

# Steps 4 Mums

## Overcoming Postnatal Depression

### 8-Week Online Course

#### Steps to Wellbeing Contact Telephone Numbers

West and North Dorset:	0300 790 6828
Poole, Purbeck and East Dorset:	0300 1231 120
Bournemouth and Christchurch:	0300 7900 542
Southampton:	0800 612 7000

[www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk](http://www.steps2wellbeing.co.uk)

[dhc.s2w.webinars@nhs.net](mailto:dhc.s2w.webinars@nhs.net)

# Welcome to Steps 4 Mums

Steps4Mums is an online course to help you overcome postnatal depression, based on Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT). This booklet accompanies the sessions and is yours to keep.

There will be 8 weekly, 1 hour webinar sessions. At each session, only the course therapists will be able to see you have logged on.

Although you can see and hear the facilitators, they will not be able to see you. You can interact by typing in questions or comments, which the facilitators will be able to see. You will not be able to see the other participants of the group or interact directly with them.

You can join in from home and look after your baby during the session. Please do interact with us as it means we can make the sessions more relevant to your experiences! There is no such thing as a silly question, and your comments may well help another mum as we always try and share your comments (anonymously). The webinar session is like a virtual group where you can learn ways to improve your mood.

Every week you will be sent a mood questionnaire via email. Please ensure you complete these prior to the session, as they will also mark your attendance as well as help track your symptoms.

At the end of each week, the therapists will ask you to take what you have learnt that session and practise the strategies covered. These tasks are to help you to make changes and improve your mood.

CBT is a really practical type of therapy, the main change happens at home with your practising the strategies.

If you can't make a session, please do email us or phone us using the contact details on the front of this booklet.

# Overview of the Sessions

1. Introducing CBT
2. Behavioural Activation - Introduction
3. Behavioural Activation - One Step Further
4. Cognitive Restructuring - Getting Started
5. Cognitive Restructuring - "Taking the Thought to Court"
6. Sleep and Relaxation
7. Feeling Anxious – Fight v Flight and worries
8. Relapse Prevention – Maintaining Progress



## Keeping Safe Between Sessions

Steps to 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 / Midwife

Request a GP appointment

Phone a friend or family member

Call 111 for out of hours support

**CONNECTIONS** on **0300 1235440**, which is a 24/7 helpline for people needing urgent mental health support.

The **Samaritans** are available 24/7 on **116123**,

You can text **SHOUT** to **85258**.

**Go to A&E for urgent support or call 999.**

**My Safety Plan:**

**My GP and number:** *e.g Dr No 01202 123 456* \_\_\_\_\_

**Who I might call:** *e.g. Bianca from work (071234 567)*  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What distracts me:** *e.g watching Bake Off, listening to an audiobook*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

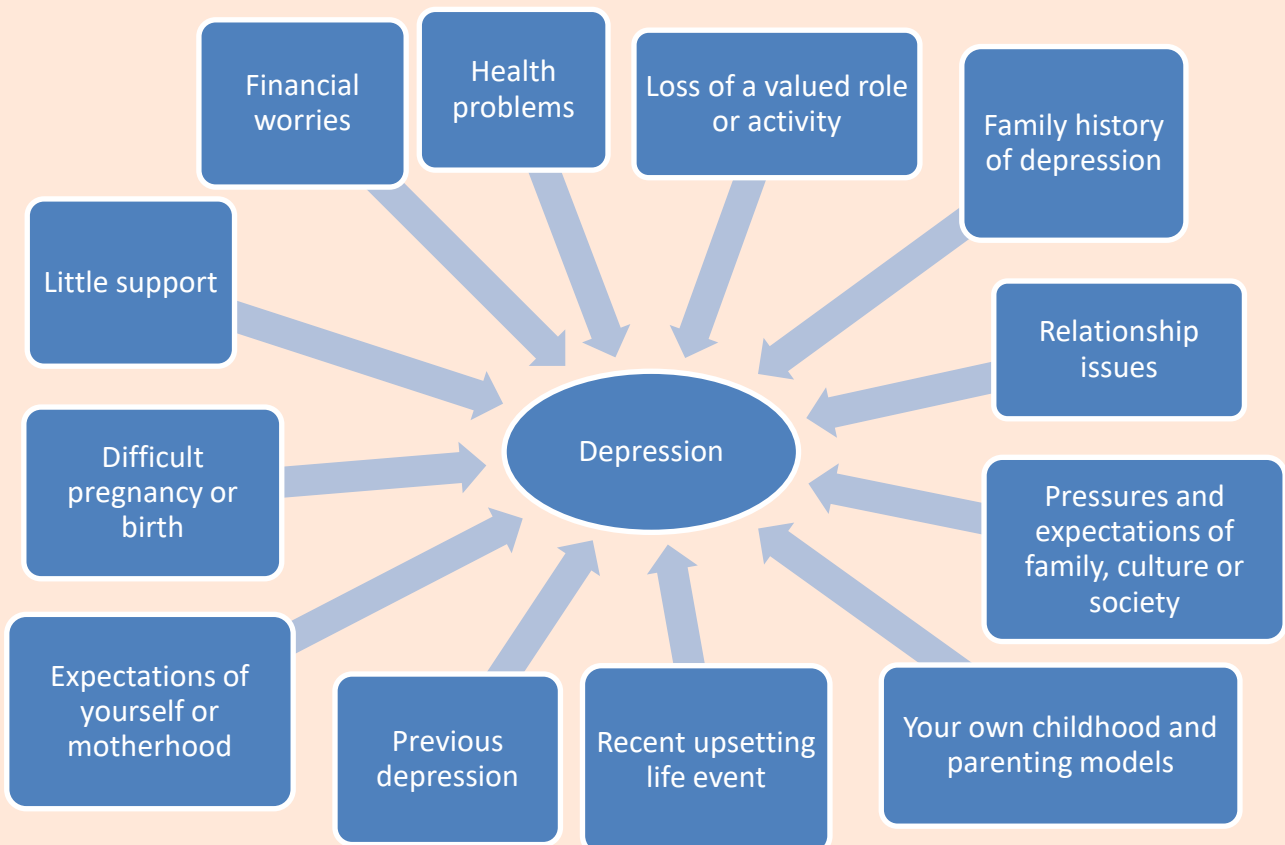
# Week 1: What is CBT?

