

Mums Matter



Course Booklet



Keeping Safe between Sessions

Steps 2 Wellbeing is not a crisis service, and although you are welcome to contact the service between sessions, the course facilitator may not be available to speak to you. However, if you are feeling very low and need some support between sessions, there are a number of places that you can turn to:

- Contact your Health Visitor or your Health Visiting Team if you need advice or support around caring for your baby, or you are feeling down and need someone to talk to
- Contact your GP surgery and request an urgent appointment
- Telephone 111 for medical or mental health advice 24 hours a day
- Go to A&E if you are worried about hurting yourself or someone else
- The Samaritans- you can call 116 123 for someone to talk to
- Think of a friend, partner or family member that you can seek support from
- Download the NHS 'Stay Alive' App
- Contact Connection 0800 652 0190 [DORSET ONLY]
- The Retreat, Hahnemann House, Hahnemann Road, BH2 5JW available Monday to Sunday: 16:30-00:00 [DORSET ONLY]
- The Lighthouse – [SOUTHAMPTON ONLY]
<https://www.southernhealth.nhs.uk/locations/thelighthouse/>

Please make a note of your useful telephone numbers, so that you have them to hand when you need them. You may want to write them in the space below, or save them in your phone so they are ready to use.

Working Together

One of the most valuable things about these groups is the support that you can give to each other. To help everyone feel safe and comfortable, it is helpful for the group to agree some guidelines for the sessions. We will discuss and agree these as a group, but here are some suggestions below:

- Put mobile phones on silent so they do not interrupt the group
- Please be in a private space, with no other people in the room
- Listen when others are talking and respect others people's points of view
- Please try to be on time, but if you are late please still join us
- It's ok to pause my camera and check on my baby or go to the toilet

Other rules that the group has agreed:

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My weekly Check In's and Mood Check Scores

What to say in a mood check: Please describe your week, particularly in respect of the problems we have been discussing in therapy and how you have been feeling. Please include any significant changes that have happened that may have influenced any changes in your mood.



Session	My Mood Rating This Week	Comments on my Mood This Week
Week One		
Week Two		
Week Three		
Week Four		
Week Five		
Week Six		
Week Seven		
Week Eight		
Week Nine		
Week Ten		
Week Eleven		
Week Twelve		

Week One – Introduction to Course

Mums Matter is a 12 week Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) based group to help you overcome postnatal low mood and anxiety

This booklet is for you to keep, and accompanies the group sessions. Please make this your own by, make notes and use the worksheets.

We will meet weekly for 12 sessions, each session lasting up to 2 hours. Each week there will be a change-based task for you to practice at home, to help you to make positive change and improve your mood.

Mums Matter is delivered by qualified CBT Therapists, and sometimes supported by a local Health Visitor. The group is about supporting you to overcome emotional difficulties; there is no such thing as a silly question and your comments may well help someone else. Whilst we never pressure anyone to speak if they don't want to, the feedback we often hear is about how valuable it is to hear from others parents.

Attending the Sessions

Each week you will need to complete a short questionnaire, to monitor your mood and progress.

If you are not able to attend a session, please let us know by telephoning your local Steps to Wellbeing office. If you do not attend a session, we will write to you, reminding you to attend the next session. If you miss a second session, or do not respond when we try to contact you, then you may be discharged from the service. Therefore, it is really important to complete the weekly questionnaires to record your attendance, and to let us know if you cannot join the session.

If you decide not to continue with the course, please do contact us to discuss alternative treatment or sources of support for you. We would also welcome your feedback on your reasons for not continuing with the course.

Here is the plan for the next 12 weeks:

Week 1: Intro – to CBT, to Postnatal Depression, Expectations for Course

Week 2: Goals and Expectations vs Reality

Week 3: Changing our Behaviours, Self-Care

Week 4: Sleep & Relaxation

Week 5: What We Say to Ourselves Matters

Week 6: Challenging Unhelpful Thinking

Week 7: Anxiety and Avoidance

Week 8: Worry and Problem Solving

Week 9: Unhelpful Rules for Living, How to Test These Out

Week 10: Self-Esteem, Self-Compassion and Assertiveness

Week 11: Beliefs about Motherhood, What Do We Mean by Terrible Mum vs Perfect Mum?

Week 12: Looking Back and Moving Forwards

Hopes and Fears

You may have certain expectations, hopes and fears about coming to this course. Please take some time to think about these and write them down in the spaces below. You can choose to share this information with the group or keep it to yourself. We will come back to these at the end of the course.



What do I hope to achieve through completing this course?



What fears do I have about attending this course?

Recovery from depression is a journey. During the course you may have times where you feel better, and times where you feel low again. The times where you feel like you've slipped back are NOT disasters. These are often the times when the most learning takes place. Low points are a chance to notice triggers, to try out new techniques and to think about what could be done differently next time.

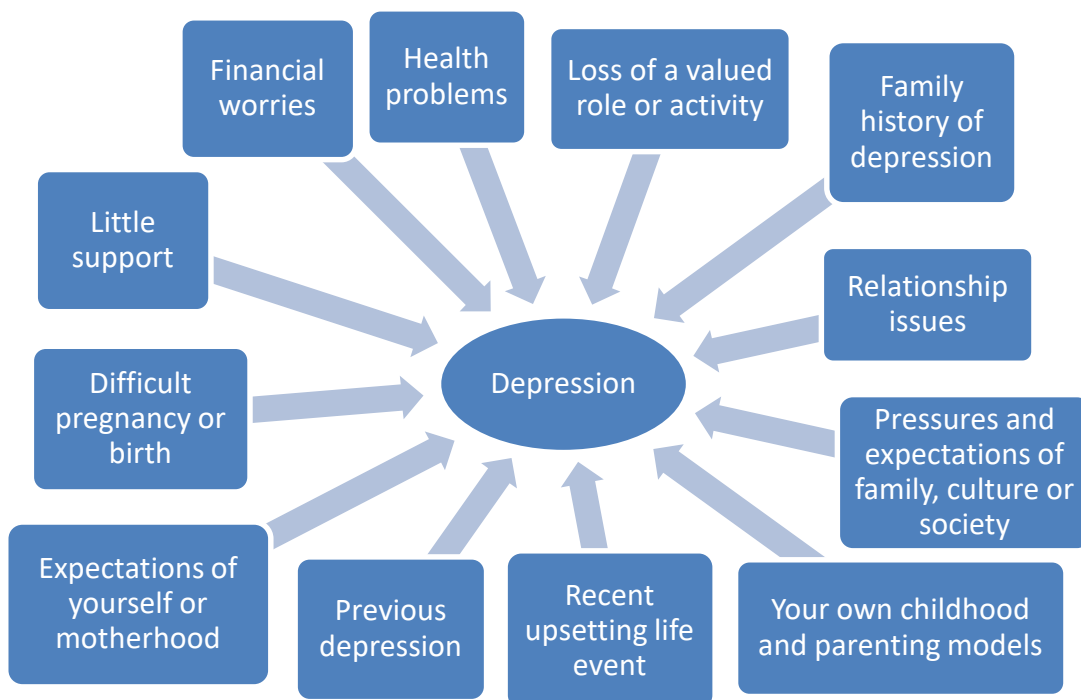
Understanding Postnatal Depression

Different people will experience depression in different ways, but the main symptoms include:

- Low mood, or sadness
- Hopelessness
- Self-blame or guilt
- Anxiety
- Lack of energy
- Lack of interest in activities
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Headaches, nausea, tiredness or pain
- Feelings of worthlessness or failure
- Irritability or emotional highs and lows
- Becoming tearful or crying for no reason
- Sleep problems (difficulties unrelated to baby not sleeping)
- Worries about own health or worrying about your baby
- Concentration difficulties
- Increased / decreased appetite
- Thoughts about death and suicide

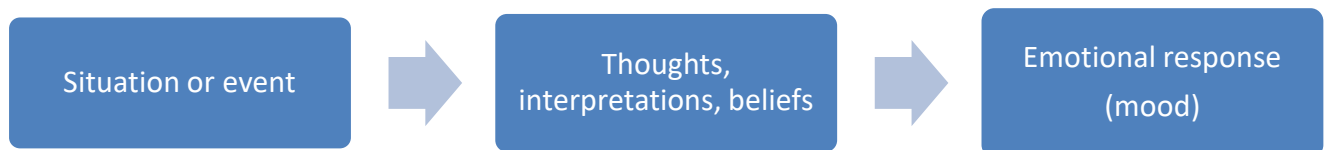
There is no one cause of depression, and usually a number of factors come together to contribute to depression and anxiety developing.

Some of the factors that can contribute to depression developing:



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a type of talking therapy that has been shown to be very effective in helping people with both depression and anxiety. Most of us believe that events, situations and the behavior of others cause us to feel emotions like anxiety, sadness or anger. If this were true then everybody in a particular situation would react the same way, but this isn't what happens. People can have the same experience but feel very differently about it. The way we feel is affected by the way we think.



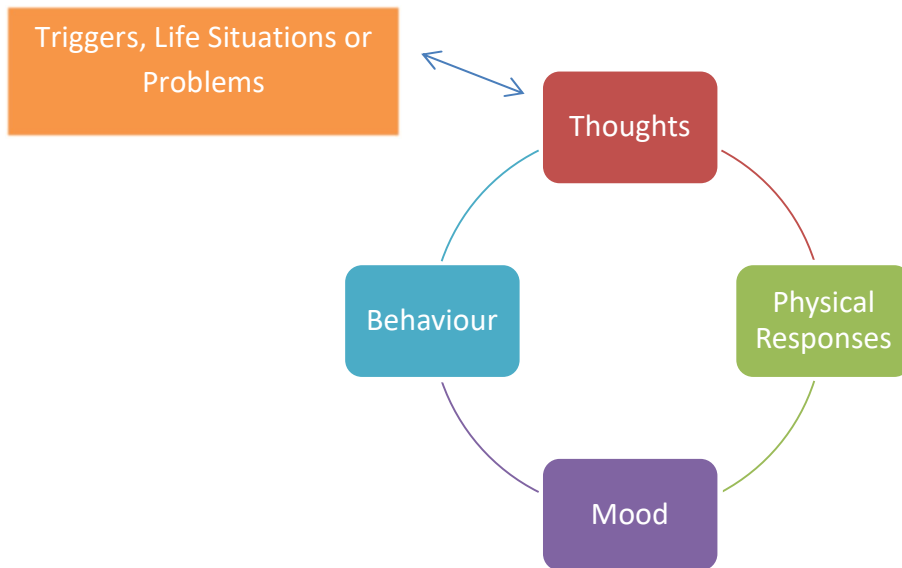
Our thoughts and feelings often affect what we do, and this can then become part the problem. For example, someone thinking negative thoughts about themselves such as 'I'm a failure, no one likes me' may feel upset, sad or ashamed. As a result of these thoughts and feelings, they may stop going out as much and spend more time on their own. This in turn can cause them to feel even worse about themselves, which leads to more negative thoughts ('I'll always feel like this'), and so they get caught in a cycle where things feel worse and worse.

How Can CBT Help?

CBT can help you to break this cycle by identifying unhelpful patterns of thinking and behaviour, which could be maintaining your difficulties. During these group sessions you will learn techniques to help you change these patterns, to help you achieve your goals and overcome depression.

Change can be difficult, and it is normal to think "I can't see this helping me" or "I can't do it", particularly if you are caught in the vicious cycle! Asking for help can be difficult, and it can be hard to find the motivation to change. Any change takes effort, but the rewards can be huge.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Model



Task: Match the following, to the boxes in the diagram above

I'm useless

Anxious

Go out for a walk

Stay in bed

Headache

Turn off phone

Tired

Buy clothes

Guilty

They don't like me

Sad

Heart pounding

Get mum to look after baby

Crying

He doesn't understand

Put on a fake smile

I can't do this

Angry

Self-Monitoring

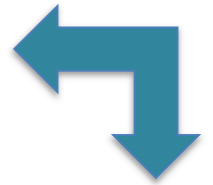
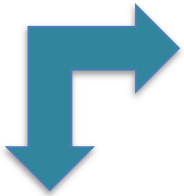
Monitoring is a helpful CBT strategy which helps you to better understand your own patterns of thinking and behavior, and how these relate to your mood. It does take commitment and work, but it can be really helpful. A simple monitoring tool can be just to use your phone calendar or diary and once a day reflecting on your mood (rating it from 0 = no depression to 10 = extremely depressed). This can help identify patterns, and figure out what makes your mood better or worse. Alternatively you can start noting times where there is a change in your mood (e.g. feeling sad, anxious or irritated) and then think about what the trigger situation was, what was going through your mind, any physical feelings, and how did you respond.

Your 5 Areas Model

Environment/situation (what, where, when, who)

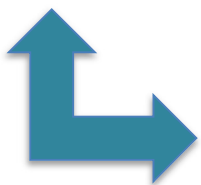


Thoughts (what was going through your mind, what pictures or memories did you have, what did this mean to you?)



Physical (what did you feel in your body?)

Behaviours (what did you do, or feel like doing)



Mood

(name your emotions and rate how strong they felt 0-10)

My Therapy Goals

Have a think about your personal goals. If you were feeling better, what would be different in your life? What would you like to change, perhaps by the end of the group sessions, or by the end of the year.

Short Term Goals- over the next 2 weeks

Medium Term Goals- by the end of the group sessions

Longer Term Goals- by the end of the year, or next year

*“A goal without a plan is
just.....a wish”*

Antoine de Saint-Exuberu

Weekly Tasks for Week One

CBT is an experiential process, so the tools and techniques covered in the sessions; need to be transferred outside of the session to everyday life, in order to have a positive impact on your mood. The weekly tasks have been designed to enable people to get the most from the course and in order for group members to get meaningful experiences; we will be spending time reviewing this together each session. Remember, if you don't make a change, nothing will change.

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through the first section of this booklet • Start self- monitoring. Using mood check-In (page 3), or example of CBT cycle (page 10). • Begin to set some goals for yourself (page 6 and 11) • Find your support network. Do I have current sources of support around me, or do I need to find people or organizations to support me (see appendix for support available locally and nationally).
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Two: Goals, and Expectations Vs Reality

My Therapy Goals

Have a think about your personal goals that you thought about last week, on **page 11**. Goals can help to motivate us but often we set goals that are too big or poorly set up. When we don't achieve them we can feel bad about ourselves, and this can contribute to the vicious cycle. When set up properly they can give us a sense of achievement.

SMART Goals

When setting yourself a goal, remember to think **SMART**

Specific – To set a specific goal you must answer the “W” questions:

- ***Who:** Who is involved?
- ***What:** What do I want to accomplish?
- ***Where:** Identify a location.
- ***When:** Establish a time frame.

EXAMPLE: A general goal would be, “Get in shape.” But a specific goal would say, “Complete a 20 minute workout video three times this week before dinner.”

Measurable – Establish a way of measuring your progress towards each goal you set.

When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience a sense of achievement that motivates you further. Ask questions such as.....

- How long?
- How often?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

Achievable – What would be achievable for me to do towards this goal in the next week? Taking small steps makes it easier to climb what feels like a mountain.

Realistic – What are you both *willing* and *able* to work towards? A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. A high goal may be easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labour of love.

Timely – Set yourself a time frame to complete and review this goal, that feels possible.

Making Changes

Think about other times in your life when you have made a change e.g. giving up smoking, starting a new job, learning to drive, taking up a new hobby. What can you take from these experiences to help you now?



The Ski Slope Analogy

Think about a mountain covered in fresh fallen snow. As people start skiing down the slopes, paths will appear. People tend to follow each other, and during the day, well-worn routes will start to appear, with the snow becoming flattened and smooth. The easiest and fastest way down the mountain is to follow these paths.

But what if you want to take a new route, and go “off piste”? This involves carving out a new path through the fresh snow. This is initially slower and harder work, but you can still get down the mountain. You may find a better route, one with more impressive scenery, or a more exciting ride. Although this may require more effort in the short term, with repetition this path too will become well-worn, and the journey will become easier and faster.

Building Motivation to Change

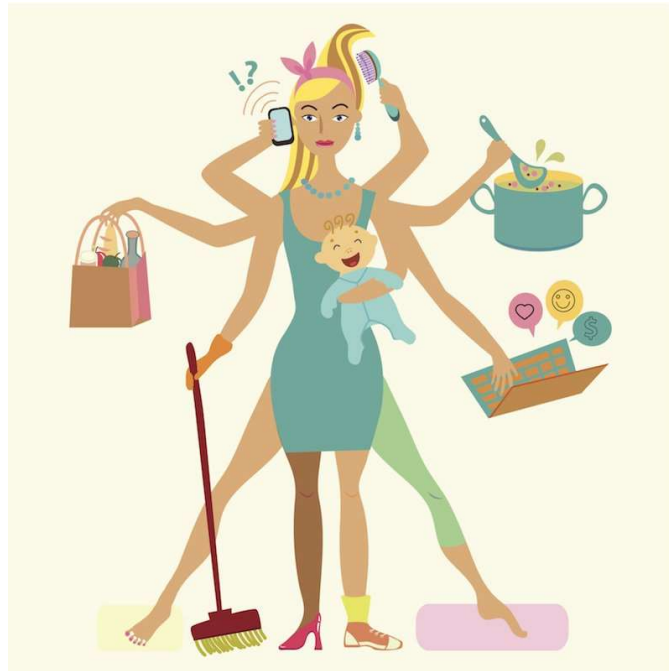
Sometimes you can have mixed feelings about making changes and trying something new. For example- coming here today you may have felt hopeful at the thought of feeling better, but nervous at the thought of meeting new people. One way of thinking about change is to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of doing something, but also what would happen if you do not take that step.

Look at the Change Balance sheet and think about coming to the session today. What are the advantages and disadvantages of attending, and of not attending this course?

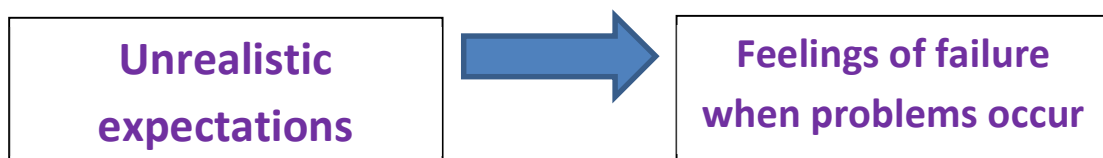
Advantages of attending this course	Disadvantages of attending this course
Advantages of not attending the course	Disadvantages of not attending this course

Expectations Vs Reality

Our experiences of pregnancy, birth and early parenting are often not what we imagined or expected them to be. Every pregnancy, birth and baby is different and this can influence us, how we feel, how we cope and our early parenting experience.

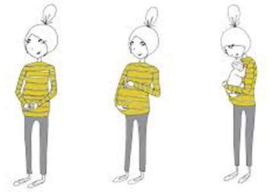


Most mothers experience difficulties adjusting to their new role and may feel overwhelmed by the demands. There are also lots of myths about motherhood that can create unrealistic demands and expectations by and from the new mother.



Let's explore this further

Task: Think about your transition to motherhood. In pairs or as a group. discuss this and please use the worksheet below:



Getting Pregnant

Pregnancy

What were your expectations of pregnancy?

How did this compare to how you felt during pregnancy?

Birth

What sort of birth did you expect/ hope for?

How did this compare to what actually happened?

What surprised you about labour and delivery?

Motherhood

How prepared were you before baby arrived?

How has your experience compared to what you expected?

What difficulties have you encountered?

What strengths have you found in yourself or your partner?

What has been the best aspect of motherhood so far?

Reflections after completing this exercise.....

Please make a brief note about how you feel after completing this exercise

↓

Understanding your Story

Past Experiences:

Your childhood, your own experiences of parenting, any previous mental health issues, previous pregnancies, miscarriages, fertility treatment, your relationships and any abuse

Conception, Pregnancy and Birth Experience: Unplanned pregnancy, difficulties during pregnancy, traumatic birth, Infant-related difficulties (poor sleep, feeding problems, allergies, illnesses), baby's temperament, lack of support, isolation, sleep deprivation

Underlying Beliefs:

How do you see yourself, other people, and the world.
Beliefs about yourself as a parent. Beliefs about parenting and motherhood

Assumptions and Rules:

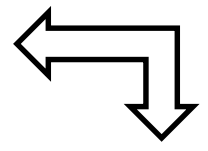
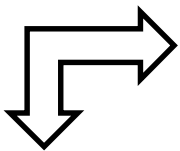
Perfectionist rules. Expectations of yourself and motherhood. Self-Belief.

Current Situation/Context:

Financial difficulties, lack of support, relationship problems, bereavement, physical health issues, disability, change in role, loss of valued employment or activity, other recent stressful life events
Cultural or family context and attitudes to family/parenting, society and social media

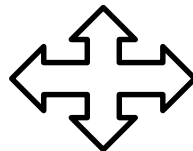
Thoughts

Negative thoughts, self-criticism, comparing yourself to others, worrying about your baby or doing the "right" thing, what if something bad happens, intrusive thoughts about harming baby



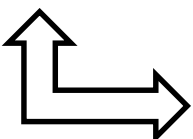
Physical Experiences:

Pregnancy or recovery from childbirth, hormones, breastfeeding, tiredness, pain, tearfulness, on edge, raised heart rate, tension, shakiness



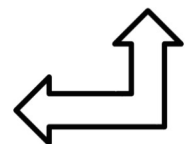
Behaviours:

Withdrawing from others, do less, avoid things. Keep busy, clean lots
Checking, obsessive "Googling", seeking reassurance, Put on a front, hide feelings



Mood

Sad, angry, guilty, ashamed, daunted, overwhelmed, confused, apprehensive, self-conscious, anxious, frightened, irritable, "up and down", numb, detached



Past Experiences:

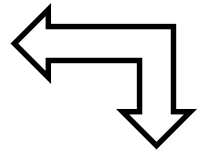
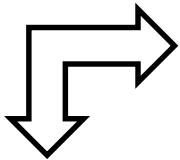
Conception, Pregnancy and Birth Experience:

Underlying Beliefs: *(we will look at this together in week 11)*

Assumptions and Rules: *(we will look at this together in week 9)*

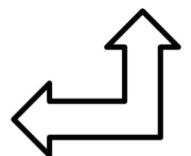
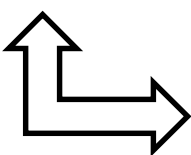
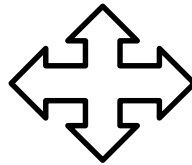
Current Situation/Context:

Thoughts



Physical Experiences:

Behaviours:



Mood

Week Two Tasks

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through the week 2 of this booklet• Continue self- monitoring, either just rating your mood, or noting down triggers and what happens as a result in the 5 areas model• Ensure the goals you have set are SMART• Reflect on your story and consider the experiences that may have impacted on your wellbeing.
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Three: Changing our Behaviours, Self Care

The Mood-Activity Link

This session focuses on the link between mood and behaviour, or activity.

How you feel emotionally affects how you behave. When you feel low in mood, it is common to feel low in motivation and energy. You may lose interest in your usual activities, or want to withdraw from other people. Low mood often leads to a reduction in activity; you may stop doing the things you would usually do, avoid other people, and stay at home more.

Low mood leads to changes in activity. Loss of interest, motivation and energy



Reduced activity maintains low mood
Less enjoyment, achievement or distraction from thoughts

Sometimes the opposite may happen, and you may become over-active, keeping busy and trying to distract yourself from your emotions or thoughts. Being over-busy can be exhausting! It can also prevent you from addressing underlying problems, and therefore these problems stick around.

Feel exhausted, overwhelmed, not able to accomplish everything



Keep busy, go out all the time, sign up for classes and

When we become a parent our routine changes, we often move away from the things we used to do that made us feel better, our values often change and we focus more on necessary tasks for our children or family. This is natural, but can move us away from things that used to help us to manage our mood.

Reversing the Vicious Cycle through Activities

When we feel depressed, we stop doing many of the activities in our lives because we feel overwhelmed, or don't have the motivation to do things. Or perhaps other priorities have taken us away from these activities. It may be the last thing you feel like doing, but activity really **can** help you feel better. Depression is often a sign that something needs to change.

Becoming more active has a number of advantages:

- Doing things you enjoy can boost your mood
- Gives you a sense of achievement
- Activity actually makes you feel less tired
- Helps you think more clearly
- Bonding time with baby
- Social support from others

Having said this, it is important that you don't set yourself up to have expectations that are based on how you used to feel. Maybe you used to clean your whole house in a day, but now it might be a pretty big achievement to just vacuum one room!

Activity is more than "just doing it", as the saying goes. When people feel depressed, doing the kinds of things that will keep life moving and on track feels difficult, if not impossible. The activities that are meaningful to you and your life are what are important

The problem with inactivity:

*The less we do
the worse we feel*



*The worse we feel
the less we do!*

What activities used to improve my mood? What used to be important?

What hobbies / interests / activities have stopped since having a baby?

What, in particular, did I value or gain from these activities?

Increasing Activities

To stay well, we need a balance of **BACE**

We all need:

1. **Body Movement** – activities that involve us moving our muscles. This doesn't have to be formal exercise or training; it can simply be walking, stretching, dancing, or running around in the park with family.
2. **Achievement**- activities that give us a sense of achievement really help us feel good about ourselves. Learning a new skill, completing a task or project, making something, reaching a goal. Setting realistic goals is key in enabling us to accomplish something.
3. **Connection** – spending time with other people. Humans are social beings, we need human contact, and the company of other people who value us and support us. Spending too much time alone is not helpful to our mood.
4. **Enjoyment**- activities that are fun, enjoyable, pleasant can really lift our mood. Things that make us laugh, relax, rest, or activities that we find interesting or stimulating can all improve how we feel.

Activities involving your baby, partner or older children can also be a great way of developing relationships and having fun together.

No matter what it is you choose to do, by making a change to what you are doing at the moment, you are taking a step forwards.

Have any of these areas changed for you since becoming a parent?

The main goal this week is to start thinking about increase the number of pleasant activities you engage in each day. Such as:

- ✓ **Pleasant social interactions**: e.g. honest & open conversation with a friend; cuddles or a warm bath with baby or partner
- ✓ **Experiences that make us feel competent**: e.g. successfully learning to do something new; being able to settle our own baby when no one else has been able to.
- ✓ **Activities that are incompatible with feeling depressed** e.g. sleeping well; laughing; being relaxed, self-care activities, pampering

Sometimes it can be hard to think of an activity on the day. On the following pages is a list of activities that you could use to start you thinking about what you could do. Look through the list and mark those activities that you think you might like to try.

Don't expect to feel any great enthusiasm for any of them at the moment, this comes with time. The key to introducing activities is balance of both daily tasks and activities that are enjoyable; when you are struggling with depression, it is often the routine tasks that are prioritised and pleasurable activities may not be thought about.



At worst **you've given yourself an opportunity to feel better**. The important thing is to persist and not give up thinking that 'this is just one more thing I've tried that doesn't work'. Just like when we first start exercising, you need to practice to see any effect. This is the first step to breaking the vicious cycle.

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”
- Lau Tzu

Fun activities catalogue

The following is a list of activities that might be fun and pleasurable for you. Feel free to add your own fun activities to the list.

1. Having a bath
2. Planning for a holiday
3. Upcycling some furniture
4. Relaxing
5. Going on a date
6. Going to see a film
7. Jogging or walking
8. Making a playlist of your favourite songs
9. Buying something new for your home
10. Lying in the sun
11. Watching something funny
12. Reading magazines or newspapers
13. Starting a new hobby (e.g. crocheting, sewing, cross stitching or photography)
14. Spending an evening with good friends
15. Meeting new people
16. Finding some beautiful scenery
17. Saving money
18. Play a board game
19. Going to the gym, doing an exercise video
20. Eating your favourite food
21. Practising karate, tai chi or yoga
22. Doing DIY around the house
23. Working on my car / bicycle
24. Having a quiet evening in
25. Taking care of my plants
26. Planting a vegetable
27. Going swimming in the sea or a pool
28. Doodling or mindful colouring
29. Going to a party
30. Playing golf or football or other sport
31. Flying a kite
32. Organise a family get-together
33. Riding a motorbike
34. Have some sex
35. Going camping
36. Singing around the house or in the car
37. Arranging flowers
38. Going to church, praying (practising religion)
39. Going to the beach
40. Think of something positive about myself
41. Going ice skating or roller skating
42. Going sailing or surfing or paddleboarding
43. Going somewhere new
44. Sketching or painting
45. Driving somewhere unplanned
46. Inviting people round
47. Join a local club or online group
48. Going birdwatching
49. Joining a choir
50. Playing musical instruments
51. Doing arts and crafts
52. Making a gift for someone
53. Cooking or baking something new
54. Writing a books / poems / articles.
55. Going out to dinner
56. Starting a book club
57. Gardening
58. Getting a beauty treatment or at home pampering
59. Early morning coffee and newspaper
60. Watching my children play
61. Going to plays and concerts
62. Listening to the radio
63. Going for a bike ride
64. Travelling to national parks
65. Having a video call with friends
66. Going crabbing or fishing
67. Star gazing
68. Flying a plane
69. Reading a book
70. Having some time alone
71. Writing diary/journal entries or letters
72. Cleaning
73. Taking children to places
74. Dancing
75. Going on a picnic
76. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
77. Meditating
78. Having lunch with a friend
79. Thinking about happy moments in my childhood
80. Making a photo book or slideshow
81. Doing jigsaw puzzles
82. Dressing up fancier than normal
83. Reflecting on how I've improved
84. Buying something for myself
85. Going to museums, art galleries
86. Lighting candles
87. Having coffee at a cafe
88. Saying "I love you"
89. Going bowling
90. Doing woodworking
91. Going to a dance class
92. Playing a video game
93. Going rock climbing
94. Going litter picking on the beach
95. Volunteering
96. Playing with my pets
97. Having a barbecue

Activity Planning

This section covers how to plan, or schedule activities, to boost your mood.

Planning when, where and how an activity will happen makes it much more likely that it **will** happen.

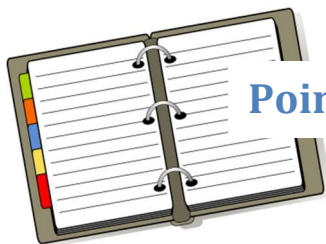
For example: I want to go out more.....

Instead: I will go out three times a week.

Every Monday I will go to playgroup with a my friend

Each Wednesday I will go and see mum

On Thursday evening I will go to yoga after the kids are in bed



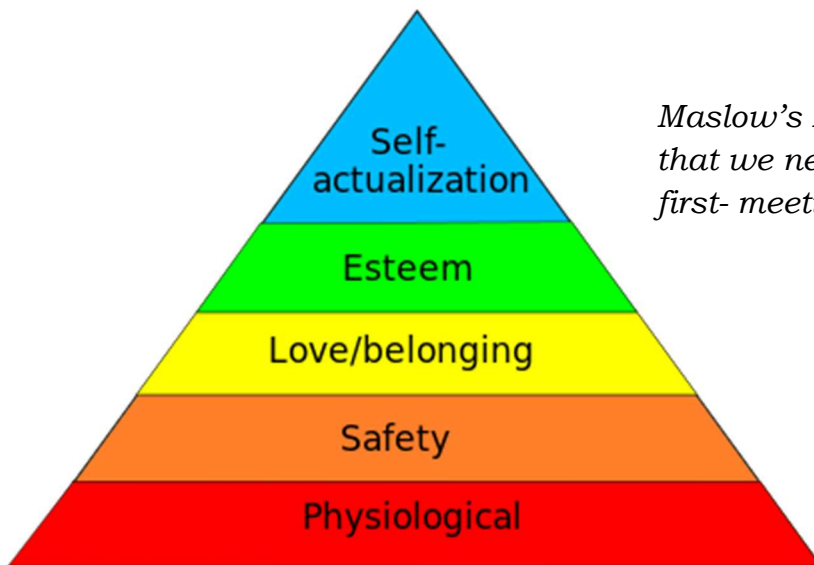
Points to Keep in Mind when Planning Activities

- Have I got a balance of BACE activities?
- What used to be important to me? Can I do anything similar now?
- Have I included some self-care?
- What will help me remember to do things? Diary, phone reminders, calendar, post-it notes, lists, diary sheet
- Start small and build up – make one change at a time 😊

Looking After Yourself

You may notice that when your mood is low, you tend to devote less time and effort to looking after yourself. Your appetite may be affected, sleep may be disturbed, and motivation to live a healthy lifestyle may be low.

Looking after yourself may be particularly difficult when you have a baby. Time is short, so preparing healthy meals may be a challenge. Things that you may have done before, like taking long baths, putting on makeup or doing your hair can seem impossible. Yet the food and drink you take in, your sleep patterns and spending time on your appearance may all have an effect on your mood.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs says that we need to take care of the basics first- meeting our body's needs

You also need to look after yourself to be able to look after your children.

**Think about the oxygen masks
on airplanes- put yours on first!**



Meeting Our Body's Needs

You may notice that when your mood is low, you tend to devote less time and effort to looking after yourself. Your appetite may be affected, and motivation to live a healthy lifestyle may be low. You may lack the energy to prepare nutritious meals, or manage any ongoing health conditions, or you may prioritise your children's needs much more than your own. There is a strong link between diet, routine and our mood.

Four Pillars of Wellbeing



1. Diet
2. Relaxation
3. Exercise
4. Sleep

We will cover some of these areas in more detail next week (sleep and relaxation), but for today please consider:

What has changed in these areas?

Are they in balance?

Is there one change that I can make to improve my routine over the next week?

Some useful videos: Maslow's Hierarchy of need

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLHiWjMFYUU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IETlvTNWhPg>

You also need to look after yourself to be able to look after your children. Think about the oxygen masks on airplanes- put yours on first!

Making a Change

Sometimes it can be helpful to compare the pros and cons of making a change, versus staying the same. It might help you find some extra motivation to make a change in your life. This technique can also help you understand what might hold you back from making that change. For example:

Advantages of Exercise	Disadvantages of Exercise
Get fitter Healthier Meet new people Learn something new Improve my mood- endorphins	Fun Fresh air Might feel embarrassed Not having the energy Having to find childcare Leaving my baby with someone else
Advantages of not Exercising	Disadvantages of not Exercising
Less effort Don't have to go out Not having to pay for classes or exercise clothes	I will not get fitter I would like to be healthier for my children Miss out on other benefits of exercise such as boosting my mood If I don't try I will never know whether I can do it. I might enjoy it

Have a go at completing a Change Balance Sheet for one of your chosen changes this week:

Advantages of.....	Disadvantages of.....
Advantages of not doing it, staying as I am	Disadvantages of not doing it

Weekly Tasks for Session 3

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through week three booklet• Start to plan in activities using the weekly planner on the next page• Add in one self-care activity for the week• Think about any change you are thinking of making and use the decision balance tool to consider pros and cons
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

⇒ Activity ↓	Day	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
AM								
PM								
EVE								

Week 4: Sleep and Relaxation

Impact of Sleep Problems

Everything seems better after a good night's sleep, or so the saying goes. Lack of sleep can affect your emotions, and make everything seem worse. Tiredness can affect your memory, concentration and attention, and lead to irritability or tearfulness. Sleep deprivation goes hand in hand with having a baby, and whilst some babies seem to get the hang of sleeping longer stretches from a fairly young age, others seem to take much longer to develop a sleeping pattern that allows you to get more rest.

If you are concerned about your child's sleeping pattern, and would like more support, please do speak to your Health Visitor. There are various techniques that you can try, and your Health Visitor can work with you to find a method that suits you and your parenting style.



My baby is asleep but I'm wide awake...

Sometimes it isn't your baby keeping you awake at night.

If you find that you have difficulty sleeping, even if your baby is snoring peacefully, then you are not alone. Many parents find that they continue to wake up, even after their baby has started sleeping through. Disturbed sleep is often a feature of depression, with difficulty getting to sleep, waking up during the night, or early morning waking.

