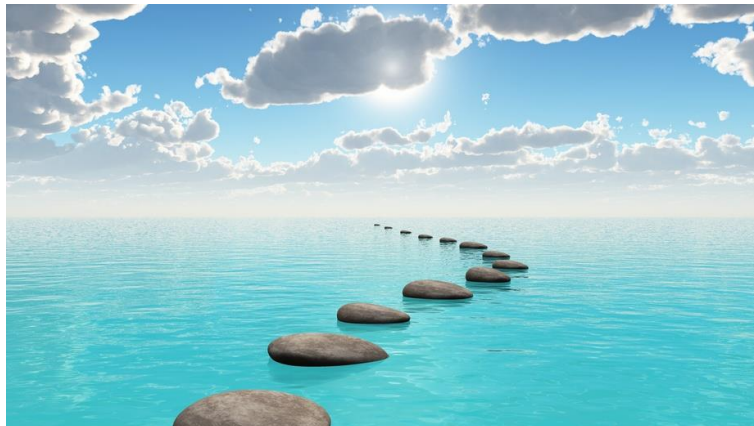




# Managing Stress Webinar Workbook



**Please have this booklet with you when sessions  
go live**

## The Webinar is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

**What is CBT? It is a talking treatment that helps you think about:**

- ☐ **How you think about yourself, the World and other people**
- ☐ **How what you do affects your thoughts and feelings.**

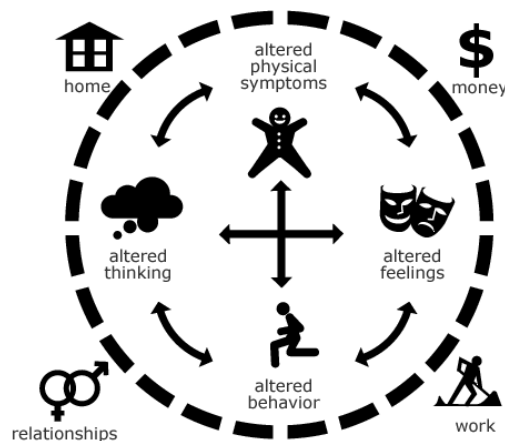
CBT can help you to change how you think ("Cognitive") and what you do ("Behaviour)". These changes can help you to feel better. Unlike some of the other talking treatments, it focuses on the "here and now" problems and difficulties. It looks for ways to improve your state of mind now, rather than focusing on the causes of your distress or symptoms in the past.

**How does it work?**

CBT can help you to make sense of problems. It does this by breaking them down into smaller parts. It is then easier to see how they are connected and how they affect you.

**These five key areas are:**

- ☐ **The Situation, relationships and practical problems you face**
- ☐ **Your thoughts**
- ☐ **Feelings**
- ☐ **Physical symptoms**
- ☐ **And finally your behaviour or activity levels**



Each of these areas can affect all of the others. How you feel physically and emotionally can be affected by how you think about any problems that you have. How you think about those problems can also alter what you do about them.

This course will help you to carry out your own five areas assessment, decide which areas to change, and then help you to bring about these changes in a planned step by step way.

Stress can often be caused by many factors, but CBT looks at what might be **maintaining** your symptoms of stress currently, and identifying practical strategies to help with this.

# WHAT IS STRESS?

The word 'stress' is usually used to describe the feelings we experience when the demands made on us are greater than our perceived ability to cope. At such times, we can often feel overloaded, under tremendous pressure and very tense or emotional. Stress affects everyone, young and old, and is a completely normal reaction that all human beings will experience from time to time.

## COMMON LIFE EVENTS

In our lives we experience many life events but sometimes these can get too much for us to manage and it can lead us to feel as though we cannot cope.

Some common life events that can contribute to our stress levels are:

- ◆ Neighbour problems
- ◆ Divorce/Separation
- ◆ Arguments at home
- ◆ Holiday / Christmas
- ◆ Unemployment
- ◆ Moving House
- ◆ Sexual Problems
- ◆ Change of job
- ◆ Excessive working/ Work pressure
- ◆ Personal Injury or Illness
- ◆ Financial worries
- ◆ Retirement
- ◆ Pregnancy / Birth of a child
- ◆ Death of a family or friend

**Make a list of factors you feel are causing stress for you currently:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



# Understanding Stress: Four Areas Model

We can feel stressed for all different reasons, and we can't always remove the reasons we feel stressed, but once stress has started we can find ourselves in a vicious cycle that feels hard to break out of.

When feeling stressed we might find ourselves thinking and feeling differently, it might affect what we're doing too. The changes in how we're thinking, feeling and acting may actually keep us feeling stressed.

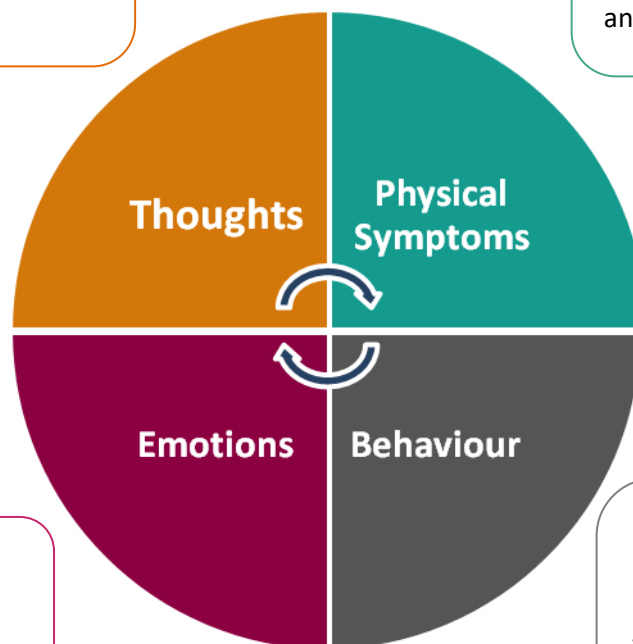
Using the four area model we can start to understand what might be happening when we feel stressed, this can help us to know where to try making changes.

