

All About Feeling Down



An Easy Read
Booklet for
Young People
with Learning
Disabilities



foundation for
people with
learning disabilities



Who helped us to make this booklet



Thank you to the young people and staff at Warmly Park School in Bristol and Emma Wilson, Charlotte Hall and Nick Mckerrow from Generate for their help with making this booklet.



They looked at the words and pictures and said what they thought. We listened to their ideas, and then changed things to make the booklet better.



The Foundation would like to thank the Baily Thomas Charitable Fund, for supporting this work.



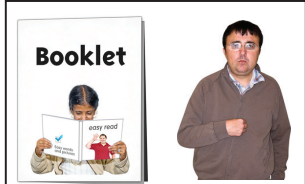
About 'All About Feeling Down'



All About Feeling Down was written in 2003.



It was written with the help of young people with learning disabilities to help other young people when they are feeling down.



The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities is writing another guide for adults with learning disabilities.
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/mentalhealth



We felt it was important to update All About Feeling Down and make it Easy Read.
We hope you find it useful.



About this booklet



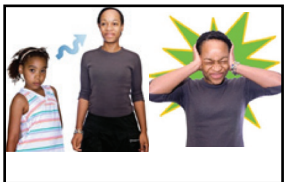
This Booklet is for young people with learning disabilities aged 14 to 25.



This booklet is about what you can do if you feel down.



It would be a good idea to ask someone you trust to help you look at this booklet.



As you grow up, changes can feel hard to deal with.



But there can be exciting times too.



Everyone has ups and downs, especially about growing up.



Growing Up



As you grow up lots of things change.



You might do work experience or volunteering.



You might do other new things, like go to a day centre or get a job.



You might move house and live somewhere new.



You may have a boyfriend or girlfriend.



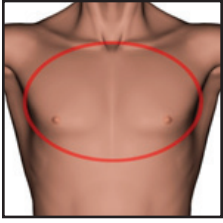
All these changes can be fun and exciting.



But they can also feel strange, confusing and scary too.



You will probably have lots of different feelings as you grow up.



Changes to your body



You might feel excited about the future.



You might feel worried about what might change.



Your body changes as you go from being a child to an adult.



If you are a young woman, you will start your periods.



If you are a young man, your voice will get deeper and you might start to grow hair on your face.



The changes in your body can affect the way you feel.



Some girls feel down just before their period, or at other times of the month.



Boys can feel up and down at different times too.



Feeling up and down?



Feeling up and down is part of being a teenager.



You might feel happy one day but sad or down the next day.



Everyone feels like this. It is okay to feel down sometimes.



What can get you down?



There are lots of things that can get you down.



Growing up and moving on often means leaving someone, or something behind.



When you leave school you might leave friends and teachers behind.



If you move house you might leave family and friends behind.



These changes can make you feel very sad or confused.



There are lots of other things that can get you down too.



When you are ill, or worried about your health, sometimes you might argue with your friends or family.



Teasing and bullying can make you very sad and worried.



You can also feel very sad, scared and angry when someone dies.



What's it like to feel down?



We are all different. Everyone feels down in different ways.



You might feel very quiet and just want to be on your own.



You might cry a lot.



You might want to shout or scream.



People talk about how they feel in different ways too.



Here are some words that people use to explain their feelings:



Sad



Scared



Angry



Confused



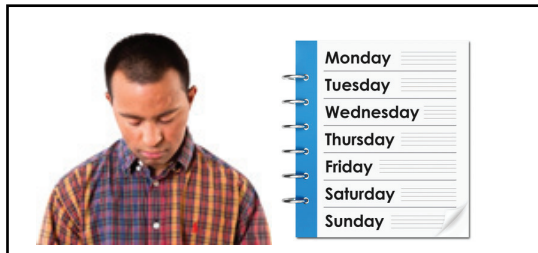
Stressed



Worried



When you are growing up, you might have some of these feelings just once in a while. Or you might feel down more often.



Some people feel down for a few hours or days, other people feel down for longer.



When you're feeling a bit down, the first step is to look after yourself.



Doing things you enjoy can really help. You might find that this is all you need to feel good again.



Be good to yourself



You will have your own ideas about what works for you, but here are some ideas for you to try:



Eating your favourite food.



Watching TV or a video.



Doing some exercise, like swimming or dancing.



Listening to your favourite CD.



Spending time with your friends.



Reading a magazine or book.



Having a relaxing bath.



Going for a walk.



Buy yourself something nice, or get your hair cut.



Share your feelings



Maybe you have been feeling down for a while now.



Perhaps you have tried to cope with a worry on your own, but can't sort it out by yourself.



Maybe you feel scared, angry or sad and the feeling just won't go away.



Don't struggle on your own.



There is always someone you can talk to who can make your worries seem less scary.



And it's good to let your feelings out so they don't build up.



Find someone to talk to



Talk to an adult who knows you well. This might be your mum, dad or carer.



They care about you and want you to be happy.



Sometimes you might not want to talk to your mum, dad or carer when you feel down.



There are lots of other adults you can talk to, like your grandparents, key worker, teacher, social worker, or youth worker. You can also talk to your friends.



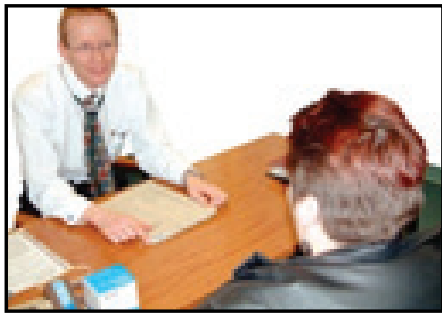
Share your feelings. You never know they may even be having the same worries as you!



Looking after yourself, or talking to someone is often enough to help you feel good again.



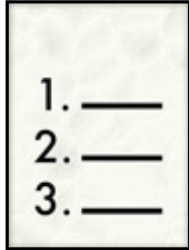
Sometimes though, you might feel very down. The feelings might last for several weeks. They might not go away.



If the bad feelings don't go away, you might need to talk to your GP and get some extra help to feel better.



When you are really down



Each person is different but here are some of the things that may happen to you if you are really down:



- You may think that things are really bad and that can make you feel worse. You always think that nothing good will happen in the future.



- You may feel more tired than usual and not wish to get up in the morning and you find it difficult to sleep.



- You may lose interest in food or you may want to eat lots more than usual, especially things you like.



- You may no longer enjoy things that you enjoyed before, like going out with your friends or family.



- Or you may find it difficult to make choices or decisions.



- You could cry or get cross more often than usual.



- You may feel unwell, for example have headaches or stomach upsets.



- You may want to talk to someone you trust about getting the support you need.



They can help you to make an appointment to see your GP.



Websites



This website has information to help you know more about feeling down. You might want to ask someone you trust to help you find this website on a computer.



This website is for people who feel confused or worried about their feelings. It helps you to understand why you feel down, and where to find help.

www.youngminds.org.uk



Telephone helplines



When you feel down, talking about your feelings can help. But sometimes you might not want to talk to someone you know.



There are other people who can give advice and help on the telephone. Like at ChildLine or the Samaritans.

www.samaritans.org
www.childline.org.uk



Helplines like these give free advice over the phone to children and young people who need someone to talk to.



They are confidential.

This means they won't tell anyone about your call unless you want them to. If you need help to use the phone, find someone you trust to help you.

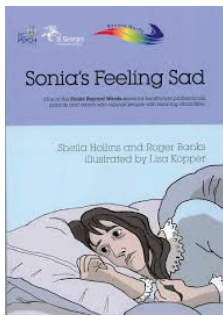


Other Booklets



Easyhealth have lots of leaflets about feeling down, such as depression, anxiety and medicines.

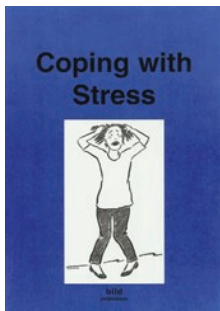
www.easyhealthy.org.uk



Sonia's Feeling Sad

Sheila Hollins and Roger Banks. Illustrated by Lisa Kopper

www.booksbeyondwords.co.uk



Coping with stress

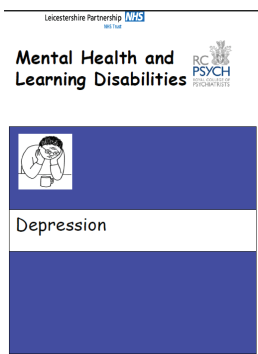
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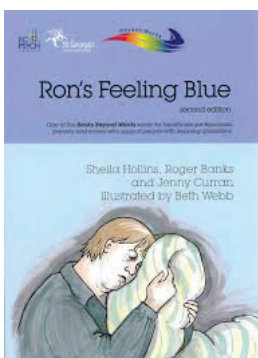
G22 5DU

www.bild.org.uk



There are some leaflets you can read about different things like depression and anxiety.

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice



Ron's Feeling blue

From Book Sales,
Royal College of Psychiatrists,
17 Belgrave Square,
London,
SW1X 8PG.

www.abebooks.co.uk



Words by Ruth Townsley and Julian Goodwin Nora Fry Research Centre,
University of Bristol.

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