Due to the increased lethargy and reduced motivation that we experience when our mood is low, it can feel difficult to do day-to-day things and the things that matter most to us. This can be even more challenging if ongoing physical symptoms impact our abilities too.

Because things feel so difficult, we often do less and begin avoiding things. If we are feeling rubbish, it makes sense that we might avoid doing things that we think could make us feel worse. Though this is understandable, in the longer-term avoidance limits our access to activities that could have a natural anti-depressant effect on our mood.

We can quite suddenly get stuck in the trap of low mood. Use the below worksheet to help you get back on track.

**TRAP of low mood**

**A**voidance **P**attern

(What I do to cope with these thoughts/feeling e.g., avoiding meeting my friend)

**R**esponse

(Thoughts and feelings about the event)

**T**rigger

(Upsetting event)

**Getting back on TRAC**

**A**lternative **C**oping strategy

(What can I do that is more helpful than avoidance in the long term? How can I act in a way that is consistent with my values? What will be the best course of action to increase my wellbeing?)

**R**esponse

(Thoughts and feelings about the event)

**T**rigger

(Upsetting event)

Getting a balance between activities that provide us with a sense of achievement, connection and enjoyment can help improve our mood.

These activities make our brain release neurotransmitters which can have a natural antidepressant effect on mood.

* Achievement stimulates dopamine.
* Purposeful activity stimulates serotonin.
* Connecting with other people stimulates oxytocin.
* Exercise stimulates endorphins.

If you have ongoing difficulties with pain or fatigue, remember to work within your limits to avoid flare up.

Please go to the sessions on Pain and Fatigue for strategies to help with this and accompanying worksheets.