

Depression Homework Toolkit

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(For therapeutic use — not a substitute for crisis intervention. If in danger of self-harm, call 988 in the U.S.)

1. Understanding Depression

Depression is not just sadness — it's a medical and psychological condition that impacts mood, motivation, physical energy, sleep, and thinking patterns. It can result from a mix of factors such as genetics, brain chemistry, unresolved trauma, chronic stress, grief, illness, or significant life changes.

The cycle of depression:

1. Low energy & motivation → 2. Withdrawal from activities → 3. Increased isolation & negative thinking → 4. Worsened mood & energy.

The good news: This cycle can be interrupted with small, consistent actions that re-engage the mind, body, and environment.

2. Daily Mood Tracking

Date	Mood (1–10)	Sleep Quality	Energy Level	Notes on Thoughts & Triggers

3. Behavioral Activation Plan (Do More → Feel More)

Choose 3 activities from different categories below each day.

Pleasurable: Reading, listening to music, walking in nature, art, baking.

Mastery-based: Cleaning a small area, finishing a work task, organizing, cooking.

Connection: Calling a friend, attending a group, writing a letter, volunteering.

Body-care: Stretching, showering, eating a balanced meal, hydrating.

4. Thought Reframing Worksheet (CBT-Based)

1. Situation: (What happened?)
2. Automatic Thought: (What did I say to myself?)
3. Emotion: (Name + intensity 0–100%)
4. Evidence For:
5. Evidence Against:
6. Balanced Thought: (A kinder, truer alternative)
7. New Emotion: (Name + intensity 0–100%)

5. Self-Compassion Journal Prompts

- When I feel worthless, the part of me that most needs kindness is...
- One small way I could show compassion to myself today is...
- If my younger self could speak right now, they would say...
- I forgive myself for...
- I am proud of myself for...
- A moment today I want to remember is...

6. Values Mapping for Depression Recovery

Circle your top 3–5 values from the list: Self-Respect | Connection | Creativity | Peace | Truth | Growth | Family | Freedom | Health | Joy | Loyalty | Compassion

Which values are most supported by my current actions?

Which values are being neglected?

What's one small thing I can do this week to live closer to my values?

7. The Depression Distress Ladder

When feeling overwhelmed, rate where you are:

0–3: Manageable — continue daily plan.

4–6: Needs intervention — grounding exercises, call a friend, take a walk.

7–10: Crisis — use safety plan, call 988, connect with therapist.

8. Grounding & Nervous System Regulation Tools

5-4-3-2-1 Senses Game: Name 5 things you see, 4 you feel, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste.

Box Breathing: Inhale 4 sec → hold 4 sec → exhale 4 sec → hold 4 sec → repeat 5 rounds.

Soothing Touch: Place one hand on your heart and one on your belly, breathe slowly until calmer.

9. Weekly Reflection Page

- What was one small win this week?
- What was my hardest moment?
- Which coping tools helped the most?
- What am I looking forward to next week?
- If my depression had a voice, what would it say? How do I want to respond?

10. Crisis & Support Plan

Therapist name & number:

3 people I can call:

Crisis line: 988 (U.S.)

My top 3 grounding techniques:

My reason(s) for staying alive: