

# Antidepressant Skills at Work: A self-care manual for the workplace

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➤ Self-care manual to help employees deal with low mood and depression

- ✓ CBT- based
- ✓ User-friendly
- ✓ Free
- ✓ Workplace-focused

## Antidepressant Skills at Work:

Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace



### Authors

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# Antidepressant Skills at Work is intended for:

- Working people with low mood, who may be at risk for developing depression
- Working people who have developed a mild or major depression
- Individuals who are re-entering the workplace
- Partners, family members, friends or workplace colleagues who want to help an individual suffering from low mood or depression
- Employers, supervisors or managers concerned about the well-being of their staff
- Treatment providers who would like a tool to use as an adjunct to their clinical treatment



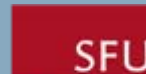
& focuses on ways to:

- Deal with workplace problems so they are less likely to cause depressed mood or lead to depression
- Reduce the effects of depression and depressed mood on work satisfaction and performance



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# Why develop a CBT-based manual for depression in the workplace?



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# ① CBT is an effective depression treatment with specific benefit for recovery of work function

“[CBT] has a direct effect on psychosocial functioning through therapeutic work on issues that have relevance to psychosocial functioning, such as the building of social skills.”

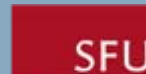
Hirschfeld RM et al (2002), Biol. Psychiatry 51.

# ② ...however, depressed workers lack access to this form of treatment



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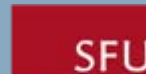


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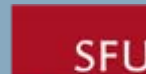
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- ③ mildly-moderately depressed individuals use & benefit from CBT-based self-care manuals
- ④ a self-care manual can be distributed to *all* workers with mood problems
  - Inexpensive
  - Easily accessible
  - Can be used by the worker without telling anyone
  - Can be used in *Supported Self-Management* model – guided or coached by a physician, counselor, family member or friend
  - Promotes early intervention with mood problems
  - Can be added to other interventions and rehabilitation



## ⑤ fosters the worker's **active** coping

- with mood-triggering difficulties in the work situation (primary/secondary prevention)
- with depressive state and symptoms (recovery)
- with maintenance of gains (relapse prevention)
- with work return, to avoid RTD (Return To Disability)



# So, what's in the manual?



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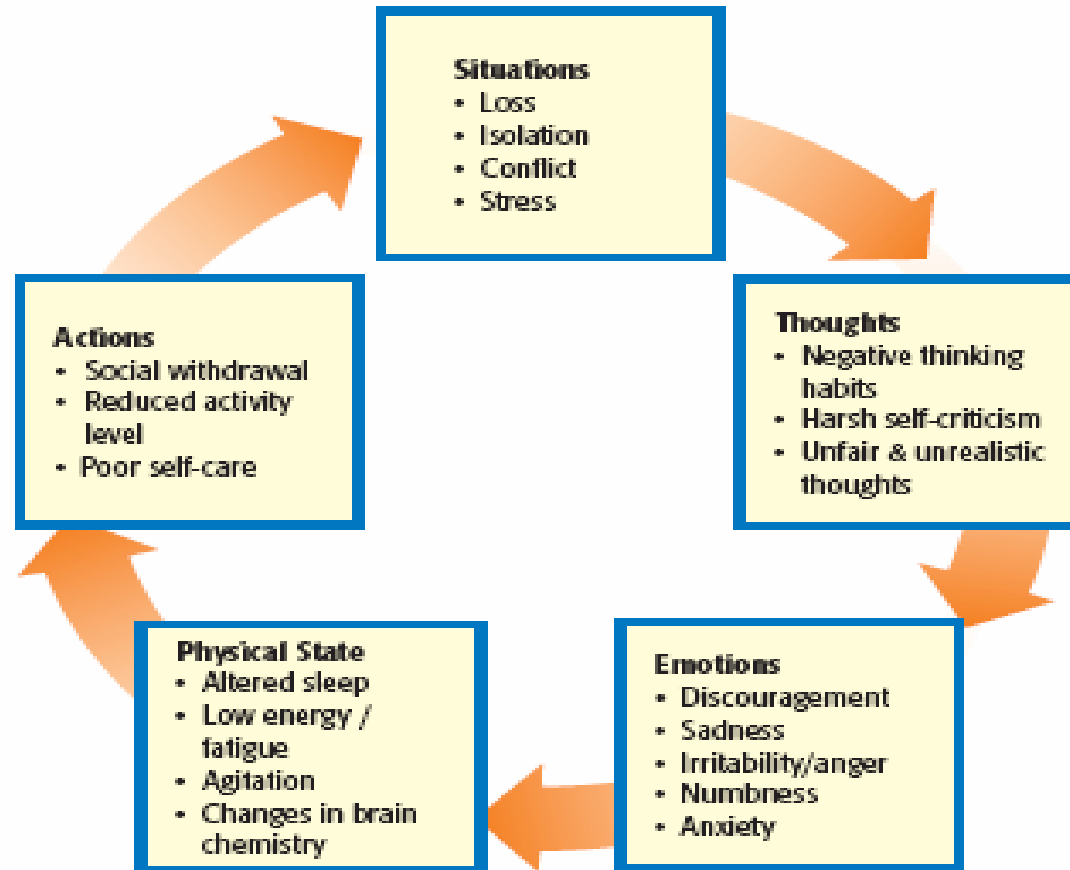