## What went through my mind?

Julie starts to think 'I can't cope', 'what if things never get easier', 'this must be my fault, I'm a failure'

## What did I notice in my body?

Julie notices she is tired, not sleeping well and keeps getting headaches and pain in her neck and shoulders



## What emotion did I feel?

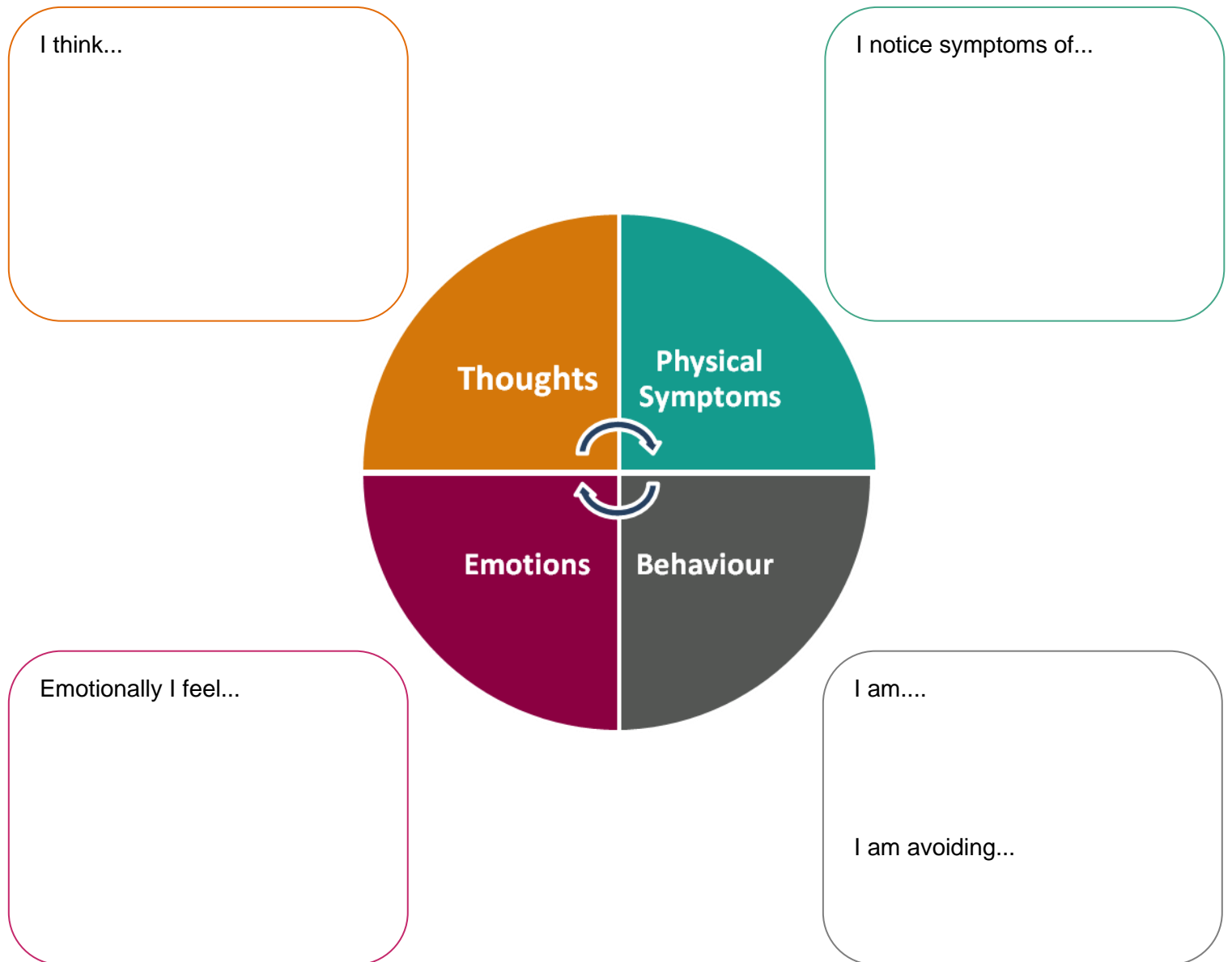
Julie finds herself feeling stressed, upset and guilty

## What helped me cope/what did I do?

Julie has started spending more time worrying, she's not going to the gym anymore and stays longer at work

# Your Stress Cycle

Everyone is different. Have a go at filling in your own vicious cycle of stress.



## Is Your Life in Balance?

Below you can find areas of life that are valued by some people. This questionnaire will help clarify your own quality of life in these areas.

Rate the importance of each area (by circling a number) on a scale of 1-10 (1 means that area is *not important*, 10 means that area is *very important*).

Not everyone will value all of these areas, or value all areas the same. Rate each area according to **your own personal sense of importance**.

Area	Not Important ←-----→ Very Important									
Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intimate Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends/Social Life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Education/Training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Recreation/Fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Citizenship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

# Time, Effort and Head Space

Now, give a rating to how much time, effort and head space you currently put into each area.

In other words, how in line with your values are you? Are you living your life in accordance with your values?

1 = little time, effort and 'head space'

10 = Maximum time, effort and 'head space'

Area	Minimum ←-----→ Maximum									
Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Intimate Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parenting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Friends/Social Life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Education/Training	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Recreation/Fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Spirituality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Citizenship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Health	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My Wellbeing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Value to step closer to .....

Goal.....

# Sleep



Regularly getting a good night's sleep is important for our physical and emotional wellbeing. Most of us at some stage in our lives will experience some sort of sleep problem which can be made worse by stress and can also impact on our stress levels.

Not getting enough sleep can make us tired, irritable and less able to cope with stressful life events. We can also start to worry about not getting enough sleep which can make us feel tense and on edge, which can then make it even harder to get off to sleep causing a vicious cycle of sleep.

