

# Working Towards Wellbeing Video Series

## Mood Monitoring

*This video is part of a series designed to help health practitioners learn evidence-based skills which enhance mental wellbeing and resilience. If you are a health practitioner, why not try these techniques for yourself? Once you've practiced these skills and experienced the benefit, we hope you will be willing and able to teach them to others.*

*If you are not a health practitioner, please watch these videos anyway! We encourage everyone to look after their mental health and emotional wellbeing in ways that we know work.*

**Mood monitoring** or **mood tracking** is exactly what the name suggests – keeping a record of your moods over time. Doing so can be as simple as scoring your mood out of 10 once or twice a day.

Keeping track of our moods can help to better understand our emotions and understand what may trigger changes in mood.

Many of us are not aware of day-to-day shifts in our wellbeing let alone able to identify the triggers. If we can identify what triggers our downtimes, we have a better chance of being in control of our emotional states. We can avoid the triggers or put in place strategies to help us manage our distress in response to them. Our personal triggers might include workplace stress, conflict with others, disturbed sleep, physical illness, world events or too much alcohol or other substances.

Mood monitoring can also identify when we need to seek additional support from a health professional. We know that early help-seeking can prevent the negative long-term impacts of poor mental health.

### **How to talk to patients about monitoring their moods:**

No-one will go to the trouble of monitoring their moods unless they understand why they are doing it. We need to explain why this may be beneficial. We hope it will help us understand the pattern of their moods, identify triggers and reduce the negative impact of triggers on their lives.

There are many options for mood monitoring. The simplest is to give each day a score out of ten and record the score on a graph, either with pen and paper or on a computer for the more tech savvy. Decide what other things to record along with mood eg sleep, exercise, medication compliance, alcohol use, conflict – whatever you and the patient feel is most likely to be relevant. You can use a numeric score out of 10, colour in a graph, or use an app such as Mood Prism.

Always have them decide in advance how they will keep the record, how often to do it, (eg once or twice a day), what time of day is best for them to do it and how long they will continue. Make sure you also set a review date so the whole exercise doesn't slip away.

Once you have identified potential triggers for changes in mood you can work together to put mood management strategies in place.

These longitudinal records are also useful in determining whether treatment is working or needs stepping up to a higher level of intervention.

#### Further reading:

- A mobile phone application for the assessment and management of youth mental health problems in primary care: A randomised controlled trial <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2296-12-131>
- Self-monitoring using mobile phones in the early stages of adolescent depression: randomized controlled trial. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.1858>

#### Other resources:

- **Mood Prism** is a newly developed app that helps you learn about your mood by transforming daily mood reports into a colourful summary of your emotional health. You will receive feedback on your mood each day, and the more you use the app, the more detailed this information will become – with “flourishing” scores after 1 week’s use, and depression/anxiety scores after 2 weeks of use.
- **Niggle** is an app that helps young people track their wellbeing and find info, quizzes, videos, podcasts and tips to help tame their 'niggles' and improve their social and emotional health. <http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/niggle>
- **Mindgauge** is an app that allows the user to easily and quickly measure and track their mental health, mood, and lifestyle. [mindgaugev2&hl=en\\_AU](http://mindgaugev2&hl=en_AU)
- **myCompass** is an online CBT program with an inbuilt mood tracking facility. [www.myCompass.org.au](http://www.myCompass.org.au)
- [Black Dog Institute Daily Mood Chart](#)
- [Centre for Clinical Interventions Mood Chart](#)