

Fatigue in Depression:

Understanding and Managing Tiredness



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Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for you who feel, or want to understand better, tiredness and low energy, a symptom that can appear in depression. **Shall we go through this together?**

Have you ever felt that kind of tiredness, even without doing anything physically demanding?

You are not alone. This isn't just "being sleepy." It is a deep sense of fatigue, and it is one of the most common challenges for people dealing with depression.

But why does this happen?

Depression affects your whole system. You might notice changes in your sleep patterns, appetite, or motivation. It's like your internal battery drains faster than usual. This can make simple daily tasks, like taking a shower, getting dressed, or leaving the house, feel very difficult and take longer than usual.



First...

it's important to understand that what you're feeling is not laziness. Recognizing that it is part of depression is the first step in learning how to cope with it.

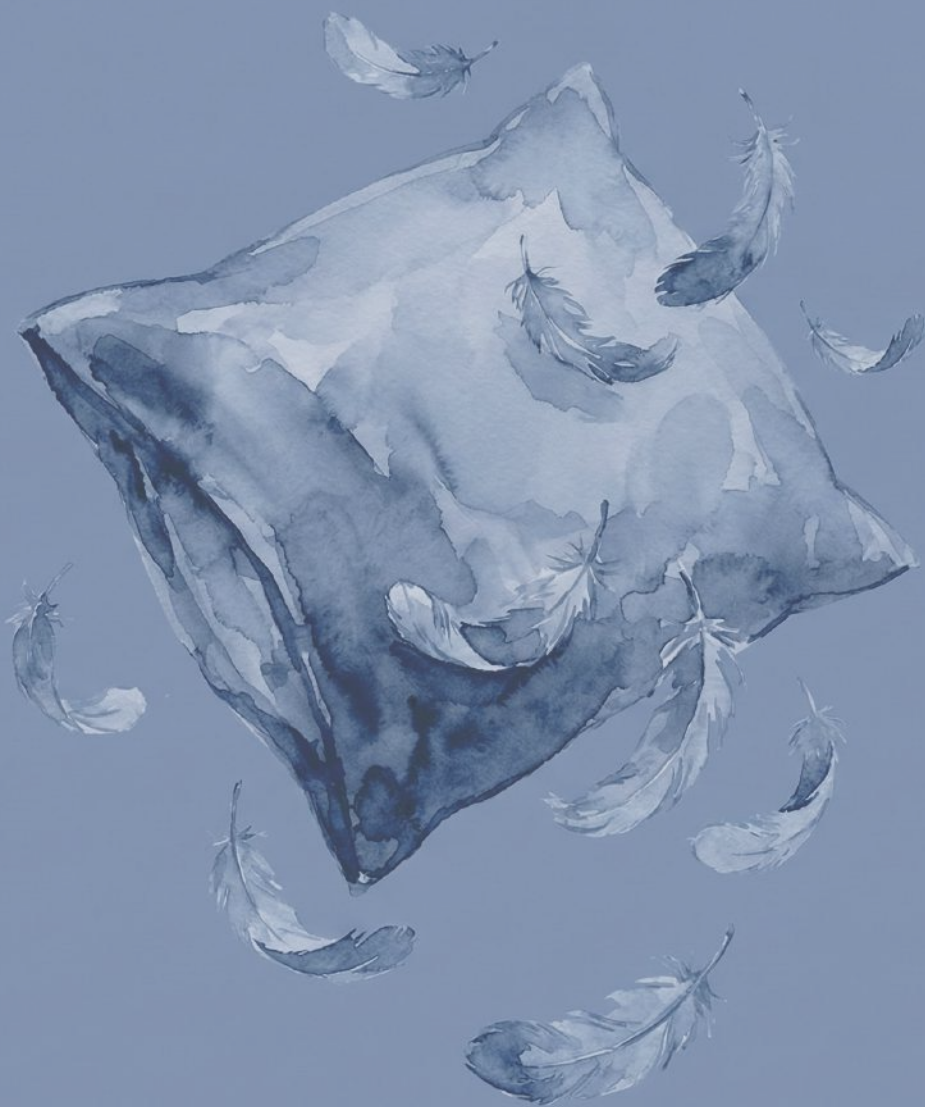
Tiredness can be connected to many areas of your life. Some examples include negative thoughts and an overload of daily responsibilities, which can make both body and mind feel heavier, increasing fatigue without you even noticing.