	Yes	No	Comments/notes
Am I having daytime naps?			
Am I going to bed and getting up at regular times?			
Am I eating too much 4 hours before bedtime?			
Do I need to reduce alcohol?			
Am I getting enough exercise and activity during the daytime?			
Am I drinking too much caffeine?			
Do I have a regular bedtime wind down routine?			
Do I need to limit the amount of time I spend in bed?			
Is the environment I sleep in helping me to sleep?			
Am I taking action when worries play on my mind?			
Are my beliefs about sleep helping me stay calm?			



# How to Begin Making Changes

If I was feeling less stressed, I would want to .....

.....

*It is often not possible to meet our goals overnight, therefore it can be useful to think about what small changes you could make over the next week, couple of weeks, and few months, in order to work towards this goal.*

*E.g. if your longer term goal is to socialise more, in the short term this could include phoning a friend or finding a social group in the local area, then making a plan to meet up.*

Short Term .....

Medium Term.....

Long Term .....

Remember when setting goals we can use the SMART goal setting structure.

**S – Specific**

**M – Measurable**

**A – Achievable**

**R – Realistic**

**T – Time-manage**



Enter your idea for a SMART goal here:

# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Before you begin make sure you are comfortable; find a quiet place to sit, then close your eyes and let your body 'go loose'. Take five slow, deep breaths before you begin.



## Step One: Tension

The first step is applying muscle tension to a specific part of your body, eg/ right hand. Take a slow deep breath and squeeze the muscles as hard as you can for about 5 seconds. **BE CAREFUL** not to hurt yourself – If you have problems with pulled muscles, broken bones or any other medical conditions that would hinder physical activity

**CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR FIRST!**

## Step Two: Relaxing the Tense Muscles

This step involves relaxing the tensed muscles. After about 5 seconds of tensing your right hand muscles, let all the tightness flow out of the tensed muscles. Exhale as you do this. You should feel the muscles in your hand become loose and limp as the tension flows out.



Remain in this relaxed state for about 15 seconds, then move on to the next muscle group.

Repeat step one, then step two with each muscle group i.e. the arms, the shoulders, the neck, the mouth, the eyes, the forehead, the chest, the stomach, the buttocks, the legs and the feet.

## Tips:

1. If your mind wanders, don't worry, just acknowledge the thought and then bring the focus of your attention back to the muscle you are tensing.
2. It is important to deliberately focus on and notice the difference between the tension and relaxation – this teaches your muscles the difference.

## Why bother?

If you've been stressed for a long period of time this exercise will help remind your body what it's like to be relaxed. As our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are linked if we can reduce physical tension it will help reduce the overall feeling of being stressed and may influence our thinking and behaviour in a positive way too!

**Prefer a guided relaxation?** There are a number of audio versions of Progressive Muscle Relaxation available online (e.g. YouTube) if you prefer to listen to a guided practice.

# Week One Notes

Between sessions:

- Read pages 1-9 and fill in your own factors that are causing stress and vicious cycle
- Take a step towards that goal?
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation, try it once a day (page 9)

## Healthy Living: Everything in Moderation

### Exercise

It has long been known that regular exercise is good for our physical health; however it can also be very good for our mental health. It can improve mood, reduce anxiety and improve concentration. Exercise has an effect on certain chemicals in the brain that affect our mood and can make us feel happier. Exercise also improves energy levels and improves sleep.

The current guidelines are 1.5 hours a week of moderate activity – this includes fast walking!

### Exercise Plan:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

### Healthy Diet

Eating healthily is not only good for us physically; it can be just as important for our mental health. Eating a balanced diet including **slow release energy** foods can be beneficial for regulating our energy levels and mood. It's also recommended to eat at regular times throughout the day. High sugar foods (ready meals, cereal bars, snacks) can cause spikes in our mood and maintain stress levels.



### Meal Planner:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

## Alcohol



Research shows that people suffering with anxiety and depression are twice as likely to be heavy drinkers. When we are stressed, in the short term alcohol appears to relieve symptoms of stress, but in the long-term, prolonged and excessive use of alcohol can lead to a whole host of problems. Alcohol is a depressant but when processing alcohol in the days after drinking our body simulates the symptoms of anxiety – so it can also actually increase both feelings of depression and anxiety.

Alcohol		
Drink	Units	Calories
Glass of champagne	1	86
Large wine	3.3	195
Pint of cider	2.6	210
Pint of beer	2.3	197
Single clear spirit	0.9	97
Single dark spirit	1	97
Glass of champagne	1	86
Large glass of wine	3.3	195

## Caffeine



Caffeine is a stimulant; it can increase the heart rate and brain activity. Excessive amounts can create a 'high' feeling;

however when caffeine leaves the body a 'low' feeling can quickly follow. Excessive amounts can cause physical symptoms similar to anxiety. Drinking caffeine can also cause sleep disturbance. Roughly more than 600mg of caffeine a day may cause problems.

It can be surprising to think about how much caffeine and alcohol we have over a week; this can easily add up.

Caffeine	
Caffeinated Drink	Mg of caffeine
Fresh Coffee	140-210mg per mug
Instant Coffee	85-110mg per mug
Decaff Coffee	6mg per mug
Tea	85-110mg per mug
Decaff Tea	6mg per mug
Coke	36mg per can
Milk Chocolate	22mg per 100g
Plain Chocolate	72mg per 100g
Red Bull	80mg