## Understanding Postnatal Depression

Postnatal depression is similar to depression experienced at any other time of life. Different people will experience depression in different ways some symptoms are:

- Low mood, or sadness
- Feelings of worthlessness or failure
- Hopelessness
- Anxiety
- Irritability or emotional highs and lows
- Lack of energy
- Lack of interest in activities
- Increased or decreased appetite
- Sleep problems – difficult get to sleep or staying asleep unrelated to the baby
- Difficulty concentrating

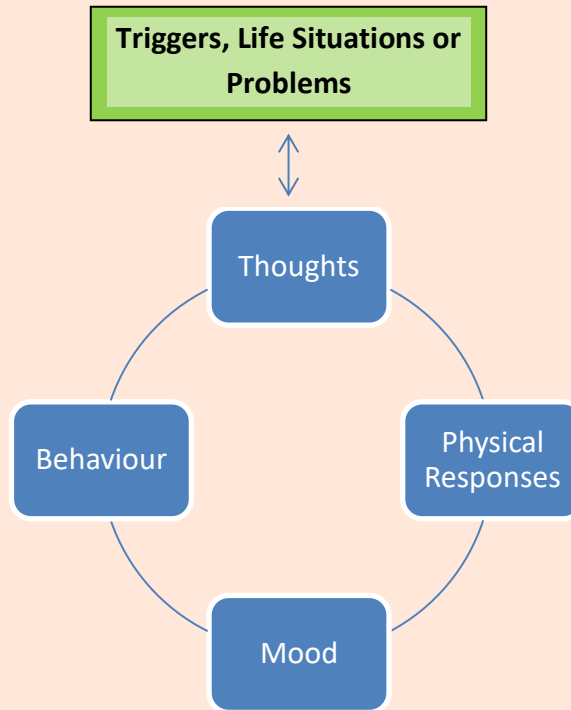
There is no one cause of depression, and usually a number of factors come together to contribute to depression and anxiety developing. **These issues also affect dads, and they can develop postnatal depression or anxiety too!**



## Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

CBT is a very practical type of therapy. It focuses on the here and now, and looks at helping us to build coping strategies.

CBT looks at how situations and triggers can cause a change in our behaviours, thoughts, emotions and physical symptoms.



**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

Scroll social media

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

# Your CBT Cycle

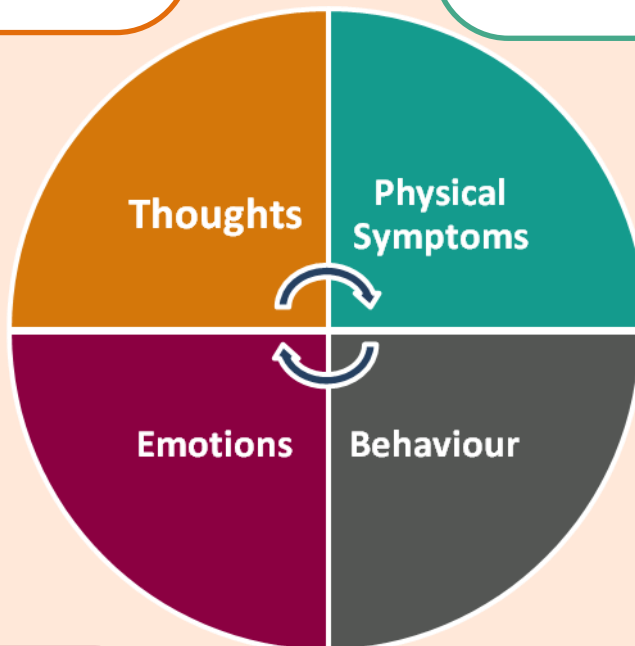
Everyone is different. Have a go at filling in your own vicious cycle.

*What went through my mind at that time? What disturbed me?*

I think...

*What did I notice in my body? What did I feel? Where did I feel it?*

I notice symptoms of...



*What emotion did I feel at that time? How intense was that feeling? (0 – 100%)*

Emotionally I feel...

*What helped me cope and get through it? What didn't I do or what did I avoid doing?*

I am....

I am avoiding...

## SMART Goals

Goals are incredibly useful, they help us to think forward, to reflect on what's important to us and to help build our motivation and momentum.

SMART goals are goals that are:

- *Specific* – define your goal carefully so you know what to aim for
- *Measurable* – progress can be tracked and achievement recorded
- *Achievable* – is it achievable for you
- *Realistic* – you have the ability and willingness to do it
- *Timely* – a time frame for measuring completion of the goal

Please think about what goals you'd like to set from today.

<b>Short Term Goal – for the next week</b>
<b>Mid Term Goal – for the next 4 weeks</b>
<b>Longer Term Goal – for the next 8 weeks</b>

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

*Antoine de Saint-Exubery*



## How CBT Works

So we've looked at how CBT looks at how we feel and how we are going to be breaking things down together, but how does it work!

CBT is a really practical therapy, it's very much the more you do the more you get.

In this workbook there will be sheets and exercises to help practise the strategies.

The more you do these the easier and stronger they get.

The bulk of therapeutic change happens in-between sessions with CBT.

CBT helps you to understand the how your thoughts, mood and behaviour are connected to each other, and the patterns or vicious circles that may be keeping your difficulties going. CBT also gives you tools to start breaking those cycles, lifting your mood, challenging negative thinking, and changing unhelpful behaviours.

### CBT Home Practise: Welcome to CBT

Before the second session think about what SMART goals you want to set and use **page 8** to write these down. (We will check in with these at session 4)

Remember having goals are going to be important to help us move forward.

Complete the three CBT cycles on **pages 10 to 12** in-between this session and next, this is going to help build understanding on how your mood, thoughts and behaviours change. Think about different triggers or situations and how this may affect the rest of the cycle.

The more we do, the more we can reflect and understand which means the sooner we can nip things in the bud!

# Your CBT Cycle

Situation:

*What went through my mind at that time? What disturbed me?*  
I think...

*What did I notice in my body? What did I feel? Where did I feel it?*  
I notice symptoms of...



*What emotion did I feel at that time? How intense was that feeling? (0 – 100%)*  
Emotionally I feel...

*What helped me cope and get through it? What didn't I do or what did I avoid doing?*  
I am....  
  
I am avoiding...

# Your CBT Cycle

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## Your CBT Cycle

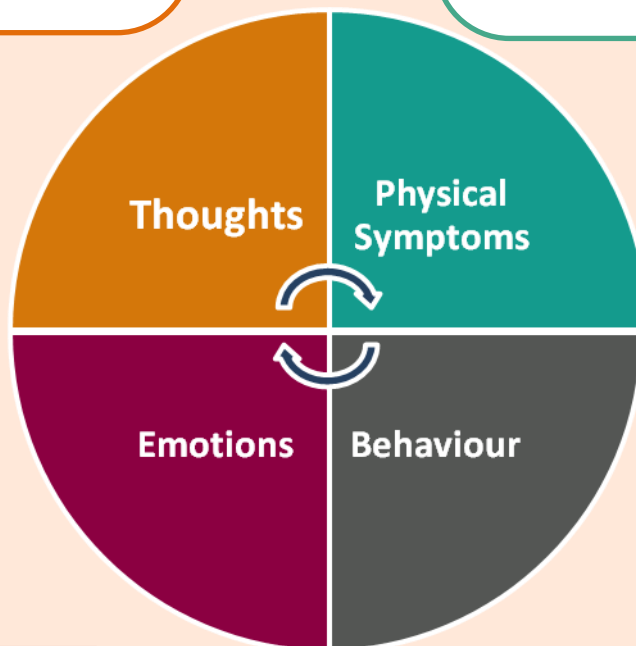
Situation:

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Emotionally I feel...

*What helped me cope and get through it? What didn't I do or what did I avoid doing?*

I am....

I am avoiding...

## Week 2: Behavioural Activation

### CBT Reflections:

What did I notice when I completed the CBT cycle?

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What patterns did I start to pick up on?

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Any differences with the first CBT cycle I completed and the last one?

