

Beating The Blues User Handbook



This manual is intended for the people who will be going through the Beating the Blues program and will cover setting up your account, helpful tips, and an overview of the program's content.

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Getting Started

Welcome to Beating the Blues! This program uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) methods to help you feel better and stay better. Whether you are using this program in addition to clinical help or just on your own, Beating the Blues will equip you with the tools you need to combat stress, anxiety, and depression. The methods you learn will help you for the rest of your life. By simply starting this program you've already taken an important step in improving your well-being.

Even if you're not very comfortable with computers, this guide should be all you need to help you complete the program successfully.

- **Setting up your accounts**

After your Helper adds your information to the program, you will receive an email inviting you to set up your account. There will be two links in the email that will take you to the registration page of the program.

If you click on the first link, you will be asked to enter your username and password. Once you have entered your username and password and reviewed the information, click the **Register** button.

Once you have activated your account then use the second link to access the program.

You will now be redirected to the main menu.

- **Logging in**

Now, when you return to Beating the Blues, you can login in with your username and password:

Step	
1.	Go to the Beating the Blues account website
2.	Click the Login button
3.	Enter your username and password, then click Login . Remember: both your username and password are case-sensitive.

Once you have logged in, you should see the main menu. On the main menu you will see "Welcome to Beating the Blues" and the **Start Course** button. If you do not see the **Start Course** button, your Helper has not yet added you to the course. Contact them and ask them to assign you to the Beating the Blues course.

Navigating the Program

- **Starting the Program**

Once you have logged into Beating the Blues, you will see a welcome message and the **Start Course** button. Clicking the **Start Course** button will start the program.

The first time you click the **Start Course** button, you will go through a short introduction and tour of the program. You can re-watch this tour at any time by clicking on **The Tour** in the upper right-hand corner of the Home screen.

- **The Home Screen**

After you have viewed the introduction, you will see the Home screen. After the first time you use the program, every time you click the **Start Course** button you will go to the Home screen.

In the Home screen, the modules will be on the left. You can click **Start Module** to begin your next module. As you go through the program, you will be asked to complete short projects to practice the CBT methods you learn. These projects will always be on the right of the Home screen, under the **My Projects** header.

You can review any previous sessions or modules by clicking the **Review Previous Sessions** button on the right side of the Home screen.

- **Navigating in the course**

The program can be easily navigated by using the **Next** and **Back** buttons. The **Next** button moves you to the next page of the program. The **Back** button will return you to the previous page.

In the modules, there is a yellow navigation bar at the bottom of each page. By clicking on this bar and moving it back and forth, you can rewind or fast forward the material on the page. In the top right corner is a bar with a percentage. This percentage shows you how much of the module you have completed. For example, if the percentage shown is 47%, you have completed 47% of the current module.

Going Through the Sessions

The program is made up of eight individual sessions. Each session is made up of 3-5 modules. Each module takes about 10-15 minutes to complete. For the program to be most effective, try to complete one module every other day, about one session every week.

In each session, you will build on the previous sessions, and learn a new skill. The skills you learn will help you combat your negative thoughts and behaviours.

Characters in the Program

As you go through the program, you will meet several characters who have been helped by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. They will discuss how the methods that you learn in the program have helped them.



- Carl**
 Carl is a teacher who is currently feeling very overwhelmed by his job. He has low self-confidence and doubts his abilities. Because of this, he is feeling anxious and depressed.
- Elaine**
 Elaine is a young single mother who is struggling with debt. She feels anxious, and often feels guilty of being a bad mother. She often fights with her mother and feels trapped.
- Rosa**
 Rosa has been recently widowed and is dealing with depression as a result. She rarely leaves her house and no longer takes part in activities she enjoys. She often feels worthless and isolated.
- Bob**
 Bob is dealing with anxiety due to his job. His workplace has recently installed new technology that Bob is not familiar with. He feels that his inability to use the new technology will lead to him being fired. He has panic attacks about his health and his income.
- Leena**
 Leena has anxiety due to a car accident. Though the accident was over a year ago, she still feels anxious about cars and sometimes has panic attacks. She feels guilty that she cannot drive her daughter around, and often feels like a bad mother.

The Sessions

- **Session 1**

Session 1 is an introduction to both Beating the Blues and to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT methods are the basis for the program. There is also information about anxiety and depression, and introductory videos for the characters in the program. Each of these videos is based on actual patients of CBT, though actors are used for confidentiality. At the end of the session, you will be asked to answer questions about your anxiety and depression symptoms. You will also be asked to think about a problem to focus on in Beating the Blues.

Your project for this session is to increase the time you spend doing enjoyable activities daily.

- **Session 2**

In session 2 you will be asked to set a goal for Beating the Blues. You will be introduced to the ABC model, which shows how thoughts and behaviours can influence your mood. You will also learn about automatic thoughts; your project will be to recognize and record your own negative automatic thoughts.

You will finally be asked to choose a behavioural technique to help manage your stress, anxiety, or depression.

- **Session 3**

In session 3 you will be introduced to common types of thinking errors, which can worsen anxiety and depression. You will be asked to determine your most commonly used thinking distortions. You will also be taught a few simple techniques that can help if you are upset.