## Caffeine or Alcohol Diary

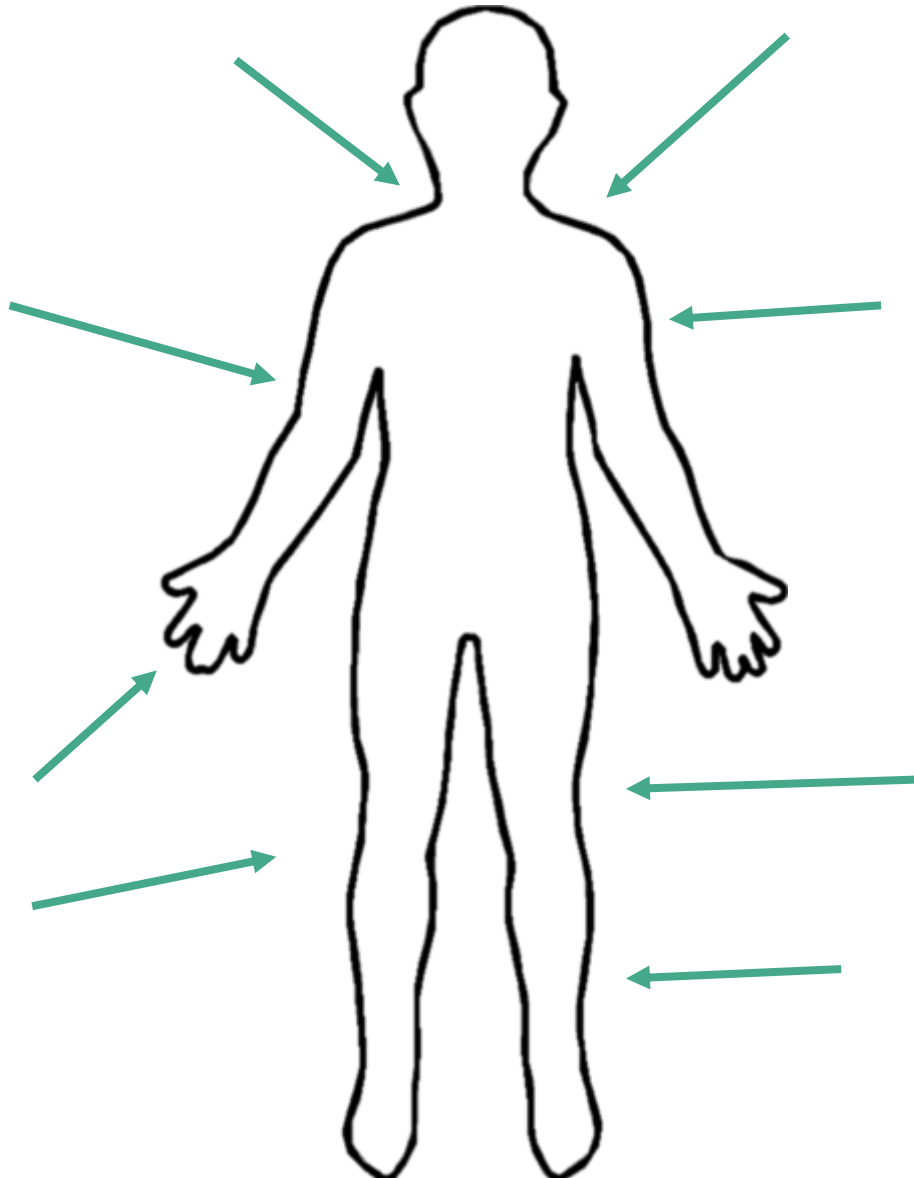
Sometimes it is surprising how much caffeine and alcohol we might be having. Try keeping a diary of either (or both) to see how your current levels are. If you are drinking too much of either alcohol or caffeine and would like to cut down we advise that you do this slowly to avoid withdrawal effects (which might affect your mood).

Day	Intake	Mood Comments
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

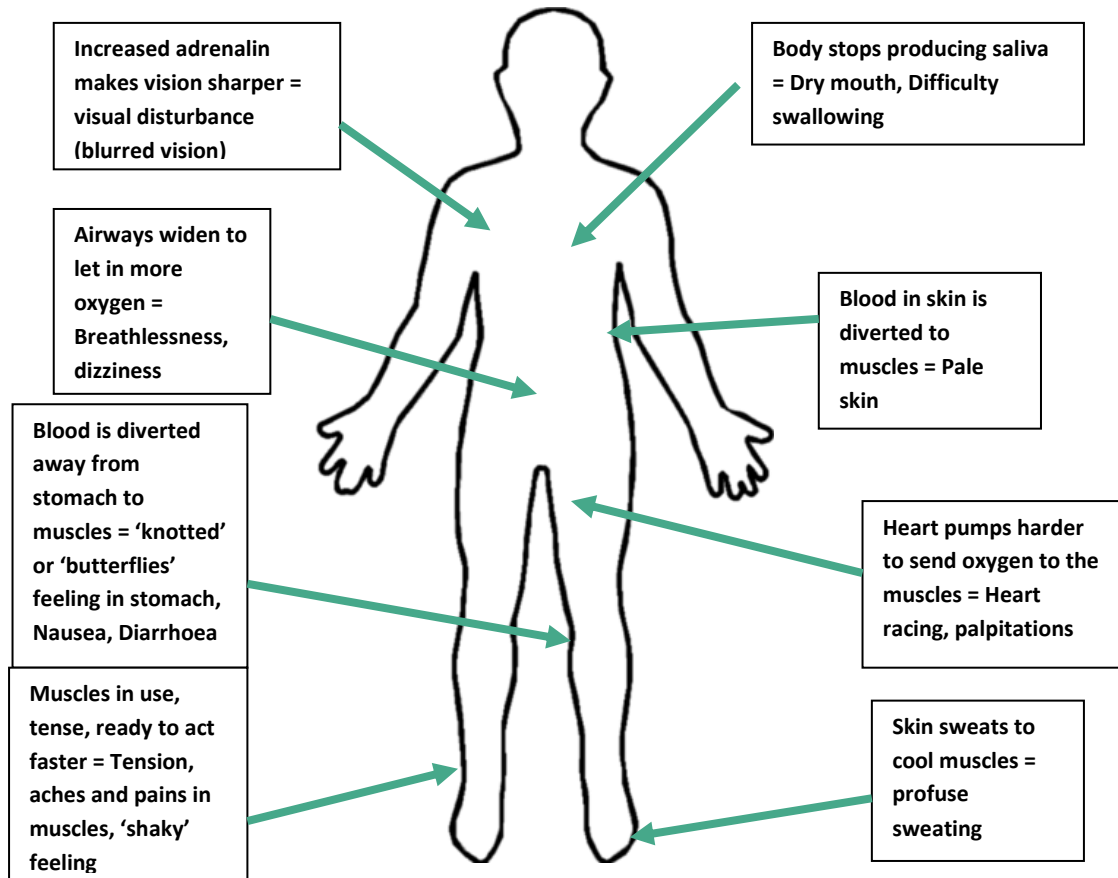
**Tip:** We're not suggesting that you can never drink alcohol or caffeine. It is important, however, to consider whether your alcohol or caffeine intake is a factor that could be maintaining your stress levels.

