

Some Strategies for Depressed Students

Susan Erbaugh

- Activities that are low key but highly structured and well within the student's range of success.
- Keep the student too busy to brood, varying tasks and keeping the student focused.
- Stay with the student until s/he gets started on a task.
- Break up long tasks into shorter assignments.
- Offer choices within a range of possibilities.
- Consider space and seating-avoid arrangements that isolate the student.
- Combat feelings of helplessness and powerlessness with assertiveness training.
- Keep contacts going with frequent use of the student's name, smiling, and responding to him/her.
- Develop positive reinforcement programs and reward immediately and consistently for spontaneous active behaviors.
- Impose consequences (response cost) for immobility, passivity, self-defeating behaviors or failure to respond.
- Provide expressive activities and role-playing.
- Organize group approaches to get the student started in activities with others.
- Encourage peer associations with good models for social behavior.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn to cope effectively with losses and share some of the feelings, including rituals and ceremonies to observe loss.
- Build self-esteem through acceptance and respect.
- Encourage parents to get involved with agency support.
- Coordinate home-school-agency programs.