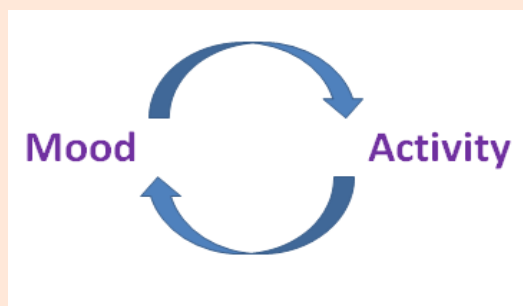
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Lots of things change when a baby is part of the picture; relationships with colleagues, time for hobbies, relationship with your own family. This can be what you might have expected; however how you feel emotionally affects how you behave.

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.

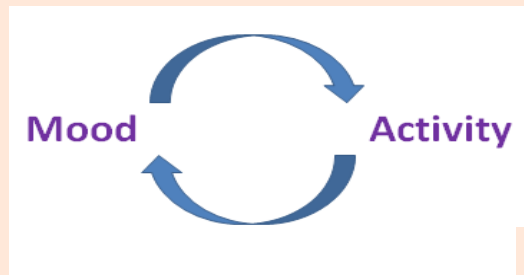
Low mood leads to changes in activity. Loss of interest, motivation and energy



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, worsens  
mood



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

### **Behavioural Activation**

Behavioural activation (BA) targets this by reversing this vicious cycle, and helping us to find a better balance whilst factoring in the demands of having a baby.

When we do less of an activity, we do it to avoid maybe feeling tired or drained or because we just “don’t feel up to it.” The problem is that the next time that activity comes up we’re more likely to avoid it again. This is called negative reinforcement.

Example: a friend arranges to meet us for a buggy walk with baby. On the morning you sit on the sofa and think “I’m so exhausted and drained, I can’t really be bothered with seeing them. The thought of having to get everything in the car and park and then make conversation!” So you text them and make an excuse to not see them.

A week later when you plan to see them again your brain pipes up and almost reminds you “Remember last week? Remember how we didn’t go and we stayed at home and how nice and easy that was! Let’s do that again!”

We let our inside feelings dictate what we do on the outside.

BA reverses this and lets the things we do in the outside world change how we feel on the inside.

It may be the last thing you feel like doing, and it might seem like adding pressure when you’re already struggling, but activities really CAN help you feel better.



We want to do things but we want a good balance. We use three categories to think about getting a balance; routine, necessary and pleasurable.

### **Routine activities**

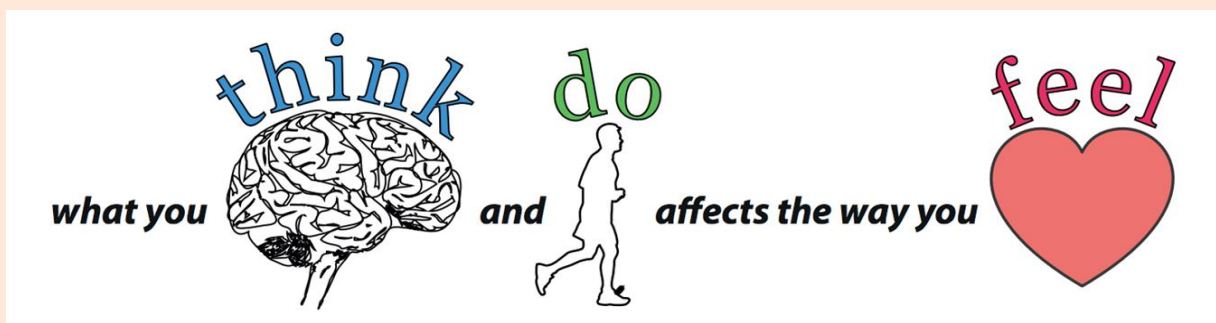
People with low mood tend to avoid doing routine activities such as cleaning the house, doing the ironing or washing up. Daily routines may become disrupted such as the time they go to bed or get up, or when they eat or cook, which are also affected by having a baby who often doesn't always fit into a clear routine! These are important life routines that make people comfortable in their surroundings. By avoiding doing them, it can commonly maintain low mood and a feeling of helplessness.

### **Pleasurable activities**

People may also stop doing pleasurable activities such as seeing friends, enjoying a day out with families or playing games with children. These are things that bring enjoyment and often make people feel well. By avoiding them, people with low mood can become withdrawn, isolated and ultimately feel worse.

### **Necessary activities**

Another area where people with low mood may notice behaviour changes is with important necessary things such as making appointments for baby, paying bills, taxing the car or confronting difficult situations. By avoiding these things, there may be consequences that could make a person's situation worse.



## Importance of Balance!

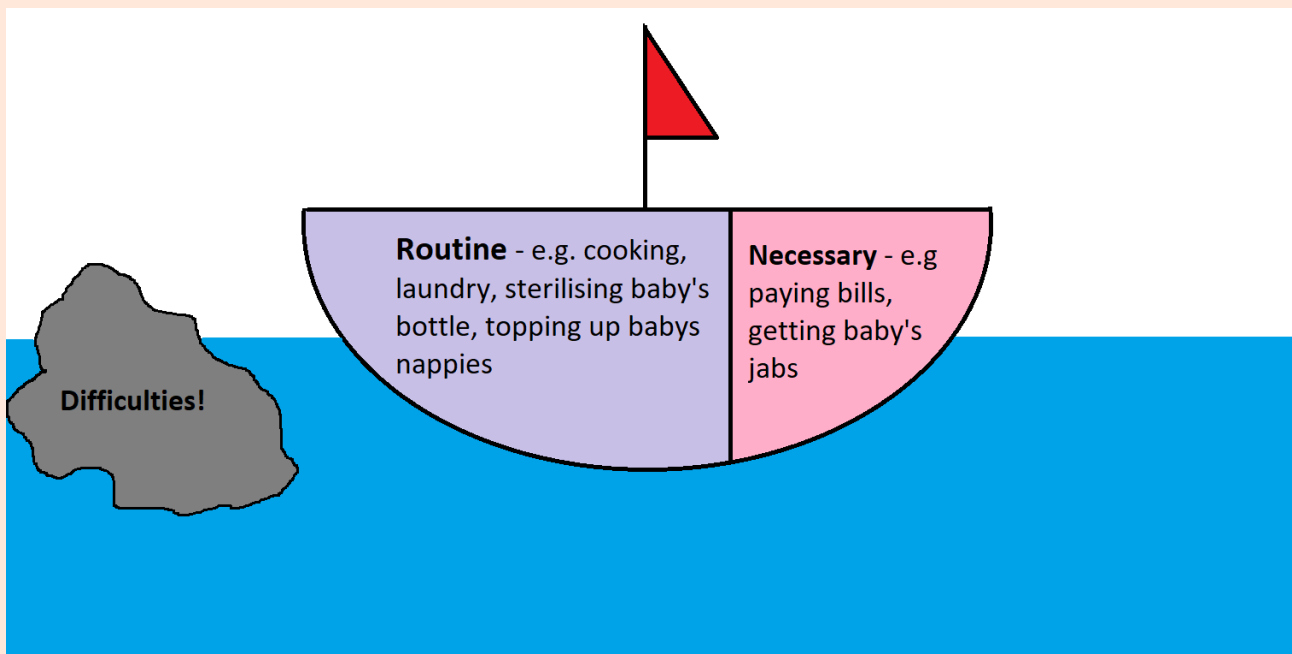
Imagine that our lives are like this boat, we often can get along for a while with our lives out of balance before it affects us.

