

**PROBLEM SOLVING TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION  
PROBLEM LIST**

<b>1. Problems with relationships:</b>  Spouse/partner:	<b>5. Problems with having a daily pleasant activity:</b>
<b>2. Problems with work:</b>	<b>6. Problems with sexual activity:</b>
<b>3. Financial problems:</b>	<b>7. Religious/Spiritual problems:</b>
<b>4. Problems with living arrangements/housing:</b>	<b>8. Problems with self-image:</b>

<b>9. Transportation Problems:</b>	<b>10. Health Problems:</b>
<b>11. Problems with socializing or loneliness</b>	<b>12. Problems with exercise/diet:</b>
<b>13: Problems with Substance Use</b>	<b>Other:</b>

# Introducing PST-PC to the Patient in Session One

## 1. Explain the Structure of PST-PC

- 4-8 sessions
- Weekly or Bi-weekly sessions
- Session 1 = 1 hour
- Sessions 2-8 = 30 minutes

## 2. Establish that symptoms are due to Depression

- Assure understanding that Depression is causing symptoms
- Collect brief list of key Depressive symptoms
- If necessary use Mind/Body explanation
- Discuss tracking list of symptoms over time during treatment

## 3. Facilitate a Problem Solving orientation

- Problems are a normal, predictable part of living
- Problems are not “unfair” and should not be unexpected
- Problems are a challenge to be addressed, not avoided
- Negative mood is a sign that a problem exists and a cue to action
- Stop and think – Look for problem areas and start problem solving

## 4. Establish the link between problems and Depression

- Unresolved problems worsen Depression
- PST-PC Strengthens problem solving skills
- Improved problem solving ability lifts mood
- Improvement follows action

## 5. Describe the 7 stages of Problem Solving

1. Defining, Clarifying and breaking down problems
2. Establishing achievable goals
3. Generating multiple solution alternatives: Brainstorming
4. Implementing Decision making guidelines: Pros & Cons
5. Choosing the preferred solution(s)
6. Implementing the preferred solution(s): Action Planning
7. Evaluation the outcome

## 6. Activity Scheduling

- Depression causes people to stop doing enjoyable things
- Planning enjoyable activities helps treat depression
- Focus on increasing pleasant events each day

## 7. Compile a Problem List

- Focus on current problems
- Allow patient to spontaneously report before cueing with Problem List Worksheet
- Identify easily achievable problem as 1<sup>st</sup> target
- Build on success
- Work through the 7 stages of Problem Solving with the problem identified

## PROBLEM – SOLVING WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Visit #: \_\_\_\_\_

Review of Progress during previous week:

Rate how satisfied you felt with your effort (0-10) (0=not at all; 10= extremely): \_\_\_\_\_ Mood: (0-10): \_\_\_\_\_

1. Problem:

2: Goal:

3. Solutions:

**Pros vs. Cons**

a)	a) Pros (+) What makes this a good choice?	a) Cons (-) <u>A Little</u> <u>Medium</u> <u>A Lot</u> Effort ( ) ( ) ( ) Time ( ) ( ) ( ) Money ( ) ( ) ( ) Emotional impact ( ) ( ) ( ) Involving others ( ) ( ) ( )
b)	b) Pros (+) What makes this a good choice?	b) Cons (-) <u>A Little</u> <u>Medium</u> <u>A Lot</u> Effort ( ) ( ) ( ) Time ( ) ( ) ( ) Money ( ) ( ) ( ) Emotional impact ( ) ( ) ( ) Involving others ( ) ( ) ( )
c)	c) Pros (+) What makes this a good choice?	c) Cons (-) <u>A Little</u> <u>Medium</u> <u>A Lot</u> Effort ( ) ( ) ( ) Time ( ) ( ) ( ) Money ( ) ( ) ( ) Emotional impact ( ) ( ) ( ) Involving others ( ) ( ) ( )
d)	d) Pros (+) What makes this a good choice?	d) Cons (-) <u>A Little</u> <u>Medium</u> <u>A Lot</u> Effort ( ) ( ) ( ) Time ( ) ( ) ( ) Money ( ) ( ) ( ) Emotional impact ( ) ( ) ( ) Involving others ( ) ( ) ( )
e)	e) Pros (+) What makes this a good choice?	e) Cons (-) <u>A Little</u> <u>Medium</u> <u>A Lot</u> Effort ( ) ( ) ( ) Time ( ) ( ) ( ) Money ( ) ( ) ( ) Emotional impact ( ) ( ) ( ) Involving others ( ) ( ) ( )

<p><b>5. Choice of solution::</b></p> <p><b>6. Action Plan:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Write down tasks you completed:</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p><b>Pleasant Daily Activities</b></p> <p><b>Date    Activity</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>Rate how satisfied it made you feel (0-10)</b> <b>(0 = not at all; 10 = extremely)</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

## **PST – RELAPSE PREVENTION PLAN**

A relapse prevention plan is an important part of PST treatment. A relapse prevention plan can be created when PST is completed, or any time the patient decides to end treatment. Work with the patient to provide psycho education re: the usefulness of a relapse prevention plan by addressing the content areas below. The components of a relapse prevention plan are as follows:

### **1. Why a relapse prevention plan is helpful**

- A relapse prevention plan helps identify and interrupt signs of a returning depression by identifying useful steps to take to address symptoms before they spiral down and out of control
- Provide psycho education on the possibility of a cyclic nature of depression: Depression can return, but this does not mean that it can't be addressed and resolved. The patient has the tools to address the depression if it returns and the relapse prevention plan can help.

