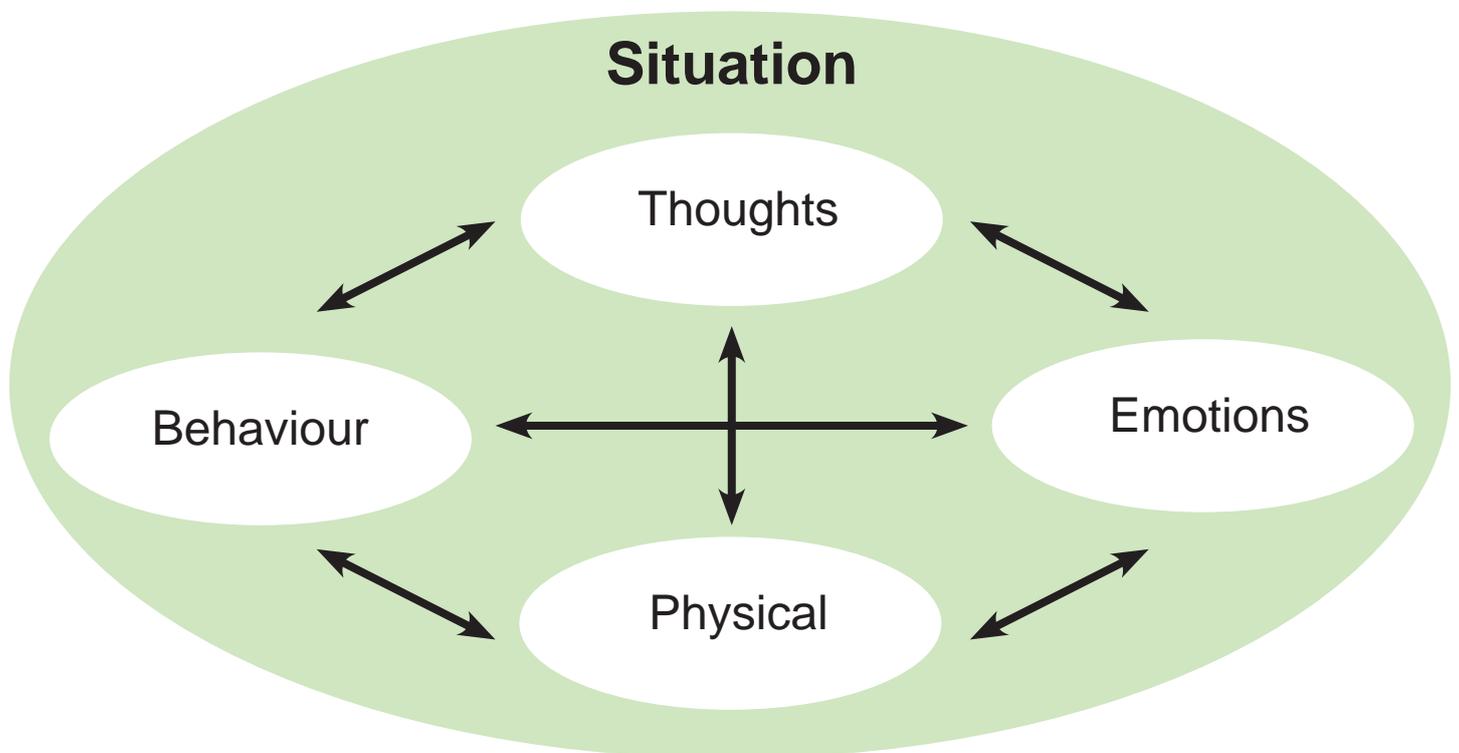




Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Skills Training Workbook

Learning more about low mood, stress, anxiety and how CBT can help you



Hertfordshire Enhanced Primary Mental Health Care Services

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Introduction

Stress, low mood and anxiety can affect many people at different times in their lives. Sometimes life can be very difficult. We might feel low due to bereavement or anxious and stressed due to having money problems, or having to attend a job interview. Although we often cannot change the life experiences we go through, we can change how we react to these experiences and we can learn how to manage our mood.

The Enhanced Primary Mental Health Service (EPMHS) provides support for people who are experiencing difficulties with depression or anxiety. This workbook has been designed to be used either as self-help, or in conjunction with attending one of our one day CBT Skills Training Workshops.

The aim of this workbook is to introduce you to a number of tools that will help you build up your own “tool bag” which will give you some skills to manage your mood. The tools covered in this workbook are based on the principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which will be explained later on in the workbook.

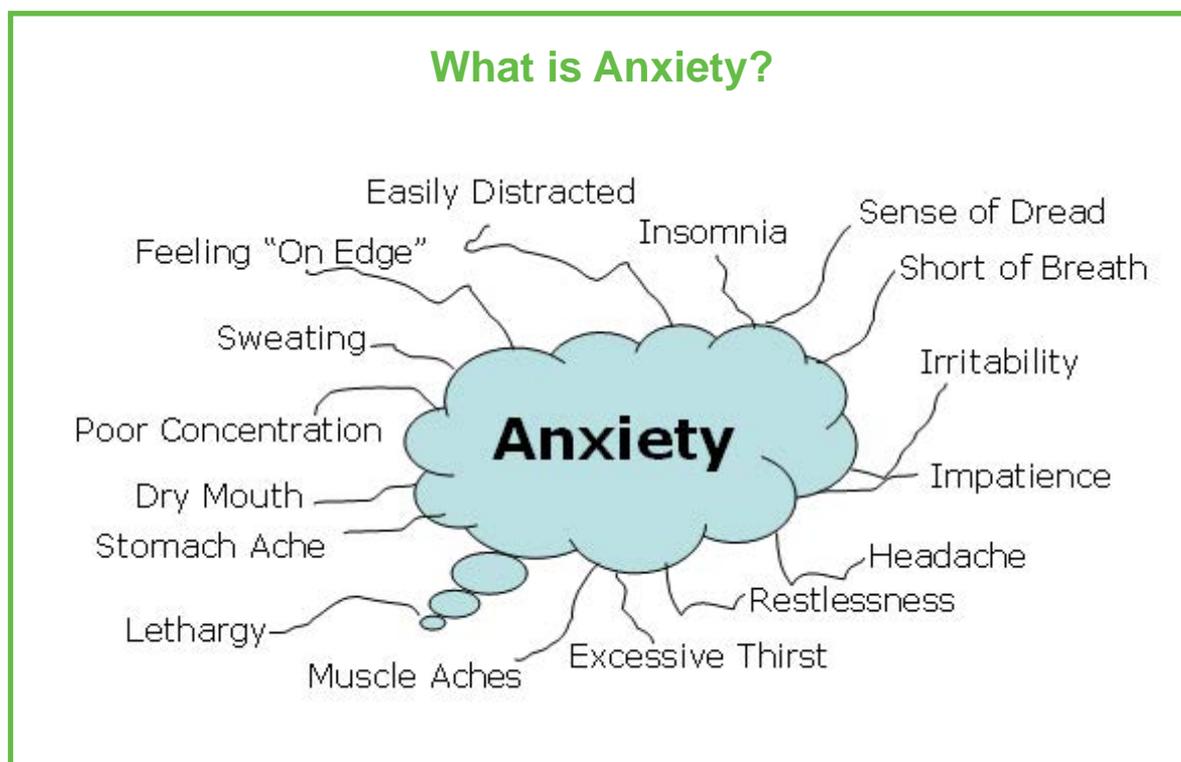
You will notice as you read through the workbook that there are a number of exercises for you to complete which will help you learn the CBT tools. Try and work through the exercises and perhaps spend more time on those that seem more useful to you and your problems and remember that as with any skills, the tools may need some time to learn and practice!

What is Anxiety and Depression?

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is an emotion which usually involves an element of worry and fear. It is a state of mind but can also affect our thoughts, behaviours and physical reactions in our body. Although anxiety can be unpleasant, it is actually an evolutionary survival mechanism. When we find ourselves in dangerous or stressful situations, anxiety helps us by preparing our body to either run away or fight back. This is known as the “fight versus flight” response.

Although anxiety can help us survive, it can start to become a problem when we use the fight versus flight response when there is no need. Anxiety is natural and helpful in dangerous or stressful situations but becomes a problem when we experience anxiety when we are not in a dangerous or stressful situation or long after a dangerous or stressful situation has passed.