Sometimes people find that if they are going through a stressful period, it can be helpful to reduce or eliminate alcohol or caffeine, to try and help reduce some of the physical symptoms. Find the balance that works best for you!

# What Physical Symptoms of Stress do I Have?



## The Physical Symptoms Of Stress & Anxiety



The Fight or Flight response is the body's way of responding to being in danger. Adrenaline is rushed into our bloodstream to enable us to run away or fight. This happens if the danger is real, or if we *perceive* the danger is real. It is the body's alarm and survival mechanism. Primitive man wouldn't have survived for long without this life-saving response; it is there to keep us alive. It works so well that it often kicks in when it's not needed; when the danger is in our heads. We think we're in danger, so that's enough to trigger the system! When we're stressed for a period of time we can become hypervigilant - constantly on the lookout for danger, hyper-alert to any of the signals, this makes it more likely that the fight/ flight alarm system will be triggered.

We can experience strong symptoms of anxiety because of hyperventilation. We may interpret these symptoms as dangerous which can lead to a Panic. Panic attacks feel very uncomfortable, but are not dangerous to our health.



## Leaves on a stream

- (1) Sit in a comfortable position and either close your eyes or rest them gently on a fixed spot in the room.
- (2) Visualize yourself sitting beside a gently flowing stream with leaves floating along the surface of the water.
- (3) For the next few minutes, take each thought that enters your mind and place it on a leaf... let it float by. Do this with each thought – pleasurable, painful, or neutral. Even if you have joyous or enthusiastic thoughts, place them on a leaf and let them float by.
- (4) If your thoughts momentarily stop, continue to watch the stream. Sooner or later, your thoughts will start up again.
- (5) Allow the stream to flow at its own pace. Don't try to speed it up and rush your thoughts along. You're not trying to rush the leaves along or lose sight of them. You are allowing them to come and go at their own pace.
- (6) If your mind says "This is silly," "I'm bored," or "this can't be right" place *those thoughts* on leaves, too, and let them pass.
- (7) If a leaf gets stuck, allow it to hang around until it's ready to float by. If the thought comes up again, watch it float by another time.
- (8) If a difficult or painful feeling arises, simply acknowledge it. Say to yourself, "I notice myself having a feeling of boredom/impatience/frustration." Place those thoughts on leaves and allow them float along.
- (9) From time to time, your thoughts may hook you and distract you from being fully present in this exercise. This is *normal*. As soon as you realize that you have become sidetracked, gently bring your attention back to the visualization exercise.



## Week Two Notes

Between sessions:

- Read pages 11-16
- Practice using the relaxations – either progressive muscle, leaves on a stream or both (both in your book)
- Take some action to begin reducing the physical effects of stress: Caffeine diary? Exercise? Meal planning?

# Activity Scheduling

When we're feeling stressed and overwhelmed it can sometimes feel that we are never going to cope with the demands placed on us. Activity Scheduling is a way of organising our time and scheduling specific activities that need to be done. This way we can relax in the knowledge that we will complete what needs to be done rather than feeling overwhelmed which can lead us to avoiding such activities.

**Step 1:** Complete a to-do list

**Step 3:** Break things down. For example, Yina needs to pay her bills but she's not sure what she owes currently, there may be a few steps needed to get moving with this. The first step might just be finding out how much she owes to whom.

**Step 2:** Prioritise each item into high, medium and low priority.

**Step 3:** Put each of these items into the schedule with the high priority items being scheduled soonest

**Step 4:** Ensure that you don't fill your week up with too many necessary things; you need a balance of enjoyable activities too – remember your values

To do:	Broken Down Steps	Priority?
Pay Bills	Find out how much I owe, work out what I can afford to pay, contact companies to discuss, schedule payment plan	High

# Rumination Tool

Rumination is when your thoughts go round and round in circles without resolving the problem, you can spend large amounts of your day stuck in this negative thought pattern. The difficult thing is rumination is often about unanswerable questions.

Many of the problems we face are not “black and white” and often have a long history. Rumination doesn’t work in those kinds of situations. When people spend so much time in their heads, trying to sort out the problem, they don’t actually take action to solve the problem. As a result Rumination becomes another form of avoidance. We need to reduce the time we spend Ruminating, and take action instead.

