

'What helps you when you're feeling depressed?'

'What are your top tips for living with depression?'

The following list has been generated by people who have come on *Black Dog* courses over the past decade and by people seeing the list on the website and in various mental health centres who have contacted me to add their own 'tip'. If you would like to add something please email me guy.holmes@nhs.net

Nature

Being in the countryside – Nature is the soul's place

Being near running water e.g. a waterfall

Getting to a high place e.g. going up the Long Mynd mountain

Walking

Making sense of what is going on

Noticing anger in myself

Recognising symptoms/underlying causes e.g. fear of death

Recognising that there are lots of different theories and ideas about why we feel depressed, lots of different ways of dealing with things, and lots of different things to draw on

When I feel depressed or think of depression I also try to think of repression and oppression: What am I repressing? Who or what is oppressing me? Am I oppressing myself? How have I been oppressed in the past and how is this affecting me now?

Getting away

It's important to find an escape route from people or things that are hurting you

Getting some personal space

Escaping from pressure

Taking a day off

Having time and space for me

'You don't have to put yourself through it'

Being with people; communicating and expressing things

Getting out and mixing with people

Being needed

Being with my son

Helping someone else; doing something with others for others

Family and friends and being with like-minded people

Talking to my mental health nurse

Going to church

Trying to communicate

Expressing anger

Activities

Planning the week ahead

It is helpful to have something planned and something to look forward to

Having at least one thing to do every day – trying not to have a blank day in my diary

Having a routine

Re-engaging in activities you once enjoyed e.g. music and theatre; this allows you to hope

Trying something new

Swimming

Cycling or doing something that has a simple rhythm – you do something requiring energy, get hungry, eat, rest, and then cycle again

Baking

Spoiling myself

Helpful self-talk

Reminding myself that *I will get over it*

Every time I spiral down I now remind myself that *it is a spiral not the same pit I always fall into – time moves on and so do I*

Being gentle with myself and reminding myself that *I have value in 'being' not 'doing'* – *you are what you are, not what you do*

I try to get a wider perspective, by drawing a dot in the middle of a piece of paper and imagining I'm looking down on my head

Trying to think positively

I've found it helpful to not put myself under too much pressure, and be able to say no or to cancel things without feeling overwhelmingly guilty

Saying '*I didn't ask for this*'

Positive thinking and challenging negative thoughts

Challenging thoughts containing the words 'should' 'ought to' 'must' 'have to' etc. and recognising you have choices. It's ok to take time out and just *be*

Saying to myself *it will pass*

Therapies

Alternative therapies e.g. aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, and other physical and non physical therapies

Medication

One-to-one and group therapies, such as CBT (cognitive-behavior therapy)

Relaxation and visualisation

'Outlook' organisation (self help for depression)

Miscellaneous

Not feeling oppressed by *having to work*

Chocolate

Playing e.g. with a remote control tractor; *Hide and Seek*

Books

Wisdom cards

Improved physical health (e.g. through diet; better pain relief)

Pets

Finding somewhere where you fit in, that sustains self-worth and is meaningful