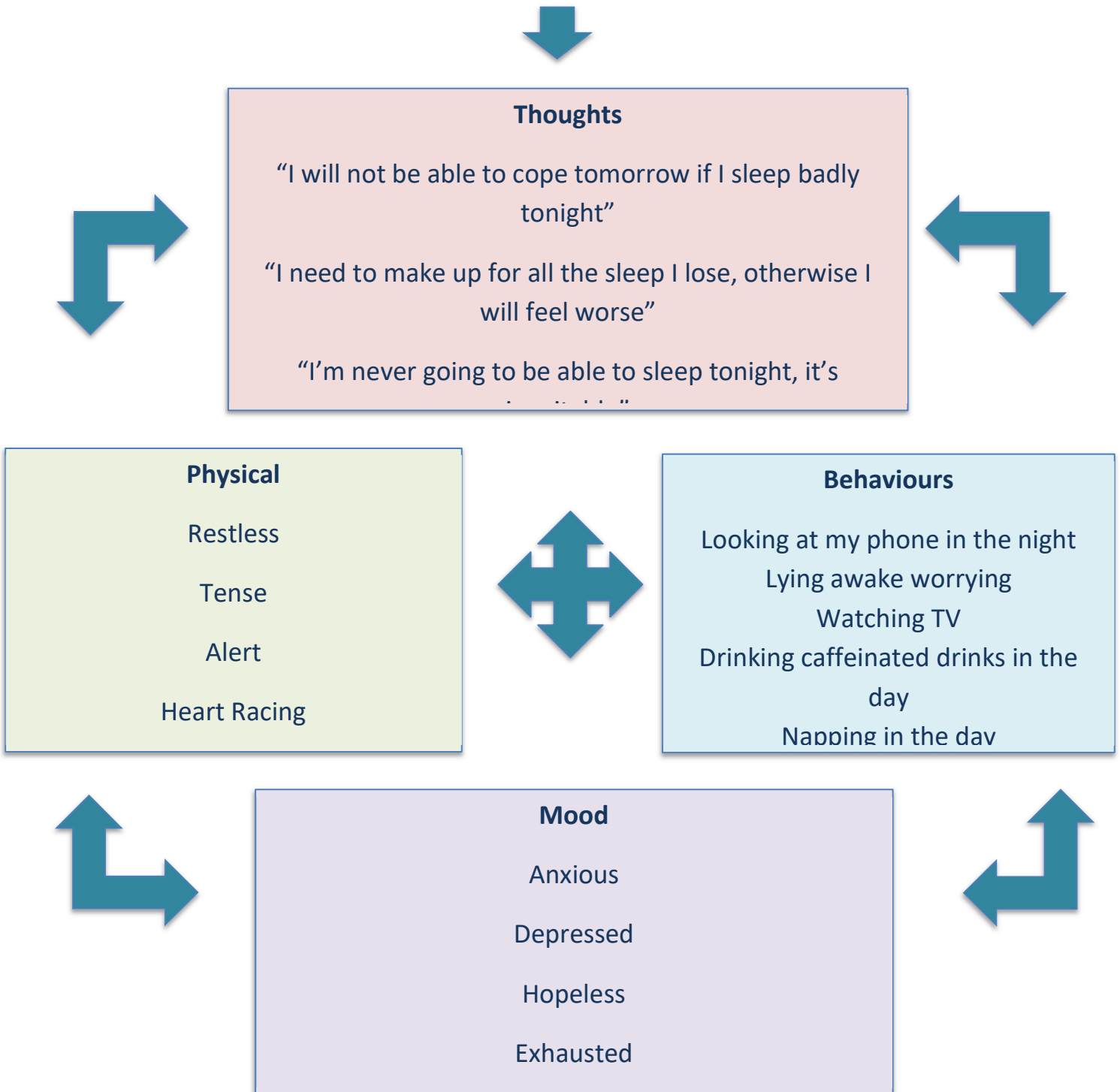
Wind Down Routine

We know the importance of babies and children having a bed time routine, in order to wind down and be ready and relaxed for sleeping. For some reason when we become adults, we can sometimes expect to fall asleep as soon as our heads hit the pillow, even if we have spent all day alert and busy. We may feel physically and mentally tired, but a winding down routine can be really important to teach our mind and body when it's time to switch off, and allows a more restful night's sleep.

Do I have my own winding down routine?

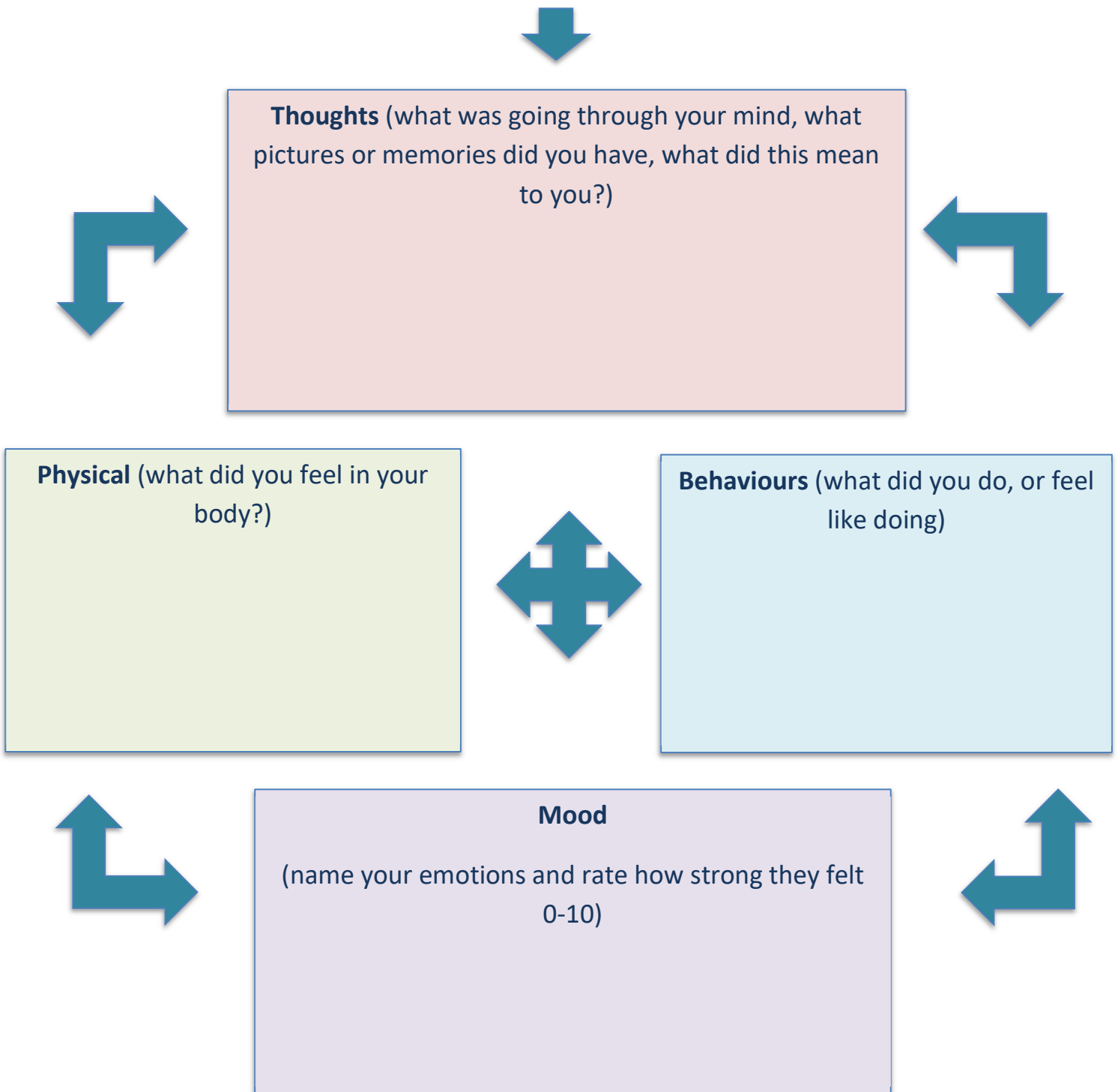
Poor Sleep Cycle

An example of a vicious cycle of poor sleep:



My Sleep Cycle

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



What happens at each stage?

Drowsiness/light sleep - Stage 1

We move from waking to sleeping – takes about 15 minutes

Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep

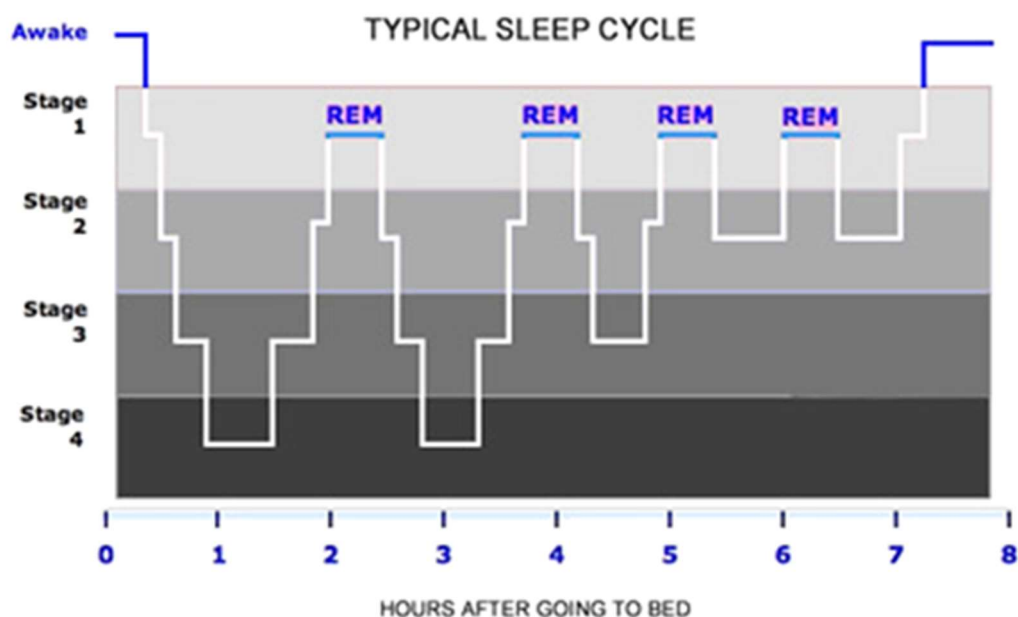
We spend around 25% of the night in REM sleep, which was only recognised in 1953, and is where most of our dreams happen. Apart from the eyes and essential muscles like the heart and breathing muscles, we cannot move! REM sleep may help us 'sort out' the day's events and defuse the emotions generated (Loughborough Uni), but there is still much we don't know about it.

Light Sleep - Stage 2

Muscles relaxed and heartbeat regular (about 50-60% of total sleep is in this stage)

Deeper Sleep - Stage 3 & Stage 4

Together these stages make up deep sleep which restores the body and allows repair and growth



Beliefs about sleep

Worry over lack of sleep can become more of a problem than the lack of sleep itself! When we are tired, we are more likely to be low in mood, and when we are low in mood we are more likely to worry about things, including our sleep,

Typical beliefs....



Notice these thoughts, and the emotions they arouse – frustration, anxiety, anger – these all arouse the body and make it harder to sleep. What can we do about this?

The answer is to examine the thoughts and see how much reality there is – could there in fact be other ways of looking at things?

“I need to make up all the sleep I lose or it'll affect my health”

I don't need to make it up hour for hour. The body gets most of its deep sleep in the first four hours, so will prioritise that when I do get to sleep.

“I'll never cope tomorrow if I sleep badly tonight”

I may not feel at my best, but I have had busy days before when I am tired and have managed to do all I had planned. I usually sleep better after a few days of poor sleep, so I may well sleep better tomorrow.

“I'm never going to get to sleep tonight”

I will almost certainly get some sleep, I nearly always do. And if I don't, I will the next night. My body will get what it really needs.

“I'm really irritable today - it's because I slept so badly last night”

I know lack of sleep can make me irritable, but so do other things! I wonder if I've taken on too much today and that is the real problem.

Sleep Problems

Create the right atmosphere and routine

We need to create our own routine in the evening that tells our mind and body to wind down to prepare for sleep. In addition, we need to consider what we do during the day, and the bedroom environment itself – to give ourselves the best chance of sleeping.

- Moderate (not vigorous) **exercise** is great in the day to make us tired – but not in the four to six hours before bed. Gentle exercise such as stretching or gentle walking is excellent before bed.
- Finish any **caffeinated** drinks four to six hours before bed and avoid **alcohol** before bed.
- **Don't eat** too close to bedtime, and avoid spicy or very sugary foods as this can keep you awake during the night.
- **Smoking** (nicotine) will wake you up rather than calm you down.
- If you like a bath to **relax**, have it an hour or so before bed, so the body is then cooling down, which promotes sleep.
- Establish a **routine** with a regular bedtime and regular waking time.
- Try not to **nap** in the day/evening
- Keep a **notebook** by the bed to record anxious thoughts, worries or “things to do” that pay pop into your head

Make a note of anything you think could improve your sleep:

.....

Still having problems? Try associating bed with sleep

The more we are in bed awake, worrying, perhaps tossing and turning, watching TV, reading or using a computer, the harder it is to sleep. We start to associate bed with stress and being awake, instead of sleep.

- Don't try to sleep until you feel sleepy (whatever the clock says) – stay up until you really feel you cannot stay awake another moment. If you are not asleep after 15-20 minutes of putting out the light, or you wake in the night and are still awake after 15-20 minutes then get up, go into another room and do something relaxing or boring until you are sleepy again. **N.B. – you'll need to check the clock the first few times, but in general it's not helpful to keep checking the time if you are lying awake** Prepare for this – decide what you will do, and where you will do it. Have a warm blanket and maybe a relaxing CD ready in the room you will use, fill the kettle and find a non-caffeine drink for when you need it. Keep the light level low.
- The bedroom should be quiet, cool and dark (light is a signal to us to wake up), and free of TVs, computers and so on. If you are sharing with a partner, you may need to consider earplugs or negotiating over the weight of the duvet!
- Make your bed as comfortable and supportive as you can; mattresses can be expensive to replace, so if yours is old you could try putting a cheap duvet under the bottom sheet.

Better Sleep Checklist

	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?			

Putting the day to rest

Choose the same time each evening, say seven o'clock, and take 20 minutes to sit down. Think about your day and write down the main points that come to mind – whether good or bad.

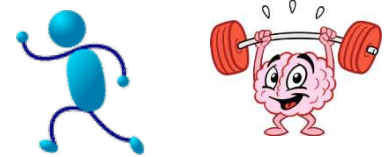
Think about tomorrow, and make a note of anything you need to do. If you can't do it all, think about how you could fit it into your week. At bedtime, remind yourself you have done this. If any new thoughts or worries come to mind, jot them down on a piece of paper by the bed and leave them for the next day's thinking time.

Creating a need for Sleep

In order to sleep well, we need to create a need for our body to go through the sleep stages so emotional processing and body restoration is needed. This means that we need to do activities which will use some of these energy levels during the day so that we can 'recharge' at night whilst sleeping.

Think about your activity levels throughout the day.

Are you doing enough to use up your energy resources?



Relaxation

Why is relaxation helpful?

- When we are stressed the muscles in our bodies tense up and this muscular tension causes uncomfortable feelings such as headache, backache, tight chest and so on.
- These aches and pains of tension can cause us to worry about why we have aches and pains, and therefore make us even more anxious and tense. People who are tense often feel tired.
- Relaxing slows down the systems in the body that usually speed up when we get anxious. If we can learn to turn on the bodily symptoms of relaxation we can turn off the symptoms of tension. Both systems cannot run at the same time.
- Stress affects our thoughts and our perceptions of our self, others and the world around us. By focusing on relaxation, we can reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress, and allow ourselves to take a step back and think differently about things.



Relaxation as a skill

- The ability to relax is not always something that comes naturally; **it is a skill which has to be learnt**. This takes time and practice. The more we practice, the easier it becomes and the better the results. Daily practice is recommended.
- There are different methods of relaxation (including breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation, visualisation), there is evidence that relaxation is effective but nothing to suggest that one method is better than another. Find the one that works best for you!
- Try and be patient when practicing, and try not to get too frustrated if your mind wanders. The more we notice our mind drifting, the more we are able to be mindful and bring our attention back to the practice.



Breathing

When the Fight or Flight response is triggered, our breathing becomes faster, to help us take in more oxygen to power our muscles when we run away, or fight off danger. If we are not actually running or fighting, this can lead to hyperventilation where we take in too much oxygen and feel light-headed.

Controlling and calming your breathing can help to dampen down the physical sensations of anxiety, prevent hyperventilation, relieve feelings of faintness and light-headedness, release tension in the chest and stomach areas, relax your body and divert your attention away from the situation that triggered the anxiety.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing is a technique that can be easily learnt and practiced to help reduce these symptoms and help to rebalance the O₂ and CO₂ levels in our body. The diaphragm is a large muscle that sits across the base of the ribcage. It is best to start practising this breathing technique daily so that it becomes like second nature.

- **Place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach.**
- **While you breathe in through your nose, notice your stomach area starting to rise and fall with the breaths. This means that you are fully inflating your lungs. Try to keep any movement in your chest to a minimum.**
- **Slowly and steadily breathe out through your nose.**
- **Repeat this cycle and try to fall into a rhythm. We should aim for eight to twelve breaths every minute.**
- **Breathing in and out equals one breath.**
- **Some people find it helpful to count as they breathe. Try breathing in to a slow count of three, and breathing out to a count of four, so that the out-breath is slightly longer than the in-breath.**
- **You do not have to “breathe deeply”, just aim for a steady, comfortable rhythm.**

As with any new skill, it may be difficult at first. If you find it tricky, try imagining that you are gently blowing on a candle flame, so that it flickers but does not go out.



Progressive Muscular Relaxation Script

Find yourself a quiet place to relax. Turn off your phone and dim the lights. This is your time...a time for complete and utter relaxation.

For this relaxation, you can either sit or lie down. Just make sure that you are warm enough, and that you are comfortable. Let your hands rest loosely in your lap, or by your side. Now close your eyes.

Become aware of your breathing, and notice how your abdomen rises and falls with each breath...

Now take a long slow deep breath in through your nose, all the way down into your stomach. Hold the breath for just a moment, and then exhale through your mouth. Allow your breath to carry away all stress and tension as the air floods out of your lungs.

Take another slow breath in through your nose. Fill your lungs completely. Hold it for a moment...and release the breath through your mouth. Empty your lungs completely.

Take a third deep breath in. Hold it for a moment, and then let it go.

Feel that your body has already undergone a change. The tension in your body has begun to loosen and subside.

Now let your breathing rhythm return to normal...and relax....

During this relaxation I will ask you to tense various muscles throughout your body. Please do this without straining. You do not need to exert yourself, just contract each muscle firmly but gently as you breathe in. If you feel uncomfortable at any time, you can simply relax and breathe normally.

Bring your awareness to your feet and toes. Breathe in deeply through your nose, and as you do, gradually curl your toes down and tense the muscles in the soles of your feet. Hold your breath for just a few seconds and then release the muscles in your feet as you breathe out. Feel the tension in your feet wash away as you exhale.

Notice how different your feet feel when tensed and when they are relaxed.

Take another deep breath in again, tense the muscles in the soles of your feet and hold this position for a few seconds. Now release. Feel yourself relaxing more and more deeply with each breath. Your whole body is becoming heavier, softer and more relaxed as each moment passes.