Can you imagine how these situations might be increasing your fatigue? And how we might deal with them more effectively?

Let's keep going and understand together how this process happens.





Do thoughts like these sound familiar?

"I still haven't done that. I'm not good enough."

"There are so many things to do, it's not going to work out."

"I should have done that differently. I'm such a failure."

Many people have thoughts like these, and they can mislead us about reality. In psychology, this is called negative filtering: a process where a person focuses only on the negative aspects of a situation, leaving out the positive ones.

➤ **For example**, you finish three tasks, but you leave one undone. Instead of feeling proud of the three you did, you fixate on the one you missed and tell yourself, "I'm not good enough". Or you receive both praise and criticism at work, but you spend the entire day thinking only about the criticism, as if it defines you, ignoring the praise.



> In Other Words,

It's like wearing "dark glasses" that distort how you see reality, making you notice problems and obstacles while ignoring successes and possibilities.



Pay close attention to this.

When this filter is used frequently, you may get stuck in a cycle that's hard to break: you feel tired, believe that nothing you do is enough, and end up feeling incapable, even when you've accomplished many things.



Have you ever gone through something like this?

One way to help with negative filtering is to ask yourself questions that encourage reflection about your judgments in everyday situations.

Here are some questions to guide you. Read them carefully and answer yourself as thoroughly as you can:

1. Are my thoughts always negative, or can I notice positive things too?

Example: "I can only think that I'm incompetent because I didn't finish the tasks I needed to complete."

2. What makes me believe these thoughts? Is it completely true, or am I only seeing part of what happened?

Example: "Indeed, I didn't finish the task, but does that mean I'm completely incompetent, or just that there's still something left to do?"

3. Am I looking at the whole situation, or am I overlooking what I did accomplish?

Example: "I didn't finish this task, but I organized other important things today."

4. If someone were observing me, what would they say about what I'm thinking?

Example: "Maybe they would see that I'm trying and doing my best, one step at a time."

5. If I wrote down everything that went well or was positive in my day or week, how many things would appear?

Example: "I helped a colleague, completed other tasks, took care of myself, even if something is still pending."

