

Change Your Behavior

When people feel down, they tend to spend more time alone.

TEAM UP:

Have you discontinued any of the following rewarding activities?

- Hanging out with friends
- Spending time with family
- Working out with a buddy
- Participating in a leisure activity

Increasing your activity level is one of the simplest ways to improve your mood.

- *Get back on schedule.* Try scheduling something every day that gets you out of bed and active. Planning and participating in activities helps to focus your mind on the future.
- *Exercise.* Exercise changes the chemistry of your brain and is a great way to treat mood problems. Attempt to gradually increase your involvement in exercise over time. Be sure to consult with your medical provider if you are considering participating in a new and strenuous exercise routine.
- *Do what you enjoy.* People with mood problems sometimes stop participating in activities they previously enjoyed, which can make their mood problem worse. You can break this cycle by re-engaging in activities that you enjoy.

TEAM UP:

Choose an activity that you enjoy and make a plan to get involved in that activity.

Activity: _____

Plan: _____

Resources

There is a lot of information available on mood problems, but where can you find the most up to date information?

- National Alliance on Mental Illness
<http://www.nami.org/>
- Department of Veterans Affairs
<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/OEFOIF/index.asp>
- US Department of Health and Human Resources
<http://www.samhsa.gov/vets>
- Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Do You Need More Help?

If you feel your mood problems have reached the point where you need more help, please contact your VA provider to schedule an appointment to consider additional treatment options and referrals. In the case of a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to the emergency room of your local hospital or the VA.

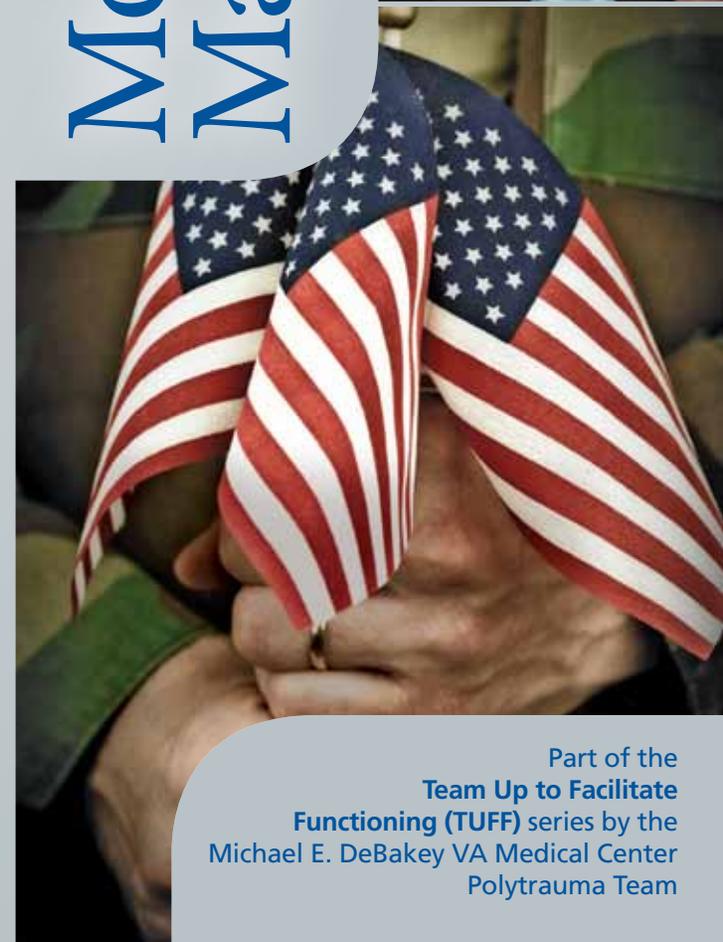
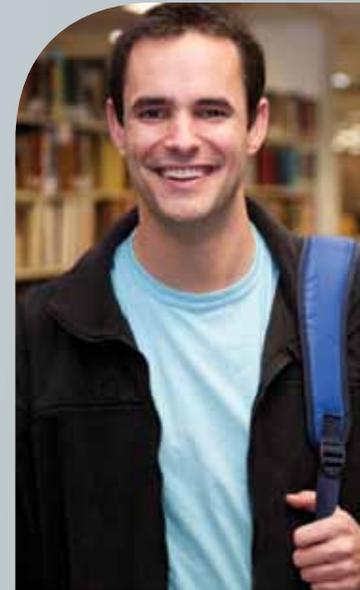


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Mood Management



Part of the
**Team Up to Facilitate
Functioning (TUFF)** series by the
Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center
Polytrauma Team



What Can I Do To Manage My Mood?

Effective management of mood problems requires three steps.

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE THE MOOD PROBLEM

Congratulations! You have already taken the most important step by recognizing the mood problem and sharing your concern with your clinician.

STEP 2: CHANGE YOUR THINKING

Experts agree that *negative thoughts* about your situation make mood problems worse. Examples of possible negative thoughts include “I am never going to feel comfortable around others again” and “I will never find a job.”

TEAM UP:

Discuss how the negative thoughts described above could affect your mood and behavior.

STEP 3: CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR

Just as your mood can change your behavior, your behavior can change your mood. Making important lifestyle changes like attending more social events and exercising regularly will have a big impact on your mood.

Change Your Thinking

Negative thinking makes problems feel even worse than they are. By learning to recognize these negative thoughts as they happen, you can take the important step toward controlling these upsetting thoughts.

TEAM UP:

Listed below are 3 errors in thinking that can affect your mood followed by examples of positive and negative ways of thinking. Try to identify all the negative thoughts.

- 1. Catastrophizing** is blowing problems out of proportion.
 - “Now everything is ruined!”
 - “It’s not ideal, but life will go on.”
- 2. Black and White Thinking** is focusing only on extremes.
 - “I’ve made some mistakes, but I have a lot of strengths as well.”
 - “I mess up everything!”
- 3. Should/Ought Statements** focus only on what is not being done.
 - “I should have done more to...”
 - “I am doing everything I can right now.”

What Is A Mood Problem?

Mood is the way you feel at a particular time. Your mood can affect your behavior and your relationships with others. Anyone can develop mood problems, but combat Veterans are at increased risk for mood problems.

Brief changes in mood are normal and generally indicate good emotional health. If the mood change lasts for weeks and if your mood interferes with your work or social life, treatment may be necessary.

TEAM UP:

Determine which of these symptoms has affected you for at least two weeks?

- Feelings of hopelessness
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Loss of ability to feel pleasure
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Irritability
- Problems tolerating stress
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Fatigue or loss of energy