



Recognising Helpful and Unhelpful Behaviour

When things aren't right, we often try to do things to make ourselves feel better. These changes in behaviour can be helpful or unhelpful.

Examples of helpful behaviour:

These often seem difficult to do to begin with but can help a lot in the long term – for example, regular exercise can make you feel better.

- 👉 Talking to friends and family and getting support from them.
- 👉 Keeping to a routine.
- 👉 Making time to relax and unwind.
- 👉 Doing things you enjoy, such as meeting friends, going to classes and groups, sport, exercise etc.
- 👉 Reading self-help books and leaflets to find out more about the problem.
- 👉 Going to see a doctor or other professional or going to a self-help group.
- 👉 Challenging unhelpful thoughts, rather than just accepting them as true.

Examples of unhelpful behaviour:

These often seem easy to do and even make things better in the short term, but in the long term they can make things much worse – for example, staying in bed when you are feeling low might seem easy to do, but in the long run it will keep you stuck in your depression.

- 👉 Drinking too much to block your feelings.
- 👉 Avoiding people and events.
- 👉 Pushing people away and isolating yourself.
- 👉 Becoming too reliant on other people.
- 👉 Constantly seeking reassurance.
- 👉 Stopping things you enjoy
- 👉 Not looking after your health

There is evidence that changing your behaviour can lift your mood even if you don't or can't change your practical problems. You don't have to make major changes – even small changes can make a lot of difference to the way you think and feel. Our resources can help you work out which aspects of your behaviour are helpful or unhelpful. You may find it useful to keep a diary or use a 'Five Areas' form to help you link your behaviour and your feelings and what happens if you change your behaviour. You can review your findings and try to work out which of your behaviours are helpful, unhelpful, or maybe a bit of both, and what you will try to change.