Now bring your awareness to your lower legs...to your calf muscles. As you draw in a nice deep breath, point your toes up towards your knees and tighten these muscles. Hold for just a moment, and then let those muscles go limp as you exhale.

Once again, draw in a deep breath...and tighten your calf muscles. Hold for a few seconds, and then let it all go. Feel your muscles relax, and feel the tension washing away with your out-breath.

In a moment you will tense the muscles in the front of your thighs. If you are lying down, you can do this by trying to straighten your legs. You'll feel the muscles pulling your kneecap upwards. If you are seated, you can tense these muscles by pushing your heels down onto the floor.

Take a deep breath in, and tense the muscles in your thighs. Hold for just a moment, and then release everything. As you do this, the blood flow to your muscles increases, and you may notice a warm tingling sensation. Enjoy this feeling of soothing relaxation in your thighs.

Again, breathe in deeply and tighten your thigh muscles. Hold for a moment. Now release. Focus on letting your muscles go limp and loose.

Draw in a nice deep breath and gradually tighten the muscles in your buttocks. Hold this contraction for a few seconds, and then release your breath. Feel the tension leaving your muscles. Feel them relaxing completely.

Once more, breathe in deeply and tighten the muscles in your buttocks. Hold for a moment. Now release them. You are becoming more and more deeply relaxed.

Take another breath, and this time, gradually tighten all the muscles in your legs, from your feet to your buttocks. Do this in whatever way feels natural and comfortable to you. Hold it...and now release all these large strong muscles. Enjoy the sensation of release as you become even more deeply relaxed.

Now bring your awareness to your stomach. Draw in a nice deep breath and then tighten these muscles. Imagine you are trying to touch your belly button to your spine. Now release your breath and let your muscles relax. Notice the sensation of relief that comes from letting go.

Once again, draw in a deep breath and then tighten your stomach muscles. Hold for a few seconds... and then let them relax as you exhale and release all tension.

Bring your awareness to the muscles in your back. As you slowly breathe in, arch your back slightly and tighten these muscles....Now release your breath and let your muscles relax.

Again, draw in a deep breath and then tighten your back muscles. Hold for a few seconds...and then let them relax and release.

Now give your attention to your shoulder muscles and the muscles in your neck. As you slowly draw in a nice deep breath, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly. Now breathe out completely, and allow your contracted muscles to go loose and limp.

Again, pull your shoulders up towards your ears and squeeze these muscles firmly.

Now feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.

Feel the heaviness in your body now. Enjoy the feeling. Feel yourself becoming heavier and heavier. Feel yourself becoming more and more deeply relaxed.

You are calm, secure, at peace.

Now it's time to let go of all the tension in your arms and hands. Let's start with your upper arms.

As you breathe in, raise your wrists towards your shoulders and tighten the muscles in your upper arms. Hold that breath and that contraction for just a moment...and then gently lower your arms and breathe all the way out.

You may feel a warm, burning sensation in your muscles when you tighten them. Feel how relaxing it is to release that tightness and to breathe away all tension.

As you curl your upper arms again, tighten the muscles as you breathe in. Breathe in deeply. Now relax your arms and breathe out.

Now bring your awareness to your forearms. As you breathe in, curl your hands inwards as though you are trying to touch the inside of your elbows with your fingertips. Now feel the tension subside as you relax and breathe out.

Again, take a deep breath in, and tighten the muscles in your forearms. Hold it for a moment, and then release them. Feel the tension washing away.

Now, take another breath in and tightly clench your fists. When you have finished breathing in, hold for just a few seconds, and then release. Notice any feelings of buzzing or throbbing. Your hands are becoming very soft and relaxed.

Take another deep breath in and clench your fists again. Hold for just a few seconds, and then release. Let your fingers go limp.

Your arms and hands are feeling heavy and relaxed.

Take a couple of nice long slow breaths now, and just relax. Feel yourself slipping even deeper into a state of complete rest.

Now tighten the muscles in your face by squeezing your eyes shut and clenching your lips together. As you do, breathe in fully. Hold it...now breathe out and relax all your facial muscles. Feel your face softening.

Once more, breathe in deeply while you scrunch the muscles in your eyes and lips....and release.

Now bring your awareness to the muscles in your jaw. Take a deep breath in, and then open your mouth as wide as you can. Feel your jaw muscles stretching and tightening. Now exhale and allow your mouth to gently close.

Again, fill your lungs with air and then open your mouth wide. Now let your mouth relax and let your breath flood all the way out.

You are now completely relaxed from the tips of your toes to the top of your head.

Please take a few more minutes to rest. Relax. Listen to the sound of your breathing and enjoy the lovely, warm sensation of physical relaxation.

*Please see the apps in the appendix,
for more information about
structured relaxation exercises.*

Weekly Tasks for Week Four

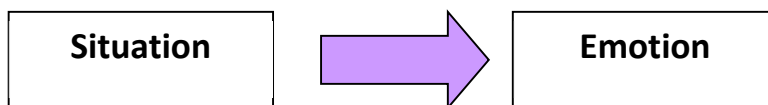
Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through this section of the booklet• Consider what factors might be affecting my sleep at the moment? What would my own wind down routine look like?• What is one change I can make this week, in order to try and improve my sleep routine?• Practice one of the relaxation exercises
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week 5: What we Say to Ourselves Matters

Mood-Thought link

In Session 1 we said that our thoughts have a big influence on how we feel.

Most of us believe that external events, situations and the behaviour of other people cause us to feel emotions like anxiety, sadness or anger. You might recall hearing yourself saying things like ‘she/he wound me up’ or ‘I’m upset because I didn’t get the job I wanted’.



If this were true then everybody in a particular situation would react the same way, but we know that different people react differently. This suggests that it is the way that we think about, perceive or interpret the situation or others actions that influences how we feel and behave.



Thoughts vs. Facts

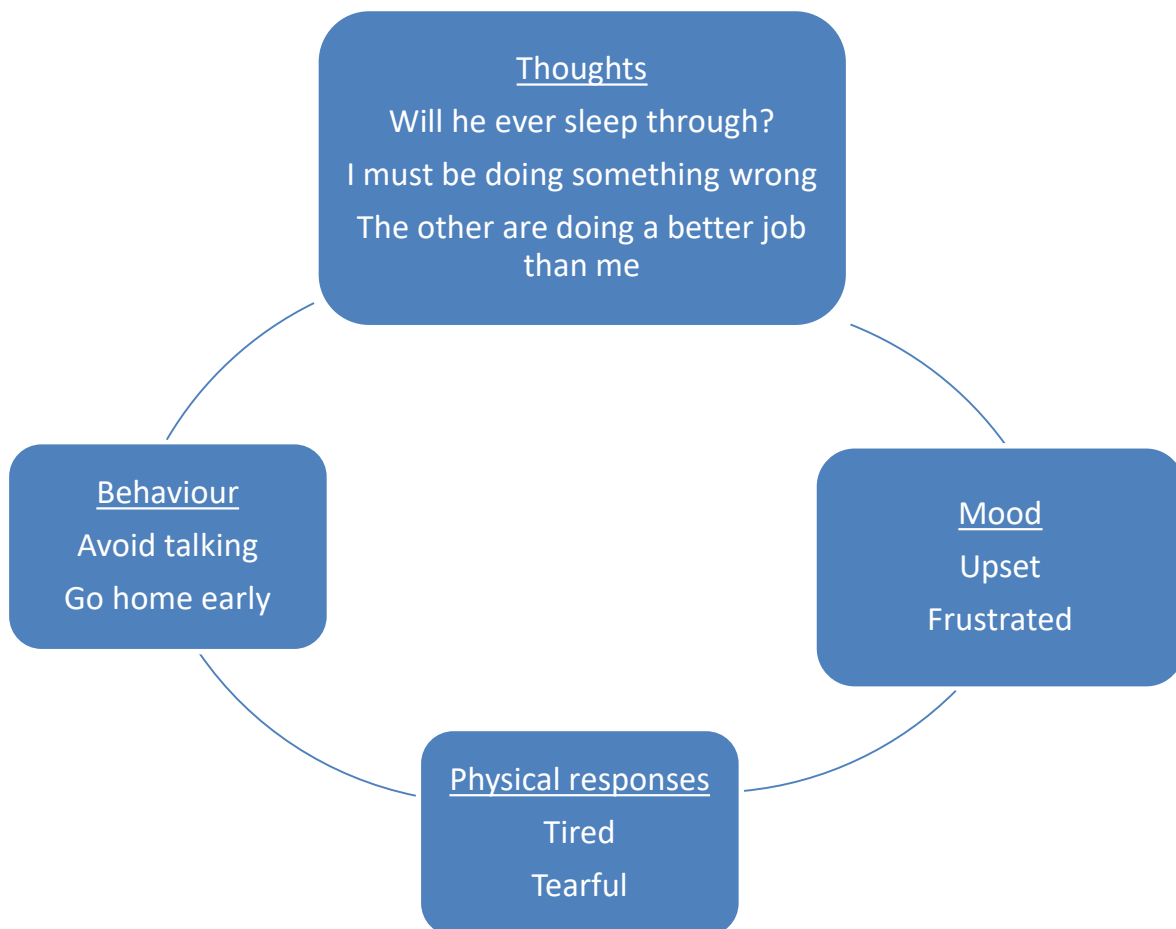
When we have a thought, our initial reaction tends to be that we believe it is 100% true, without evaluating how realistic or helpful it is. But sometimes we can “jump to conclusions”, or form a judgement about a situation without having all the facts. Sometimes we can form an opinion based on things that have happened to us in the past, which may not be relevant to the present. These would then be examples of “unhelpful thinking”.

We all have unhelpful thinking at times, for example if we walk into a room and say hello to someone only to have them not respond, our unhelpful thinking may automatically tell us ‘they don’t like me’, without stopping to evaluate the facts. When we are feeling ok our mind can consider alternative thoughts such as ‘perhaps they didn’t hear me, or they were thinking about something else and didn’t realise I was speaking to them’. If we’re not feeling good, our mind assumes that there are no alternatives. We tend to go for the negative thought, or get stuck in habitual patterns of thinking. This affects our mood, which in turn makes it harder to think of alternatives, leading us back to our vicious cycle.

Emma's Story

Emma was meeting her antenatal group for coffee. Everyone was talking about how well their babies were sleeping now, but Emma's son was still waking up at least once a night to feed. Emma started thinking that he would never sleep through the night, and that she must be doing something wrong. She felt low, and started to withdraw from the others as she didn't want them to ask about Zac's sleep. After half an hour, Emma made an excuse and went home.

Here is a vicious cycle diagram for Emma's experience:



The good news is that by becoming more aware of our negative thoughts, we can take steps to change them.

If our thoughts towards situations are unhelpful, we can learn to replace them with more helpful thoughts, which in turn can help us to feel better and behave differently. This helps to create a "virtuous" circle, rather than a "vicious" one.

Step 1 – Writing down our thoughts

1. We need to be able to identify the situation/trigger which occurred just before we noticed the shift in mood. Sometimes this can be a thought/image or memory.
2. Then we need to identify the consequences in terms of what we are
 - a. Feeling/Emotion
 - b. Doing/Behaviour

Giving our emotion a rating out of 10 can help us judge how strongly we felt that way (0 = low, 10= high).

3. Lastly we need to identify what was going through our mind when we started to feel this way. Record if it was a specific thought, or an image or even a memory.

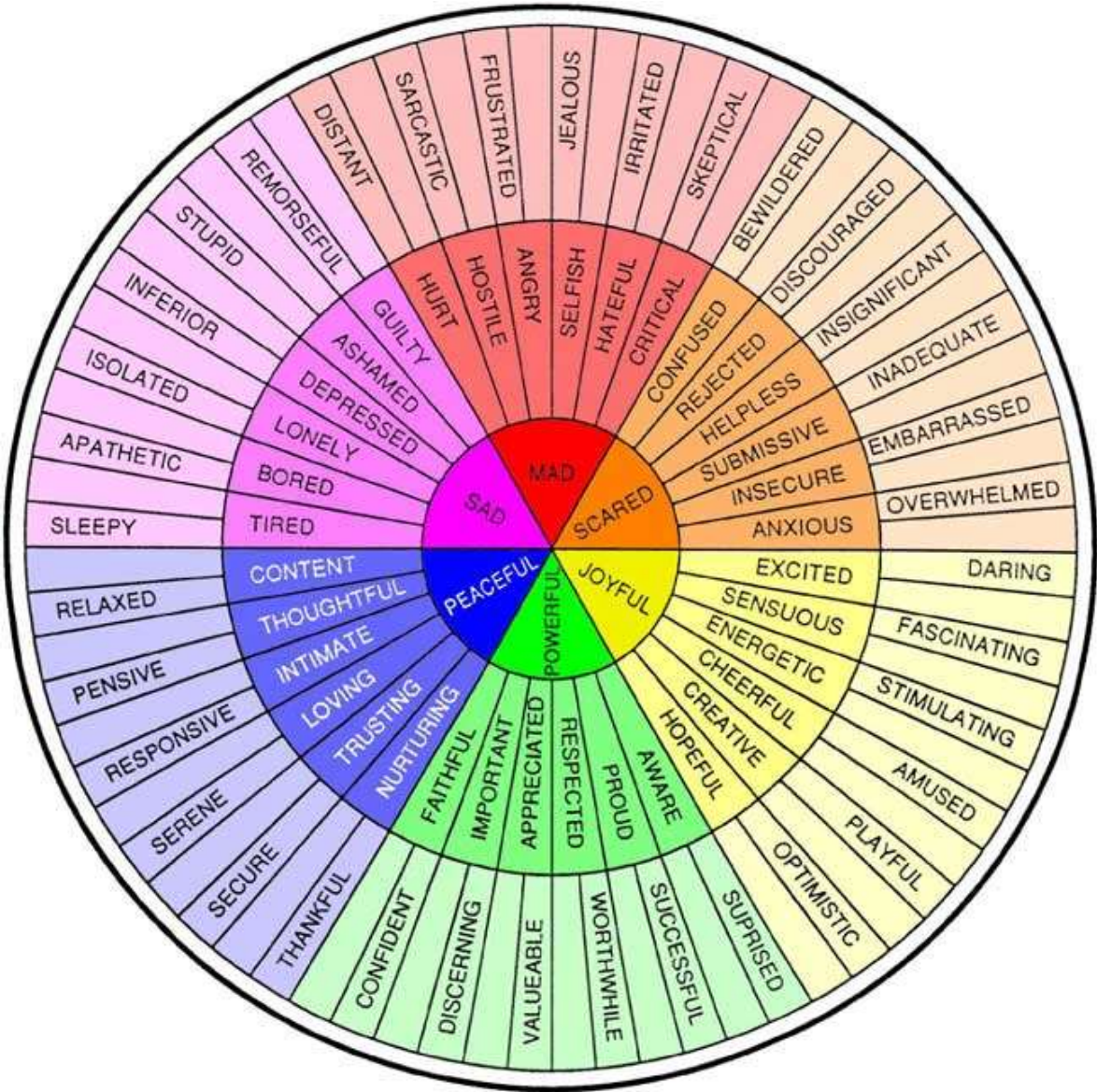
For Example:

Thought Record Form			
Situation	Emotion/Mood	Thoughts, images, memories	Behaviour
Colicky baby does not stop crying regardless what I do.	Hopeless 8/10 Helpless 10/10 Depressed 9/10 Worthless 7/10 Angry 7/10	I am no good at this. My mother would think I'm hopeless. I don't know what to do. I'm not a good mother. This is awful. I should be able to soothe the baby.	Try harder; avoid asking help; avoid meeting with people

Alternatively:

Thought Record Form			
Situation	Emotion/Mood	Thoughts, images, memories	Behaviour
Colicky baby does not stop crying.	Hopeful Calm	I have tried everything that any competent mother would have but my baby is still in pain. I will have to rock her until she settles. Perhaps I will make a cup of tea so I can have a drink while I do this. This will pass.	Ask help; taking turns with partner; Rock baby













Feelings Wheel



Have a look at the different words used to describe the different types of emotions. Start with the 6 emotions in the centre of the wheel- mad, scared, joyful, powerful, peaceful and sad. Look at the related emotions; for example someone feeling joyful could be feeling excited, sensuous, energetic, cheerful, creative or hopeful.

Unhelpful Thinking Habits

Over the years, we tend to get into unhelpful thinking habits such as those described below. We might favour some over others, and there might be some that seem far too familiar. Once you can identify your unhelpful thinking styles, you can start to notice them – they very often occur just before and during distressing situations. Once you can notice them, then that can help you to challenge or distance yourself from those thoughts, and see the situation in a different and more helpful way. *Blue text (italics) helps us find alternative, more realistic thoughts.*

 <p>Mental Filter - When we notice only what the filter allows or wants us to notice, and we dismiss anything that doesn't 'fit'. Like looking through dark blinkers or 'gloomy specs', or only catching the negative stuff in our 'kitchen strainers' whilst anything more positive or realistic is dismissed. <i>Am I only noticing the bad stuff? Am I filtering out the positives? Am I wearing those 'gloomy specs'? What would be more realistic?</i></p>	 <p>Judgements - Making evaluations or judgements about events, ourselves, others, or the world, rather than describing what we actually see and have evidence for. <i>I'm making an evaluation about the situation or person. It's how I make sense of the world, but that doesn't mean my judgements are always right or helpful. Is there another perspective?</i></p>
<p>Prediction - Believing we know what's going to happen in the future. <i>Am I thinking that I can predict the future? How likely is it that that might really happen?</i></p> 	<p>Emotional Reasoning - I feel bad so it must be bad! I feel anxious, so I must be in danger. <i>Just because it feels bad, doesn't necessary mean it is bad. My feelings are just a reaction to my thoughts – and thoughts are just automatic brain reflexes</i></p> 
<p>Mind-Reading - Assuming we know what others are thinking (usually about us). <i>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?</i></p> 	<p>Mountains and Molehills Exaggerating the risk of danger, or the negatives. Minimising the odds of how things are most likely to turn out, or minimising positives <i>Am I exaggerating the bad stuff? How would someone else see it? What's the bigger picture?</i></p> 
<p>Compare and despair Seeing only the good and positive aspects in others, and getting upset when comparing ourselves negatively against them. <i>Am I doing that 'compare and despair' thing? What would be a more balanced and helpful way of looking at it?</i></p> 	<p>Catastrophising - Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen <i>OK, thinking that the worst possible thing will definitely happen isn't really helpful right now. What's most likely to happen?</i></p> 
 <p>Critical self Putting ourselves down, self-criticism, blaming ourselves for events or situations that are not (totally) our responsibility <i>There I go, that internal bully's at it again. Would most people who really know me say that about me? Is this something that I am totally responsible for?</i></p>	<p>Black and white thinking - Believing that something or someone can be only good or bad, right or wrong, rather than anything in-between or 'shades of grey'. <i>Things aren't either totally white or totally black – there are shades of grey. Where is this on the spectrum?</i></p> 
<p>Shoulds and musts - Thinking or saying 'I should' (or shouldn't) and 'I must' puts pressure on ourselves, and sets up unrealistic expectations. <i>Am I putting more pressure on myself, setting up expectations of myself that are almost impossible? What would be more realistic?</i></p> 	<p>Memories - Current situations and events can trigger upsetting memories, leading us to believe that the danger is here and now, rather than in the past, causing us distress right now. <i>This is just a reminder of the past. That was then, and this is now. Even though this memory makes me <u>feel</u> upset, it's not <u>actually</u> happening again right now.</i></p> 

Step 2 – Identify Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Unhelpful Thinking Style:	Relevant for me? Yes/No	A recent example:
Mental Filter		
Jumping to Conclusions		
Mind Reader		
Emotional Reasoning		
Negative Predictions		
Mountains and Molehills		
Compare and Despair		
Catastrophising		
Critical Self		
Black and White thinking		
Shoulds and Musts		
Memories		

Weekly Tasks for Week Five

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through session 5 of the booklet• Start to record some of your negative thoughts and unhelpful thinking styles using the Thought Record Form on the next page
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Thought Record Form

Use this form to record examples of your thinking. You can use the form to record more than one example, just draw a line under each one to separate them.

