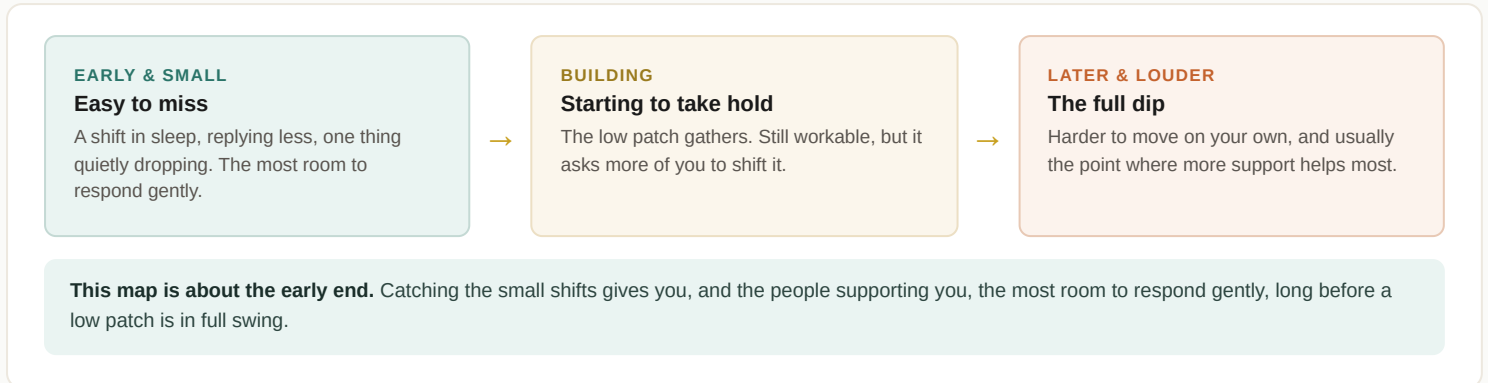


Knowing your own early signs

Recovery from low mood is rarely a straight line. It tends to move in dips and lifts, and a dip is part of the path, not a sign it is all coming back.

This is a place to map your own early signs: the small shifts that, for you, tend to come before a low patch. **Knowing them is not about bracing for the worst. It is so you and the people supporting you can notice early and respond gently.** Everything you need is on these two pages.

WHY EARLY SIGNS ARE WORTH KNOWING small and early is easier to work with



WHAT EARLY SIGNS TEND TO BE LIKE

<p>PERSONAL, NOT UNIVERSAL Yours may not look like a symptom</p> <p>In one study, most personal warning signs were not classic symptoms but things like irritability, withdrawing, or letting time slip (Slofstra et al., 2021).</p>	<p>OFTEN THE SAME EACH TIME A pattern that repeats</p> <p>Early signs tend to be fairly consistent within a person across episodes, which is what makes your own pattern worth knowing (Benasi et al., 2021).</p>
<p>NOTICING, NOT BRACING A map, not a guard you mount</p> <p>This is not about watching yourself anxiously. It is something you glance at now and then, not a reason to feel on alert.</p>	<p>BETTER SHARED Not the only one watching</p> <p>It works best brought to therapy or shared with someone you trust, so you are not carrying the noticing alone.</p>

<p>1 Think back to a low patch Recall the lead-up, if you can. What shifted while things still looked mostly fine?</p>	<p>2 Fill in what fits you Use the rows as starting points. A few words each; skip any that do not fit.</p>	<p>3 Share it with support Bring it to therapy, or to someone you trust, so the noticing is shared.</p>								
<p>WHAT ONE ROW MIGHT LOOK LIKE</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">WHERE TO LOOK</td> <td style="width: 25%;">WHAT MY EARLY SIGN LOOKS LIKE</td> <td style="width: 25%;">WHAT IT MIGHT BE TELLING ME</td> <td style="width: 25%;">A SMALL STEP, OR WHO I'D TELL</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Pulling away</i></td> <td><i>I stop replying to messages and start cancelling plans</i></td> <td><i>I am starting to withdraw, before I have noticed feeling low</i></td> <td><i>Reply to one person; mention it at my next session</i></td> </tr> </table>			WHERE TO LOOK	WHAT MY EARLY SIGN LOOKS LIKE	WHAT IT MIGHT BE TELLING ME	A SMALL STEP, OR WHO I'D TELL	<i>Pulling away</i>	<i>I stop replying to messages and start cancelling plans</i>	<i>I am starting to withdraw, before I have noticed feeling low</i>	<i>Reply to one person; mention it at my next session</i>
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i For use alongside therapy, not as a substitute, and not a safety plan. This is for noticing early and responding gently with support, not for managing a low patch on your own. If things feel unsafe or are escalating quickly, contact your GP, your clinician, or a crisis service rather than working from this sheet.

REMEMBER A dip is part of recovery, not proof it has failed. Your early signs are your own, and knowing them is for responding gently and early, with support, never for managing it alone.

Slofstra, C., Castelein, S., Pieper, A., Dijkstra, G., Hoenders, R., & Booij, S. (2021). Personalized warning signals for depressive relapse: A qualitative study. *European Psychiatry*, 64(S1), S620. · Benasi, G., Fava, G. A., & Guidi, J. (2021). Prodromal symptoms in depression: A systematic review. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 90(6), 365–372.

Your early signs map

One area per row. **A few words per cell, and leave any cell or row blank.** The rows are starting points, not a list to complete. Use the last row for anything that is yours alone. This works best filled in with, or shared with, someone supporting you.

WHERE TO LOOK	WHAT MY EARLY SIGN LOOKS LIKE	WHAT IT MIGHT BE TELLING ME	A SMALL STEP, OR WHO I'D TELL
Sleep & energy often the first thing to shift			
Pulling away cancelling, not replying, going quiet			
The things that drop first what you stop doing early on			
How you talk to yourself the tone your thoughts take			
Appetite & body eating, restlessness, a physical heaviness			
Something else that is yours:			

i **For use alongside therapy, not as a substitute.** This map is for noticing early and responding gently with support, not for managing a low patch on your own. It is not a safety plan. If things feel unsafe or are escalating quickly, contact your GP, your clinician, or a crisis service rather than working from this sheet.

WHEN YOU HAVE MAPPED WHAT YOU CAN

Bring it into a session, or share it with someone you trust.

Your early signs are useful information whether or not you are currently in therapy. If you would like to talk them through, the Meet and Greet is a short call to see if we are the right fit.

MEET & GREET
 Free
 15 minutes
 Online or in-person
 No obligation