

EMOTIONS AND MOODS

Living with pain can affect your emotions and mood negatively and can increase your risk of depression, anxiety and fear. Specifically:

- Pain and fear of pain can cause you to avoid physical and social activities, which can weaken your relationships, affect your mobility and lead to more pain.
- Negative moods, if left unchecked, can result in the development of a mood disorder like depression.
- Pain and depression are connected. Pain can increase depression and depression can increase pain, both of which can turn into a pain cycle.

The good news is the reverse is true as well. When you are happy and focused on the positive things in life, you're less likely to notice pain. This can help wind down the nervous system and help to manage pain.

Your pain is real and it's also true that it's "made by the brain", so we can exert some control over it with time and practice. Learning how to recognize and regulate your emotions and mood is one way you can accomplish this. This will allow you to become more aware of when you're experiencing a fluctuation in mood and to prevent it from getting worse.

HOW TO POSITIVELY INFLUENCE YOUR MOOD AND EMOTIONS

Find out where you're going with mood mapping:

- Chart your good as well as bad moods for at least one week and look for patterns.
- Schedule a time for completing your map at least four times each day.
- Rate your moods using a rating scale between 1 and 5 (1 being your worst mood and 5 being your best mood).
- Identify your triggers.
- Analyze your map.
- Do your own reality check: Think of a time you felt similarly and how you overcame the situation. (Examples: What did you do to overcome the situation? What kind of support did you have? What did you learn from the situation?)

DO THE OPPOSITE

- When you experience an emotion, a behaviour usually comes with it. Doing the opposite action can help you change your emotion.

NOTICE THE GOOD STUFF

- We are hardwired to detect threats before acts of kindness, so it's natural to pay more attention to the bad things than the good.
- If you notice yourself focusing on the negative aspects of an experience, try instead to think about something positive in the situation. It won't automatically change the situation, but it can shift your mood and increase your ability to take action.

RESOURCES

- <https://www.liveplanbe.ca/pain-education/depression/thinking-and-depression>
- <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26799-brain-signature-of-emotion-linked-pain-is-uncovered/>
- <https://www.painweek.org/media/news/can-depressive-mood-contribute-pain-sensitivity>
- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-04/study-shows-chronic-pain-changes-the-brain/11760024>
- <https://www.positivityblog.com/how-to-quickly-change-a-negative-mood-into-a-positive-one/>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/child-development-central/201507/feed-the-right-wolf>
- <https://theconversation.com/emotions-how-humans-regulate-them-and-why-some-people-cant-104713>