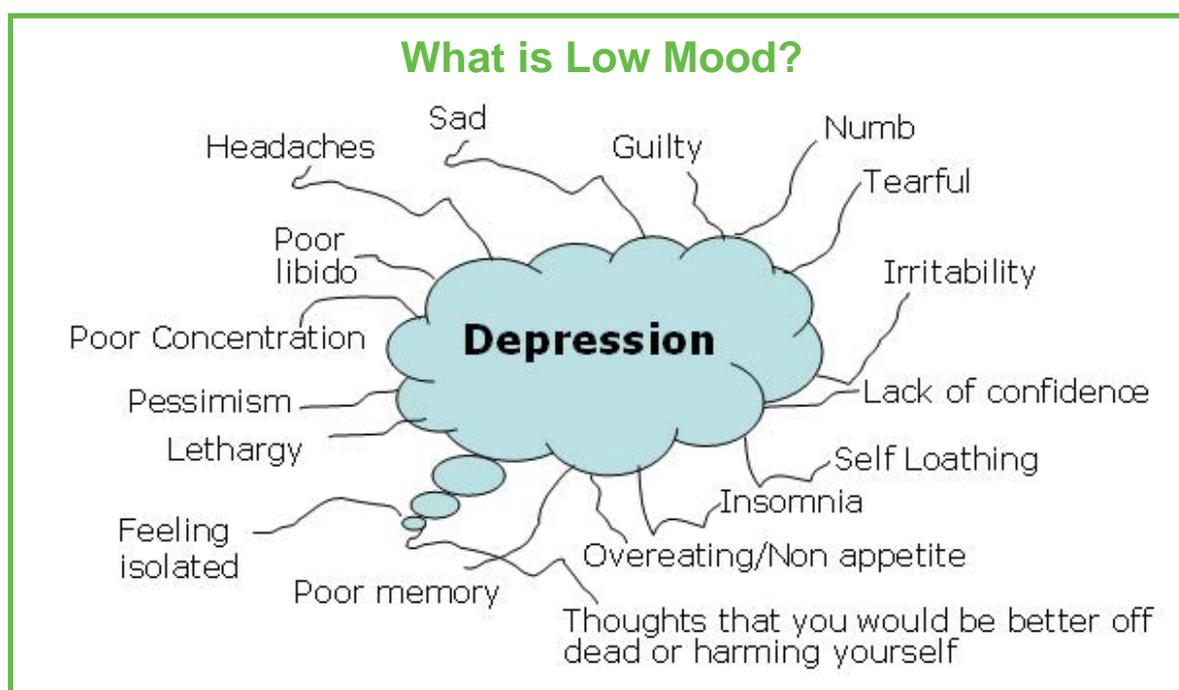


What is Low Mood?

Low mood is another emotion which can cause emotional distress. People can often experience a number of different symptoms that can affect the way that we think, the things that we do, as well as the physical symptoms that we can experience. This can then impact people further by causing their mood to deteriorate even more. Research has shown that the main causes for low mood can be linked to genetics, biology, early experiences in life, a combination of stressful events or even major life events such as a relationship breakdown, loss of a loved one or any traumatic event.

When feeling low, people may find themselves thinking negatively about themselves and thinking that other people do not like them. A common symptom of low mood is that people tend to withdraw from activities or social interaction, as well as having difficulties staying or trying to sleep, as well as eating. People experiencing low mood can also think that life is not worth living, or may even think about harming or killing themselves. This can be quite common for people who are experiencing these difficulties.

Having thoughts like these can be quite scary but does not mean that you will act on them. It is important to speak to your GP, the mental health helpline on 01438 843322 or attend the nearest Accident and Emergency department if you feel concerned about acting on any thoughts about harming yourself or anyone else. This will ensure that you get the correct help and support that is needed.



Activity

Take a look at the lists below for some common symptoms of anxiety and low mood. Feel free to tick the symptoms which you experience:

How does anxiety affect you?

Thoughts		Emotions	
<input type="checkbox"/>	"Something awful is going to happen"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxious
<input type="checkbox"/>	"I will not be able to cope"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scared
<input type="checkbox"/>	"What if I don't do it right"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nervous
<input type="checkbox"/>	"What will people think of me"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irritable
<input type="checkbox"/>	"I need to escape"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depressed
Physical Symptoms		Behaviours	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Faster heart beat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoiding situations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical tension	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased smoking or drinking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dizziness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arguing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hot and sweaty	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talking or doing things faster
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tunnel vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Under or over eating

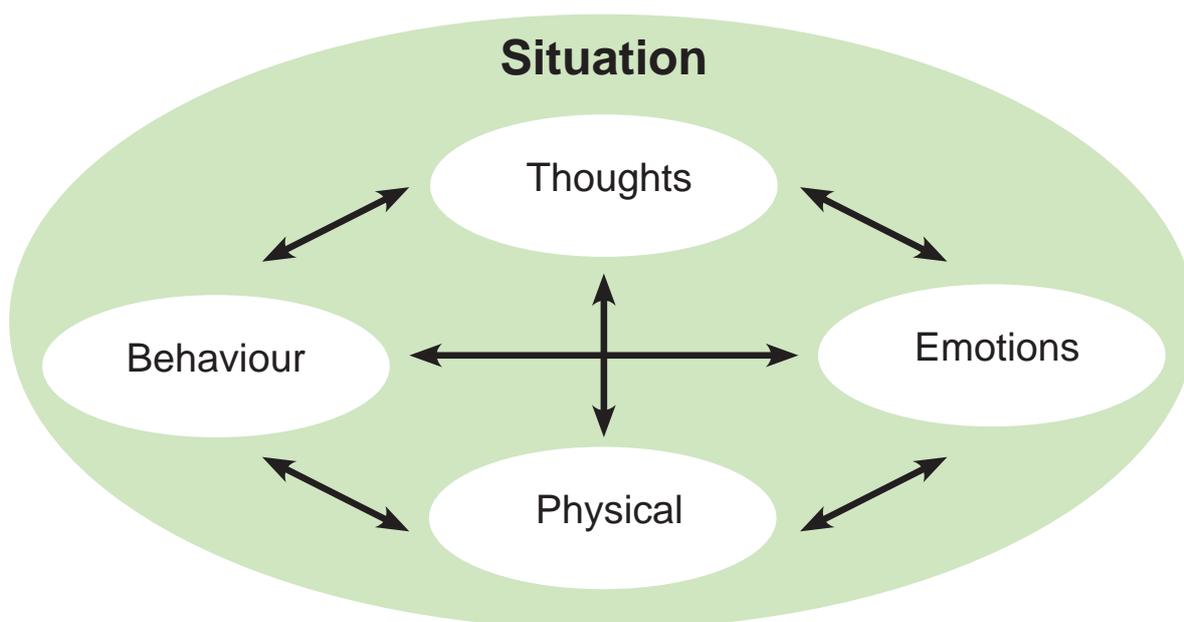
How does low mood affect you?

Thoughts		Emotions	
<input type="checkbox"/>	"I'm a failure"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depressed
<input type="checkbox"/>	"People think I'm stupid"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sad
<input type="checkbox"/>	"Nobody likes me"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lethargic
<input type="checkbox"/>	"There's no point, I won't enjoy it"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irritable
<input type="checkbox"/>	"I might as well not be here"	<input type="checkbox"/>	Suicidal
Physical Symptoms		Behaviours	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulties sleeping	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social withdrawal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor appetite or over eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased smoking or drinking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decrease in activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of sex drive	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sleeping during the day

A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Based Approach

What is CBT?

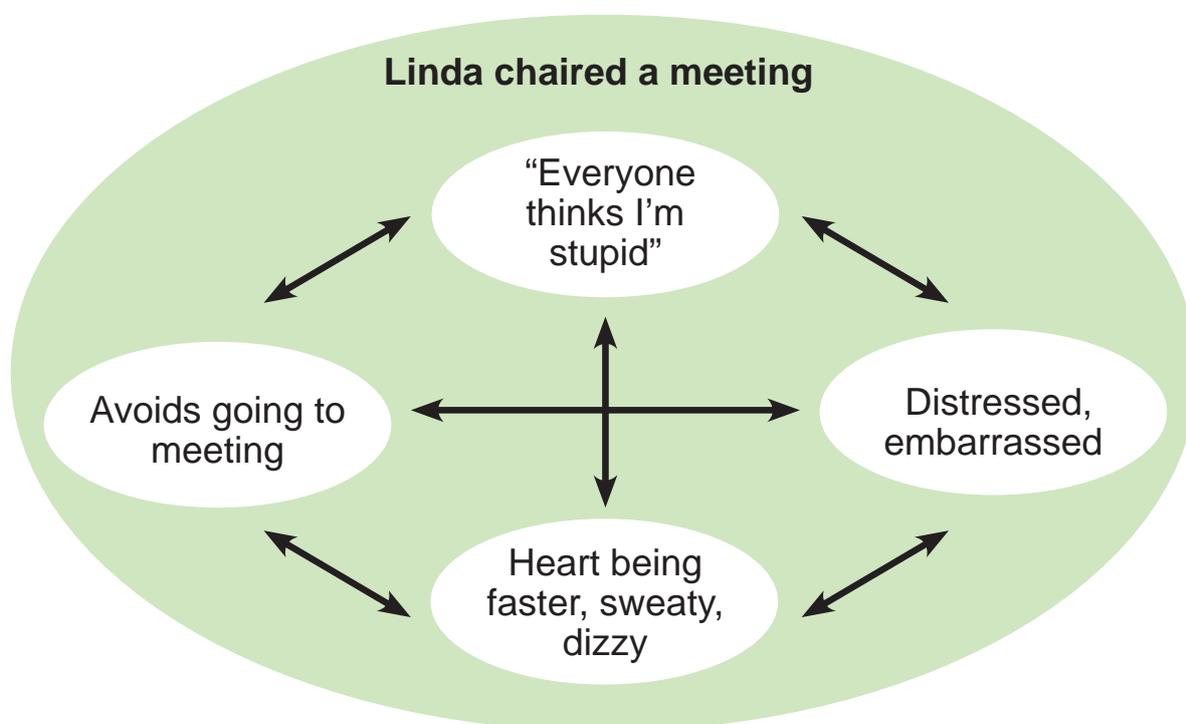
Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy which can help people look at the different situations that they find themselves in, and to understand their thoughts, emotions and behaviours. The idea is that our thoughts, emotions, physical symptoms and behaviour can all influence one another and therefore help to maintain unhelpful moods such as low mood. Take a look at the diagram below.



The CBT model emphasises that it is not the situation that causes the emotional distress that an individual experiences. CBT argues that it is the individual's interpretation or view of that event or situation which causes the emotional distress. CBT works by focussing on the negative thoughts and learning how to challenge them, as well as learning how to change unhelpful behaviours such as avoidance.

When feeling low or anxious, it is common to have negative automatic thoughts or nats. These are unhelpful thoughts that pop into our minds without any effort. With anxiety, nats are often about overestimating threat and underestimating an individual's ability to cope, which can maintain any anxiety. Sometimes people find coping mechanisms which help them deal with the situation. This may involve avoiding the situation, or doing something differently in order to help control their anxiety. Although this may lower their anxiety in the short term, it can actually maintain and reinforce it in the long term. Breaking this vicious cycle may cause an increase in anxiety to begin with but ultimately help reduce it.

The example below is of Linda. Her situation is chairing a meeting at work. Her thoughts, emotions, physical symptoms and behaviours are all influenced by each other. She thinks that "everyone will think that I am stupid," which contributes to her feeling embarrassed, as well as making her heart beat faster and becoming sweaty. As a result of this, she now actively avoids going to any meetings. This can cause Linda to feel even more anxious and embarrassed and strengthens her negative thoughts. If Linda thought she was able to chair the meeting, and did not avoid future meetings, this can then help create a more balanced emotion and to manage anxiety.



With low mood, people tend to think about themselves, the world and the future in a very negative way. For example, someone might have thoughts that “I am useless” and “It is pointless trying, as there is no point”. The lower a person feels, the more nats they will have and the more nats, the lower a person will feel. This forms a vicious circle that needs to be broken.

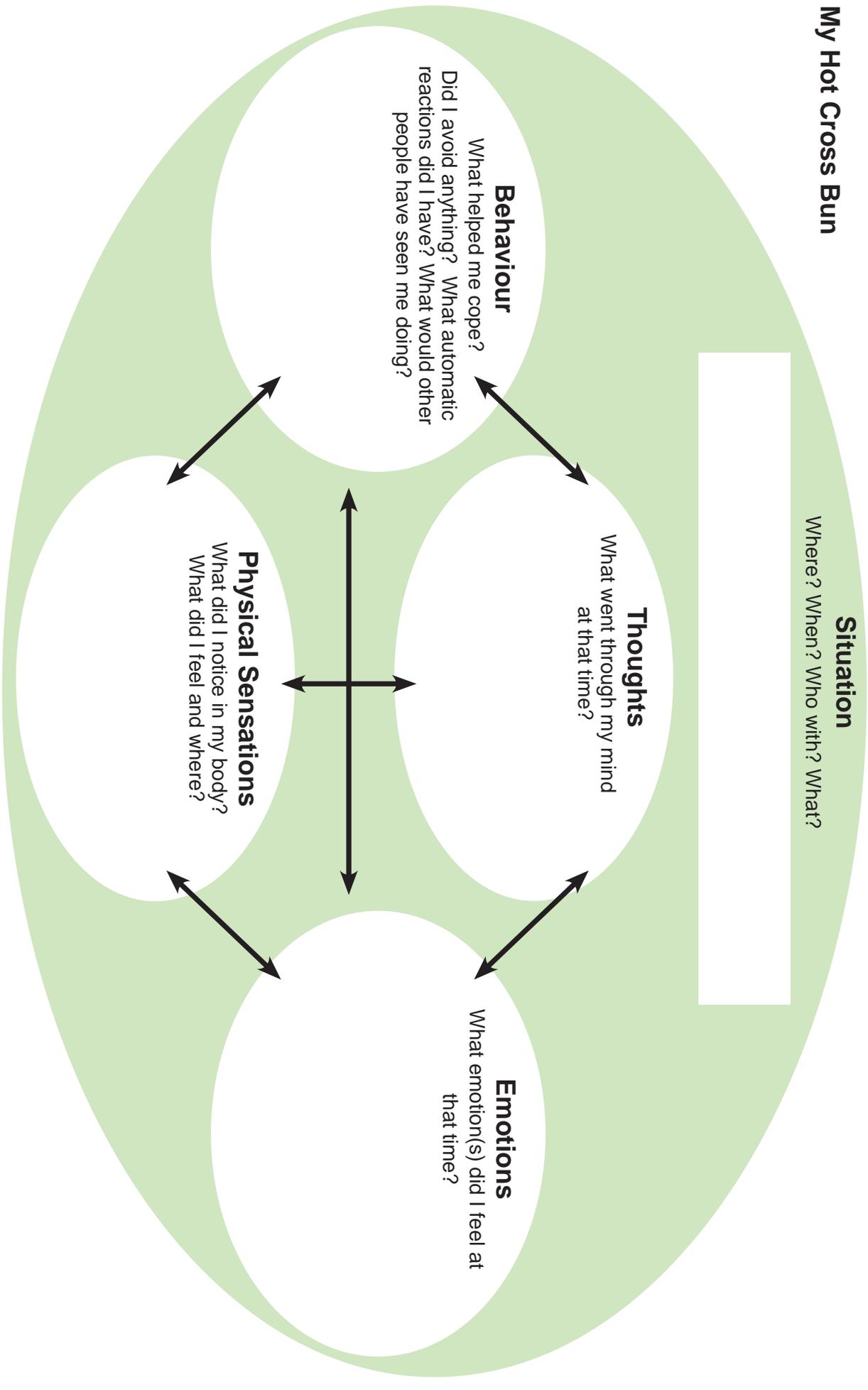
Look at the example below of Mike. Mike has been having problems at work and over the last few months has been feeling very low. His situation is that he has been asked to go to a party by an old friend. Again, notice how his thoughts, emotions, behaviour and physical sensations are all influenced by each other. He thinks negatively about the invitation and thinks that “no-one will talk to me”. As a result, he decides not to go to the party and feels even lower. If Mike had gone to the party and found that people did talk to him this may have helped him feel better and improved his low mood.



Activity

Can you think of situations where you feel anxious or low – what was the situation? What were you thinking? What did you notice in your body? How did you behave in the situation? Can you fill in your own Hot Cross Bun?

My Hot Cross Bun



Setting a Goal

Before we continue and focus on the tools that can help you manage your mood, we need to think about goals. In order for any self-help to be effective, it is important to set some **SMART** goals.

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time Limited

Self-Help is like a Road Map

Imagine you're planning a journey and you are looking for directions. Is it possible to get directions to a destination that you do not know yet?

If you do not have any goals, how do we know what techniques to use to help you reach your goals?

Not having goals is like trying to find directions to a destination when you have not decided where you would like to go.

Self-help goals can be either short term, medium term or long term. Long term goals may take years to achieve where as short term goals may be achievable in a matter of weeks. When thinking of self-help goals, it may be a good idea to start breaking down the steps in order to create some short or medium term goals.

Question?

It may be difficult to change the habit of a lifetime in a few weeks or months. Once you have created your goals, you to start your journey towards recovery. It's like helping people to get to the right train station and on to the right train. Once the journey has started, it's up to the individual to practice working through the new techniques learnt.

Let's look at some examples of SMART goals:

I would like to meet a friend for a drink 3 times a week and spend 30 minutes talking to them. I would like to achieve this within the next 3 months.

Whilst I am looking for a job, I would like to call 3 prospective employers each week and ask them about any vacancies. I would like to be able to do this within the next 3 weeks.

I would like to learn how to challenge my negative thinking so that I do not always jump to conclusions. Instead of worrying about things all day, I would like to allocate 20 minutes a day writing down all my worries and try to manage them. I would like to achieve this by the end of the month.

Let's look at some examples of goals which are NOT SMART:

I would like to feel less anxious.

I would like to stop avoiding things.

I would like to do the things I used to do.

Activity

On the following page, please take a few minutes to identify your goals and triggers. Triggers refer to the situations that normally cause you any anxiety or low mood that you may be experiencing.

- Identify what triggers your anxiety or low mood
- Look at your own Hot Cross Bun
- Identify what needs to change for you to feel better (Goals)

Triggers:

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Goals from Self-help

- What do you hope to gain?
- What do you hope to have achieved?
- What will be different for you?

Spend a few minutes thinking about your individual goals and write these on the next page. Remember to make these goals as **SMART** as possible.

SMART Goals:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time Limited

Goals:

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Common obstacles that people may face:

1. Worries about getting things ‘right’ may lead to people not attempting or completing these tasks.
2. Feeling low or unmotivated may make it seem more difficult to do the work.
3. Feeling demoralised when improvement is not immediate can sometimes lead to people dropping out of treatment without giving it enough of a chance.
4. Being very busy and not prioritising the content and techniques contained in this book.

What do you think could prevent you from being able to achieve these goals?

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What could you do to ensure that these obstacles do not prevent you from achieving your goals and overcoming your problems?