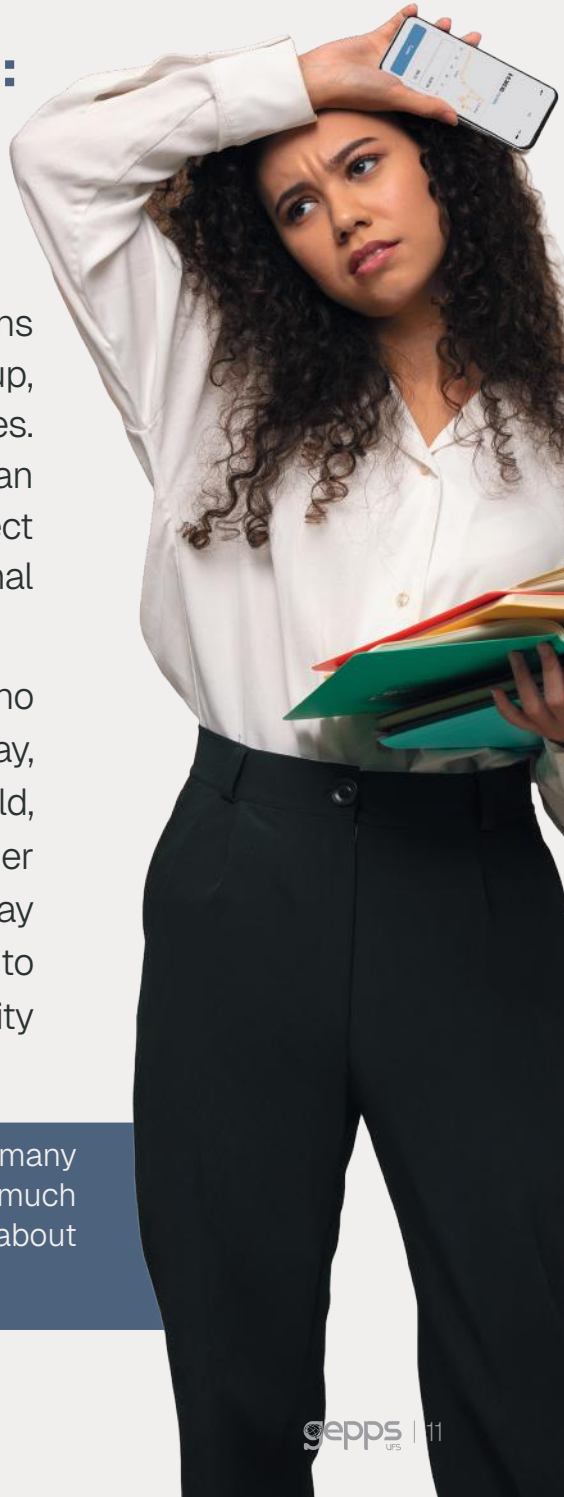


Activity overload: do you know what it is or how it shows up?

Activity overload happens when many tasks pile up, especially work-related ones. Having too much to do can reduce rest time and affect physical and emotional well-being.

For example, someone who wakes up early, works all day, takes care of the household, and still handles other responsibilities every day may become more vulnerable to stress, increasing the intensity of depressive symptoms.

> We are used to living with many responsibilities, but too much can also harm us. How about organizing this together?



Routine Planning

This is a technique to reduce tiredness caused by an excessive number of activities. It is very important to encourage activities that bring pleasure and help you complete tasks that seem difficult or heavy.

To create your routine plan:

1. Divide your day into 30-minute or 1-hour blocks for each activity.

2. Start with the necessary tasks that cannot be left out of your day.

3. Write down the time you spend commuting.

4. Set aside time for physical exercise, rest, and leisure.

5. Also, plan free time, even within your leisure time, so you can handle unexpected tasks if they come up.

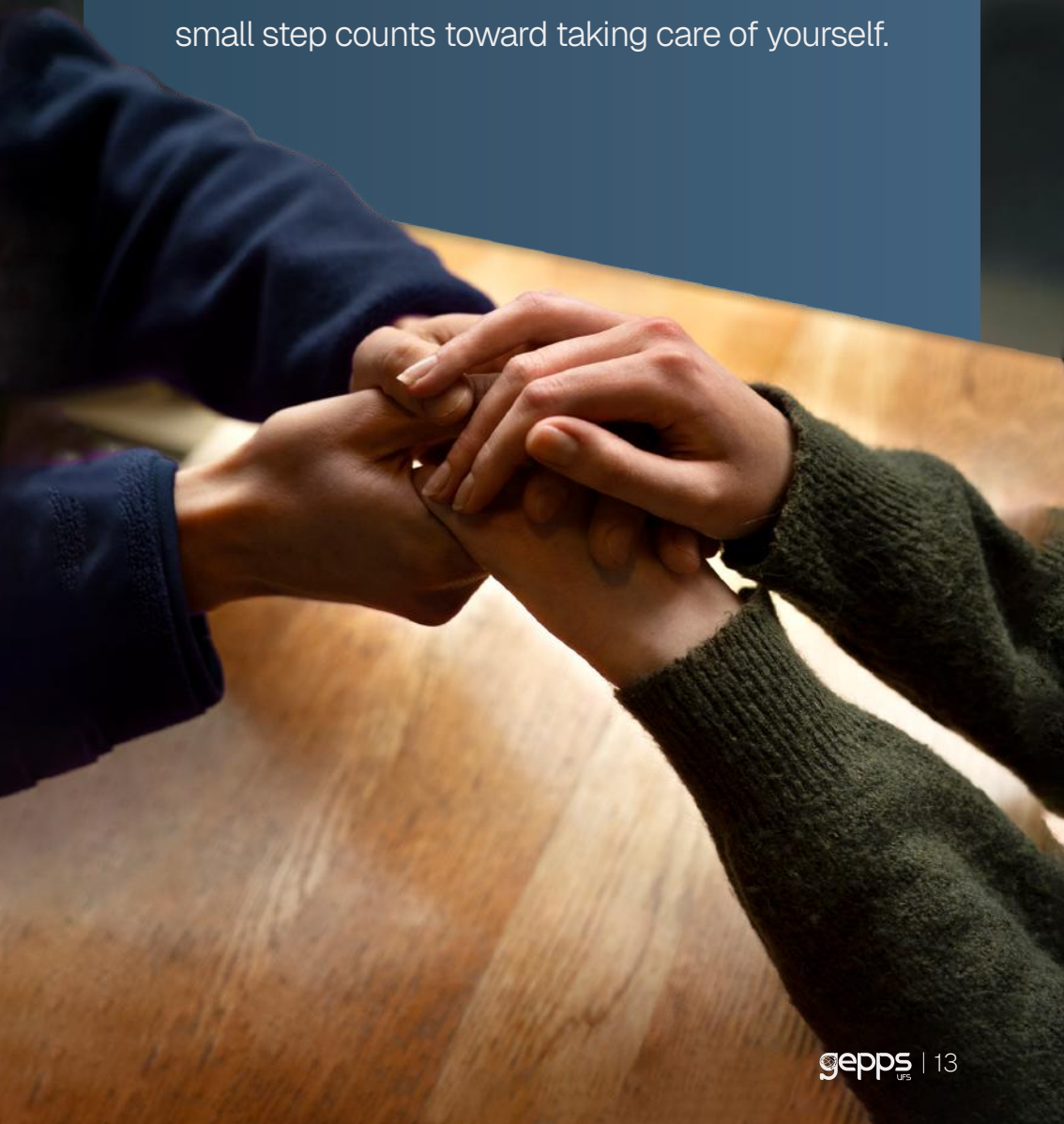
> **Attention:** Avoid scheduling commitments back-to-back without any breaks. Remember to review your routine plan weekly and adjust it if needed.

Download your routine plan here, print it out, and complete it in your own time, with your full attention.



Dealing with tiredness in depression is not easy, but it is possible. Learning to take care of yourself is the first step in this journey.

Remember: no process happens in a straight line. It's normal to have harder days and better days, and every small step counts toward taking care of yourself.



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Where to Look for Mental Health Support

1. Emergency and Crisis Support

If you or someone else is in immediate danger or at risk of harming themselves, call 9-1-1 right away or go to the nearest emergency department. For urgent emotional support or crisis intervention (including thoughts of suicide), you can call or text 9-8-8, a nationwide suicide crisis helpline available 24/7 in English and French.

2. Your Family Doctor or Primary Health Provider

A family physician (general practitioner) is often the first person you can talk to about mental health concerns. They can:

- Assess your mental health;
- Provide initial support or medication if needed;
- Refer you to specialists (e.g., psychiatrists, psychologists) or community mental health services.

3. Community Mental Health Services

Across Canada, there are community-based services that help with emotional support, counselling, and referrals:

- Community health centres offer accessible care and may include counselling or mental health programming;
- 211 helpline is a free referral service (by phone or online) that connects you with local social, health, and mental health resources in your community.

4. Mental Health Organizations and Supports

There are organizations that provide information, education, and connection to services:

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA): a national network with local branches offering programs, peer support, and referrals to mental health supports (though the national office itself does not provide direct clinical services);
- Kids Help Phone: free, confidential support for young people (through call, text, or online chat).

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