It's when difficulties (like the rock in the sea!) happen that they really impact us. Unfortunately we can't always control the rocks in the sea and when they are going to get in our way, life will put some difficulties or hardships in our way.

The best way to cope with those difficulties is to try and keep a good balance.

What will happen to our boat if a difficulty hits those routine activities? Our boat will fill with water and sink. That's because most of our boat is filled with those activities.

The better our balance is the more we can keep our boat afloat!





## BA 1: Activity List - Write a list of activities you've stopped doing / are doing less of since feeling low

List some routine activities here: e.g. washing up, cleaning the house

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List some pleasurable activities here: e.g. going out with friends or family

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List some necessary activities here: e.g. paying bills, dealing with difficult situations

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**BA 2: Difficulty hierarchy – Put activities on previous page in order of difficulty below**

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**The most difficult**

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**Medium difficulty**

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**The easiest**

**If some activities are too difficult then break them down so they become easier. For example ‘Clean the house’ could become ‘hoover the lounge’, ‘clean the worksurfaces’, ‘make the bed’. If these are still too much, then break these down further like ‘tidy the bookcase in the lounge’, ‘Sort out baby toys in the lounge’.**



## **CBT Home Practise: Behaviour Activation**

We're going to target some of those behaviours from the CBT cycle now. More specifically get doing things because we know this helps!

Write a list of Routine, Necessary and Pleasurable activities you want to be doing on **page 17**.

Put this list on the hierarchy on **page 18**, there should be a mix of routine, necessary and pleasurable at each level.

If you struggle to have something at each level think about how you can break it down to make it easier.

Once you've done this, start at the easiest level and plan in activities for the week using the diary on **page 19**.

## Week 3: Behavioural Activation Extended

### CBT Reflections:

What did I notice making the list of activities?

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How did you find the hierarchy?

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How did planning go? What worked and didn't work?

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What patterns did I notice?

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### Problem 1: Finding it Hard to Make Change

It can be really hard changing what we do, especially when we're tired and our motivation is low. It's also really important to notice sometimes it can be our own thoughts and fears that stop us from doing activities. We can have worries about leaving baby with partner, worries about attending baby groups or even thoughts or feeling even more tired.

### **\*Change Balance Sheet\***

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:**

<p><b>Advantages of Exercise</b></p>	<p><b>Disadvantages of Exercise</b></p>
<p>Get fitter Healthier Fresh air Meet new people Learn something new Fun Improve my mood- endorphins</p>	<p>Might feel embarrassed Not having the energy Having to find childcare Leaving my baby with someone else</p>
<p><b>Advantages of not Exercising</b></p>	<p><b>Disadvantages of not Exercising</b></p>
<p>Less effort Don't have to go out Not having to pay for classes or exercise clothes</p>	<p>I will not get fitter I want to tone up 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</p>
<p><b>Advantages of</b> .....</p>	<p><b>Disadvantages of</b> .....</p>
<p><b>Advantages of not doing it (staying as I am)</b></p>	<p><b>Disadvantages of not doing it</b></p>

## Problem 2: I Don't Know What I Like

### My Personal Values

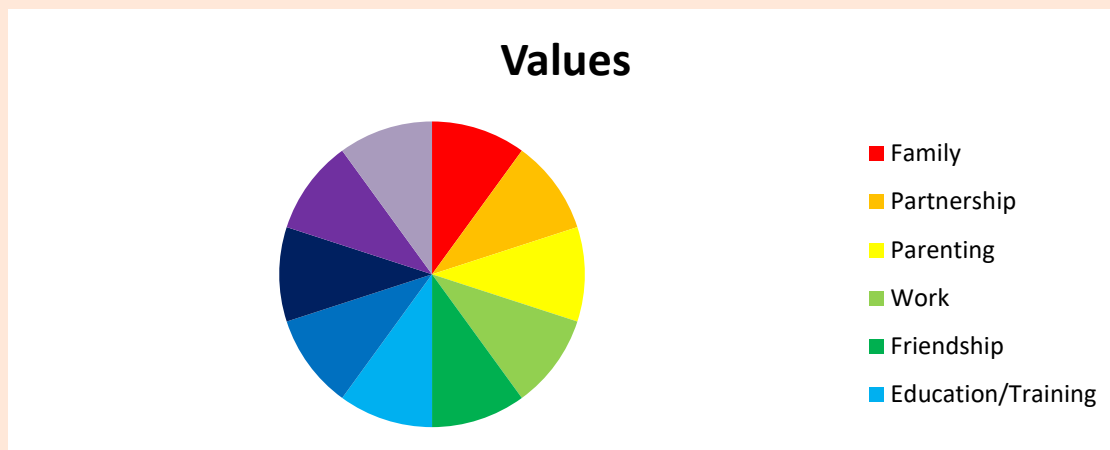
Sometimes it can be hard to think about what things you even like doing or what you enjoy doing now, especially since having a baby.

If you found it hard to think of pleasurable activities then take some time to reflect on your values

#### What are values?

Our values reflect what we care about most, what we regard as most important to us.

Values drive us and guide our life choices. Choosing activities which reflect your values can be a great way of improving your mood and sense of purpose and fulfilment.