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For example:

1. Remember that there is not one 'correct' way to complete tasks.
2. Remind yourself that improvement can be gradual, which is normal and to be expected.
3. Prioritise time to practice the techniques and complete tasks so that you can get as much benefit as possible.
4. Discuss any concerns with a qualified professional if you are receiving help and support from one.

Notes

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Tool 1 - Increasing Activity Levels for Low Mood

Low mood can affect people in different ways which can impact their thoughts, their body on a physical level as well as what people do, or more specifically, what people may begin to stop doing. A common symptom of low mood is becoming less active and withdrawing from the daily activities that we need to do, or that we enjoy doing. When people feel like doing less, it is often the things that they used to enjoy that they stop doing in their weekly schedule. Withdrawing from activities may help to maintain low mood because there is a lack of opportunities for people to interact with others.

People can also feel like doing less because it can feel easier to do nothing. Increasing activity levels can help break this vicious cycle by encouraging people to become more active in a structured way. This works by helping them to do activities in order to see how it affects their emotions, rather than waiting for them to feel like doing something, which may never come. Daily activities can be divided into 3 main types which are listed below:

Routine – The things that are done normally on a daily basis, e.g. waking up, showering, watching TV..

Necessary – The things that we may not want to do but need to be done otherwise there will be adverse consequences, e.g. paying the bills, going to work or cleaning the house.

Pleasurable – The things that we enjoy doing such as our hobbies. Examples include swimming, visiting friends, playing tennis.

There is some overlap between routine, necessary and pleasurable activities. Please try not to spend too much time trying to decide which category the task falls under, as long as it is included. The aim is to create a balanced increase in activities.

5 steps to Increasing Activity Levels

1. Create a list of Routine, Necessary and Pleasurable activities – things you would like to do, but have stopped doing since you felt low.
2. Create a hierarchy of the list you just made in step one – make sure you include each type of activity – routine, necessary and pleasurable.
3. Schedule the tasks using a blank activity diary – put in a mixture of activities. Try some easier activities first. Small and regular activities are best to start with and then you can build in other activities over time. Activities need to be very detailed, for instance, to go for a ten minute walk with the dog every morning around 10 a.m.
4. Do them!- do the activity and record it in some way in the diary.
5. Review the week – review what activities you managed to include during the week. How did increased activity impact on your mood? What other activities could you schedule in for the next week? If it was difficult to complete some activities, where the activities too difficult? Could you get a friend or partner to help remind you?

Activity

Now have a go at filling in the following forms to start to work through the 5 steps.

Remember that it may be quite difficult at first to increase your activity levels and there's no such thing as failure. Every 'failed' task is actually an opportunity to learn from mistakes in order to improve the next time.

Step 1 - Activities List

Routine

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Necessary

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Pleasurable

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Step 2 - Activities Hierarchy

Use a mixture of routine, necessary and pleasurable activities.

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- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
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Please write any notes here if you have any:

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Step 3
Activity Diary for week commencing: _____

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	What							
	Where							
	When							
	Who							
Afternoon	What							
	Where							
	When							
	Who							
Evening	What							
	Where							
	When							
	Who							

Step 4 – Complete the Activities

Step 5 – Review the Week

Write down what activities you completed

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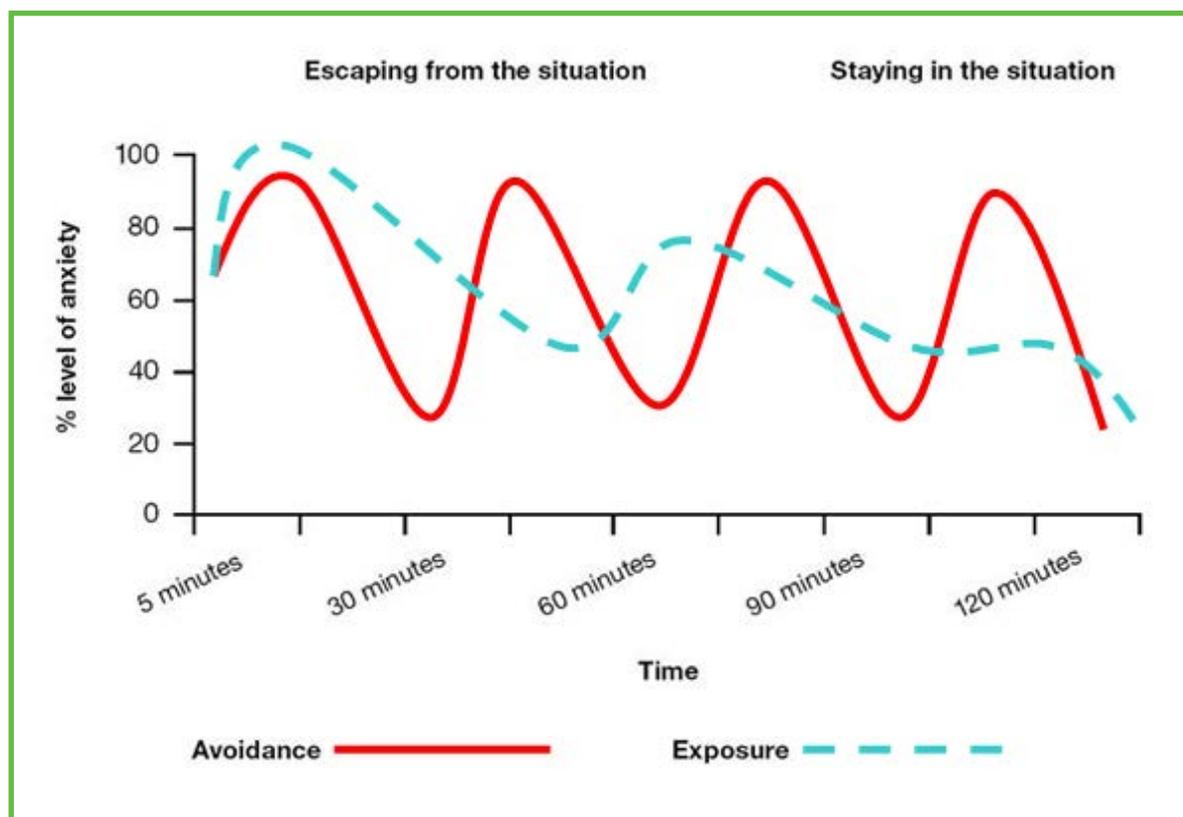
Ask yourself the following questions:

- What impact did increased activity have on your mood?
- Were any activities more helpful in making you feel better?
- What will you include in next week's activity schedule? (you may want to add some new more difficult activities, or you may want to increase some of the existing activities)

Tool 2 - Facing Your Fears

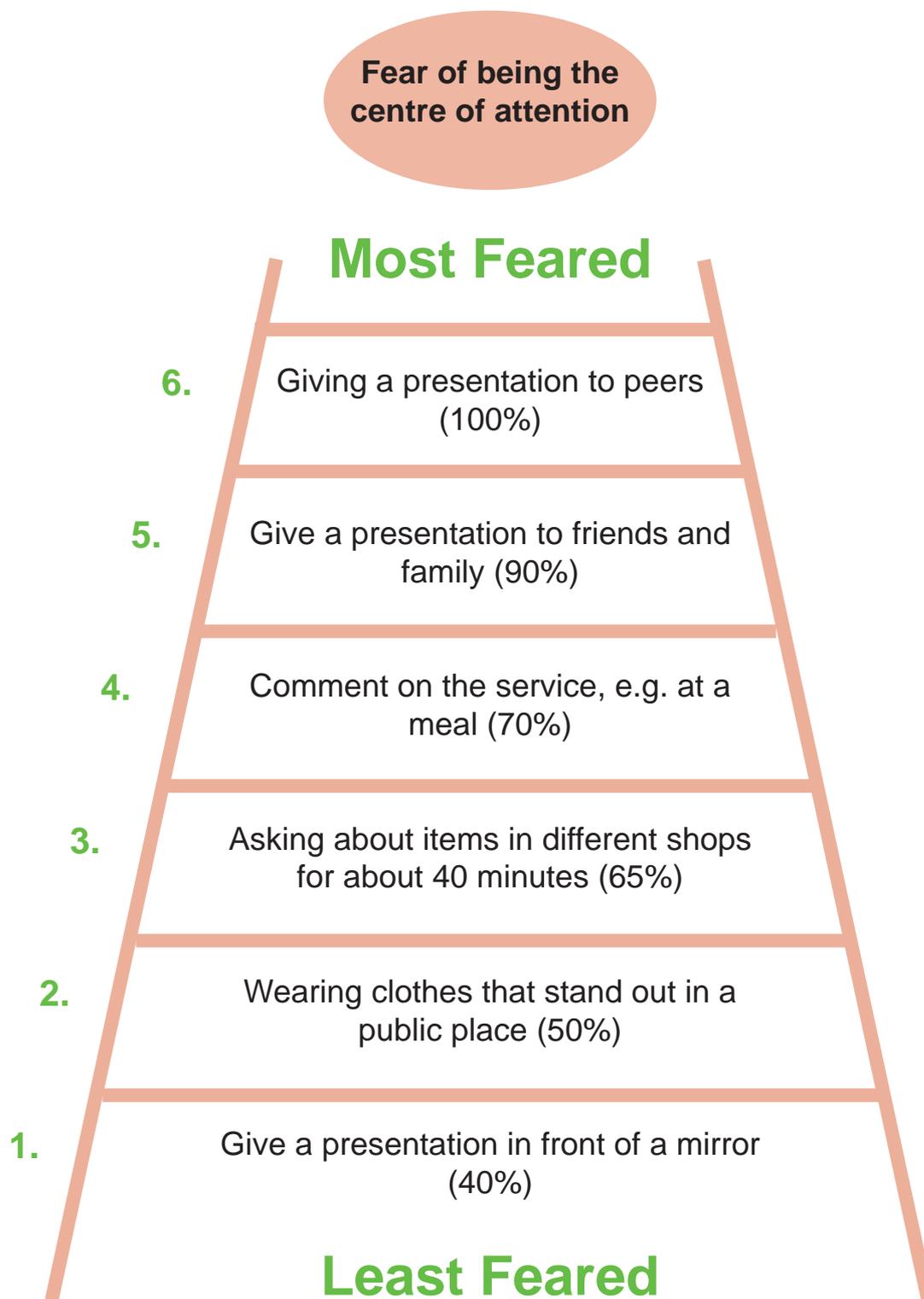
If you remember the information from the introduction, people are experiencing the fight versus flight response when feeling anxious. The flight refers to avoiding or escaping the situation that causes anxiety.