**Step 1:** Notice Rumination

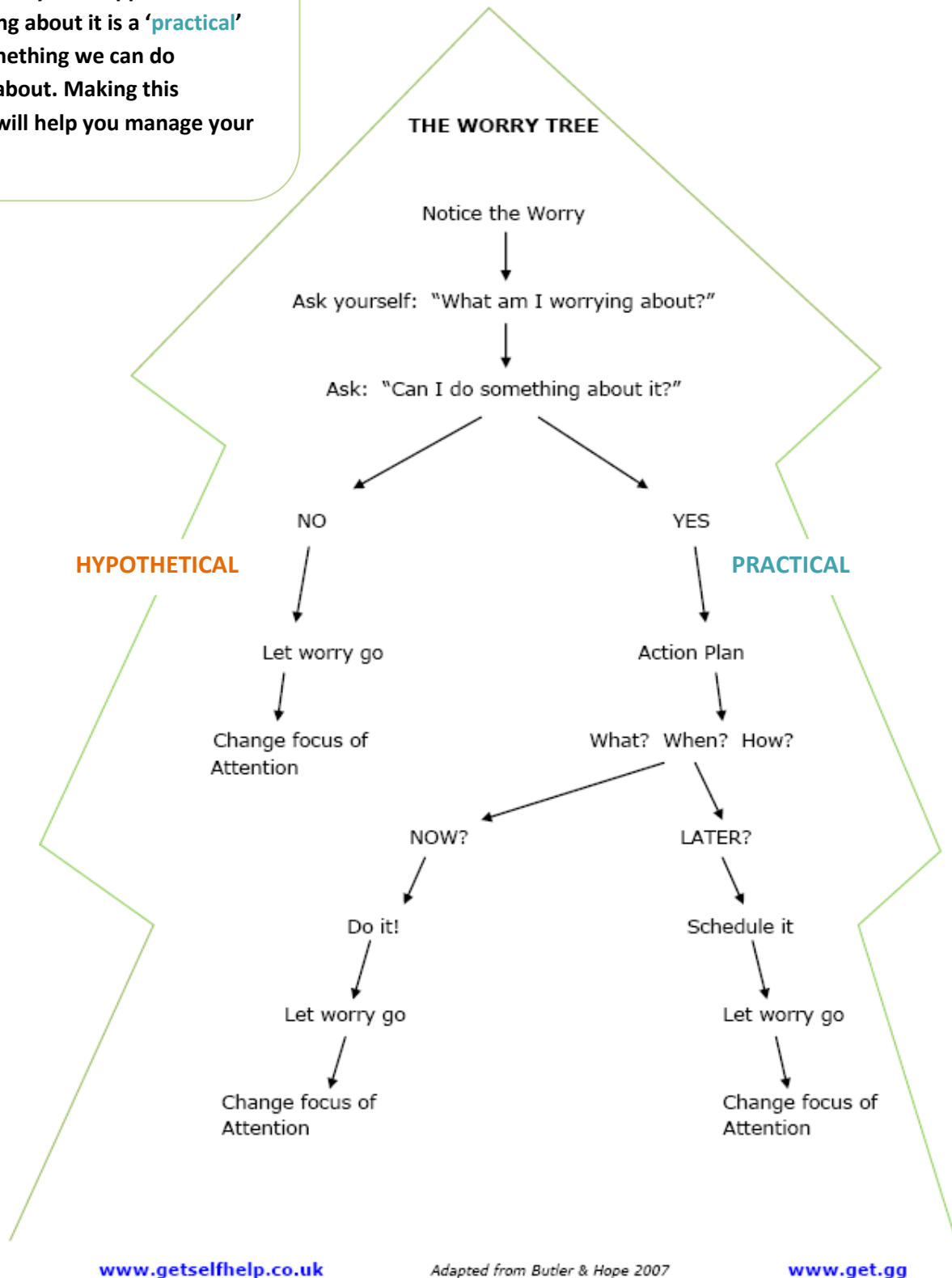
**Step 2:** Take Action (to solve a problem, or focus away from the thoughts)

<b><u>Situation</u></b> What Was I Doing?	<b><u>Ruminations</u></b> What was I ruminating about?	<b><u>Consequence</u></b> On my emotions, what I did, physical symptoms	<b><u>Is It Helping Me? Yes/No</u></b> If no, then do something else instead.	<b><u>Action</u></b> What did I do/can I do instead? (solve a problem, an activity, hobby, music, chores)
<i>Driving at the weekend</i>	<i>An error I made on a piece of work I did yesterday, and how rubbish an employee that must make me</i>	<i>I felt sad, frustrated with myself, I felt like quitting</i>	<i>No, I just kept thinking about something I can't change at this point, and felt rubbish</i>	<i>I will correct my work first thing Monday, I have added a reminder on my calendar. If I think about it on the drive to work tomorrow, I'll turn on the radio and focus on that</i>

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6-8am							
8-10am							
10-12pm							
12-2pm							
2-4pm							
4-6pm							
6-8pm							
8-10pm							
10-12am							

# Worry Tree

If we can't do anything about our worry it is '**hypothetical**' - something that may or may not happen! If we can do something about it is a '**practical**' worry – something we can do something about. Making this distinction will help you manage your worries.





## Worry Time

This is a technique which some people find useful to help let go of hypothetical worries. You put aside around 15 minutes at a particular time of the day (eg/ 8pm to 8.15pm. This is your 'Worry Time'. If you start to worry about something at any other time throughout the day, tell yourself that you will save it for your 'worry time'.

At worry time, sit down somewhere quiet and give yourself permission to worry about the things you have stored up over the course of the day. You may have forgotten some, some things may have already been resolved and you may find that you feel differently about some of the things you were worrying about now that some time has passed.

At the end of worry time try to re-focus your mind back onto the present. Maybe get up and go into a different room, or start doing something different, use all your senses to really tune in to what is going on around you. If you find yourself starting to worry again repeat the process: you will worry about it in your next worry time.

## Worry Time Technique



**Step One:** Set a worry time. For example, 15 minutes at 7:30pm.

**Step Two:** When you notice a worry during the day, label it 'I'm just worrying about.....', write it down if you can

**Step Three:** Accept the worry is there and ask yourself 'Can I do anything about this right now?' If no.....

**Step Four:** Let the worry go (for now) and refocus attention using your senses

**Step Five:** At worry time, go through any worries you noticed during the day. Then repeat the process from step one.

## Attention Training

### Attention Focus

When we worry it is often like we are living our life in the future, as our mind is caught up in all sorts of catastrophic scenarios of “what if” worries. This means that our body is in the present moment, but our mind is very much elsewhere. Often we may not even be aware that our mind is doing this.

**Worriers will often say that because of this, they miss out on what is happening in life here and now.**

Training your attention through attention focusing exercises can be a useful way of bringing yourself out from the future with the worries back to the present moment. It will also help with worry time as we mentioned earlier – refocusing is key!

**Below are some activities and exercises that can adjust our focus of attention:**

#### 5 senses – ask yourself:

What can you **see** around you?

What can you **hear** around you?

What can you **smell**?

What can you **taste**?

What can you **touch** right now?