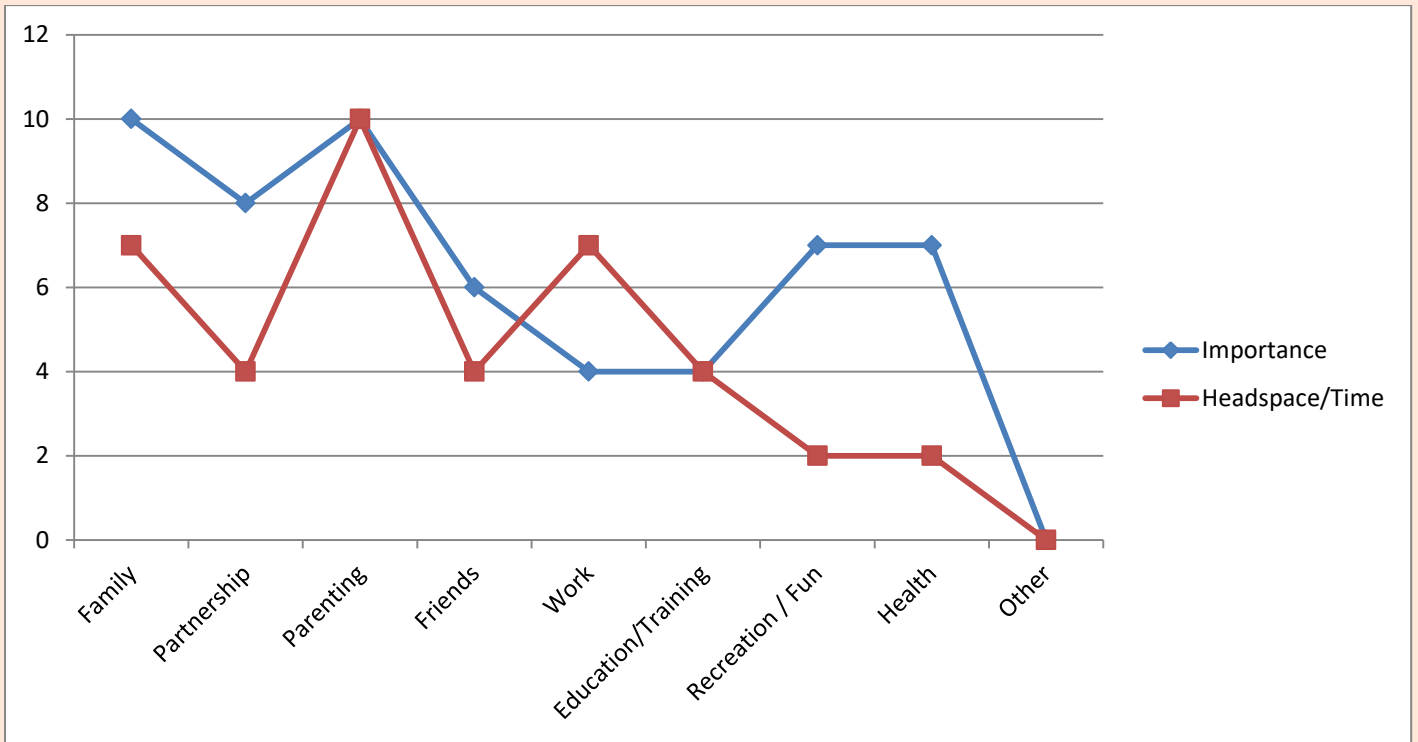


#### What are my values?

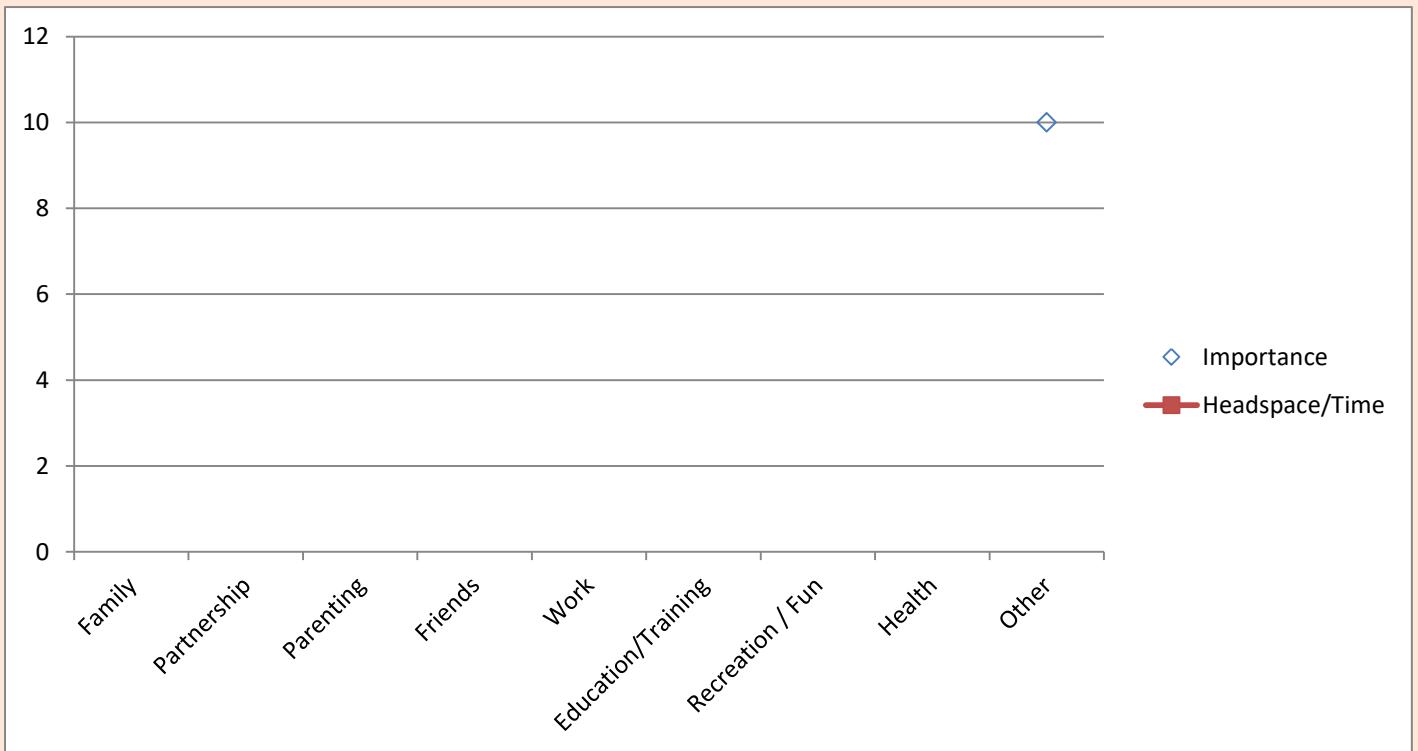
**Task:** Look at the next page you can see in the graphs shows a list of areas of life that are valued by some people. The blue line shows how important these areas are and the red line shows how much time and headspace that area is getting.

In the first graph is an example, and in the second graph plot your own values and importance. Rate the importance on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = *not important*, 10 = *very important*). Then how much time and headspace it has currently for you on the same scale (1 = *little time, effort and 'head space'* and 10 = *maximum time, effort and 'head space'*). There is a space for you to add another personal value, if there is something that is important to you, but not covered by the values given.

**Example:**



**Try your own:**



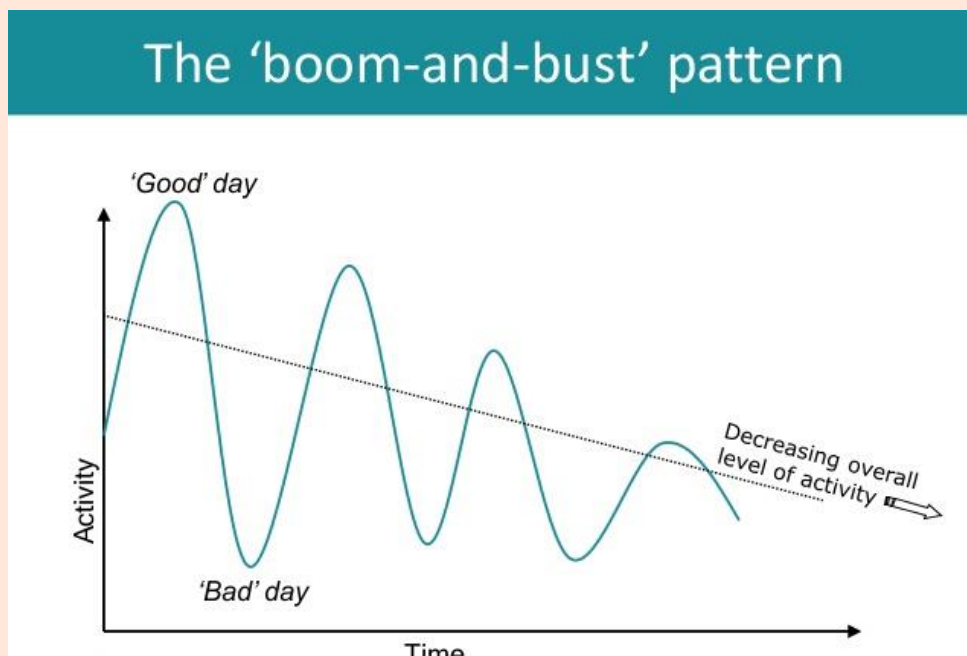


### Problem 3: Up and Down Days

A key frustration for many people is the way that depression can be really up and down. Not just our mood either it can be our energy levels and our motivations.