Avoiding or escaping the situation may make you feel better in the short term, but in the long term this avoidance is actually reinforcing your anxiety. That's because you are learning that avoiding or escaping the situation reduces your anxiety, which is encouraging you to be afraid of the situation.

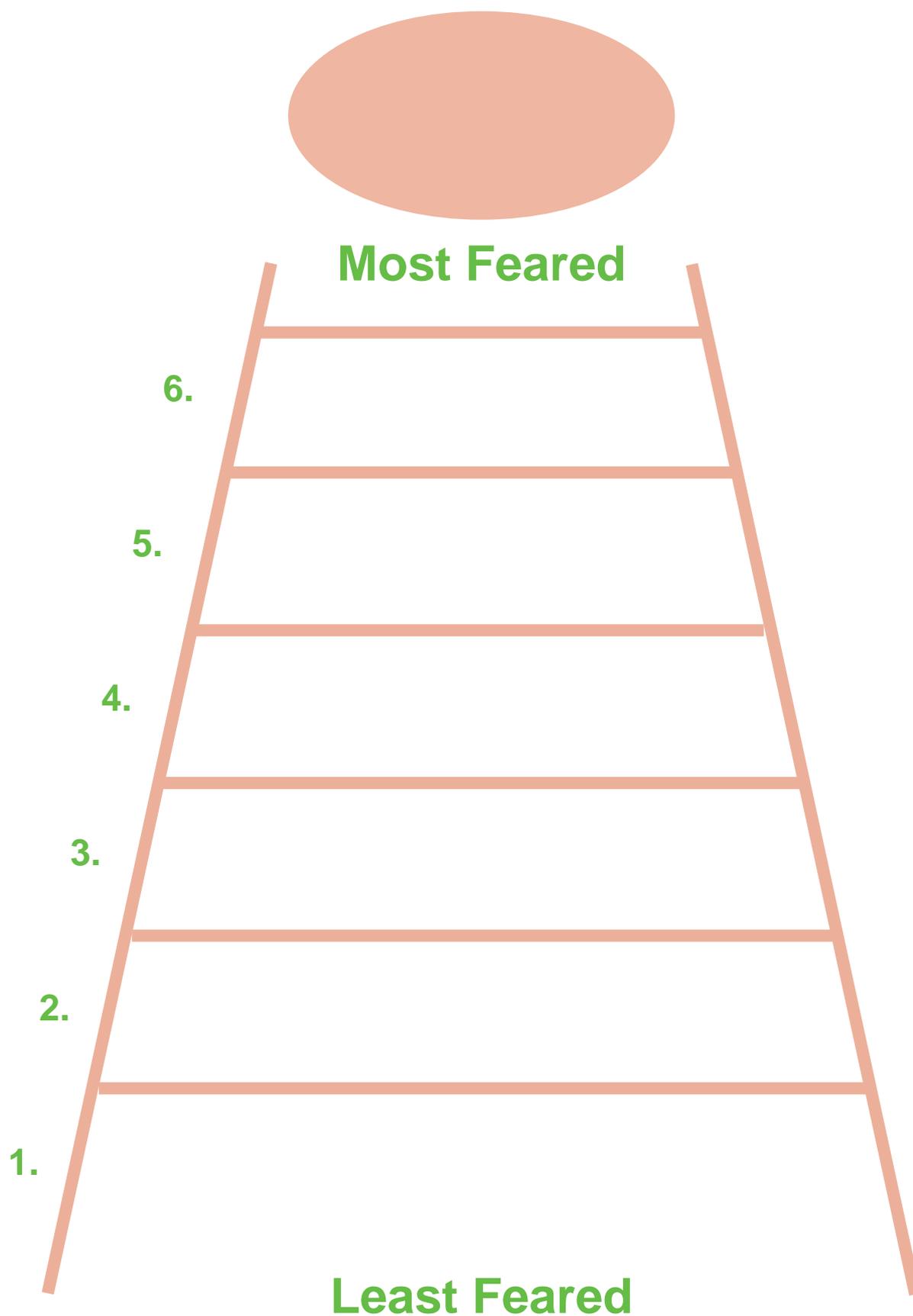


The graph shows that by avoiding or escaping the situation, anxiety levels drop significantly. However, the next time the individual is put in the same situation, their anxiety returns and will continue to do so if they continue to escape and avoid the situation. The solution is to actually stay in the situation which causes the anxiety.

In order to overcome this, CBT uses an approach called graded exposure. This involves staying in situations that cause some anxiety and gradually working your way up an anxiety ladder until you eventually stay in the situation that causes the most anxiety. Here is an example of a completed anxiety ladder for Jo who has a fear of being the centre of attention:



Now it's your turn. If you are finding that you have a phobia of an object or activity or are avoiding something, then complete your own anxiety ladder:



Doing Graded Exposure

For graded exposure to be effective it needs to be graded, prolonged, repeated and done without distraction. Read below to see what this means:

Graded – overcoming a fear is best achieved by gradually confronting the fear

Prolonged – exposure must be for a long enough time to allow the levels of anxiety to reduce. Sessions need to last until the levels of anxiety have reduced by around 50%.

Repeated – an exposure task needs to be repeated around 4 or 5 times a week.

Without distraction – when doing exposure it is important that people can experience some anxiety and see that it can reduce. Therefore, it is important that people do not do other things when doing the exposure exercises, for instance distracting themselves with music, relaxation or breathing exercises etc.

Steps for Exposure

1. Take a step from you Anxiety Ladder
2. Face the situation until your fear reduces by at least 50%
3. Repeat 4 or 5 times in the week
4. Remember expose without using distraction, relaxation or breathing exercises so you can feel the anxiety peak and reduce
5. Once you have conquered the step and no longer feel anxious, move on to the next step
6. Repeat the Steps

When completing any exposure tasks, it may be helpful to keep an anxiety diary. This can allow you to rate your levels of anxiety before, during and after your exposure exercise. You can also make notes or write down any of your thoughts at the time. Please use the blank anxiety diary on the next page.

Note that an anxiety ladder can also be used for worry. Worry is something that we all do which can help us plan for future dangers. It can also maintain our anxiety levels in some situations, which are usually when we worry about things which are uncertain (e.g. checking your health), unpredictable (e.g. checking my family's safety or driving) or uncontrollable (e.g. peoples reactions at work, at home, in pubs).

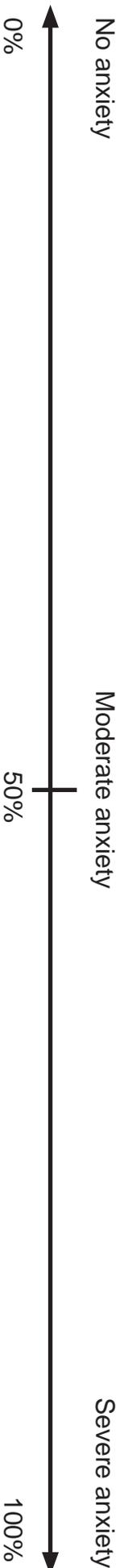
Activity

If you would like to try the exposure steps and to work on overcoming a particular fear, please use the blank anxiety diary on the next page to help you.

Remember, exposure needs lots of practice and can be difficult at first. However, it will get easier as you practice.

Anxiety Diary

		Anxiety Rating 0 - 100%				
Date and Time	Duration	Exercise	Before Exercise	Start of Exercise	End of Exercise	Thoughts or Comments



Tool 3 - Thought Challenging

Learning how to manage negative thoughts can also help to manage your anxiety and low mood. When people are feeling low or anxious, their thoughts can often be extreme or unrealistic. As we discussed earlier, CBT calls these types of thoughts Negative Automatic Thoughts or Nats. As thoughts can influence our emotions, behaviour and vice versa, it is important to learn how to challenge some of our Nats. Although some people understand that their negative thoughts may not be true, it can be very difficult for people with anxiety or low mood to differentiate between the two and they often take their negative thoughts as fact.