Situation (what, where, when, who was there)	Emotion (label your feeling and rate intensity out of 10)	Thoughts (what was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way)	Thinking Styles (catastrophising, mental filter, shoulds/musts)	Behaviour (what did you do, or avoid doing)

Week 6: Thinking Differently

The key to changing the way we feel is to learn how to change our unhelpful thinking. This means we have to learn to re-evaluate our thoughts, almost like we are a detective or a lawyer. Instead of just accepting that what we are thinking is 100% true, we must learn to look for evidence to see whether or not our thoughts are accurate.

Hot Thoughts

Often there will be lots of thoughts going through our mind in a situation. It is not necessary to go through and re-evaluate them all though, as many thoughts follow a similar theme. Usually we can identify a main thought that links most closely to our emotion. We call this the “hot” thought.

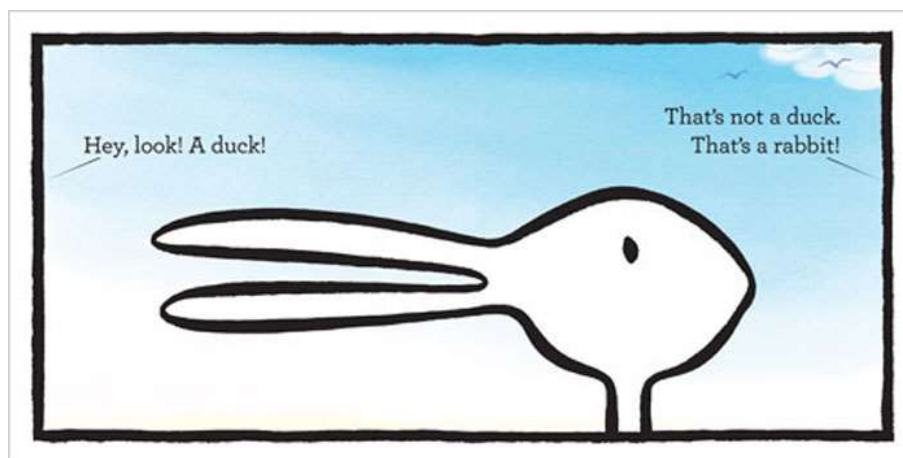
We may hold unrealistic expectations about pregnancy and parenthood (theme) that can give rise to negative automatic thoughts (see below for examples).

Expectation /belief	Negative automatic thoughts	Challenging the thought	
		Supporting Evidence	Evidence Against
The biological transition to parenthood should be smooth and natural	'I should not require use of anesthesia, forceps or episiotomy.'		
Attachment to my baby should be easy and free of negative feelings	'I should always feel love for my baby, if I don't I am a bad mother' 'Negative feelings toward my baby are wrong.'		
Being a parent should be manageable and any problems easily solved	'I should know what my baby needs/wants automatically' 'It should be easier with my second child.'		

Different Perspective

To help us re-evaluate our thoughts we can ask a number of questions

- What is the **evidence** that tells me my thought/belief is true? - *Would this hold up in court? Would a judge say there is enough evidence?*
- Is there any **evidence that disproves** my thoughts/belief?
- Are there any **other explanations**?
- How might **someone else view** this situation?



- What might **someone who cares about me** tell me if they heard me thinking this way?
- What might **I tell someone** if I heard them thinking this way?
- How would I have thought about this **before** I was feeling down?
- What is the **likelihood** that this will happen? *Would I bet my entire life savings on this outcome happening?*
- What is the **worst** that will happen? What is the **best** that will happen?
- How can I **cope** if the worst does happen?

Balanced alternative

The Traffic Accident Analogy

When there's a traffic accident, police ask for *witnesses* to come forward and describe what happened. They like to have *as many witness statements* as possible so that they can build up enough evidence to give them a broader, more realistic version of events. In a traffic accident, *there will be many different perspectives on what happened*. The driver of one car will have one view, another driver or a passenger will have yet another view. Each onlooker who witnessed the accident will have a slightly different perspective, depending on where they were, how far they were, how good a view they had, what else was going on, how much danger they felt they were in, how the accident affected them, what the accident means to them.



It's the same principle with everything - each situation, event, conversation, means something different to all those involved, and also to those not involved.

(Vivyan 2009, taken from www.get.gg)

The alternative, balanced thinking is like putting all the different perspectives together to come up with the most accurate, rational and helpful view. It can also be thought of as learning a new language – initially it can be difficult to grasp but with practice you can become fluent.

To recap:

1. Identify the thoughts you were having in a situation;
2. Find the “hot” thought;
3. Re-evaluate this thought by answering the questions listed on the previous page. Remember to look for factual evidence rather than your own opinions;
4. Balanced alternative – putting all the information together and to develop a more accurate, balanced view.



Thought Diary for Re-evaluating Thoughts

Situation (what, where, when, who)	Emotion (label and rate out of 10)	Thoughts What was going through your mind? Circle "hot" thought	Evidence Supporting Hot Thought	Evidence Contradicting Hot Thought	Alternative, balanced perspective	Re-rate Emotions
At a family lunch, my son was distracted and would not drink his milk. My in laws were saying that my son didn't need his bottle and I should stop trying to give it to him	Angry 30% Guilty 50% Upset 70%	I wish they would leave me alone Maybe they're right, maybe I am doing it wrong If he doesn't eat enough he won't sleep well He's just distracted, he usually drinks all his bottle Why isn't my husband sticking up for me This happens all the time I don't want to cause an argument I don't know what I'm doing, maybe I am overfeeding him I'm useless		He usually drinks all his milk. Lately he has been distracted when feeding He is developing really well and this shows that I am caring for him well My HV said that he is drinking and eating enough and he is a healthy weight I am being too critical of myself .I cannot say that I am useless based on this one situation. There are lots of things that I do very well My husband said that I should trust myself more	I am his mum and I know him better than they do. I am just doubting myself Others are entitled to their opinions but I will continue with what works for our family	Upset 20% Angry 20% Guilty 10%

Trouble shooting guide

– Help! I've completed a thought record form and I don't feel any different.

My mood is still the same.

If there is no change to your mood after completing a thought record form, ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I described a **specific** situation?
- Did I accurately identify and **rate** my emotion?
- Is the thought I am testing a “hot” thought **linked to the emotion** I want to change?
- Did I identify **multiple** “hot” thoughts? If so, I may need to gather evidence supporting and contradicting each one before my mood change.
- Is my hot thought a **question**? If so, try turning it into a statement by asking yourself how your depressed or anxious voice might answer this question. E.g. “what if I can't cope?” will become “I won't be able to cope”
- Did I write down **all the evidence** that I could think of? There needs to be several pieces of evidence contradicting a hot thought before developing an alternative, balanced perspective.
- Could I **ask someone else** to help me think of evidence against?
- Review the evidence supporting my hot thought. Are these **opinions or facts**? If they are just my opinion, they may be more example of “unhelpful thinking styles”. If they are facts, **do they prove that the original thought is 100% true?**
- Is my alternative **believable** to me? If not, review the evidence and try to write something that seems more credible for you.
- Sometimes it takes a while for us to start believing our newer way of thinking. Try **acting ‘as if’ you believe it** and see what happens. E.g. If I believe I have coped with difficult situations in the past, and therefore can cope in this situation, I would remain in the situation rather than avoiding or putting this off.
- Keep practicing, **give yourself time** to feel differently as this often does not happen straight away.

Thought Diary for Re-evaluating Thoughts

Situation (what, where, when, who)	Emotion (label and rate out of 10)	Thoughts What was going through your mind? Circle "hot" thought	Evidence Supporting Hot Thought	Evidence Contradicting Hot Thought	Alternative, balanced perspective	Re-rate Emotions

Weekly Tasks for Week 6

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through week 6 of the booklet• Try and identify your own “Hot Thoughts”• Evaluate any unhelpful thoughts• Consider challenging any unhelpful thinking styles.
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today’s Session	

Week Seven: Managing Anxiety

What is Stress?

Stress can be described as a feeling of being **under pressure**. We experience stress when the demands of the situation are greater than the resources we have available to manage them. For example, when we have lots of tasks to complete but not enough time to complete them in, or when we have to respond to new challenges without the necessary skills or experience, or perhaps without any support.

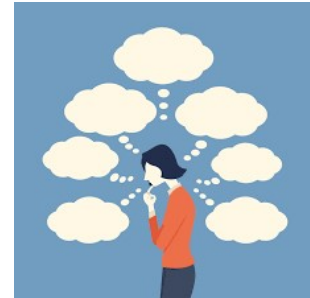
We can experience stress when faced with a big challenge, or through a **build-up** of several smaller tasks. It can be helpful to think about having a “**stress bucket**” which can only hold so much before overflowing. You may have heard the phrase “**the straw that broke the camel’s back**” - this is another way of thinking about how little things can build up and up, until we feel overwhelmed and stressed.



What is Anxiety? A Personal Exercise:

Take a few minutes to have a think and answer the following questions:

Q: How do you know you are anxious?



Q: How does anxiety effect how your body feels? (Physical Symptoms)

Q: How does anxiety effect how you think and see situations? (Thoughts)

Q: How do you cope with anxiety? (Behaviours)

Q How does anxiety impact your day to day life? What does it stop you doing? What does it make you do more of? (Behaviours)

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is the body's natural response to a **perceived threat**, or danger. Anxiety, worries and fears are experienced by us all from time to time. The symptoms themselves are not dangerous and are simply trying to keep us safe. Our fear response (also called the Fight or Flight response) helps us react quickly to an **immediate danger**. Some anxiety is natural, but some people experience high levels of anxiety, and may feel anxious very often. Anxiety is a common feature of Postnatal Depression.

The Fight or Flight Response

When we were evolving and adapting as early humans the threats we faced used to be very immediate and very real. We needed to be able to respond quickly and effectively to stay alive. Those who could survive and reproduce, so we have inherited the same brain mechanism that they had: the **Fight or Flight** response.

Imagine a bear walks into your room right now:

What do you want to do?

Run? Fight? Freeze?

Whatever you do, you had better do it fast!



The Fight or Flight response evolved to help us to **react quickly to danger**: to run away, to fight, (or sometimes freeze to be a less visible target). When the Fight or Flight response is triggered by our brain, **adrenaline** is released, which gets our body ready for action.

But for most of us, modern day life isn't about fighting or escaping predators or enemies anymore. The Fight or Flight response was designed to deal with life-threatening dangers, but **nowadays it is much more likely to be triggered by our fears or worries of a perceived danger**. The next time you feel anxious, try to ask yourself what the threat is? Is this life threatening? If the answer is no, then the fight or flight response is probably not helping.

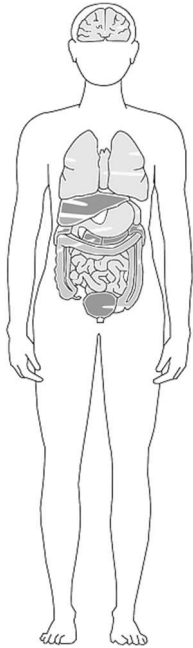


A good analogy is a **smoke alarm**. A smoke alarm is designed to alert us to the danger of fire but it cannot distinguish between steam from the shower, burnt toast or a house fire. While the first two examples are not real threats the third, is but the response of the alarm is the same- and in each case the alarm is difficult to ignore! **Anxiety can make our bodies turn into a more**

sensitive alarm system.

Adrenaline: getting the body ready for action

When adrenaline is released, it rushes through our body, getting it ready to fight off the danger, or to run away. Below are is a list of the main physical sensations that you may experience:

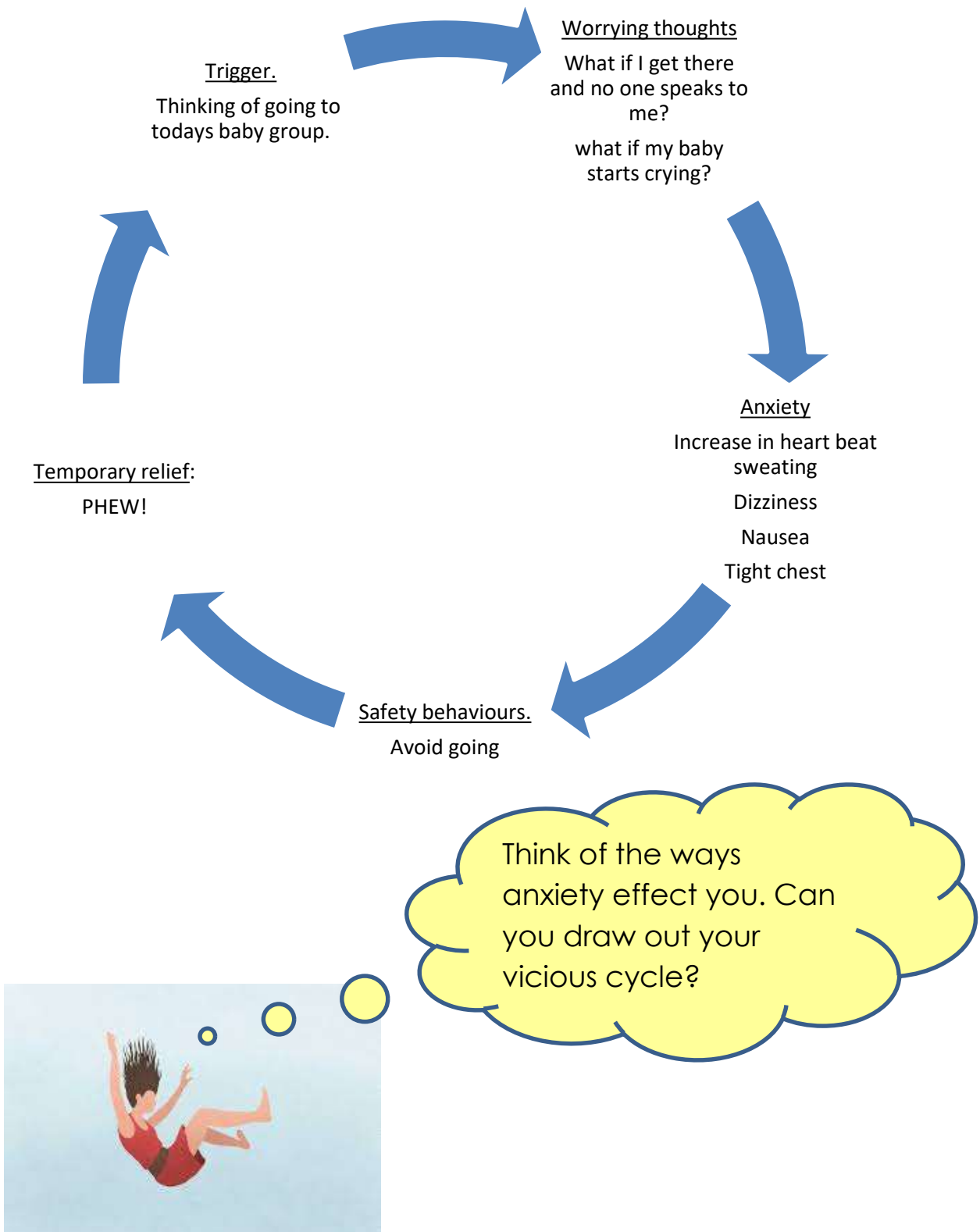


- Rate of **breathing** increases, so oxygen levels in the blood increase
- **Heart rate** increases, the heart beats harder, and blood pressure increases
- **Blood flow** is diverted from the core (digestive organs) to the periphery (limbs, skin)
- Blood vessels near the skin relax, leads to feeling **flushed or hot**, this in turn leads to **sweating**, so there may be alternating hot and cold
- Churning **stomach** or butterflies
- Needing to go to the **toilet**
- Reduced blood flow to salivary glands leads to **dry mouth**
- **Muscles tense** up, which can lead to tremors, pain or shaking
- **Pupils dilate** (to increase peripheral vision) but leading to a loss of focus, e.g. blurred vision
- Brain function changes, we become more instinctive and **less rational** or cognitive
- Sexual response inhibited, **loss of libido**

