

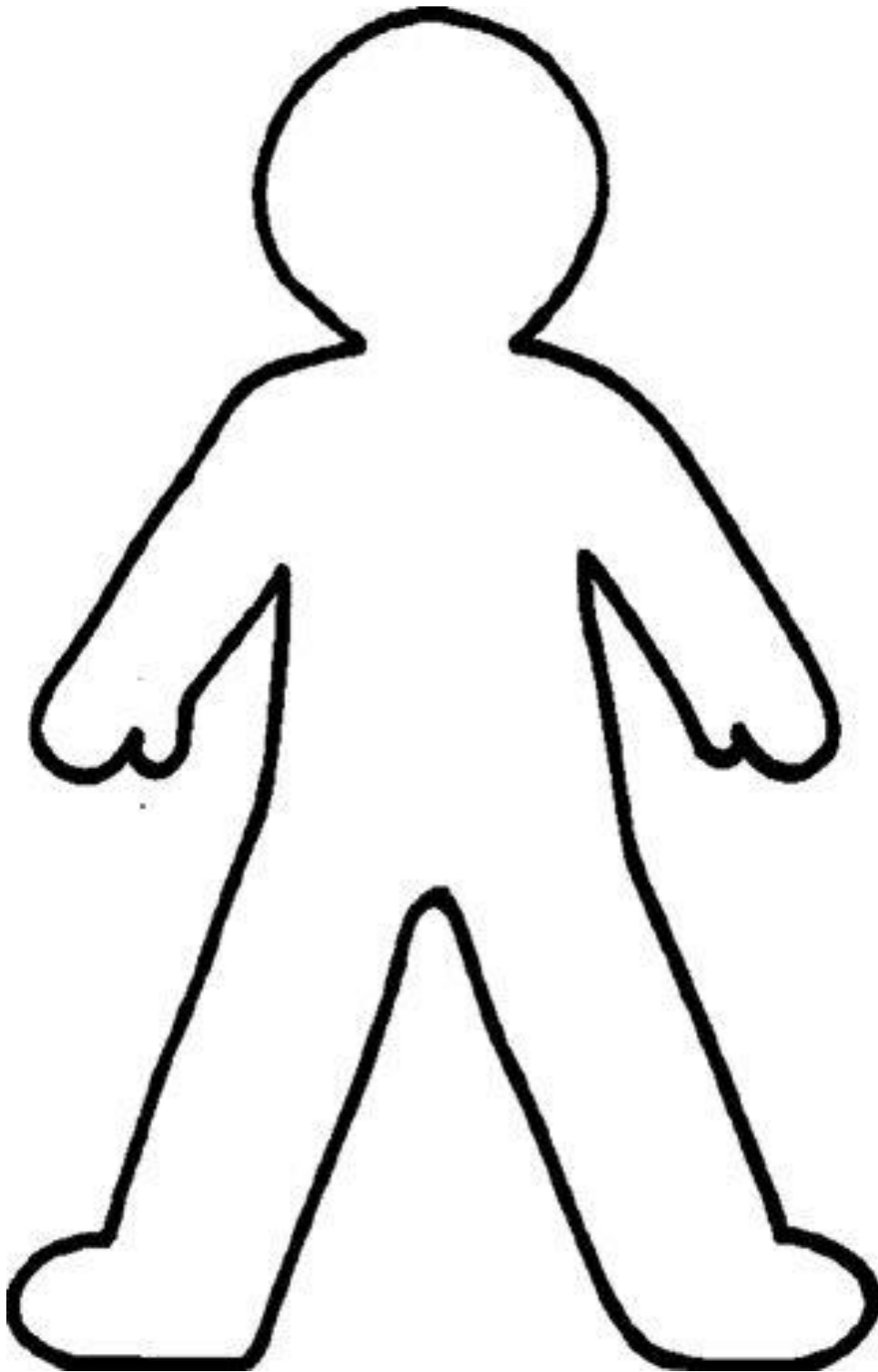
Allow  
yourself  
to be a beginner.  
No one starts  
off being  
excellent.