Examples of Nats include:

“Nobody likes me”

“Everything always goes wrong for me”

“If I am late for work, I will lose my job”

“They think I’m stupid”

What is the difference between a thought and an emotion?

The above are examples of thoughts, usually a statement about something or someone. A thought is usually a sentence or statement. An emotion is a word which describes how we feel, and is usually one word. Examples of emotions include angry, happy, anxious, depressed, etc. When people are feeling anxious, there are a number of unhelpful thinking styles that they may be using. An example is fortune telling, and usually involves predicting a negative event or outcome for a future event.

There are 3 Stages to Challenging Thoughts:

- 1. Stage 1** – Catching Thoughts
- 2. Stage 2** – Looking for the Evidence
- 3. Stage 3** – Finding an Evidence Based/Alternative Thought

Stage 1 - Catching Thoughts

Catching negative thoughts can be difficult as it is probably something that we are not used to doing. For that reason, it's quite important to be able to prioritise time to practice catching your negative thoughts. Where there are lots of thoughts, try and identify the thought that causes the most distress or the “hot thought”. When you have the “hot thought” how strongly do believe it from 0 to 100%.

In order to help you catch your thoughts, ask yourself the following sorts of questions:

- What were you doing?
- Who were you with?
- Where were you?
- What were you telling yourself?
- What is the worst thing that went through your mind?
- What does it say about you if it's true?

There are also a number of points to bear in mind when you are trying to catch your Nats:

- They are short and specific
- They occur extremely quickly after the event
- They can occur as words or images
- They do not arise from careful thought
- They do not occur in a logical series of steps
- They seem reasonable at the time

Thought Traps

When catching your Nats, you may also find that there is a theme to your negative thinking. We call these thought distortions of thought traps. A number of these are described below:

1. ALL OR NOTHING THINKING

- You see things in extreme or in black and white.
- “It is either perfect, or it is a mess”, “My friend likes me or he doesn’t.”

2.

OVER-GENERALISATION

- You see a single negative event as proof that other similar events will turn out the same way.
- if one person behaved in a spiteful way to you, then all people behave in this way.

3. MENTAL FILTER

- You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it, viewing the whole situation as negative.
- Refusing to notice any positives or anything that went well/you did well.

4. DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

- You reject positive experiences by insisting they ‘don’t count’ for some reason or another. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.

5. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

- You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that support your conclusion.
- Mind Reading – you conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, but you do not check this out with them.
- Fortune Telling – You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel that your prediction is an already established fact.

6. MAGNIFICATION (Catastrophising)

- You exaggerate the importance of things, such as, something you may have thought was wrong.
- You inappropriately shrink your achievements or desirable qualities.

7. EMOTIONAL REASONING

- You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are “I feel like a failure, therefore, I am one”.

8. SHOULD/MUST STATEMENTS

- You set your self standards of what you perceive you ‘should’ or ‘must’ be doing. These standards are often too high and unrealistic.
- The emotional consequence is guilt.
- When you direct should statements towards others, you feel anger, frustration and resentment.

9. LABELING AND MISLABELING

- This is an extreme form of over generalising. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: ‘I’m a loser’.
- When someone else’s behaviour bothers you, you attach a general label to them ‘he’s an idiot’.
- Mislabelling involves describing an event with language that is highly coloured and emotionally loaded.

10. PERSONALISING

- You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event , when in fact you did not have primary or any responsibility.

Activity

Have a think about your own unhelpful ways of thinking? Can you recognise a pattern?

My main unhelpful ways of thinking are:

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The next time I notice myself using them, I will try to:

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Activity

In order to combat the negative effects that these thoughts can have on our emotions and behaviours, we need to start by learning how to catch our nats by using a thought diary.

Please look at the example on the next page and then try to complete your own example on the blank 3 column thought diary.

SITUATION Who were you with? What were you doing? Where was it? When did it happen?	EMOTIONS What did you feel? (one word) How intense? (0-100%)	CATCHING THOUGHTS What flashed through your mind? What bad things might happen? What does it say about me? How intense? (0-100%) What unhelpful thinking style could this be? e.g. Mind-reading, over generalising

Example of 3 column thought diary filled in:

SITUATION	EMOTIONS	CATCHING THOUGHTS
I did not pass my exam today. I was preparing for it over the last 4 weeks.	Anxious 80% Low 100%	I will not get through this year. 60 % I am no good. 60% I should give up now and leave university. 65% My parents will be disappointed. My friends will think I am loser. 75% I am a failure. 90%

Stage 2 - Looking for the Evidence

After catching your Nats, the next stage is to challenge these negative thoughts. The process of challenging these extreme and unhelpful thoughts focuses on looking at the evidence for and against the thought.

To help you when you are looking for evidence, you might want to ask questions such as:

- How would someone else think about the situation?
- If I wasn't anxious, how would I look at the situation?
- Is there any other way of looking at the situation?

How can challenging thoughts help me?

More balanced thoughts will improve your mood and enable you to function better, which will result in enjoying your life again.

Opinions or thoughts are what people think. People do not need to have any scientific evidence in order to have an opinion or thought, and just because someone has a thought or opinion does not necessarily make it true. This type of evidence is subjective and therefore difficult to prove.

Factual evidence is much stronger as there can not be any element of doubt. Factual evidence is objective and therefore very difficult to disprove. When challenging negative thoughts, we need to practice looking for evidence for and against the negative thought. The idea is that we work with the thought which causes the most emotional distress, which is usually the one with the highest belief rating. We then need to create a new alternative thought which is based on the evidence. Please refer to our thought challenging diary on the next page.

Activity

Look at the completed example where the thought “I am a failure” is challenged and then take a look at your 3-column diary again, can you see how you might start to challenge your “hot thought”, the most distressing Nat?

Negative thought =

“I am a failure” 90%

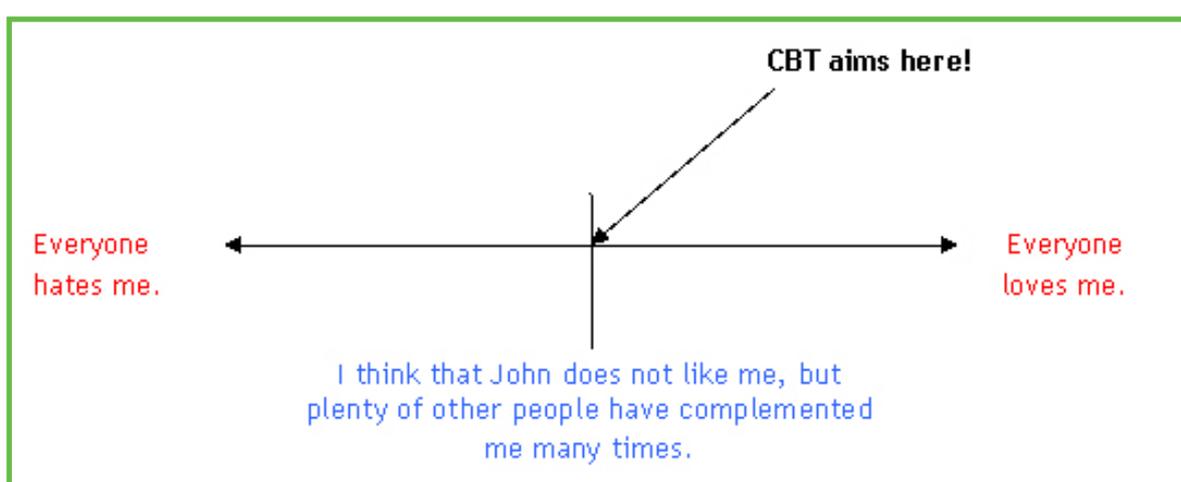
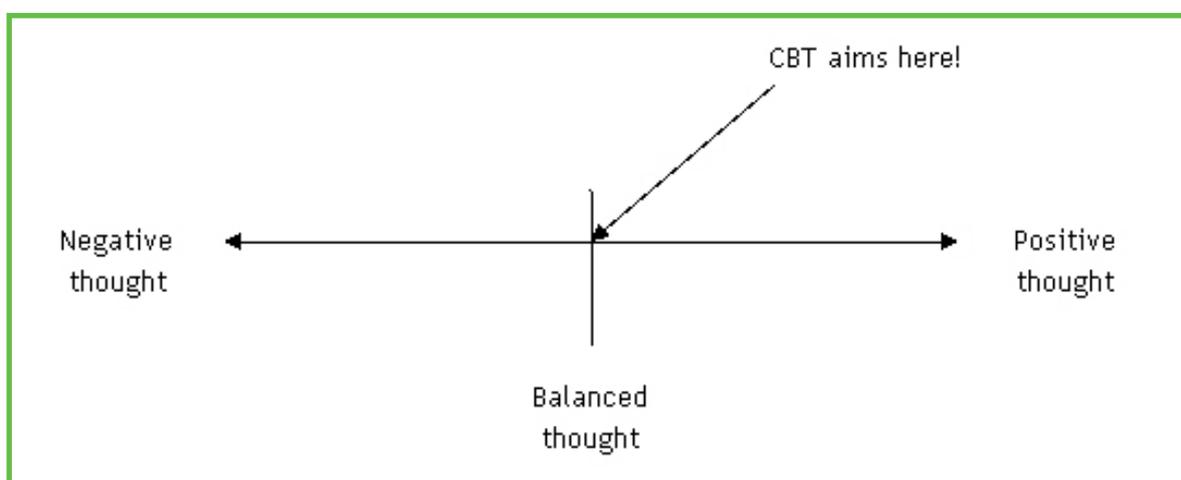
Evidence For	Evidence Against	Evidence Based Thought	Revised Emotion
<p>I did not pass the exam. I received F grade.</p>	<p>I did get 50% mark, which was F, but I did get some of it right. I did pass all other 5 exams this semester. This is the first exam I failed. I was ill for two weeks prior to this exam. Less time to study.</p>	<p>I am not failure, I just failed 1 exam. 60% That means I have to focus now and study for the retake of this exam.</p>	<p>Low 70% Anxious 60% HOT 50% BT 60%</p>