Know Your Triggers

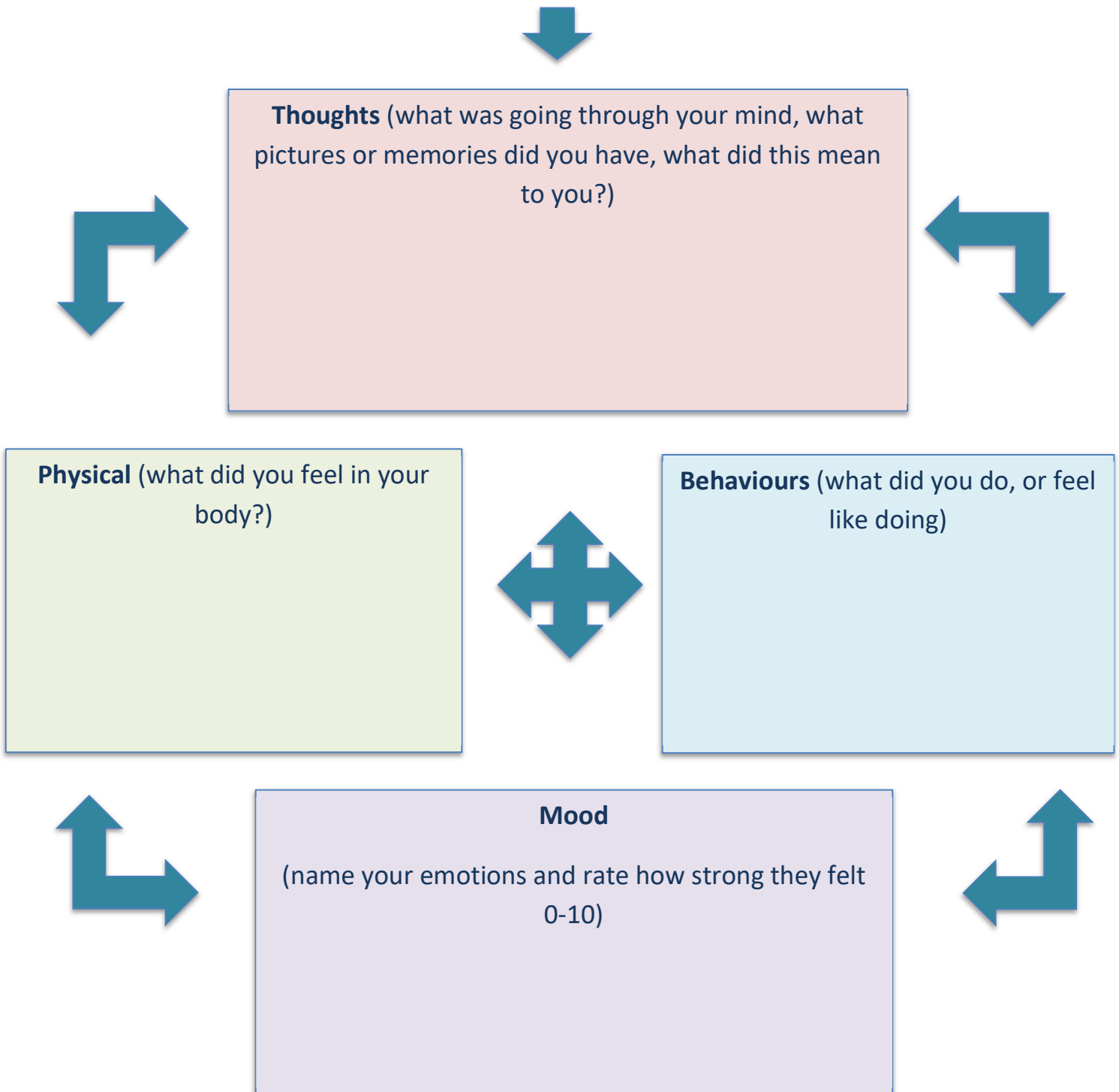
Examples of High Stress Times	My High Stress Times
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Getting ready to go out- Getting baby to sleep- New phases of baby's development e.g. teething; sleeping changes- Other people interfering with the routine- Tantrums when other people are around/public places- Tensions with partner or an absent partner- Dinner time	

What Keeps Anxiety Going?



My Anxiety Cycle

My warning signs of tension and/or anxiety building up are:



How does my breathing affect anxiety?

As we've already mentioned, when we experience anxiety we often notice our chest tightening and this can lead to our **breath rate increasing**. Our natural reaction is to try and control our breathing but this can lead to us taking more shallow breaths. This can then lead to an imbalance in oxygen (O₂) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels within the body, which **keeps us feeling anxious**. Through shallow breathing we can increase the carbon dioxide levels in the blood stream which results in:

- Further shortness of breath
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Increased heart rate
- Confusion

Practical Strategies to Reduce Fight/Flight Response

1. Think back to week four, and the **structured relaxation** we discussed. Including breathing, progressive muscle relaxation.

2. **Other relaxation strategies:**

- Have a shower or bath
- Focus on your breathing rather than thoughts
- Yoga techniques
- Ring a friend or someone you enjoy talking to
- Self-statements: *"I am calm and relaxed"*, *"I can do this"*, *"This will pass"*
- Treat yourself to a drink/food (but not in excess)
- Mini 'mental holiday' – think of a favourite holiday destination
- Quick release – releasing tension in muscles.
- Take three slow deep breaths
- Reminding myself *"I'm not alone in feeling this way"*
- Crying as an emotional release

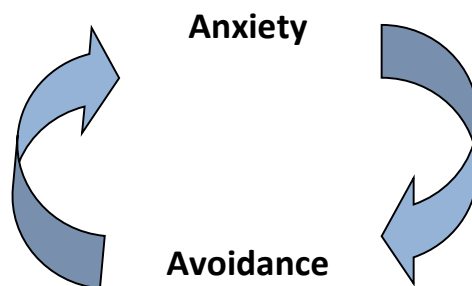


Any other things that help you to relax?

How Our Reactions Can Keep Anxiety Going

Often we cope with anxiety by **avoiding** the situations that trigger it. This makes sense, but avoiding the things we fear only serves to **maintain the problem**. Imagine if you have a fear of dogs, so you do whatever you can to avoid them. This may reduce your anxiety in the short-term, but avoidance prevents you from learning that the majority of dogs pose no threat to you, and there is no need to fear them. Avoidance also has a significant impact on your life.

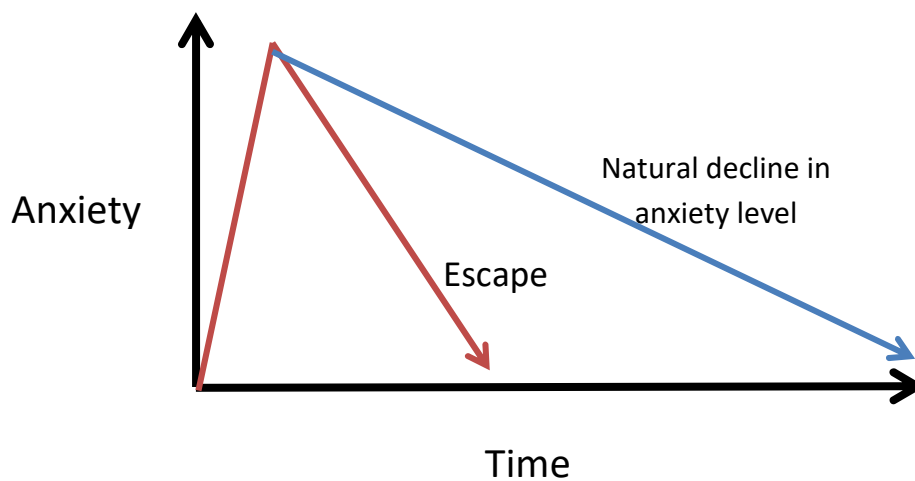
If you are trying to avoid dogs there are lots of places that you are not able to go, such as parks, town centres and some beaches. You may find it difficult to get to work, and may have to avoid friends who have pet dogs. **By running away from our fears we do not give ourselves the opportunity to learn if we can cope** with a situation and discover how resourceful we actually can be.



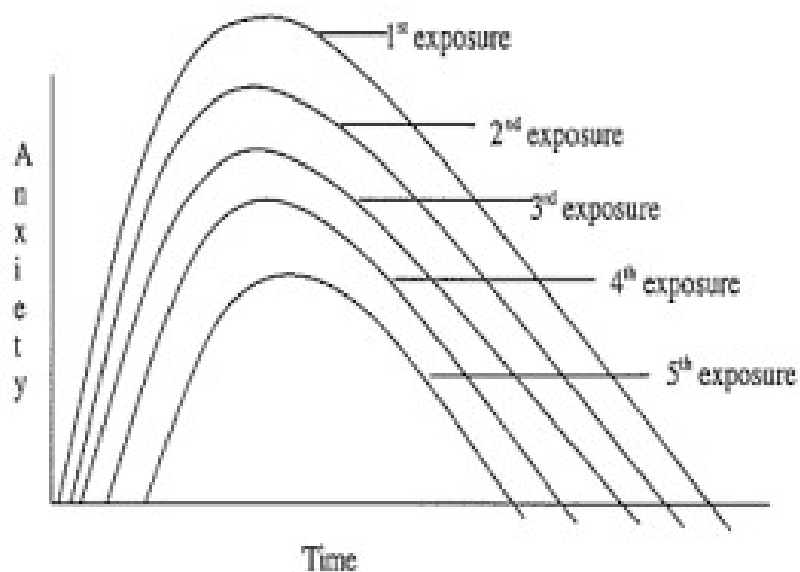
Is there anything I am avoiding at the moment?

How to Build Confidence over Time

As we have already seen, anxiety is our body responding to a perceived threat, and our body's fight/flight response is preparing us for action. When we get a spike of anxiety, **it can feel as if it will last forever**, however this physical reaction is not able to last for a prolonged time. There is only so much adrenaline that can be released in our body at one time. If we **stay in the situation** and allow the anxiety reaction to take its course, we would see is that ever so steadily the spike of anxiety starts to reduce and gradually drops off, as **our mind and body recognises there is no immediate danger to our life**. If we always escape or avoid the trigger, our mind and body never learns that there is no immediate danger, so we will continue to feel anxious the next time we are in this situation.



How exposure (remaining in the situation) works:



How to Reduce Anxiety by Facing our Fears Gradually

One way of facing our fears is to break down the problem into small pieces. By creating a ladder, or hierarchy, of feared events we can start to work towards facing our fears gradually.

By testing small amounts of anxiety we can learn to sit with those uncomfortable feelings until our **anxiety naturally starts to come down**. By repeatedly doing this, we go through a process called '**habituation**'. This is when we expose ourselves to a trigger and it no longer creates a distressing reaction. Imagine that you are watching a scary horror film for the first time. You may feel tense, fearful and on edge, in anticipation of what is coming next. If you watch this film another 20 times, it will become much less scary. You may begin to focus on other aspects of the film, such as the lighting, set, or dodgy special effects.

If you felt fearful of dogs, you might begin by watching a programme with dogs in, before sitting in a park with dogs in, and then work up to eventually stroking a dog.

Exposure Hierarchy:

Most Difficult (causes up to 100% anxiety)	
Least Difficult (causes 0-30% anxiety)	

Weekly Tasks for Week Seven

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through Week 7 of the booklet• Try a technique to help manage physical anxiety symptoms• See you if you can build the steps to facing something you are avoiding
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Eight: Worry and Problem Solving

What is Worry?

Worries are a collection of anxious predictions that are often triggered by “what if...?” questions. For example, noticing a bodily sensation and worrying this might be due to a serious illness, leading to worry about dying and further worry about the consequences of death for loved ones. All within the space of a few moments. Put simply, worry can be defined as follows:

“Worry is a thought process that is concerned with future events where there is uncertainty about the outcome, the future being thought about is a negative one, and this is accompanied by feelings of anxiety”

Worry can lead us to doubt our ability to cope and underestimate factors such as support from other people. Although worries can be about a number of different topics, each person will tend to experience **recurring worry themes** that are common place for them. Worries always involve a tendency to mentally time-travel into the future consequences.

The more we worry, the more distressing the levels of anxiety that is experienced. Therefore, noticing your most intense levels of anxiety is a good way to consider the themes of your worry.

Examples of Worry and Impact

Worries	Physical	Behaviours	Emotions
“What if the baby gets ill?”	Loss of appetite Difficulty Sleeping	Worrying Ruminating	Anxious
“What if I can’t cope”	Restless Muscle tension	Seeking reassurance	Over- whelmed
“What if I am late to my appointment”	Heart racing Irritability	Extra checking Avoiding	Nervous

Types of worry

We can separate worries into two different types:

- (1) those relating to **current problems**, and
- (2) those relating to **hypothetical (or potential) problems**

During this session, you will be taught different types of techniques to manage current problems and potential problems. It is important to use the right tool for the job (hint: it is impossible to solve a hypothetical problem!)

It is normal to struggle to classify certain worries and certain worries but with practice this skill can improve. Learning to separate out types of worries is important for treatment as we will be teaching different CBT techniques depending on the type of worry observed.



Worry Time / Postponing Worry

When we postpone our worry, we set a time dedicated to worrying, later in the day. In this situation, the aim is to notice the worrying thoughts during the day, then tell yourself “I will not worry about that now, I have set time to think about this later”, then return your focus of attention to what you were doing, or do something else. You may want to carry a note book and write down each worry as it happens, or make a note on your phone.

- Agree the **worry time**: same time, length of time, and place each day.
- During the worry time - only worry about those worries that are **current**.
- Dismiss other worries, or **postpone** less urgent worries to the next time. The aim of setting a worry time is that you are learning not to react to worrying thoughts for the rest of the day, and you are taking control over the usual urge to worry.
- This takes practice. You will find this **easier over time** until you feel you can control the worry, or not have to worry at all.

Letting Go of Hypothetical Worries

- Try focusing attention on playing with your baby
- Notice and describe in detail something about your baby or your environment
- Use a breathing technique
- Mindfulness or meditation
- Visualising your worries as leaves floating away on a stream
- Reminding yourself that worrying will not change the situation or prevent unwanted events from happening
- Focus on your surroundings, use the attention refocusing mentioned in a few pages time

Notice what kind of worry you're having and think about **what you can do right here right now** in that moment to change or influence the worry.

If it's **hypothetical** and you can't change the outcome of the likelihood or it happening or not happening then it's about pulling yourself away from the worry back into **the here, the now, the present**. How do I bring myself back to the present? Anything at all that grabs your attention is great.

Problem Solving

If you're having a **current** worry then it's about working through the worry tree and then taking steps to solve them using the table below:

Step One: Problem Identification Write down the problem you want to solve. <i>Try and be as specific as possible, e.g. not just 'work stress'... what are you hoping to change about this current problem?</i>		
Step Two: Solution Identification Write down ALL possible solutions that come to mind. <i>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.</i>		
Step Three: Strengths vs Weaknesses <i>For each solution, consider the possible pros and cons of each and note down below:</i>		
Solution	Pros	Cons

Step 4: Which solution will you select?
Choose the best sounding option to start with, you can always review this later.

Step 4: Plan

When?

Where?

Who?

Anything to do before?

Step 6: Implement the plan

Step 7: Review it
You may not have solved the whole problem, but have you been able to take steps towards helping?

Did this work?

What went well?

What didn't go so well?

Are there further steps I can take from my list of solutions? Go back to the list!

Attention Refocusing

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, and struggle to enjoy the moment.

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 e.g. focus on only the drums in a song on the radio, or the warmth of the water when washing up.

Refer back to Week Four - Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) is a deep relaxation technique that has been effectively used to control stress and anxiety, relieve insomnia, and reduce symptoms of certain types of chronic pain.

Weekly Tasks for Week Eight

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through the Week 8 of this booklet• Notice “what if” worries• Use the Worry Tree to decide how to respond• Use Problem-Solving rather than Worrying about it• Practice letting go of worries and Attention Shifting
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today’s Session	

Week Nine: Rules and Assumptions

Rules and assumptions **guide our behaviour** and how we live our lives. We all have them.

Some rules are helpful, for example: *I do not drive a car if I have had too much to drink.*

Rules for living are often most helpful when they are **flexible**, not rigid.

For example: *It would be great to be a good enough mum who is trying her best for her child.*

Rather than: *I must always be a perfect mum all the time, I can never make a mistake.*

Unhelpful assumptions and rules tend to be rigid, unrealistic, or excessive.

For example:

- *I must do everything perfectly, otherwise I am a failure*
- *I must keep others happy, otherwise they will not like me*
- *If my baby doesn't meet their milestone, then it's my fault and I'm a bad mum*
- *I must always put my children first all of the time, otherwise I am selfish*



What rules might this person hold for themselves?

Emma's Story

Emma is 26 years old and mum to Zac, aged 8 ½ months. Zac is Emma's first baby. Emma had a healthy pregnancy but her labour was long, and Zac was eventually delivered by emergency C-section. Emma was upset about this because she wanted a natural delivery, and she didn't want to stay in hospital after the birth.

Emma works in a pre-school and loves her job. She has lots of friends at work but since having Zac she has not been able to meet up with them very often. She misses her friends and her job, which was something she felt she was good at. Emma made a good friend called Lauren through her antenatal group, but Lauren moved away four months ago. Emma's family do not live locally, and although her partner is supportive he works long hours. Emma tries to hide her feelings from him because she does not want to worry him. Emma thought that she would find it easy to look after Zac because she has lots of experience with children, but now she is finding things difficult.

Zac wakes up during the night and Emma is very tired. She is unhappy with her body and thinks she should lose weight. Emma has started to avoid meeting her antenatal friends and going to baby groups because she thinks that everyone is managing much better than she

is. She spends most of her time at home with Zac, who is currently teething and cries a lot. She thinks that she must be doing something wrong, because other babies seem happier and sleep better than Zac does. Emma often buys clothes and toys for Zac on the internet, and she and her husband recently argued over the credit card bill.

Emma's parents have been visiting more often since Zac was born. Emma worries that her mum will think that the house is messy, or that she isn't looking after Zac properly. When Emma was growing up, her mother had high expectations of Emma and her brother, and would pick Emma up on her appearance and tidiness. Emma has always felt inferior to her brother, who is very academic and went to university, whereas Emma did not. Emma remembers feeling depressed as a teenager, but she felt better once she started working in the preschool. She started feeling low again over the past few months. Emma recently took Zac to be weighed and when the Health Visitor asked her how she was, she started crying. Emma said that she doesn't think she is coping very well.

What might be some of Emma's rules / assumptions?

Helping to Identify my Own Possible Rules and Assumptions

Rules tend to start with

- If I do ... then ...
- If I don't do ... then ...
- I should / must always ... or else ...
- I should / must / ought to ...

Some of these questions might help you to identify unhelpful or rigid rules:

What are some of the standards I expect myself to meet as a mother? E.g. I should always be able to settle my child.

What does it say about me if I don't meet this expectation? E.g. *If I can't settle my child, then I am failing as a mum.*

What do I think other people's expectations are for myself and my baby? E.g. *They will expect me to be coping with everything all of the time.*

Are there times where I feel responsible when things aren't going according to plan? When might this happen? E.g. *It's my fault if my toddler has a tantrum in the supermarket.*

Some of my rules for living might be:

An Example from Emma's Story

Emma's Rule: *If I snap at my child, then I am a terrible Mum*

How is this rule impacting on your life?

I feel low in mood often, I feel I can't discipline my child as well as other people, and I let him get away with things but if I do snap I feel guilty.

Where did this rule come from?

