

Feeling Down

How to use the booklet



Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for people with learning disabilities who might be feeling down or struggling to cope with the coronavirus emergency and restrictions.

Who can help talk through this booklet with people with learning disabilities and how do they to do it?

This guide is for people who can help talk through the booklet with the person with a learning disability. These can be family members, friends, or support staff. The booklets are also suitable for social care staff and health professionals and have been developed and tried out in a national research project. Although the booklets were designed to be accessible, many individuals with learning disabilities will have few, if any, literacy skills. Even if individuals do have literacy skills, the idea of the booklet is to give the person a chance to talk through their feelings with someone else. This means that the support person has a key role.

The booklet can be talked through in a number of ways depending on the individual circumstances of the person with learning disabilities. You can meet face-to-face if social distancing restrictions allow, or by phone using a printed or online copy. You can also use online video links such as zoom or skype or mobile phone apps, if you and the person with learning disabilities have internet or enough mobile data.

It will take between 40 minutes and one hour to go through the booklet. Take your time.

What is this booklet about and how can it help?

Everybody can feel down. When something bad happens, it can make us feel down. People feel down for different reasons. Not understanding what is making you feel down or feeling alone and thinking that no one else understands can make you feel worse. The aim of this booklet is to help people understand why they are feeling down and to help them to talk about their emotions.

How do you bring the booklet to life for the person feeling down?

To make the booklet engaging and easier to understand, there are stories about how feeling down has affected the lives of different characters. Try to bring the examples to life for the person you're talking to. Ask how the stories relate to their own lives. Give the person a chance to tell you about the difficulties they have been having in their life. Don't rush through the booklet, stop and talk about the different points the person brings up. Remember to read out all the words shown in the pictures. Pause and check the person's understanding after completing each section of the booklet.

Building a trusting relationship with the person makes a real difference to how they feel. So it is crucial to listen carefully to what they are telling you and to try to understand their point of view.

If the person becomes upset

The booklet is for people who might be feeling a bit upset or who are struggling emotionally. So it's understandable if people become a bit upset when talking about their feelings. However, if there are serious concerns about someone's mental health or if they are at serious risk of harming themselves or others then their GP should be contacted.

Other booklets and resources

Before you use this booklet read through the Introductory booklet with the person you are supporting. It tells you about the other booklets you can look through. They show different ways of helping the person to feel better. You will find these other resources at the Scottish Commission for Learning Disabilities www.sclld.org.uk/information-on-coronavirus/ and at NES Scotland <https://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk>

This booklet has been adapted from StepUp, a guided self-help intervention for people with learning disabilities and depression. You can look at the online training for StepUp which includes video clips.

Online modules and the manual on StepUp can be found at NES, Scotland, <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/15095/learning-disabilities/talking-therapies-for-depression-step-up>

And NHS Education England.

<https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/intellectual-disability-and-depression-talking-therapies/>

Feedback

If you have any feedback or thoughts about the booklets then we would really like to hear from you. You can contact:

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