#### Mundane Task Focusing

Sometimes when we are doing everyday mundane tasks we are often on autopilot and do not focus on the task at hand. E.g. washing up, cleaning teeth, hoovering. We can use these tasks to practise strengthening our attention like a muscle.

The good thing about mundane task focusing is that you are not having to do anything extra in your day, it is just about changing how you pay attention to things you are already doing.

Really pay attention to what is happening in that present moment.

*Choose one thing to focus on. Listen out for a specific word in a conversation. Focus on only the drums in a song on the radio. The warmth of the water when washing up.*



## Week 3 Notes

Between sessions:

- Continue with your relaxations
- Notice rumination and take action instead (page 19)
- Have a go at activity scheduling (page 18)
- Keep going!

## How Unhelpful Thoughts Affect Our Mood

If we look at the vicious circle of stress we can see that the way we think can have an effect on our mood and our behaviour. When we feel stressed the way that we think can become quite distorted. We may have unhelpful thoughts (i.e. “I’m useless”, “I can’t cope”, “What if I can’t meet this deadline!”) and these negative thoughts can help maintain our stress.

### Sometimes we can become stuck in our thoughts...

In a state of **cognitive fusion** we are ‘caught up in’ or preoccupied with thoughts. Our stressful thoughts seem to be the literal truth. When we fuse with our stressful thoughts, they have enormous influence over our behaviour. For example, Steve thinks ‘I’m so stupid’, Steve believes totally in this thought and can’t see past it. As a result Steve thinks he will fail his exams so he is avoiding studying, he thinks ‘what’s the point... I’ll never pass anyway’.



**Cognitive defusion** enables us to step back psychologically and observe our stressful thoughts without being caught up in them. We can then recognise that our thoughts are nothing more or less than ‘here one minute – gone the next’ private events – an ever-changing stream of words, sounds and pictures. As we master defusing from thoughts, they have much less impact and influence over us and we can even begin challenging them.

### Thought Challenges

What are the chances...?

What is the worst thing...?

Am I right to think that...?

Will this matter in five years time...?

What is this worth...?

# How Unhelpful Thoughts Affect Stress

If we look at the CBT cycle of stress, we can see that the way we think can impact our mood and our behaviour. When we feel stressed the way that we think changes. We may have unhelpful thoughts (i.e. “I’m useless”, “I can’t cope”) that can then maintain our stress.

**Firstly, be more aware of your thoughts** – keep a diary / write thoughts down.

## Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles:

**All or Nothing thinking** – Believing that something or someone can be only good or bad, right or wrong, rather than anything in between or ‘shades of grey’.

*Things aren’t either totally white or totally black – there are shades of grey. Where is this on the spectrum?*

**Over Generalising** – Applying the experience of one situation to ‘all the time’. Not getting one particular job becomes “I’ll never get a job”

**Self-criticism** – Putting ourselves down, blaming ourselves and taking personal responsibility for something that is not entirely our fault. “I must have done something wrong” “I’m stupid”.

*Is this really my fault? Can I look at this another way?*

**Mind-Reading** – Assuming we know what others are thinking (usually about us).  
*Am I assuming I know what others are thinking? What’s the evidence? Those are my own thoughts, not theirs. Is there another, more balanced way of looking at it?*

**Catastrophising** – Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen.  
*OK, thinking that the worst possible thing will definitely happen isn’t really helpful right now. What’s most likely to happen?*

**Emotional Reasoning** – “I feel bad so it must be bad!” “I feel anxious so I must be in danger”. *Is this 100% true?*

**Filtering the positive** – You only focus on the negative and disregard the positive.

*Am I only noticing the bad stuff? Am I filtering out the positives? Am I soaking up the negatives and sieving out the positives?*

**Shoulds, Oughts and Musts** – Thinking or saying “I should” (or shouldn’t) and “I must” puts pressure on ourselves, and sets up unrealistic expectations.

*Am I putting more pressure on myself, setting up expectations of myself that are almost impossible? What would be more realistic?*

**Judgements** – Making evaluations or judgements about events, ourselves, others or the world, rather than describing what we actually see and have evidence for.

*Is there another perspective?*

**Memories** – Current situations and events can trigger upsetting memories, causing us distress right now.

*Even though this memory makes me feel upset, it’s not actually happening again right now.*

**Prediction** – Believing we know what’s going to happen in the future.

*Am I thinking that I can predict the future? How likely is it that that might really happen?*

**Compare and Despair** – Seeing only the good and positive aspects in others, and comparing ourselves negatively against them.

**Mountains and Molehills** – Exaggerating the risk of danger / negatives. Minimising the positives.

# Thought Challenges

Once you have recognised your unhelpful thinking habits, and once you have identified the thoughts that may be feeding into your cycle of stress (e.g. I'm a failure, the worst thing could happen), it can be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

## What is the worst thing...? What are the chances this will happen...?

- Often our minds are very good at thinking of the worst possible scenario in situations. How likely is it this will happen? And how bad would this be if it did happen?
- Often we can overestimate the danger of a situation when we feel anxious, and underestimate our ability to cope.

## Am I right to think that...?

- What's the factual evidence this thought is true? What assumptions are making me think this? My own opinions or past experiences?
- What about the other side of the coin, what tells you this thought might not be true?

## Will this matter in five years time...?

- There are obviously stressful life events that do matter in the long term, but often many of our day to day stressful thoughts can feel really overwhelming at the time, but we often won't feel the same way in even a week, a month, or 5 years time.
- We can react very emotionally in the moment, but asking yourself will it matter? Can help us to gain perspective.

## What is this worth...?

- Is life too short to be worrying about something I can't change?
- Is all this worrying worth it? For hypothetical worries the answer is often no.

## What would I say to a friend in this situation?

- Would you give them words of encouragement to try something out and reassure them? - Or would you tell them they are being stupid and to get on with it?
- Often the things we say to ourselves we would never say to the people around us.

## Next, try to come up with a more balanced / realistic thought.

**Tip:** It can also be helpful to actively try and focus on your positives / achievements each day. Even just thinking of 3 positive things from your day can help!