You might notice there can be the odd day you wake up and feel really motivated and feeling... well a bit better! Then the next 3 days you feel rubbish, perhaps for no obvious reason.

When depression, tiredness and lack of motivation reduces your activity levels it's very easy to try to make up for lost time on better days. But cramming in too much activity on a day when you are feeling better often leads to a setback in your symptoms. It becomes a vicious circle that is damaging to the recovery process and frustrating and unpleasant to live with. This is sometimes called 'boom and bust' or 'activity cycling' and it's easy to fall into this cycle.



#### **Is this you?**

The best way to avoid this is to do a little less on the good days so we can do a little more on bad days! The idea is we leave a little in the tank. Look at your last week and see what days you managed to do a lot and what days you had struggled and think about changing the level of activities.

## **Problem 4: Ruminating**

### **What is Rumination?**

Rumination is when your thoughts go round and round in circles without resolving the problem. When you feel depressed you can find that you can spend large amounts of your day stuck in this negative thought pattern.

### **Catching Rumination**

#### **Noticing when you ruminate is the first step to changing this thinking habit!**

You could do this by coming up with a physical cue that you can use each time you notice yourself ruminating. For example, snapping your fingers, clicking your tongue, making a mark on a piece of paper, saying the phrase “that’s rumination” in your mind each time that you notice this. Noticing when the rumination is happening will help you in time to be able to think about alternatives that you can use which may improve mood.

When you begin it’s helpful to also keep a diary so that you can see if there are any patterns in it: does it happen more when you’re on your own? Doing the washing up? In the car? In the evenings? You can write an ‘R’ on your BA diary when you know you’ve been ruminating. Knowing this will help you think about how to reduce it and improve it.

★ **Three Strategies to Reduce Rumination** ★

1. Activity Scheduling	2. Connecting with the present	3. How vs Why thinking
<p>So you've recognised what times you ruminate the most and what you may have noticed, is that it's often times when we're not busy and not doing much.</p> <p>Using your BA diary plan in activities during those key times.</p>	<p>When we ruminate we often get caught up in our own head and we can get lost in thoughts about the past. So let's pull ourselves back into the here and now!</p> <p>Anything that grabs your attention is GREAT!</p>	<p>Try changing the content of the thoughts. <b>When we ruminate we can ask ourselves lots of unanswerable questions!</b> If we can change the <b>STYLE</b> of question it may change the <b>WAY</b> we think about things.</p> <p><u>Change from:</u></p> <p><b>WHY questions which focus on unanswerable questions, and will get you caught up.</b></p>
<p><u>Examples:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4am feeds &gt; Having an audiobook I listen to during that time</li> <li>• 2pm nap time &gt; scheduling 30 minutes to do my nails</li> </ul>	<p><u>Some ideas:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mindful colouring</li> <li>• Mindful eating</li> <li>• Jigsaw puzzle</li> <li>• Hand massage</li> <li>• Yoga</li> <li>• Listen to an album</li> <li>• 10 minutes movement</li> </ul>	<p><u>To:</u></p> <p><b>HOW</b> questions which focus on action and doing something about the problem.</p>

# C1 Behavioural activation diary

	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					

## **CBT Home Practise: TroubleShooting**

Have any problems come up for you?

### Problem 1:

If change seems daunting use the change balance graph to reflect on what change would mean to you on **page 22**.

### Problem 2:

Use the values graph on **page 24** to think about what's important to you and how much time and headspace it's getting at the moment.

If you've struggled to think of pleasurable activities use the values that are important to think of what activities could represent the values that you would enjoy.

Use this values square to think about how you can include big and little activities in the 'pleasurable' column to do more of.

What activities would represent those values!

### Problem 3:

If you had up and down days think about your next week's BA diary. Now is there a steady balance across the week? Are there days where you need to take an activity away to put it onto a different day?

### Problem 4:

When are those key times that you ruminate? Try planning some activities in those times and think about ways you can pull yourself back into the here and now.

If you try activity planning and the same rumination keeps coming back, try grabbing a piece of paper and writing it down as a 'how' question to see if this changes it.

Plan another week of activities on **page 28**.

## Week 4: Cognitive Restructuring

### CBT Reflection:

How has the second week of Behavioural Activation been?

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Did anything get in the way?

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Did you complete the change table? If so what did you make of it?

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Did you reflect on your values? Were there any that surprised you?

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What activities can you do to reflect your values?

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Did you need to change the balance of your activities with Boom and Bust? How will you change this?

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Do you ruminate a lot? Did you notice there's key times when this happens?

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What will you do in those times to help pull yourself out of your head?

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### GOAL CHECK IN

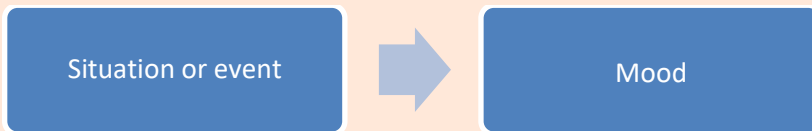
How are your SMART goals going from week 1?

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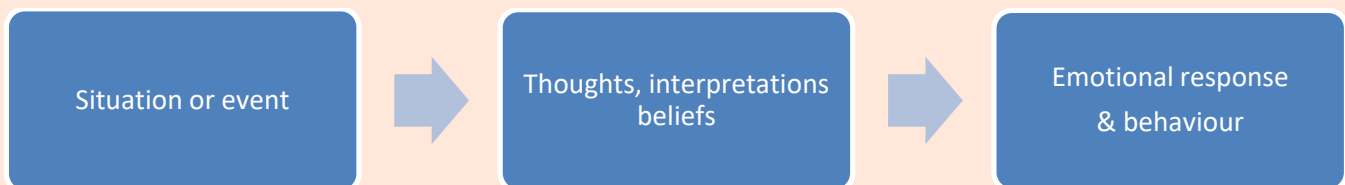
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## Our Thoughts

Most of us believe that external events, situations and the behavior 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”.



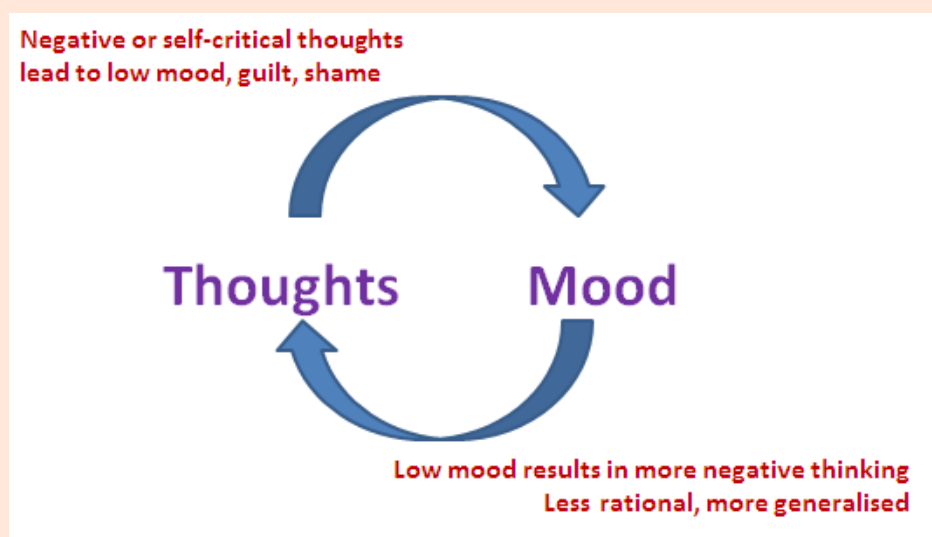
If this were true then everybody in a particular situation would react the same way, but we know that different people react differently. This suggests that it is the way that we think about, perceive or interpret the situation or others actions that influences how we feel and behave.



