



Setting goals and planning your day

Part of the *beyondblue*Connect toolkit

When your mood is low you might feel unmotivated or unable to do the everyday activities you would usually do. This might include paying bills or even showering, as well as those activities you might do for enjoyment.

Having a routine is an important step to feeling better

It is helpful to set some goals and activities that you need to do, as well as some you would like to do because you used to enjoy them. Doing this will help you feel more in control and hopeful about the future.

Here are some tips to help you set some goals, even if you are feeling unmotivated

- **For the time being, set yourself one to three short-term goals that you would like to achieve in your day.** As you feel better and your short-term goals become easier to achieve, you can change them and come up with some medium and longer term goals.
- **Set realistic goals and activities that are achievable.** You want to challenge yourself – but be realistic. Think about what you are ready to do so that you can feel a sense of achievement when you get it done.
- **It is helpful to set goals that are positive and specific.** Focus on things you can achieve rather than those things that you want to reduce or stop doing altogether. For example, setting a goal to 'water the garden for 10 minutes a day' is often more helpful than the goal to 'stop sitting on the couch all day watching TV'.
- **Think about the activities you have stopped doing because of your changed mood.** These might include a mixture of necessary tasks like mowing the lawn and paying bills, and activities you enjoyed like socialising with friends, going for a bike ride or reading a book. Use these activities as a starting base when it comes to setting yourself goals to work towards over the next few weeks and months.

Using a weekly planner

Having a weekly planner can help make achieving your goals easier. Below is an example of a weekly planner that you can use to base your own plan on.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	Go for a walk	Borrow book from library	Invite friend over
Tuesday	Weed back garden		Read book
Wednesday			
Thursday	30 minute walk	Take kids for milkshake after school	Go to movie
Friday	Meditate		
Saturday	Organise new internet connection		
Sunday		Watch TV series	Make meal for mum

Use the below template to complete your own weekly planner

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

If you are finding it difficult to think about the types of activities to include in your planner, consider activities relating to keeping fit, pampering yourself, entertaining yourself, socialising, things to do around the house, things to do out and about, and helping others.

Now you have one to three things you would like to work towards and achieve each day. Here are some tips to consider once you've sorted out a schedule:

Try to do at least one thing from your schedule per day.

Don't be disheartened if you have a day where you achieve none of the goals you set for yourself. Breathe in and out – acknowledge that there is always tomorrow to start afresh.

Some goals might be worthwhile breaking down into chunks to avoid being overwhelmed. For example, you might have a goal to increase your fitness by joining the local gym. You could break it down into parts such as phone the gym to find out prices, complete an application form, get information about classes etc.

Write your goals down. If you are having a bad day it is helpful to have your goals written down so you can refocus and bring your mind back to them – achieving even just one of them might turn your day around.

At the end of the day or week, you could measure how you are going with achieving your goals by going back over your written list.

Do some of the goals seem less overwhelming now that a few weeks have passed? Even if you haven't got through all the goals and activities you set for yourself at the start of the week, you may have achieved some of them. This is not an easy feat when you are experiencing a changed mood. Imagine what you might achieve in the next few weeks as you slowly start to feel better!

If you have not achieved what you'd hoped, acknowledge that the simple act of writing your weekly plan and thinking about the activities you'd like to attempt is a brilliant start! It shows your resilience – that you are not giving up. And you can try again next week.

The *beyondblue*Connect service is funded by the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network.



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Depression. Anxiety.

The information in this document is general advice only. The advice within it may therefore not apply to your circumstances and is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional.

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