Your project for this session is to record your thinking distortions during the week.

- **Session 4**

In this session you will learn four techniques that can help challenge distorted thinking. These techniques will also show you how to replace negative thoughts with more helpful thoughts.

Your project will be to try to use the techniques from this session during the week and record any impact on mood or behaviour.

- **Session 5**

In this session, you will learn about some common mistakes that people make when challenging their thoughts, and how to overcome these mistakes.

You will also be introduced to the idea of inner beliefs. You will learn characteristics of inner beliefs and how to access them. For people who are dealing with anxiety or depression, it's very common for inner beliefs to be negative.

Your project for this session will be to write down one of your inner beliefs and find evidence against it during the week.



- **Session 6**

In this session, you will continue working on your inner beliefs. You will learn how to collect evidence against them and develop more helpful versions of them.

You will also be introduced to attributional style and how it impacts your mood and well-being.

You will also learn a new behavioural technique to work on in the final sessions.

Your project for this session will be to test your more helpful versions of inner beliefs.

- **Session 7**

In this session, you will continue working with attributional styles. You will check your attributional style to see if it is making your depression or anxiety worse. If it is, you will be given ways to modify your attributional style to improve your confidence.

Your project for the week is to try some new thinking strategies.

- **Session 8**

In the final session, you will review all the techniques that you've learned in the program.

You will check your progress on the goal you set at the beginning of the program.

You will build an action plan to build on the changes you have made and to continue combating your problems.

Repeating Sessions

If you need to review a session, you can do so at any time by clicking the **Review Previous Sessions** button on the right side of the Home screen. This can be helpful when completing projects, or after finishing the program to help you continue to manage your negative thoughts and behaviours.

Completing Projects

In each session you will be assigned a short project to do during the week. While it is possible to finish the program without completing the projects, the program will be more effective if you do complete them. The easiest way to complete your projects is to work on them for a few minutes every day.

All projects can be found on the right of the Home screen, under the **My Projects** header.



Evaluation

As you go through the program, you will be asked to fill out self-assessments. These assessments only require you to answer a few questions at the end of each session.

For most sessions, you will only be asked three questions. These questions will ask you to rate how much your stress, anxiety, or depression has impacted your life in the past week. These assessments can help you track your improvement over the course of the program.

Clinical Evaluations

In the program, you will be asked to answer questions for two clinical evaluations: the PHQ9 and the GAD7. These two assessments will come at the beginning of session 1 and at the end of sessions 2-8.

The **PHQ9** (Patient Health Questionnaire 9) is a clinical measure of depression. The higher a user's self-assessment score, the more depression is affecting their life. If the scores are decreasing, so are the user's feelings of depression.

The **GAD7** (Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7) is a clinical measure of Generalized Anxiety. The higher a user's self-assessment score, the more anxiety is affecting their life. If the scores are decreasing, so are the user's feelings of anxiety.

Viewing the Reports

It is possible to see your reports as you progress through the program at any time. In the main toolbar on the Welcome Screen, you can click the **Reports** tab to view them. You will see the results of both the clinical evaluations and the non- clinical self-assessment questions.

Privacy

All the information that you enter into the program is private and kept confidential. Your Helper will be able to view the results of your PHQ9 and GAD7 assessments, but they will not be able to see how you answered any of the questions. They will also be able to see the answers to your self-assessments.

The makers of Beating the Blues may sometimes collect patient answers in order to improve the program. All information used for this purpose will remain anonymous.

Self-Harm

Before you begin to use Beating the Blues we need to ask you a few questions about self-harm so that we can better understand how you have been feeling recently. It is important to answer these questions carefully so that if you need any help, we can ensure the right person is informed or can signpost you to where to get some help.

You will be asked these questions at the beginning of every session and if required the results may be shared with your GP or other Health Care Worker.

However, if you have very serious symptoms of anxiety or depression, or are considering self-harm or harm to others, we do not recommend this program. If you do have these thoughts while using the program, it is important that you seek immediate help.

Troubleshooting

This section contains the solutions to some common problems in the program, and some tips to ensure everything goes smoothly.

- **Forgotten Passwords**

If you forget your password for the program, it's easy to create a new one.

Step	Action
1.	On the Beating the Blues login page, click Forgotten your password?
2.	On the next page, enter the email address you use to login. Then click Send .
3.	You will receive an email with a link to the Password Reset page. Click the link.
4.	On the Password Reset page, enter your new password and press Reset . You can now use this new password to login.

- **Logging Out**

If you use any public computers (such as those in libraries), or a tablet computer, it is best to log out from the program when you have finished for the day. If you do not log out, the next user of the computer may be able to access your Beating the Blues information.

To log out:

Step	Action
1.	In the Welcome screen, on the program's main toolbar, click on your username.
2.	Select Sign out . You are now logged out of the program.

- **Bookmarking the Program**

To make it easier to access the program, we recommend that you bookmark it. This is only possible on personal computers. To do this, simply go to the Beating the Blues website and add it as a bookmark.

- **Using the Program on a smart device**

Beating the Blues can be accessed on a smart device. You should be able to simply open a browser and go to the Beating the Blues site. The program will run as normal.