The way we think in a situation, and how we make sense of it in our minds, is shaped by our previous experiences, our personality, and our underlying beliefs about ourselves, other people and the world. We tend to interpret new situations in line with beliefs and ideas that we already hold, which may not always be helpful to us.

### **The Thoughts – Mood Link**

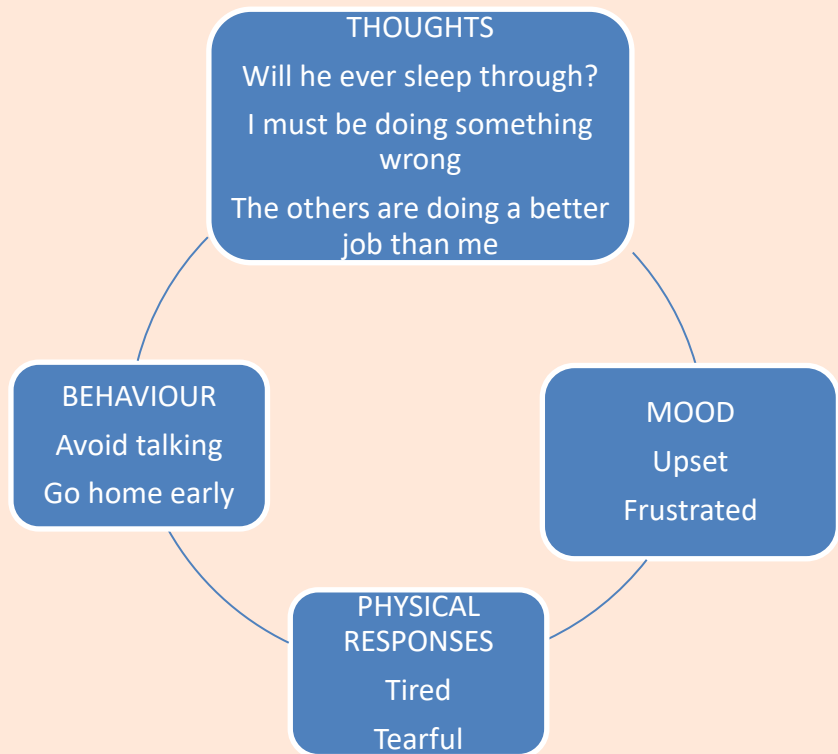
In weeks 2 and 3 we focused on the link between our mood and activity. There is a similar, strong link between our thoughts, and our mood.



## 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 Zac was still waking up at least 3 times 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:



**Task:** what might these people be thinking? Have a go at filling in the boxes.

Activating event	Beliefs	Consequences	
		Emotions	Behaviour
Say hello to a friend in town whilst out walking with the pram but they walk on past me and do not acknowledge me		Worried, upset	Ask another friend for reassurance
		Concerned	Phone them later to see how they are
		Angry	Decide not to bother talking to them again



## Thoughts vs. Facts

When we have a thought, we tend to just accept it as true without evaluating how realistic or helpful it is.

When we are feeling anxious or depressed, though, these unhelpful thoughts become more frequent. They tend to be automatic and just seem to happen. They are often unreasonable or unrealistic but we don't question them, they seem correct at the time. The more you believe and accept these thoughts, the worse you are likely to feel. You may begin to view everything in a negative way or be more likely to avoid activities you fear.

**But we can change this!**

## Identifying and Recording Your Thoughts

CBT involves helping people to see how their thoughts and behavior interact in helpful or unhelpful ways.

1. Identify the trigger – remember our CBT cycle, what's caused the change in your mood.
2. Next identify the consequences, in terms of our
  - a. Emotional feelings, or mood
  - b. Behaviour- what we did, or avoided doing

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

2. Lastly we need to identify what was going through our mind when we started to feel this way. This might be a specific thought, an image or even a memory.

## Using a Thought Record Form

When you notice a change in your mood, try to write down a brief description of the situation (event), how you were feeling emotionally (mood), what was going through your mood (thoughts), and what you did, or avoided doing (behavior).

Thought Record Form			
Activating Event	Emotion/Mood	Thoughts, images, memories	Behaviour
Colicky baby does not stop crying regardless of 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 my baby.	Try harder; avoid asking for help; avoid meeting up with people

### Alternatively:

Thought Record Form			
Activating Event	Emotion/Mood	Thoughts, images, memories	Behaviour
Colicky baby does not stop crying.	Hopeful 7/10 Calm 8/10	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 for help; taking turns with partner; rock baby

**Task: Think of a time when you have felt low recently, and complete the form below to identify your thoughts, emotions and behaviours:**

Thought Record Form			
Activating Event	Emotion/Mood	Thoughts, images, memories	Behaviour

# Thinking Styles

**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.



*Am I only noticing the bad stuff? Am I filtering out the positives? Am I wearing those 'gloomy specs'? What would be more realistic?*

**Prediction** - Believing we know what's going to happen in the future.



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

**Mind-Reading** - Assuming we know what others are thinking (usually about us).



*Am I assuming I know what others are thinking? What's the evidence? Those are my own thoughts, not theirs. Is there another, more balanced way of looking at it?*

**Compare and despair**



Seeing only the good and positive aspects in others, and getting upset when comparing ourselves negatively against them. *Am I doing that 'compare and despair' thing? What would be a more*

*balanced and helpful way of looking at it?*

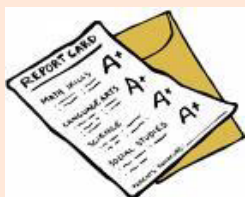
**Critical self**



Putting ourselves down, self-criticism, blaming ourselves for events or situations that are not (totally) our responsibility. *There I go, that internal bully's at it again. Would most people who really*

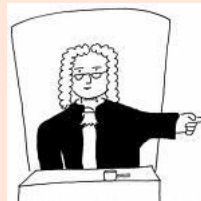
*know me say that about me? Is this something that I am totally responsible for?*

**Shoulds and musts** - Thinking or saying 'I should' (or shouldn't) and 'I must' puts pressure on ourselves, and sets up unrealistic expectations.