## COURSE – LIVING THROUGH LIFE EVENTS - SESSION 2

### Fight, Flight and Freeze responses

The fight, flight, freeze reaction is associated with activation of the sympathetic nervous system. This reaction can result in the following physical effects:

Body System	Physiological effect	Consequence
HEART	Increased heart rate Dilation of coronary blood vessels	Increase in blood flow Increased availability of oxygen and energy to the heart
CIRCULATION	Dilation of blood vessels serving muscles Constriction of blood vessels serving digestion	Increased availability of oxygen to skeletal muscles Blood shunted to skeletal muscles and brain
LUNGS	Dilation of bronchi Increased respiration rate	Increased availability of oxygen in blood
LIVER	Increased conversion of glycogen to glucose	Increased availability of glucose in skeletal muscle and brain cells
SKIN	Skin becomes pale or flushed as blood flow is reduced	Increased blood flow to muscles and away from non-essential parts of the body such as the periphery
EYES	Dilation of the pupils	Allows in more light so that visual acuity is improved to scan nearby surroundings
EARS	Body signals needs to be altered	Heightened sense of hearing



## **COURSE – LIVING THROUGH LIFE EVENTS - SESSION 2**

### **Understanding Depression**

Depression is different to feeling sad or blue for a few days which everyone will experience at some point in their lives. Clinical Depression is more intense, lasts longer (symptoms last at least 2 weeks) and it interferes with your ability to do the things you are normally able to do easily. Even though you might feel alone, depression is actually very common. In fact, 1 in 4 people will experience depression at some point in their life. Often people feel embarrassed about sharing this but it is important to note that it can happen to anyone irrespective of whether you are an introvert, extrovert, male, female, sociable, shy, wealthy or poor.

### **Symptoms of Depression**

The symptoms of depression can be divided into 3 categories. It is important to become aware which symptoms you experience, as these will act as early warning signs that you are starting to feel low. The earlier you can recognize the signs, the earlier you will be able to act, before your mood become really low.

#### **Physical Symptoms (how your body experiences depression) which may include:**

- Tiredness, heaviness and fatigue
- Increased or decreased appetite
- Sleep disturbances, such as early waking, trouble getting to sleep, sleeping too much
- Changes in the way you move, either becoming restless or slowed down

#### **Cognitive and Affective Symptoms (your thoughts, thinking patterns and emotions) – for example:**

- Negative about yourself (e.g. I'm a burden, people would be better off without me)
- Negative about the future (e.g. this will never change, I'll never get better)
- Negative about the world (e.g. the world is a bad place)
- Only noticing the negatives whilst overlooking the positives
- Repeated thoughts of death, self-harm or suicide
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Feelings of worthlessness, failure or excessive guilt

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### **Behavioural Symptoms (what you do, or avoid doing) – including:**

- withdrawing from other people
- difficulty keeping up with usual household tasks or work
- neglecting your appearance or self-care

