone is out having fun and I have no-one to see or go out with.                                                    | Depressed<br>Low – 80%                                                                  | I drank too much and fell asleep on the couch.                                        |
| Thursday 8:00pm<br>At a friend's BBQ in their garden.                          | why am I feeling so bad?<br>I should be enjoying myself.<br>why can't I just be normal?<br>I've really pushed myself to come here and it's not working. | Disconnected – 70%<br>Numb<br>Sad                                                       | I left early and went to bed when I got home.                                         |
| Saturday 10:00am<br>Eating my breakfast.                                       | what's the point of anything?<br>Nothing matters. Nothing is enjoyable. I wish I could end it all and get it over with.                                 | Hopeless – 90%<br>Pointless<br>Depressed                                                | I called my friend and told them how bad I was feeling. She said she would come over. |
| Who were you with? What were you doing?<br>Where were you? When did it happen? | If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?                                                                                                  |                                                                                         |                                                                                       |

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|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday 9:00pm<br>At home on a Friday night watching TV.                        | I'm always going to be alone. Everyone is out having fun and I have no-one to see or go out with.                                              | Depressed<br>Low – 80%                                                                  | I drank too much and fell asleep on the couch.                                        | It numbed me out so I didn't have to feel, but I felt bad the next morning.                  |
| Thursday 8:00pm<br>At a friend's BBQ in their garden.                          | why am I feeling so bad? I should be enjoying myself. why can't I just be normal? I've really pushed myself to come here and it's not working. | Disconnected – 70%<br>Numb<br>Sad                                                       | I left early and went to bed when I got home.                                         | I kept dwelling on it and thinking about how useless I must be if I can't even manage a BBQ. |
| Saturday 10:00am<br>Eating my breakfast.                                       | what's the point of anything? Nothing matters. Nothing is enjoyable. I wish I could end it all and get it over with.                           | Hopeless – 90%<br>Pointless<br>Depressed                                                | I called my friend and told them how bad I was feeling. She said she would come over. | I felt a bit better after reaching out as I felt like someone cared about me.                |
| Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you?<br>When did it happen? | If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?                                                                                         |                                                                                         |                                                                                       |                                                                                              |

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