My mum had high expectations of me and my brother and would often pick up on things I didn't do well enough.

In what way is this rule unreasonable?

Children often push boundaries, and if people are feeling low or feeling overwhelmed they often have lower tolerances which can sometimes lead to snapping, it doesn't mean they are a terrible Mum. I know other mum's have been in this situation too, and I don't judge them for this.

What are the disadvantages of this rule?

*I feel a lot of guilt if I snap.
I feel really low in my mood and fully believe that I am a terrible Mum.
I am not taking into account anything that says I am a good Mum, I struggle to believe it.
I get stressed about snapping, which makes me more likely to continue snapping.*

Are there any advantages of having this rule?

I can't think of any, I don't want to snap at my child, but having this rule doesn't prevent that from happening.

What might be a more balanced / flexible rule?

Sometimes I feel overwhelmed which is understandable and common, if I snap it doesn't mean I am a terrible Mum. I am doing my best, and other mum's have been in this situation too.

Updating my own Rule or Assumption (Homework):

To practice this, choose a rule you would like to challenge and change:

How is this rule impacting on your life?

Where did this rule come from?

In what way is this rule unreasonable?

What are the disadvantages of this rule?

Are there any advantages of having this rule?

What might be a more balanced / flexible rule?



Behavioural Experiments

It is likely that you don't fully believe the new, more flexible and balanced rule that you have just created. **It takes time to change our rules for living**, but one of the most helpful ways we can encourage this, is to take the new rule for a test drive.

Behavioural experiments are planned activities to **test out our rules / assumptions in everyday situations**. They help you test how accurate they are, and give evidence to support the development of a new, more balanced, and flexible rule for living.

Task: Design your own Behavioural Experiment to test a New Rule

Conduct this experiment between sessions and share your findings with the group (if you feel comfortable to do so).



Behavioural Experiment Worksheet

Prediction

What is your prediction?

What do you expect will happen?

How would you know if it came true?

Rate how strongly you believe
this will happen (0-100%)

Experiment

What experiment could test this prediction? (where & when)

What will you be doing differently?

How would you know your prediction had come true?

Outcome

What happened?

Was your prediction accurate?

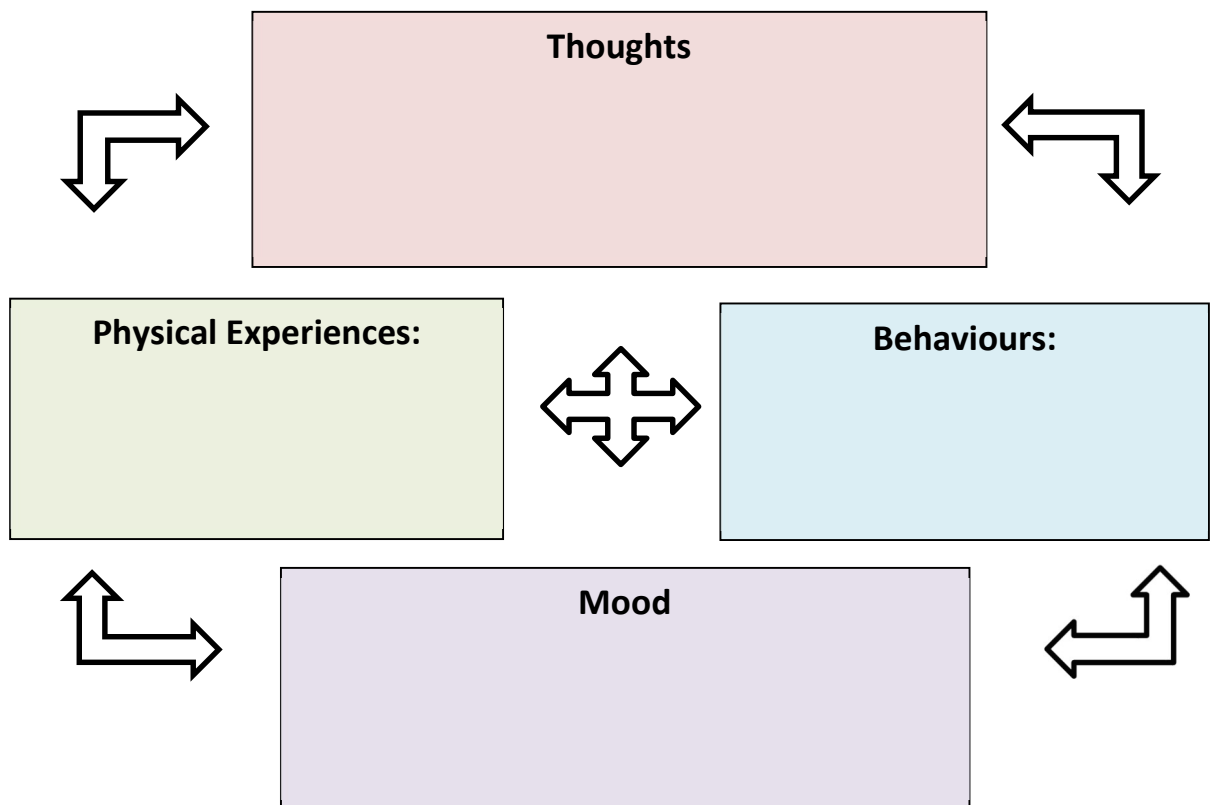
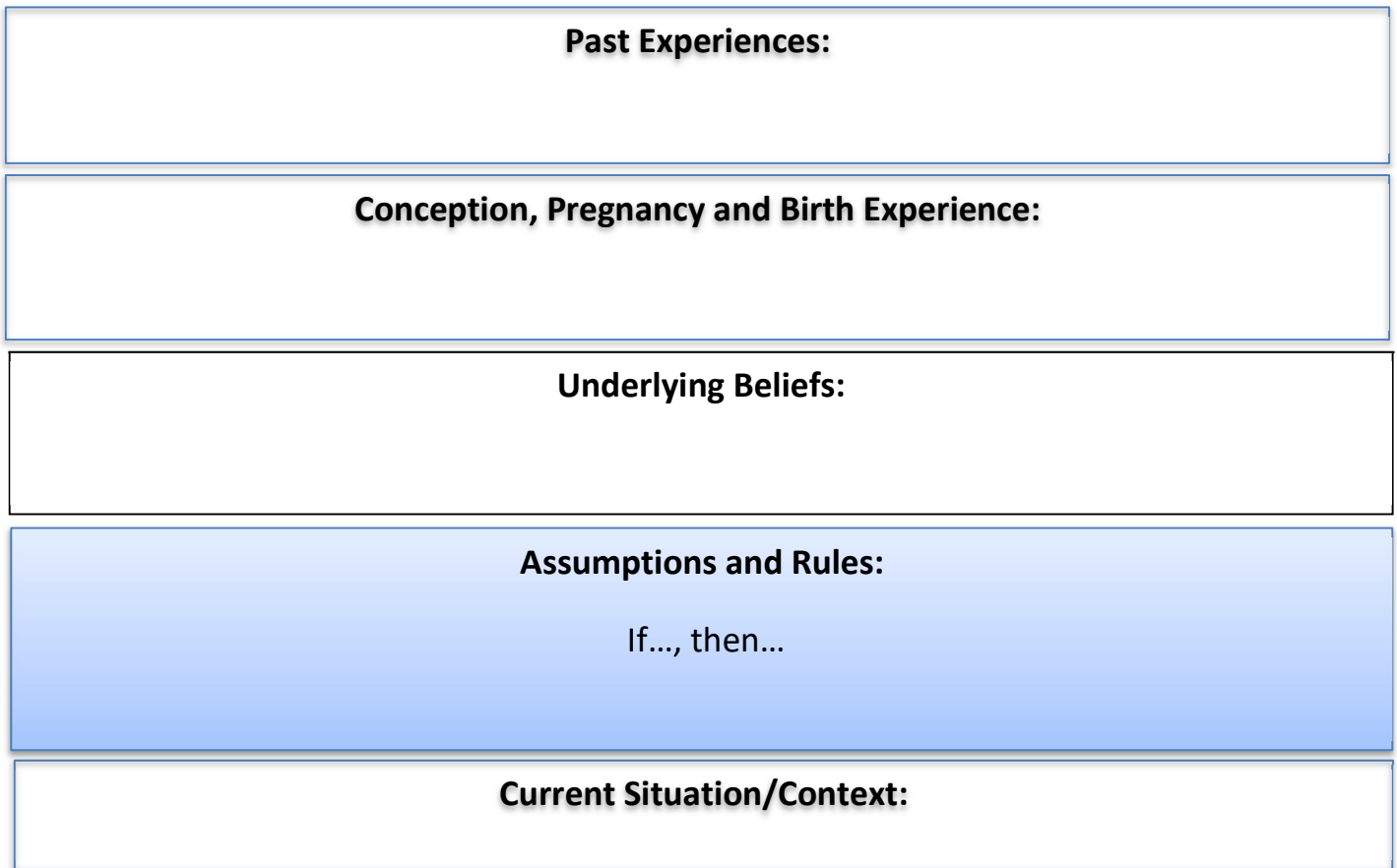
Learning

What did you learn?

How likely is it that your predictions will happen in the future?

Rate how strongly you
agree with your original
prediction now (0-100%)

Looking Back to Week Two:



Weekly Tasks for Week Nine

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through the Week 9 section of this booklet • Continue using thought diaries, to develop a more balanced way of thinking • Try to identify some of your own unhelpful rules or assumptions, and fill into the formulation from Week 2 • Carry out your own behavioural experiment, to test out your new rule, and report back next week
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Ten: Review Experiments, Self Esteem and Assertiveness

Behavioural Experiment Review

Outcome

What happened?

Was your prediction accurate?

Learning

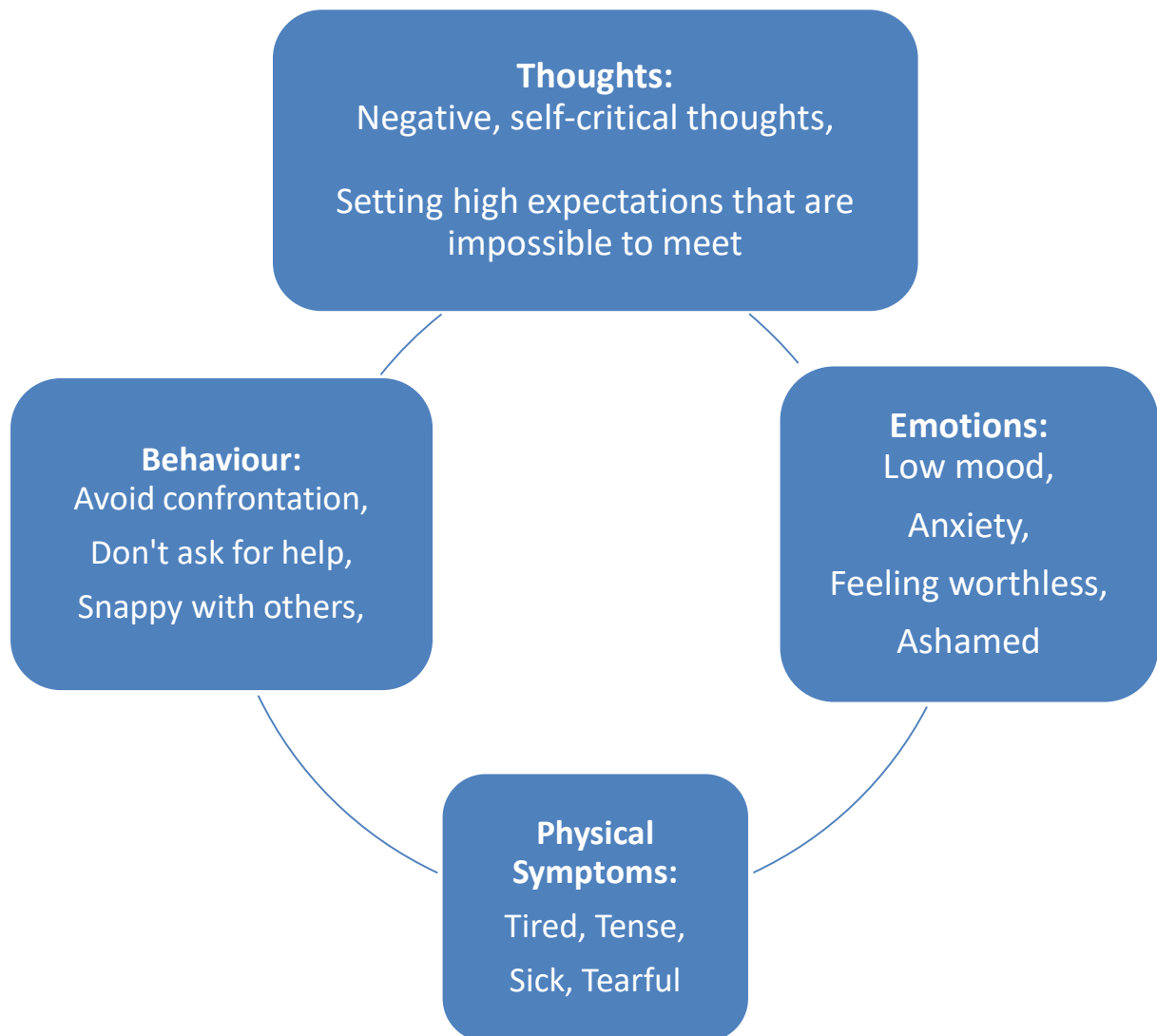
What did you learn?

How likely is it that your predictions will happen in the future?

Rate how strongly you agree with your original prediction now (0-100%)

What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is the **value you attach to yourself**. Lowered self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are part of the experience of depression. Often, people with depression do not act assertively and they may stop doing activities that will improve their mood. This **keeps self-esteem low** as they do not believe that they are worth it.



Self-Compassion



Compassion can be defined as:

“A sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it.” (<https://compassionatemind.co.uk>)

As humans, **we tend to be hard on ourselves**; however **we are often compassionate to other people**. When you become a parent, no one give you an instruction manual and you have to figure things out as best you can. It is easy to find fault, to beat yourself up, and compare yourself to others and see them as be doing a better job than you are.

In truth, **you are probably doing the best job that you can**, and when you are having a difficult time, you need support and encouragement to get through it, not someone criticising you.

Self-critical thoughts affect your emotions and behaviour. Learning to be more compassionate towards yourself can help you in your recovery from depression.



Combatting your Inner Critic

To tackle self-critical thoughts: Imagine if you wanted to improve your fitness and you hired a personal trainer. Imagine if they were critical, bullying and discouraging.

- What might they say or do?
- How might this person make you feel?
- What effect would this have on your confidence and self-esteem?

Now consider what it would be like to have a personal trainer who is kind, supportive and encouraging. It might help to think of someone you know, like a close friend or relative.

- What might they say or do?

- How might this person make you feel?

- What effect would this have on your confidence and self-esteem?

Practicing Self-Compassion

Notice your inner self-critical voice over the week. Note down the things that it says to you. Notice the tone of this voice- is it judging, cold, angry? **Practice writing down compassionate responses to these criticisms**- this is difficult to begin with so keep practicing. Imagine a trusted and kind friend, family member or colleague.

It could be someone you know now, or knew in the past, or someone from this group. If you have trouble thinking of someone, you could use a famous person, character or religious figure, who you believe to be kind, compassionate, fair and gentle.

Critical Voice	Compassionate Response
e.g. "I am so stupid for forgetting that"	"I am really tired and I have had a lot to think about lately. I didn't do it on purpose. I am not a bad person for forgetting something. My friend will understand"

Practice the Compassionate Voice

By yourself- at home, notice your “Inner Critic” and try to respond with a Compassionate Voice.

Critical Voice	Compassionate Response

Changing Your Behaviour: Assertiveness

Being assertive means **communicating our opinions and wishes in a confident way**, without being passive or aggressive. It can be really difficult to assert yourself when you are feeling low or anxious, but assertiveness can be a really useful skill.

Being assertive can help you to:

- Feel more in **control**
- Communicate your needs to others and have these **understood**
- Communicate more **effectively** with your partner, family and friends
- Have **confidence** in your own opinions
- **Reduce worry** and anxiety by tackling difficult situations
- Say “**no**” and feel less overwhelmed
- Improve or maintain **relationships**
- **Respond** to unwelcome advice

Assertiveness can be useful for mums in managing unsolicited advice, relationships and conflict.

Communication Styles

Being assertive means communicating confidently, enabling you to balance your needs with those of others. Have a look at the table below, noticing the behaviours and responses associated with each communication style.

Which style of communication can you recognise in yourself?

	Passive	Assertiveness	Indirect	Aggressive
Basic Attitude	<i>I'm not ok</i>	<i>I'm ok and you're ok</i>	<i>You're not ok, but I'll let you think you are</i>	<i>You're not ok</i>
Philosophy	<i>Take care of others' needs without regard to one's own</i>	<i>Take care of own and others' rights and needs</i>	<i>Take care of own rights and needs whilst letting others think that you care about theirs</i>	<i>Own rights and needs met at the expense of others</i>
Behaviour	<i>Retreating Giving up Resenting situation</i>	<i>Honesty Confrontation Negotiation</i>	<i>Manipulation Sarcasm</i>	<i>Criticism Shouting Put downs</i>
Response from Others	<i>Attention Sympathy Exasperation</i>	<i>Respect Acceptance Comfort</i>	<i>Suspicion Confusion Feels manipulated</i>	<i>Fear Hurt Humiliation Defensiveness Aggression</i>

Assertive Communication

Task:

By yourself or with the group as a whole, read out the statement and practise an assertive response

	Assertive Response
<i>You really ought to be getting Ellie into a strict routine now, you're too soft.</i>	
<i>While you're in town, could you take this parcel to the post office and get some shopping for me? I need a rest.</i>	
<i>I'm going to Kate's later and I said that you'll be coming too.</i>	
<i>Still not sleeping through? You should be doing.....</i>	
<i>You don't mind looking after the twins for me later do you. Can you give them their tea as well?</i>	
<i>Haven't you managed to get that done today? What have you been doing?</i>	

*** A good way to start practising Assertive Communication is to start small. Choose someone that you feel more comfortable with, or choose a minor problem to tackle first, and build your confidence before tackling bigger issues.**

Personal Bill of Rights

1. I have the right to ask for what I want
2. I have the right to say no to requests or demands I can't meet
3. I have the right to express all of my feelings, positive or negative
4. I have the right to change my mind
5. I have the right to make mistakes and not have to be perfect
6. I have the right to follow my own values and standards
7. I have the right to say no to anything when I feel I am not ready, it is unsafe or violates my values
8. I have the right to determine my own priorities
9. I have the right not to be responsible for others' behaviour, actions, feelings or problems
10. I have the right to expect honesty from others
11. I have the right to be angry at someone I love
12. I have the right to be uniquely myself
13. I have the right to feel scared and say 'I'm afraid'
14. I have the right to say 'I don't know'
15. I have the right not to give excuses or reasons for my behaviour
16. I have the right to make decisions based on my feelings
17. I have the right to my own needs for personal space and time
18. I have the right to be playful and frivolous
19. I have the right to be healthier than those around me
20. I have the right to be in a non-abusive environment
21. I have the right to make friends and be comfortable around people
22. I have the right to change and grow
23. I have the right to have my needs and wants respected by others
24. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
25. I have the right to be happy

Weekly Tasks for Week Ten

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through week 10 of the booklet• Continue with Behavioural Experiments from last week• Practice the Compassionate Voice Exercises• Practice Assertive Communication
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Eleven: Understanding Core Beliefs

So far we have been concentrating on “**automatic thoughts**”- those thoughts that pop into our heads as we go about our daily lives. These thoughts are the easiest to work with because they are the most accessible, and by altering these thoughts we can make a big impact on how we feel, and how we behave.