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# Key questions

- Why focus on depression at work?
- What is depression?
- What are the effects of depression on work life?
- What causes depression?
- What can I do about depression?
- What should I know about medication?

# Causes of depression



# Antidepressant Skills

## I. Solving problems effectively

Identifying useful actions  
Evaluating (pros & cons)  
Planning, implementing

## II. Realistic thinking

Identifying distorted thinking  
Challenging, replacing, practicing

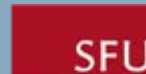
## III. Reactivating your life

Social, self-care, interests  
Goal-setting



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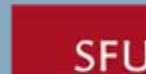
# Other Topics

## ➤ Preventing Relapse

- Planning ahead for stress
- Mood emergency plan

## ➤ Making Decisions about Depression

- Should I tell people at work about my depression?
- Should I take time off work?
- How can I return to work successfully?
- What lifestyle changes might be helpful (sleep, diet, use of alcohol & drugs, physical activity)



# Stories



PUTTING ANTIDEPRESSANT SKILLS TO WORK: AN EXAMPLE  
**Sanjay became angry over small problems.**

**SITUATION** Sanjay sold high-end clothing in a trendy downtown store. He enjoyed his job and maintained good sales over the years. However, he'd always had a problem with his temper. He would become impatient when orders took too long to arrive and would find himself yelling on the phone at the warehouse people. When co-workers didn't handle something the way he'd expected, he would snap at them. His co-workers were intimidated by him and resentful of his aggressive manner.

Sanjay had previously moved from job to job, staying at each position only for a few years, but his current job was one he really liked and wanted to keep. However, he still became angry over small events. In fact, the longer he stayed in his job, the more bothered he felt by certain inefficiencies in how the store was run. He had more conflict with co-workers, and on several occasions became short with customers. His co-workers started to avoid him. Once his supervisor

saw him being impatient with a customer and warned him that this was not acceptable.

He was feeling pretty uncomfortable at work – isolated because co-workers wanted nothing to do with him and worried that his temper would cost him a job he really liked. He felt quite sad, at work and at home, and wondered if he would have to give up his job. He began to drink more, and refused invitations from his friends and began to feel less energy and motivation for doing things. This worried him quite a bit, because he was normally an upbeat and energetic person.

**ACTION** One day, Sanjay's supervisor took him aside and expressed concern about his recent performance – she told him that he was an excellent salesperson and he should be doing well, but he was not projecting his usual

enthusiasm to customers. She asked whether there was any way she could help. He admitted that he had not been feeling his usual self lately and thought that he might need to talk to someone. His supervisor, knowing that he was an asset to the company, suggested he visit the Employee and Family Assistance Program on contract to this clothing chain. Sanjay had 8 sessions with an EFAP counselor, who recognized that he had a problem with depressed mood that might become more serious if his pattern of work behaviour didn't change.

The counselor helped him to see how being so aggressive with his colleagues left him feeling isolated, and how this isolation triggered depressed mood. She coached him in using antidepressant skills to make changes in his work behaviour.

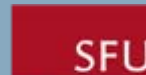
## *Used to illustrate:*

- Contribution of conflicts or coping difficulties to depression onset
- Impact of depression on function
- Use of support systems
- Use of the self-care manual and antidepressant skills
- Realistic outcomes



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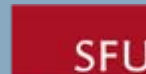
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- Available for free download ([www.carmha.ca/publications](http://www.carmha.ca/publications))
- Encouraging distribution of manuals by:
  - EFAPs
  - employers
  - unions
  - insurers
  - rehabilitation managers
- Employers/organizations wishing to do a print run are requested to contact Dr. Joti Samra at [jsamra@sfu.ca](mailto:jsamra@sfu.ca)/ 604.291.5263



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# Thank you!



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