### **2. Early warning signs of a relapse**

- Ask patient to make a list of warning signs - symptoms that occur when the patient is depressed, reduction in pleasurable activities, etc. - in order to heighten the patient's awareness of a returning depression.

### **3. What's been helpful in keeping symptoms from returning**

- Ask the patient to identify useful behavioral activation activities that the patient is working on that help keep depression from returning
- Explore and reinforce the PST skills the patient has been using to address depression
- Send the message that there are things that the patient can do to address symptoms if they recur – Re-engage in BA and use PST

### **4. Medication adherence**

- If the patient is on medication you need to inform them that they should not go off medication on their own. Encourage the patient to keep the next follow up appointment with their Doctor to discuss course of treatment with medication
- Explore and challenge any erroneous beliefs re: medication with the patient and provide appropriate feedback re: the importance of medication – if the patient is on medication at end of PST treatment.
- Main messages that you can impart include: 1. Medication should not be stopped abruptly. This is usually done in conjunction with the Doctor to identify a safe way to begin tapering off medication so side effects are minimized. 2. The average length of time on a medication is one year. Even if the patient is feeling better it does not mean that the medication is no longer needed. If the patient had missed doses and does not feel any negative effect this is because the medication is still in their system.

**5. Use the PST premise re: return of symptoms to check in and identify what the problem is.**

- Explain that if depression symptoms begin to recur that the patient should check to see what's changed
- Have they stopped doing the activities they were enjoying?
- Is there a problem on their mind that they are not addressing?
- Use the sign of a symptom to check in and begin to figure out what's wrong – then take steps to address it.

Reinforce the patient's ability to Problem Solve and create a written action plan for Relapse Prevention. Also inform the patient that if they are not able to make changes in their mood they can return to see their Doctor or to see you.

# Relapse Prevention Plan

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Maintenance Medications

1. \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ mg \_\_\_\_\_ Take at least until \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ mg \_\_\_\_\_ Take at least until \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ mg \_\_\_\_\_ Take at least until \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_ tablet(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ mg \_\_\_\_\_ Take at least until \_\_\_\_\_

Call your primary care provider or your care manager with any questions (see contact information below).

## Other Treatments

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Personal Warning Signs

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## Things I do to Prevent Symptoms from Returning

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## If symptoms return, contact:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Contact/Appointment Information

Primary Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Next appointment: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Care Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. Number: \_\_\_\_\_



## Problem Solving Treatment

### **PST THERAPIST PROMPTS (30 minutes)**

#### 1. Selecting the problem

- Which problem area do you think is most important to address at this time?
- Which problem area is affecting your life the most right now?
- Which problem area would you like to work on?
- If none identified: focus on pleasant daily activity or symptom management

#### Specifically defining the problem

- What are the different aspects of the problem? (break down into different areas)
- How does [the problem] affect you/your life?
- When are you most aware of [the problem]?
- Also: who, where, how frequently?

#### 2. Establishing a realistic short-term goal

- What would you like to be different?
- What would you like to see happen in the next week?
- What would you like to change about that?
- What would you like to do about that?

#### 3. Brainstorming multiple solutions

- What ideas do you have for reaching your goal?
- What kinds of things can you do here and now to reach your goal?
- What else?
- Let's get all the ideas written down. We will address any concerns next.

#### 4. Evaluating pros and cons

- What are the advantages of that solution?
- Are there any disadvantages that you can think of (time, effort, money)?
- Can you think of any potential negative effects for you or others?
- Are there any compelling disadvantages compared to the other solutions?

#### 5. Choosing the solution

- Which solutions appeal to you the most?
- Which ones have the best chance for success?
- Which one(s) would you like to try?
- What about this solution put it over the top for you?

#### 6. Developing plan to implement the preferred solution

- Let's figure out the steps that need to be taken to try [the solution].
- Who, what, when, where, how, how long, how often?
- What will need to happen in order to make this work out?
- What may get in the way of being able to do this? What is a Plan B?

#### 7. Evaluating the outcome (start of next session)

- Your homework was to try [solution]. How did it go?
- How did you feel about having tried that solution?
- How did accomplishing that affect your mood?