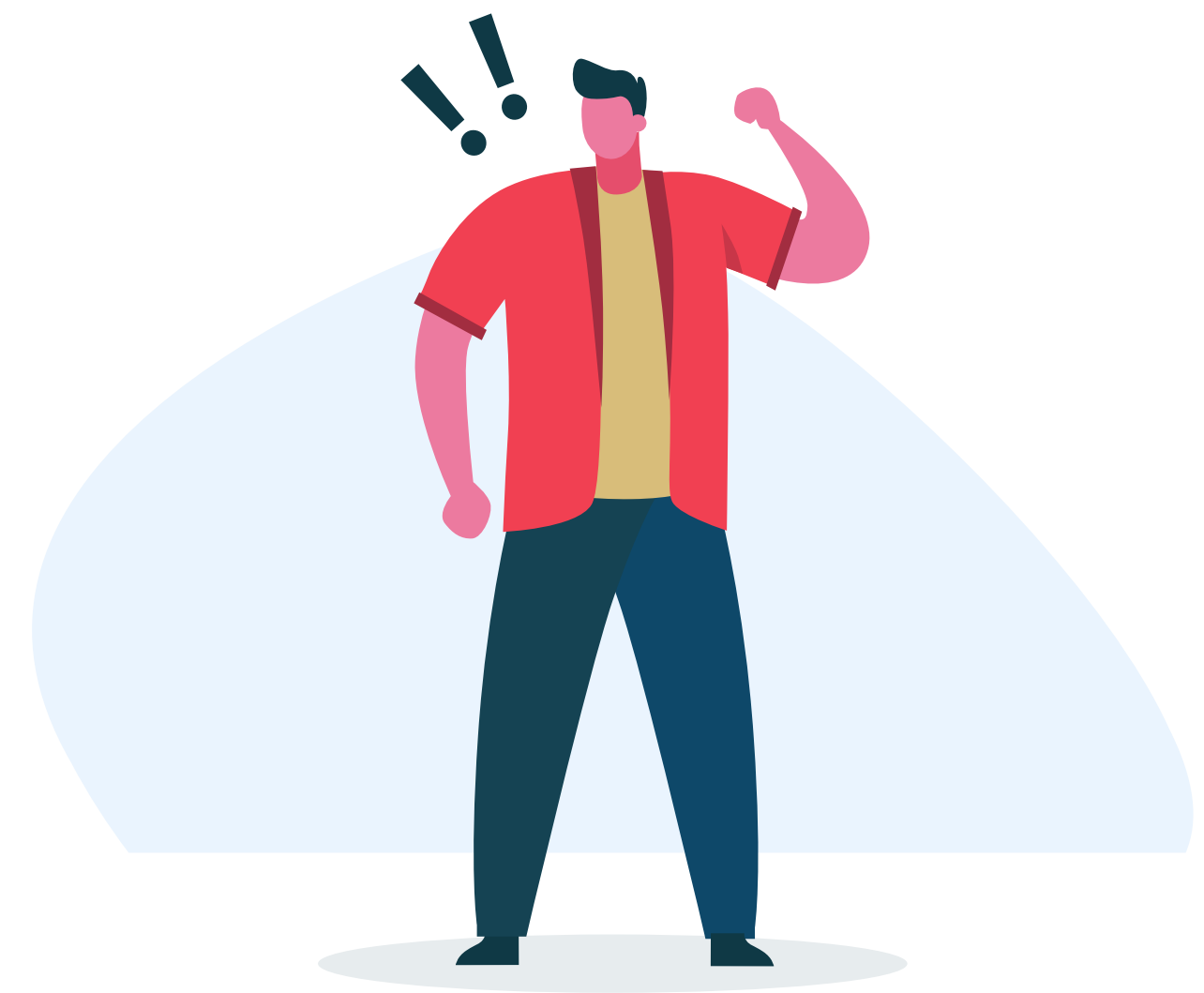


## Factsheet

# ESCAPING DEPRESSION



1

### Get back into the swing of things: be friendly to yourself

Depressive illness affects our natural ability to undertake and carry out everyday activities, from the simplest (washing, dressing, chatting, walking, shopping) to the most complex (working, inviting friends round, planning projects). When we're depressed, it's often difficult to carry out daily activities. Getting back into the swing of things is a good way to combat depression. Make sure you go « slowly »: it's really important!

2

### Don't compare with what you were able to do or felt before

After a fracture, you don't expect to walk normally again as soon as the cast is removed. It's the same after an acute stage of a depression. It takes time for all the sensations associated with action, spontaneity, pleasure and desire to return to normal. Comparing what you're capable of today with what you were capable of yesterday makes no sense. Psychological healing takes time.

3

### Taking action without waiting for desire

To do something, you generally have to want to do it and feel capable of doing it. Depressive illness, however, curbs desire. After a depression, you have to force yourself to act, even if you don't feel like it, as if you were restarting an engine. And the same illness tends to make us feel incapable of doing anything (negative view of ourselves) so we have to act without trying to do too well and accept that the results are imperfect, either materially (we're generally less efficient), or emotionally (action generally gives us less pleasure than before). In depression, the logical order is reversed: you have to act without wanting to. And even if it doesn't give you pleasure, you have to keep going: that's how pleasure will eventually return.

4

#### Taking your medication correctly every day for several months

Antidepressants don't bring immediate relief after the last dose. Their effects build up gradually, day after day, week after week. That's why it's important to take your medication every day, and not just when you're feeling low.

It's a good idea to take your medication at the same time every day, in the morning with breakfast, for example; or to place a medicine box in plain view on the bathroom shelf, near the toothbrushes, if you take it in the evening, but out of reach of children.

Taking your treatment over the long term helps avoid the risk of a relapse. Sticking to your doctor's prescription, and taking your medication correctly every day for several months is one way of overcoming depression. Discontinuing treatment needs to be discussed with your doctor. He or she will decide with you when is the best time to stop taking it, and the reduction should be gradual.

5

#### Don't talk too much or too little about your depression

It's important to talk to others about your depression: like that you hear the opinions of people who're not depressed about what's happening to you, helps you to gain perspective on details that you may overemphasize, makes you feel less alone, less guilty... It also allows you to receive support and help. Sometimes people who're depressed are not acknowledged as such by those around them, who may have the impression that they're just letting themselves go, listening to themselves too much...

Avoid talking too much about your depression. Repeated complaints wear down even the best of wills: they're tiring, and it's hard for others to feel that they can't help you. The general idea is that being depressed is nothing to be ashamed of, and that talking about it can bring help and understanding in the face of your difficulties.