Negative thought =

Evidence For	Evidence Against What unhelpful thinking styles am I using	Evidence Based Thought Consider the evidence. What balanced thought would be more helpful to you?	Revised Emotion What do you feel now? (one word) How intense: 0 - 100%

Stage 3 - Finding an Evidence Based/Alternative Thought

So at Stage 2, CBT helps people challenge their negative thoughts by looking at the evidence for and against the thought. Then we move into Stage 3 where we try to create a new alternative thought, which is more realistic compared to the original thought. This does not mean that we simply develop a new thought which is the opposite of the negative thought; going from one extreme to the other is not particularly helpful. CBT is not concerned with developing positive thinking instead it helps people create more balanced or realistic thoughts. Consider the diagram and example below:



So once you have your negative thought, decide what the other extreme would be (going from a negative thought to a positive thought) and then using the evidence for and against try to create a balanced evidence based thought.

Court Case Drama

Imagine you are a judge in a court case. The defendant is on trial for shop lifting. His evidence for his innocence is “I didn’t do it”. The prosecution has CCTV footage of the defendant stealing an item of clothing from the shop.

What evidence do you think the judge will use to make their decision, and what do you think the outcome will be?

Thought challenging is also like being the judge in your own court case. The defendant is your negative automatic thought, for example “everyone hates me”. When presenting the evidence that supports this, how reliable and robust is it? “Everyone hates me, I just know it” is that good, strong enough evidence? Consider all the evidence and create your own verdict by using an evidence based alternative thought.

Activity

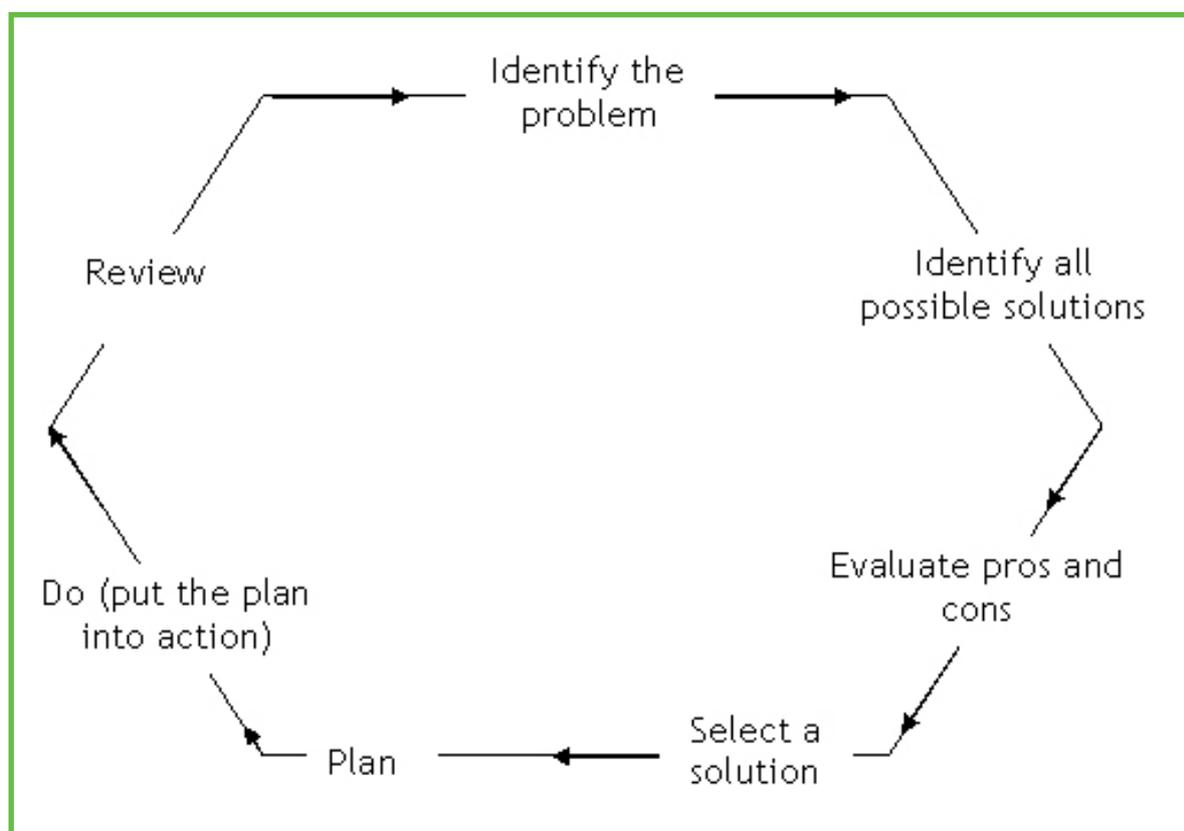
Here are some examples of a full Thought Diary. Spend some time completing the first three columns only and then when you feel more confident about catching your thoughts, try to complete more of the diary, starting to consider the evidence for and against and thinking about an alternative thought. Don’t forget this needs a lot of practice.

SITUATION Who with? What doing? Where?	EMOTION What did you feel? (one word) How strong? (0-100%)	AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS (IMAGES) What is going through my mind? What is the worst thing that can happen? What does it mean about me if it is true?	EVIDENCE FOR?	EVIDENCE AGAINST? Am I jumping to any conclusions that are not justified by the evidence?	ALTERNATIVE THOUGHT	RATE EMOTION AGAIN (0-100%)

SITUATION Who with? What doing? Where?	EMOTION What did you feel? (one word) How strong? (0-100%)	AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS (IMAGES) What is going through my mind? What is the worst thing that can happen? What does it mean about me if it is true?	EVIDENCE FOR?	EVIDENCE AGAINST? Am I jumping to any conclusions that are not justified by the evidence?	ALTERNATIVE THOUGHT	RATE EMOTION AGAIN (0-100%)

Tool 4 - Problem Solving

Although people who experience low mood or anxiety may worry about things in general, sometimes there may actually be a need to deal with problems and difficulties in a practical way. A problem solving approach can be used to help identify the problem and then try to find a way to manage it.



1. Identify the problem
2. Identify all possible solutions
3. Evaluate pros and cons
4. Select a solution
5. Plan
6. Do (put the plan into action)
7. Review

Problem Solving in Action

Imran was offered a job interview for next Thursday at 4pm but he was due to pick up his son from nursery at the same time. He started worrying about this and became anxious. He decided to try and use a problem solving approach to help with his situation.

1. Identify the problem – I have to be in 2 different places at the same time.
 - I need to pick up my son and also attend a job interview.
2. Identify all possible solutions –
 - I could ask my wife to pick up our son
 - I could ask if any of my friends are free
 - I could call employer and ask if interview time could be changed
3. Evaluate pros and cons –
 - I could ask my wife to pick up our son – My wife might get angry, but she might be free and available.
 - I could ask if any of my friends are free – More chance of someone being free, but they might feel compelled to say yes.
 - I could call employer and ask if interview time could be changed – It might be possible to change the interview time but I don't think it looks good to the prospective employer
4. Select a solution– After thinking about the pros and cons, Imran ranked his solutions in the following order:
 - I could ask my wife to pick up our son
 - I could ask if any of my friends are free
 - I could call employer and ask if interview time could be changed
5. Plan – I can ask her when she comes home from work, after she has had something to eat.
6. Do (put the plan into action) – Imran asked his wife if she could pick up their son next week.
7. Review – Unfortunately Imran's wife was not free to pick their son next week. She said that she may have been able to if she had been given more notice. Imran learnt that he may have to give people more notice in future. He decided to go to his next solution and called a few friends to see if they were free. One of them was and agreed to pick up his son. Imran attended the job interview but unfortunately did not get the job.

Activity

If you have a problem you would like to think about managing, try and complete the following worksheet to help you:

Problem Solving Worksheet

Identify the problem

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Identify all possible solutions (use additional sheets if necessary)

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Evaluate pros and cons (use additional sheets if necessary)

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Select a solution

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Plan

(write down the steps you will take to apply your chosen solution – use additional sheets if necessary)

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Do (put the plan into action)

(make a note of when you did it, note the date, time and place)

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Review (write down how the plan went)

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Tool 5 - Getting a good night's sleep

Getting a good night's sleep can have a positive impact on your mood. Sometimes people tend to worry about not getting enough sleep. The amount of sleep that you need varies depending on your age and health. A common myth is that everyone needs at least 8 hours of sleep, which may be a lot more than you actually need. Try to focus on sleeping rather than worrying about not getting enough sleep.