This could be 3 random things, or you could focus your positives on something you have:

**A**chieved

**C**onnected with

**E**njoyed

How often do we spend thinking about our achievements each day? Giving yourself a task to focus on this can help to balance our thoughts.

# Problem Solving

## Step One: Problem Identification

**Write down the problem you want to solve.**

*Try and be as specific as possible, e.g. not just 'work problem'...*

## Step Two: Solution Identification

**Write down ALL possible solutions that come to mind.**

*This is often the most important bit. Take your time to come up with as many possibilities as you can, even if they seem unlikely or illogical.*

## Step Three: Strengths vs Weaknesses

*For each solution, consider the possible pros and cons of each and note down below:*

Solution	Pros	Cons

<b>Step 4: Which solution will you select?</b> <i>Choose the best sounding option to start with, you can always review this later.</i>		
<b>Step 4: Plan</b>		
<b>When?</b> <b>Where?</b> <b>Who?</b> <b>Anything to do before?</b>		
<b>Step 6: Implement the plan</b>		
<b>Step 7: Review it</b> <i>You may not have solved the whole problem, but have you been able to take steps towards helping?</i>		
<b>Did this work?</b>  <b>What went well?</b>  <b>What didn't go so well?</b>  <b>Are there further steps I can take from my list of solutions? Go back to the list!</b>		

## How to do Mindful Breathing

The primary goal in Mindfulness is a calm, non-judging awareness allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting caught up in them. This creates calmness and acceptance.



- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine straight – try and relax your shoulders
- Direct your attention to your breathing
- Try not to control your breathing but to focus on the sensation of breathing, the in and out of the breath
- Bring your attention to your belly, feeling it rise or expand gently on the in breath and fall or recede on the out breath
- When thoughts, emotions, physical feelings or external sounds occur, simply accept them, giving them space to come and go without judging or getting involved with them
- When you notice that your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted then gently bring the attention back to the breathing
- If your mind wanders away from breath a thousand times, then your job is simply to bring it back to the breath every time

## Week 4 Notes

Between sessions:

- Read pages 25 - 30
- Continue relaxations
- Try thought challenging or the just worry approach... Or both!
- Pick one activity to try doing mindfully



## Progress So Far...

### Techniques I have tried so far

### Things that have helped (could be from the course or elsewhere!)

### Things to Continue Working On

### Things to Try

## Goal Review

My goal at the start of the course was .....

.....

Met	Not Met

*If you didn't meet your first goal this could be a good chance to revise it – don't worry or feel bad if the goal wasn't met, this is how we learn.*

My new goal to work towards is .....

.....

.....

Remember when setting goals we can use the SMART goal setting structure.

**S – Specific**

**M – Measurable**

**A – Achievable**

**R – Realistic**

**T - Timed**



## Relapse Prevention

### My Early Warning Signs of Stress

I think...

I notice symptoms of...

Thoughts

Physical Symptoms

Emotions

Behaviour

Emotionally I feel...

I am....

I am avoiding...

Make some notes of the symptoms that you experience first when you get stressed. Keeping an eye out for these will help you to recognise when stress levels are creeping up. It's normal for stress to go up and down as situations and events around us continue to change day to day but knowing what our warning signs are can really help us stay on top of things.

## Relapse Prevention Planning

It is often helpful to set aside a regular time to refresh your memory of what we covered here and to renew your determination to make and maintain behavioural changes.

By identifying a specific time when it would be helpful for you to do this, you are more likely to remember to do this.

**Write down when, where and for how long you will have your “check in” with yourself:**

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**How many weeks do you think it would be helpful to continue to “check in”?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Decide what you will do during your check-in.**

Some suggestions are below:

- Am I still doing the “everyday” things I need to do to manage my stress levels?
- Am I living in accordance with my values?
- Am I experiencing a particularly challenging time at the moment? Do I notice any warning signs? If so, what would it be helpful to do in response?

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## Useful Apps



### CALM

Contains guided meditations which aim to improve sleep, reduce anxiety, and feel calmer. Has elements which are free as well as paid subscription to access more content.

### Headspace

Contains 10 free practices for Mindfulness based meditation.  
Further programmes can be paid for.



### Mindfulness (Frantic World)

Originally developed for a research programme at Oxford University, the app focuses on learning guided meditations. It is free for the first 10 days, after which you will need to pay a one of fee to continue using.

### ReachOut WorryTime

This is a very useful app for worry. If you want to practice worry time, this app helps you to set a time for this each day. You can then add worries to the app throughout the day, and access them during your worry time. This has a useful visual element when working through the practical and hypothetical worries.



## Other Support

### National Websites

- Anxiety UK: Self-help leaflets available for downloading <http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
- Mental Health Foundation <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>
- Reading Well and Books on Prescription <https://reading-well.org.uk/>
- Age UK - information and advice for older adults <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/>
- Its good to talk - Find local private counsellors and therapists who are accredited <http://www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/>
- Cruse- advice and counselling for bereavement <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>
- Relate - specialists in relationship counselling for individuals, couples and families <https://www.relate.org.uk/>

### CBT Information

- Centre for Clinical Interventions: Free workbooks <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/>
- Get Self Help: CBT self-help resources <http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/>
- Northumberland self-help resources <http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp>

### Local Support

- Dorset Mental Health Forum: A local peer led charity that run education courses through the Recovery Education Centre <http://www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/>
- Dorset Mind – for better mental health <http://dorsetmind.uk/>
- My Health, My Way: Personalised support for people in Dorset to help them live well and feel better <http://www.myhealthdorset.org.uk/About-My-Health-My-Way>
- My Health Dorset – support for people and carers related to long term health conditions (physical and mental health) <http://www.myhealthdorset.org.uk/>

## Need Further Support?

If you are concerned about your safety or you do not feel able to keep yourself safe, please contact one of the following for support:

- GP
- NHS 111
- Samaritans

*Freephone: 116 123*

*Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)*

- In an emergency, urgently attend your Accident and Emergency Department at your local hospital or dial 999