These automatic thoughts are driven by our underlying beliefs about **how we see ourselves, other people and the world around us**. These beliefs usually develop over time and have been influenced by our individual experiences, observations and interactions with others in our immediate world. While they are often rooted in childhood, this is not always the case and they can develop after significant experiences in adulthood.

The same belief can develop from quite different experiences. For example someone who believes they must do everything perfectly may develop it because they had it modeled to them. For example, they grew up in a household where everything was very tidy, everything had a place and they were praised for doing things well and criticized for doing things at a level that was less than what they were capable of doing. Alternatively, the belief that they must do everything perfectly can develop if they grew up in a household where it was very chaotic, messy and there were no expectations for anyone. Our beliefs help explain why in a particular situation our feelings, thoughts and reactions might be different to someone else’s.



Rucksacks- It seems that we all carry our own rucksacks on life’s journey. In our rucksack we carry our life’s experiences and expectations, and these influence the way we are, what we do, and what we make of our life and how we go about it. Our rucksack – and what we carry in it - affects the way we think, feel and act: towards ourselves, towards others, and towards life in general.

If we think about our problems as “**rucksacks**”, we can take the problem/s outside of us, which makes it easier to change things in a positive way. Before we can make those helpful changes, we need to understand more about our personal rucksack, and how it affects us. Think about what is in your rucksack- **past experiences, memories, beliefs, expectations, rules for living, assumptions** etc. What does your rucksack look like? What colour, shape, size, weight, fastenings, straps, and material does it consist of?

Impact of Beliefs about Parenting:

A couple’s relationship changes after the birth of a child. Different beliefs about how to be a parent may begin to cause conflict. For example, you may never have discussed whether or not to use a dummy, prior to having your first child. Often both you and your partner will have different strong views about child rearing. You will have both experienced different styles of parenting from your own respective parents. Expectation may also come from other role models during childhood. Your own identities and roles have also changed for the both of you, you are no longer simply a “partner”, you are also a “mother” and “father”. You may also have conflict with other members of your family e.g. grandparents, because they may hold different parenting beliefs to you.

'Thus, our expectations of ourselves as mothers are shaped by our own experiences of being parented and subsequent experiences. Some of these experiences may be unrealistic and unhelpful in our bid to beat depression.' Milgrom, Martin & Negri (1999, p. 113)

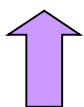
Beck's CBT model for Depression – Core Beliefs

The table below table shows some common negative core beliefs. Although while looking at depression, we will focus on the negative core beliefs that we hold, it is worth remembering that **we all hold positive core beliefs too!**

I am helpless	I am not good enough
I am powerless	I am unlovable
I am out of control	I am unlikeable
I am weak	I am undesirable
I am vulnerable	I am unattractive
I am needy	I am unwanted
I am trapped	I am uncared for
I am inadequate	I am bad
I am ineffective	I am unworthy
I am incompetent	I am different
I am a failure	I am bound to be rejected
I am disrespected	I am bound to be abandoned
I am defective	I am bound to be alone

How Our Rules and Assumptions Relate to Beliefs

Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs)



When rules are not met our negative core beliefs are activated

Assumptions/Rules



Rules develop to protect us from the pain of negative core beliefs

Core Beliefs

Emma's Story – Remember from Week Nine?

Emma is 26 years old and mum to Zac, aged 8 ½ months. Zac is Emma's first baby. Emma had a healthy pregnancy but her labour was long, and Zac was eventually delivered by emergency c-section. Emma was upset about this because she wanted a natural delivery, and she didn't want to stay in hospital after the birth.

Emma works in a pre-school and loves her job. She has lots of friends at work but since having Zac she has not been able to meet up with them very often. She misses her friends and her job, which was something she felt she was good at. Emma made a good friend called Lauren through her antenatal group, but Lauren moved away four months ago. Emma's family do not live locally, and although her partner is supportive he works long hours. Emma tries to hide her feelings from him because she does not want to worry him.

Emma thought that she would find it easy to look after Zac because she has lots of experience with children, but now she is finding things difficult. Zac wakes up during the night and Emma is very tired. She is unhappy with her body and thinks she should lose weight. Emma has started to avoid meeting her antenatal friends and going to baby groups because she thinks that everyone is managing much better than she is. She spends most of her time at home with Zac, who is currently teething and cries a lot. She thinks that she must be doing something wrong, because other babies seem happier and sleep better than Zac does. Emma often buys clothes and toys for Zac on the internet, and she and her husband recently argued over the credit card bill.

Emma's parents have been visiting more often since Zac was born. Emma worries that her mum will think that the house is messy, or that she isn't looking after Zac properly. When Emma was growing up, her mother had high expectations of Emma and her brother, and would pick Emma up on her appearance and tidiness. Emma has always felt inferior to her brother, who is very academic and went to university, whereas Emma did not. Emma remembers feeling depressed as a teenager, but she felt better once she started working in the preschool. She started feeling low again over the past few months.

Emma recently took Zac to be weighed and when the Health Visitor asked her how she was, she started crying. She said that she doesn't think she is coping very well.

Understanding Emma's Depression

Based on Emma's story, what might be some of her Core Beliefs?

My beliefs:

Try to identify one of your own core beliefs. It may be helpful to look at the list of common negative core beliefs earlier in the session. Although you will have both positive and negative core beliefs, we are looking to identify one that is problematic for you.

A problematic core belief for me is: _____

See if you can map out how your beliefs may have developed:

Asking some these questions can also be helpful:

- What were your parents like when you were growing up?
- Do you know what sort of parenting your partner had?
- Are your parenting views very different from those of your parents?
- What do you think has influenced your views?
- What information can you use from your timeline?

Space for you to write some notes about your own core beliefs...

Positive Data Logs

Although most of us can easily remember negative experiences that have strengthened a negative belief we might hold about ourselves e.g. I am a failure because I was late meeting my friend today, most of us don't spend much time thinking about the **positive experiences** that we have each day. Positive experiences may be obvious, e.g. someone paying us a compliment, or more subtle, e.g. a pet being pleased to see us, making a cup of tea for someone, or a stranger smiling at us. Keeping a positive data log of these experiences can help us to **acknowledge the positive things happening around us** and begin to think about what these experiences must say about us.

For example:

Fact	What it says about me
I was on time for work	I am punctual
My friend laughed at my joke	I am humorous
I grew some vegetables	I am a good gardener
I visited my elderly neighbour	I am helpful and considerate
I have managed to look after my baby and do one load of washing, even though I am tired	I am caring and capable of meeting my baby's needs
Baby laughed and smiled whilst we were playing together	I can make my baby happy

Try Keeping Your Own Positive Data Log:

Situation/experience/comment	What this says about me

We're all on a Continuum.....

Being a parent is an extremely challenging job. Babies and children are all different, and do not come with an instruction manual. When you become a parent for the first time or a parent to subsequent children, it is a very **steep learning curve**. Added to this, there is always someone ready to tell you that you are not doing things as well as you could do; there are hundreds of baby books and “experts” with advice, sleep training methods, classes and activities to stimulate your baby’s development, recipes and feeding recommendations and so on. Sometimes, family and friends can be quick to point out things you could do differently, or to tell you what worked for them. Then there are cultural expectations or messages from society about what it means to be a mum- should you go to work, should you stay at home with your children, to breastfeed or not to breastfeed, when should you have another baby, and messages about appearance and body image. Women may feel a huge pressure to be a “perfect” mum, and compare themselves to others and criticise themselves, feeling guilty for the choices they make, whatever those choices may be.

Sometimes, **you may have held quite negative beliefs** about yourself **before having children**, and these can then become the filter through which you view your own parenting. For example, if you believe that you are not good enough, and lack confidence in your abilities, when you have a baby you may think of yourself as not being a good enough mum, and not feel confident in your parenting.

Our negative core beliefs tend to be **very rigid and unforgiving**. They tend to be very black and white, with little or no flexibility.

For example, a common core belief reported by people experiencing depression is “I am a failure”. In mums with postnatal depression, this often takes the form of “**I am a bad mother**”. Rules for living may look like these:

Core Belief

I am a bad mum



Assumptions/Rules for Living

If I don't keep a perfect home then I am a bad mum to my children

My children must never be upset; if they are then I have failed

Thinking More Flexibly

The trouble with having very rigid core beliefs is that they don't often take into account human context or variability. We would normally be quick to tell a friend to be kinder to themselves if they are dealing with a difficult situation, but our own core beliefs are often much harsher and less forgiving. In reality, **we are all on a continuum**, or scale, falling somewhere in between two extremes. Nobody in the world is a complete failure or a complete success, we all fall somewhere in the middle of a scale.



What makes a good mum?

Make a list of the qualities that you see as making a good mum:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Discussion points:

What do you notice about your list?

What factors have you noted as being important, and what didn't you include?

Are you judging yourself for things that are not actually so important?

What evidence do you have, to show that you have demonstrated these important qualities?

“There is no way to be a perfect mother and millions of ways to be a good one”.

(MaternalOCD.org)

Qualities of Being a “Good Enough” Mum

Now let’s look each of the quality in turn. Give yourself a rating where you are in the scale of having this quality (0= I do not have this quality at all; 100% = I have this quality 100%). What do you notice?

0-----100%

0-----100%

0-----100%

0-----100%

0-----100%

0-----100%

0-----100%

Where do you think you are now on the continuum between perfect and terrible mum?

What are the advantages for children in having a mum with imperfections?

Important: Taking care of myself

Talking about core beliefs can be difficult. It may trigger memories from the past, or painful feelings. Take some time now to think about how you can look after yourself if you feel upset. What activities would help? What would it be advisable to avoid? Who could you contact if you need support?

Weekly Tasks for Week Eleven

Weekly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read through week 11 of the booklet• Carry out the reflective exercises• Keep a Positive Data Log this week as shown in the booklet
Plan for Weekly Task	<p><i>When will I be able to do this during the week?</i></p> <p><i>What might get in the way of doing this?</i></p> <p><i>Is there anything I can do to make it easier to do this or remind myself?</i></p>
Key Message from Today's Session	

Week Twelve: Looking Back and Moving Forwards

You have now completed the course, but this is really just the beginning. It is important to keep doing what is working for you, and to build upon the changes you have started to make during this course. Continuing to practice the strategies you have learned during the course is essential, it can often take 3-6 months to really notice the benefits of CBT.

On the next page is a summary sheet to reflect on the learning and progress you have made on the course, and what you would like to keep working on next. The aim of CBT is to give you the tools and understanding to **be your own therapist**, in a similar way to how a driving instructor teaches you so that you can then drive a car by yourself. When you first pass your driving test, you may not feel confident driving, but this comes with **time and practice**.

Some other important suggestions for staying well:

- 1. Keep a balanced routine and lifestyle**

Even though your sleep may get disrupted, it is important to try and keep a normal routine. Structure helps to maintain good sleeping, eating and exercising habits. These are the foundations of our wellbeing.

- 2. Develop a good social support network**

Social support is crucial. Sometimes just talking things out loud makes you realise that problems are more manageable than you originally thought. Social support can occur in a number of different guises. Even if you would never talk to someone about your vulnerabilities they might be someone that you could do things with e.g. go for walks together. Make a list of people in your life that could offer different forms of support (emotional, practical etc). If you really feel like this is limited, then use your problem solving skills to figure out how to increase this.

- 3. Develop a good professional support network**

Keep in contact with your GP and health visitor. Know what your early warning signs (symptoms) are and have a plan to address them. This may include referring yourself back to Steps 2 Wellbeing in the future for some top-up sessions, however we would encourage a period of consolidating your skills through practice, before returning to the service.

- 4. Expect slip ups and down days**

Slip ups in progress occur. It is easy to think that you are 'back to square one', but this is unhelpful thinking. Life is full of ups and downs- everyone has down days and it would be unrealistic to expect that you will not experience this too. Also, **down days do not mean you are back at square one**; you now have a better understanding of your difficulties, and strategies which you know work. Down days or slip ups are opportunities to learn from. Apply your problem solving skills and figure out what has happened and what you could do differently.

My Therapy Blueprint

What have I learnt through attending this course?	
What strategies have I found most helpful?	
What do I need to keep doing to continue working on how I'm feeling?	
Sometimes setbacks occur- what are my warning signs to look out for?	
What can I do if a setback occurs? How can I overcome it?	

RESILIENCE

Remember that suffering is temporary, stress and trauma do not define you

Embrace silence, take some quiet time away from distractions, find peace, mindfulness

Self-care: Look after yourself, physically and emotionally– you cannot pour from an empty cup

It's ok not to have all the answers. Allow space and trust that the answers will arise naturally

Learn Acceptance: suffering is part of life. Acceptance is not giving up, but riding the wave, leaning in to the experience and bouncing back

Identify your team, find your network, spend time with those who can calm you, listen to and support you, without trying to solve problems for you

Express yourself – write, draw, exercise, dance, create, move, learn, get out of your head

Not trying too hard! It's ok not to get everything “right”

Think flexibly, see things from other perspectives. Step back and look at things differently



“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Thank you very much for contributing to this course. We hope that you can continue to use what you have learned here to become your own therapist. This will help you to keep moving forward and to combat depression in the future.

Appendix 1 - Resources List:

Websites :

- www.pandasfoundation.org.uk
Post and Antenatal Depression Advice and Support
- <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/out-of-the-blue>
Best Beginnings Out of The Blue is a series of films about different topics relating to bonding with your baby, mental health in pregnancy and maternal mental health after birth.
- <http://www.pndandme.co.uk>
Website, blog and resources, by Rosie, who experienced antenatal and postnatal depression. She also founded the Twitter chat #PNDHour
- <https://maternalocd.org/> “There is no way to be a perfect mother, and millions of ways to be a good one”.
Maternal OCD is a charity founded by two women who experienced perinatal Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and aims to provide information and support to women experiencing this condition, and their families.
- <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/>
charity supporting single parent families to live secure, happy and fulfilling lives
- <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
A national charity set up to help people experiencing different forms of anxiety.
- www.selfcompassion.org
Website of Dr Kristen Neff, includes lots of information and resources relating to self- compassion, including practices to help you develop a more compassionate way of relating to yourself, and guided meditations.
- <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>
The Lullaby Trust provides expert advice on safer sleep for babies and offers emotional support for bereaved families
- <https://birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/>

A charity that supports women who suffer birth trauma – a shorthand term for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after birth.

- <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/>
Information on breastfeeding, helpline number, trained volunteers running support groups, information sheets on medications whilst breastfeeding.
- <https://www.gov.uk/find-sure-start-childrens-centre>
Sure Start Children's Sure Start centres give help and advice on child and family health, parenting, money, training and employment.
- <https://maternitymattersdorset.nhs.uk/> [DORSET]
Information on pregnancy through to parenting and support available in the area
- <https://www.dorpip.org.uk/> [DORSET]
a specialist community-based service that helps families who are struggling to form secure relationships with their infants from birth to age two (discuss with HV / midwife).
- <https://www.home-start.org.uk/> [DORSET]

Smart Phone Apps

- **Mush** – free app to find other mums in the local area. Also run virtual meet-ups, coffee mornings, webinars and baby classes
- **Mind the Bump** – mindfulness app for new and expecting parents
- **Baby Buddy**: recommended by the Department of Health, offers support and information during pregnancy. From the charity Best Beginnings.
- **Baby Check App** – from Lullaby trust, features 19 simple checks that parents can do if their baby is showing signs of illness.
- **Dad Pad** - important information for dads on what to expect and how to care for their baby.
- **Stress & Anxiety Companion**- free on the App Store, recommended by the NHS for mild-moderate anxiety and stress, includes tools such as breathing exercises and relaxing music
- **Headspace** – Guided meditation and mindfulness, free trial available, see App Store, Google Play or www.headspace.com

- **Calm** – meditation app with sleep stories and relaxing music, £36 per year's subscription
- **Breathe2Relax**- breathing exercises app
- **Catch It** – encourages you to record negative thoughts and to look at it from a different perspective
- **Relax Melodies** – Music for sleep and relaxation

More Apps can be found on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/filter/?categories=Mental%20health,Pregnancy%20and%20baby>

Twitter

#PNDHour – regular Twitter chat on a Wednesday evening for parents, professionals and anyone affected by Postnatal Depression

Self-Help Books for Depression and Anxiety:

- **Why Perinatal Depression Matters** by Mia Scotland
- **Self-Kindness for Mums** by Dr Charlotte Hartley-Jones
- **The Compassionate Mind Approach to Postnatal Depression** by Michelle Cree
- **Overcoming Postnatal Depression, the Five-Areas Approach** by Chris Williams & Roch Cantwell
- **Mind Over Mood: change how you feel by changing the way by changing the way you think** by Dennis Greenberger & Christine Padesky
- **Overcoming Worry and Generalised Anxiety Disorder** by Mark Freeston
- **Understanding Panic Attacks and Overcoming Fear** by Roger Baker
- **Women Who Think Too Much** by Susan Nolen-Hoeksema
- **The Pregnancy and Postpartum Anxiety Workbook: Practical skills to help you overcome anxiety, worry, panic attacks, obsessions and compulsions** by Pamela Weigartz
- **Towards Parenthood: Preparing for the changes and challenges of a new baby** by Janet Milgrom and others

All these books can be bought online, either new or in used/good condition. They can also be requested through your local library if you would like to borrow rather than buy them.

If you discover any other books or online resources that you think would be helpful for others, please do let us know!