If you feel tired during the day try not to sleep as this can disturb your natural rhythm and make it difficult to sleep at night.

Try to think around your surroundings as well. Is your bedroom too noisy or have too much light coming in? Is the room clean and tidy or quite messy? Is the bed and mattress comfortable? Is the room too hot or too cold? These are all questions to think about as these factors can cause difficulties in sleeping. It might be worth adjusting some of these properties in order to create the perfect sleeping environment for yourself.

Try not to eat or drink anything that contains caffeine within 4 hours of going to sleep. Drinking caffeinated drinks before bed time or eating a heavy meal can make it difficult to fall asleep. Nicotine also acts as a stimulant so where possible try not to smoke within 4 hours of going to sleep.

Medicines can also interfere with the amount and quality of sleep that you are getting. If you are using medication, it may be worth checking with your GP if this may be causing any sleeping difficulties if you are experiencing any. Sometimes people may use sleeping tablets or alcohol to help them sleep. Although these may help in the short term, it can cause long term difficulties in sleeping patterns. Try not to use alcohol to help you sleep and if you are going to use sleeping tablets try to keep this to short term use only.

Try to create a consistent routine whereby you wake up and go to sleep at approximately the same time each day. Most people may prefer to sleep in at the weekends. Where possible try not to sleep in for more than an hour of the normal time that you wake up. It is important for you to unwind in the hour preceding bed time. This may involve changing into bed time clothes, or having a malty drink, listening to relaxing music or even reading a book. This routine can help the body unwind and begin to feel tired. Another helpful tip is to go to sleep when you are actually tired. This may result in altering your activity levels in the day or time you go to sleep so that you end up going to sleep at an appropriate time whilst you are also feeling tired.

Do

- Do go to sleep and get up at a regular time.
- Do wind down before bedtime.
- Do go to bed when you are actually feeling tired.
- Do leave your bed and do a relaxing activity if you can not sleep within 30 minutes of going to bed.
- Do exercise regularly, but not too close to bed time.
- Do create a comfortable sleeping environment.
- Do check if medications may be interfering with your sleep.

Don't

- Don't worry about not getting enough sleep.
- Don't worry about things before you go to sleep
- Don't read a book, watch tv or eat whilst you are in bed.
- Don't eat or drink caffeine within 4 hours of going to sleep.
- Don't smoke or drink alcohol within 4 hours of going to sleep.
- Don't sleep during the day if you feel tired.
- Don't sleep longer to make up for lost sleep.

Create your own Wellbeing Blueprint

From time to time we may find ourselves going back to our old habits. For any change to be realistic, it takes time and effort to practice and develop our new skills. In order to prevent future relapse, it is a good idea to create a plan which can help you identify the situations which may cause difficulties in future, as well as thinking about how we can best manage these situations.

My Wellbeing Blueprint

What have you found most helpful about the toolkit?

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How will you continue to build on what you have learned?

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What are your goals for one year's time?

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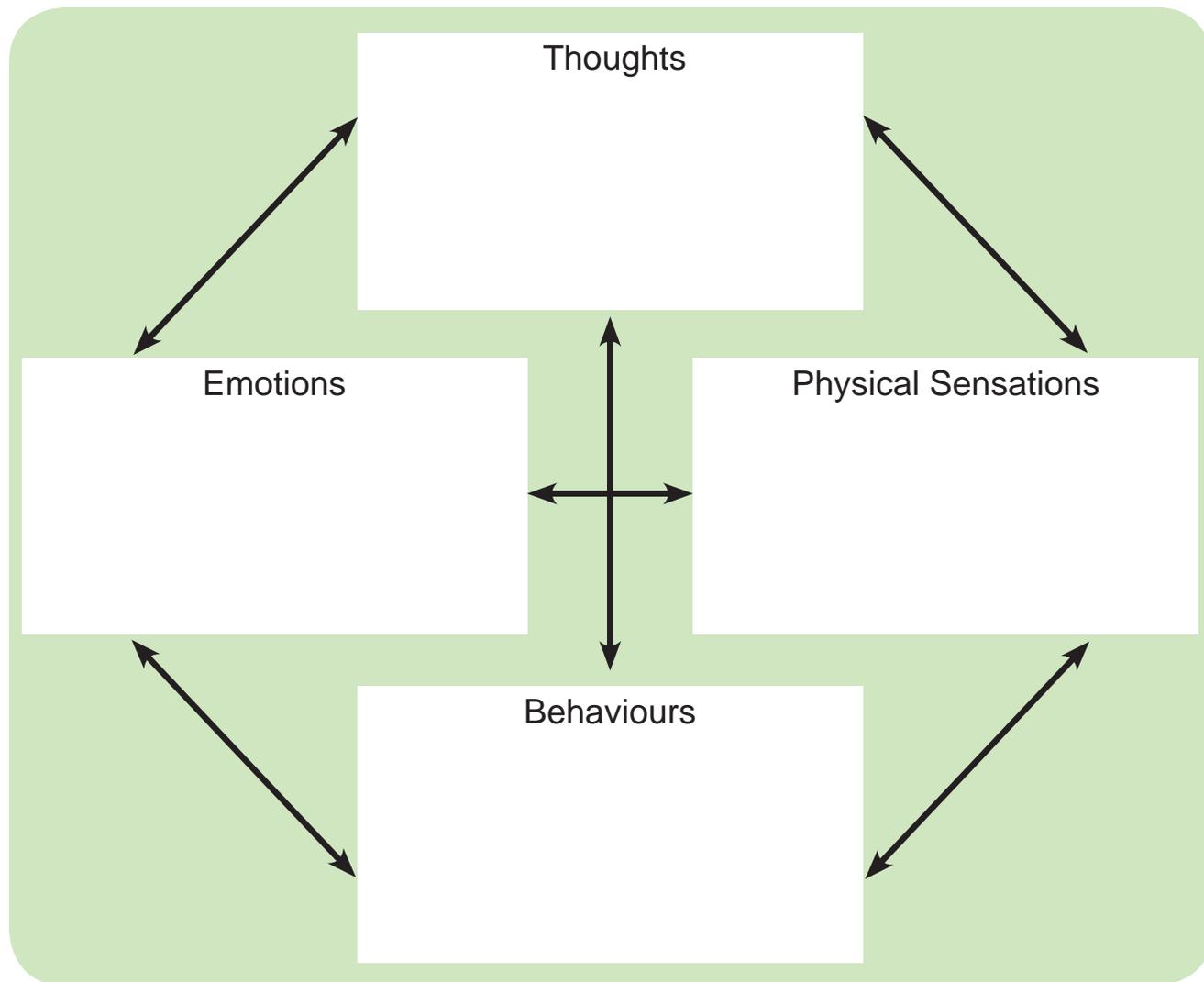
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How will you recognise your problems getting worse?

Situation:



How will you maintain your wellbeing if you notice the problems getting worse?

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What are your most unhelpful thoughts?

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What are the alternatives to these?

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What can you do daily, weekly and monthly to help your wellbeing?

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Who can you contact for support?

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Thank you. Please keep this blueprint somewhere easy to refer to.

Next Steps

We hope you have found this booklet helpful. Hopefully you will have learned some useful tools in order to help you manage the difficulties you are experiencing. Don't forget that you will need to keep practicing these techniques in order to notice a difference.

However, if after using this booklet, you feel that you need some extra help in managing your mood, you can ask your GP to refer you to our service, or you can even make a self-referral. The number for all our referrals is given below:

EPMHS:
Health Professional or Self Referral:
Tel:
0300 7770707

Please note that we are not a crisis service. If you need help urgently, please contact your GP or the Hertfordshire Mental Health Helpline 01438 843322.

Further Reading

- Anger:** *Overcoming Anger and Irritability: A self-help guide using cognitive behavioural therapy* - by Davies William (2000)
- Anxiety:** *Feel the Fear and do it anyway* - by Susan Jeffers (2007)
Overcoming Anxiety - by Helen Kennelly (2009)
Overcoming Anxiety - by Chris Williams (2003)
The Worry Cure - by Robert Leahy (2006)
- Health Anxiety:** *Introduction to Coping with Health Anxiety* - by Charles Young (2007)
- Self-Esteem:** *Overcoming Low Self-Esteem: a Self Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy* - by Melanie Fennel (1999)
- Depression:** *Feeling good handbook* - by David Burns (1999)
Overcoming Depression: a Self Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques - by Paul Gilbert (2007)
- OCD:** *Overcoming Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: a Self Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques* - by David Veale (2009)
- Phobias:** *Introduction to Coping with Phobias* - by Brenda Hogan (2007)
- Pain:** *Overcoming Chronic Pain: A self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques* - by Frances Cole (2005)
- Panic:** *Overcoming Panic & Agoraphobia: A self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques* - by Derrick Silove, (2009)
- Social Anxiety:** *Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness* - by Gillian Butler (1999).
- PTSD:** *Overcoming Traumatic Stress: a self help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques* - by Claudia Herbert (2008)