



What to do when you are...

Feeling bored, flat and unmotivated



5 Key Messages

1. Think about what is important to you
2. Spend time doing more of the things that are important to you
3. When you feel unmotivated, start doing something anyway
4. Notice and pay attention to how it feels to do what you are doing
5. Be kind to yourself

- Think about what is important to you.

What do you believe matters? What do you want to get out of life?

1. Think about what is important to you

- Think about what matters to YOU rather than what matters to OTHER people



- Everyone finds different things important

- Examples of things people find important:

- a) Having good relationships with people (e.g. family, friends, partner).
- b) Looking after your physical and mental health (e.g. doing exercise, self-care).
- c) Bigger things that happen in the world or community (e.g. the environment, religion)

- Focus your time and energy on the things that will make you feel good (e.g. spending time with friends, being out in nature, developing a new skill) rather than on avoiding something bad (e.g. not doing something that you want to do because you are worried what people think) or on doing something because it will give you money or power

2. Spend time doing more of the things that are important to you

- Now you have worked out what is important to you, think about what small steps you can take right now towards doing more of those things.

- There will be more than one way to spend time doing something important to you.

For example, if it is important for you to be active – you could dance around your room, do an online workout video, go for a walk or do sports.

- Make a plan for how you are going to spend more time doing things that are important to you.

Share your plans with other people that are close to you or that share your interests.

Make sure it is achievable. Think about what exactly you will do and when you will do it.

Imagine all the steps in your plan. Think about whether there is anything that will get in the way, and work out how you can get round any hurdles.

Recommendations 1 and 2 are linked – it is important that you do both steps (not just 1!)

- Spend time on things you find important regularly.

- It is normal to find it hard to do things when you are unmotivated, but just do it anyway!

Once you get started it is usually easier to keep going.

- **Start with a small step.**

Think about what action can you take right now in the direction of doing something that is important to you.

3. When you feel unmotivated, start doing something anyway

- Be proud of yourself for any and all progress you make.

- Focus on the process. Think about what you learnt or developed (e.g. improving your endurance) rather than achieving an end goal (e.g. running for 5km).

This will keep you motivated in the long run.

- If an activity didn't work out (it was hard to get started AND you didn't enjoy it) – think about what you could do differently next time.

Don't give up! Could you make the activity shorter or smaller? Could someone do it with you?

4. Notice and pay attention to how it feels to do what you are doing



- Try to ‘get out of your own head’

Rather than focusing on your own thoughts when doing an activity, instead focus on the activity you are doing.

- Notice what is going on around you.

What can you see, hear, feel, smell and/or taste?

- Notice and record the time you spend on daily activities.

This can help you identify what makes you feel good, and then do more of those things.



5. Be kind to yourself

- Remember lots of young people have been feeling bored or unmotivated during the pandemic.

Instead of criticising yourself for feeling bored or unmotivated, just notice how you feel and remember it is understandable to feel this way.

- Making changes can be difficult and can take time.

lots of us are getting used to changes in our day-to-day activities, including time spent doing hobbies or fun activities

- Try to notice and challenge any negative 'self-talk' that is getting in the way.

For example, if you were thinking about exercising, replace thoughts like "I'm no good", or "I have to / I should", with thoughts like "I want to be fit and healthy", "It is important for me to exercise".

What should someone do if they are struggling with their mental health?



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- If anyone is struggling at a level where it is getting in the way of daily life (e.g., causing distress, interfering with sleep, schoolwork, concentrating in lessons, socialising with friends), it is important to seek help.
 - This could be talking to a trusted friend or family member. Often a good starting point is to speak to someone at school (a school nurse, school mental health champion); this information can typically be found on the school website or by asking a form tutor.
 - Another option is to speak to a health professional, e.g., GP.
 - More information on sources of support (and other useful resources) can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health/>