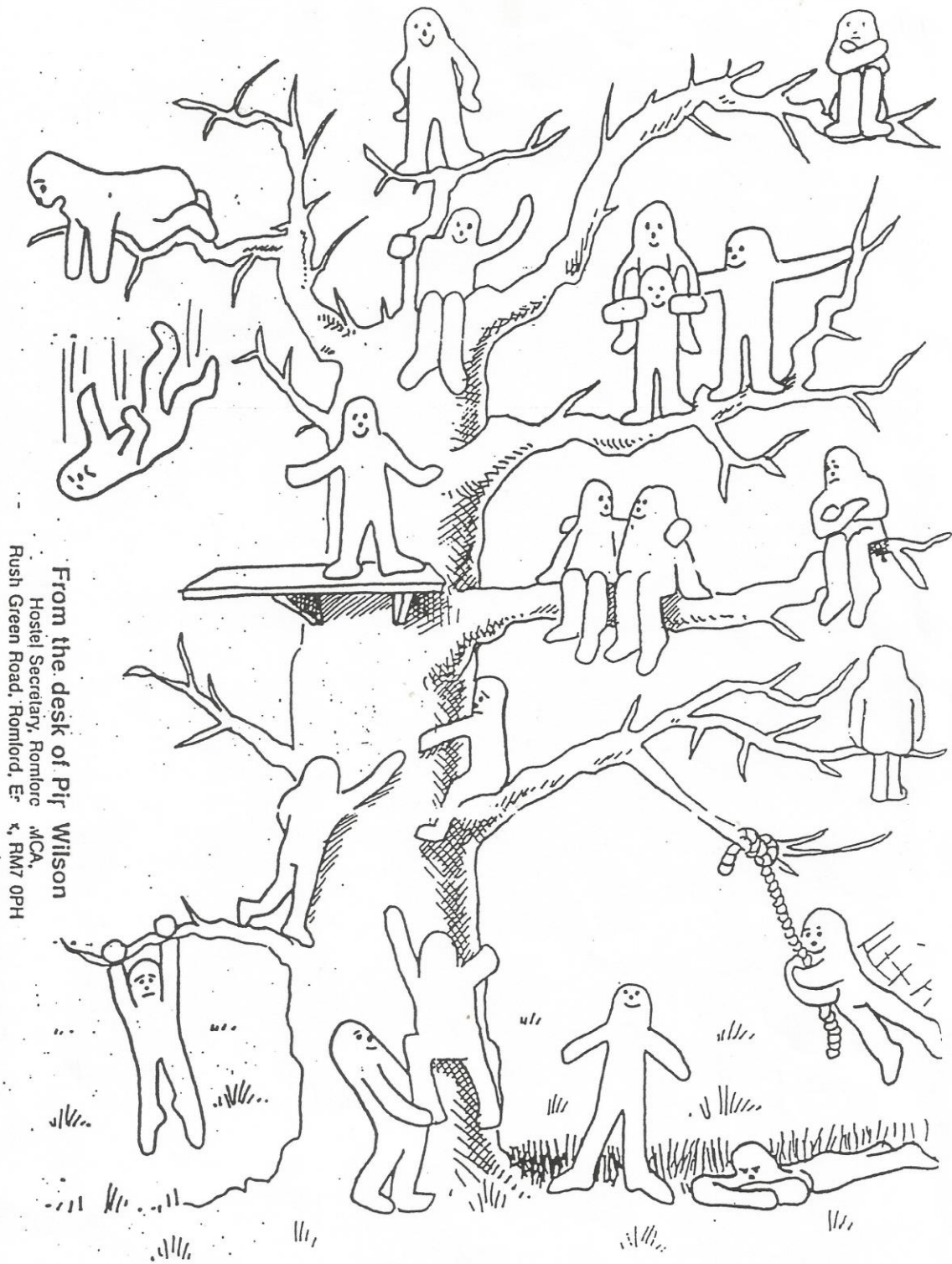
### **How depression affects the brain: depression is the brain's self-protection mechanism.**

The brain uses a number of chemicals as messengers to communicate with other parts of itself and with the nervous system. These chemical messengers, called neurotransmitters, are released and received by the brain's many nerve cells, which are also called neurons. This communication system is essential to all of the brain's functions, including thought processes and behaviour. Depression has been linked to problems or imbalances in the brain with regard to neurotransmitters called serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine. Any problem that interrupts the smooth functioning of this chain of chemical events can negatively impact both the brain and nervous system. When you have depression doing the ordinary, everyday things that you used to do without thinking can feel like climbing Mount Everest – that due to the physiological effect of the brain and it's not your fault.

### **REMEMBER**

1. Depression is not your fault – it's an illness.
2. Once you recognise you have depression there is a lot that you can do to help yourself get better – you're on the road to recovery!
3. Rome wasn't built in a day – recovery from depression takes time and perseverance.
4. There is no magic cure to depression and not 'one' solution – a multi-pronged approach is needed to master it.
5. Small changes can make big differences

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### GOLDEN MOMENTS

Each day – write down anything that happened that was positive. These may not be big things, but moments when something happened that was simply – OK. It may be something like the bus arriving on time, a smile from the checkout assistant, or finding a parking space.

	AM	PM	EVE
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNESDAY			
THURSDAY			
FRIDAY			
SATURDAY			
SUNDAY			

**Living through Life Events**

My thoughts and feelings - Session 2.