

## Relapse Prevention

Once you've started feeling better, you'll want to make sure you continue to improve and do the things you can to avoid feeling depressed again in the future.

***Know your personal warning signs.*** Are there things you might do or think or feel that would tell you that you were getting depressed (like sleeping poorly, feeling more irritable or finding it harder to do what you want to do)? Write these down in your Symptom List and watch for them. Remember that everyone feels sad or blue sometimes, so you only need to pay attention to anything that might be a serious problem for you.

***Prepare for stressful life events.*** Write down events that might be hard for you (like anniversaries of stressful events) and plan ahead of time how you want to handle them in your Coping Plan.

***Talk to a close friend or relative.*** It may help to share your thoughts and feelings with someone close to you.

***Pursue your interests.*** Getting involved in safe and healthy activities that interest you can make a big difference how you feel. This can mean anything from walking around your neighborhood or local park to joining a bowling or chess club. The important thing is that you want to do it.

### ***Keep taking your antidepressant medication***

- Antidepressants only work if taken every day
- Antidepressants are not addictive
- Continue antidepressants even after you feel better
- The goal is for all of your symptoms to go away, sometimes it takes a few tries

You might also want to review the MOOD manual.

It is not unusual for people who have had depression to experience it again at some time. If you experience depression again, you can get quickly back on track by following your doctor's instructions and having a plan in place. If you are concerned that you might be getting depressed again, please call your doctor or nurse or depression care manager.