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

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



*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?*

**Emotional Reasoning** - I feel bad so it must be bad! I feel anxious, so I must be in danger.



*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*

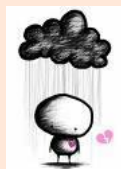
**Mountains and Molehills**



Exaggerating the risk of danger, or the negatives. Minimising the odds of how things are most likely to turn out, or minimising positives

*Am I exaggerating the bad stuff? How would someone else see it? What's the bigger picture?*

**Catastrophising** - Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen



*OK, thinking that the worst possible thing will definitely happen isn't really helpful right now. What's most likely to happen?*

**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'.



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

*spectrum?*

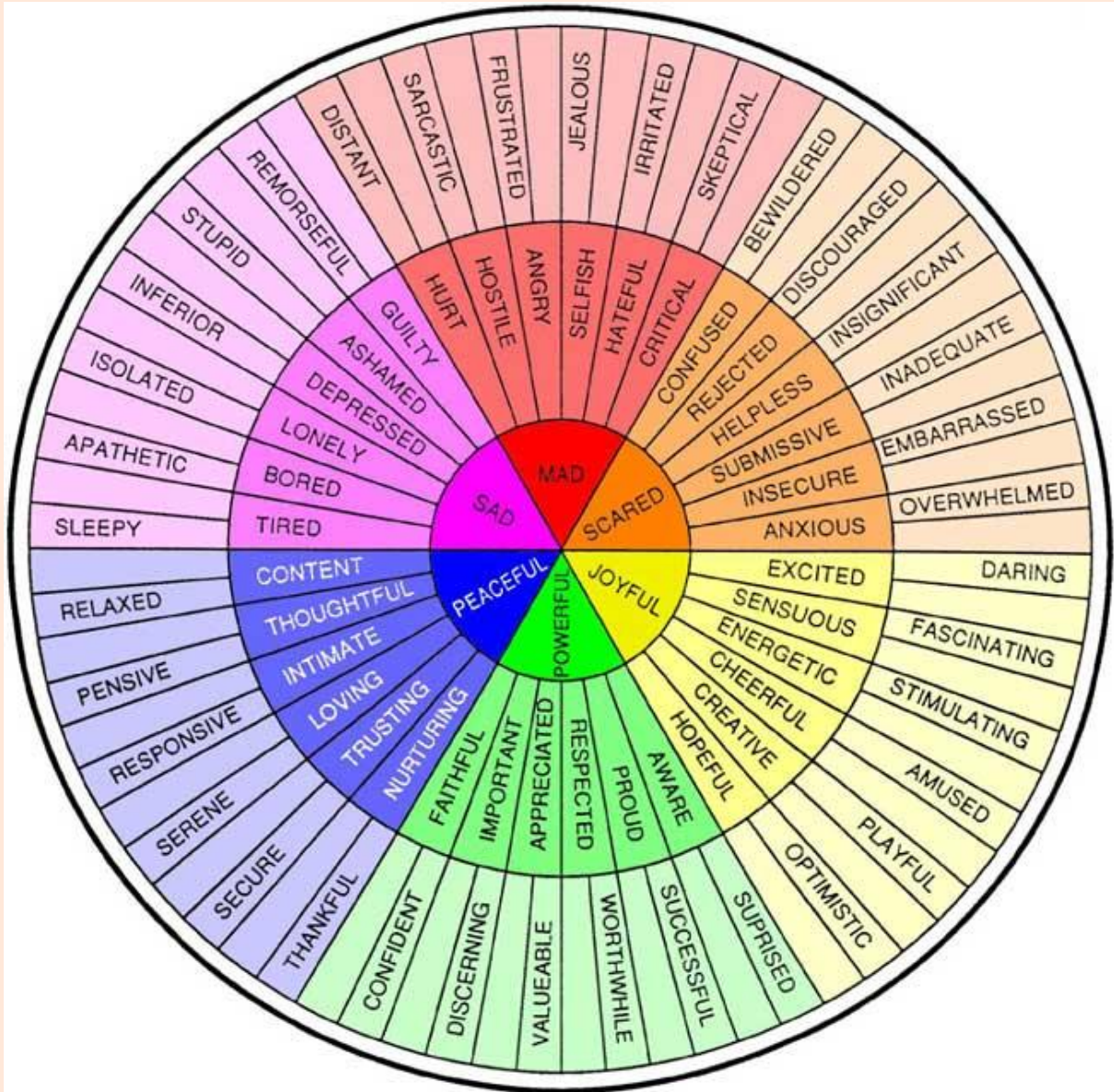
**Memories** - Current situations and events can trigger upsetting memories, leading us to believe that the danger is here and now, rather than in the past, causing us distress right now.



*This is just a reminder of the past. That was then, and this is now. Even though this memory makes me feel upset, it's not actually happening again right now.*

## Labeling Our Emotions

It can be hard to identify our emotional feelings. The following feelings wheel may help. 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.



## 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

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

## 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

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

## **CBT Home Practise:**

Keep a thought diary on **page 38**, and every time a negative thought pops into your mind write it down. Or every time you notice you are feeling negatively write it down and reflect on it.

Try and think about what thinking styles you notice you have been doing, using **page 36**.

Keep going with the Behavioural Activation diaries! At the back of the booklet there are enough spares for the rest of the course, please see **page 76**.

## **Moving Forward with Goals:**

**Keep going!**  
**Do you need to readjust your goals?**  
**It's ok if you do, remember you're in the driving seat!**



## Week 5: CR Taking the thought to court

### CBT Reflection:

How did you find keeping the thought diary?

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Did you notice any pattern in your thoughts?

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Did you notice any particular thinking styles that you tended to do more of?

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We've kept our thought diary and we've looked at what types of thinking styles we do now for the next step....

### To Challenging Unhelpful Thinking!

The key to changing the way we feel is to learn how to change unhelpful or unbalanced 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 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.

### Challenging Unhelpful or Negative Thinking Using Evidence

1. Identify the thoughts you were having in the situation
2. Find the "hot" thought
3. Re-evaluate this thought by answering the questions listed below. Remember to look for factual evidence rather than your own opinions
4. Balanced alternative – putting all the information together
5. Generating a more accurate, rational and helpful view.

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

- What is the evidence that my thought/belief is true?
- 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?
- What is the worst that will happen?
- Can I cope if the worst does happen?



We can use a Thought Diary form with extra columns to help us work through this.



### **Troubleshooting 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 mood?
- Is the thought I am testing a “hot” thought for the mood 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.

- 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.
- Review the evidence supporting my hot thought. Are these opinions or facts? If they are just my opinion, they may be more example of “wonky thinking”.
- Is my alternative believable to me? If not, review the evidence and try to write something that seems more credible to me.
- 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.

Thought Diary for Re-evaluating Thoughts

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

Thought Diary for Re-evaluating Thoughts

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

## 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. A similar process happens with our thinking.

### **CBT Home Practise:**

Keep going with the thought diary but now we’re going to add on challenging the thought using the diary on **page 45**.

If you struggle to come up with evidence against the thought consider asking someone you’d trust to help you or think about what you might say to a friend?

Keep going with the balance of activities.

All the strategies work best like a jigsaw puzzle all fitting together!

# Week 6: Sleep

## CBT Reflections:

How did it feel challenging thoughts?

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How did you feel coming up with a rebalanced thought?

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How was it keeping the thought diary?

---

Are you still trying to keep a balance of routine necessary and pleasurable going?

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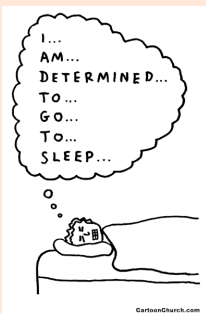
How is the planning going?

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## Sleep!

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 baby's (or toddler'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.



## Baby's Asleep but I am 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.

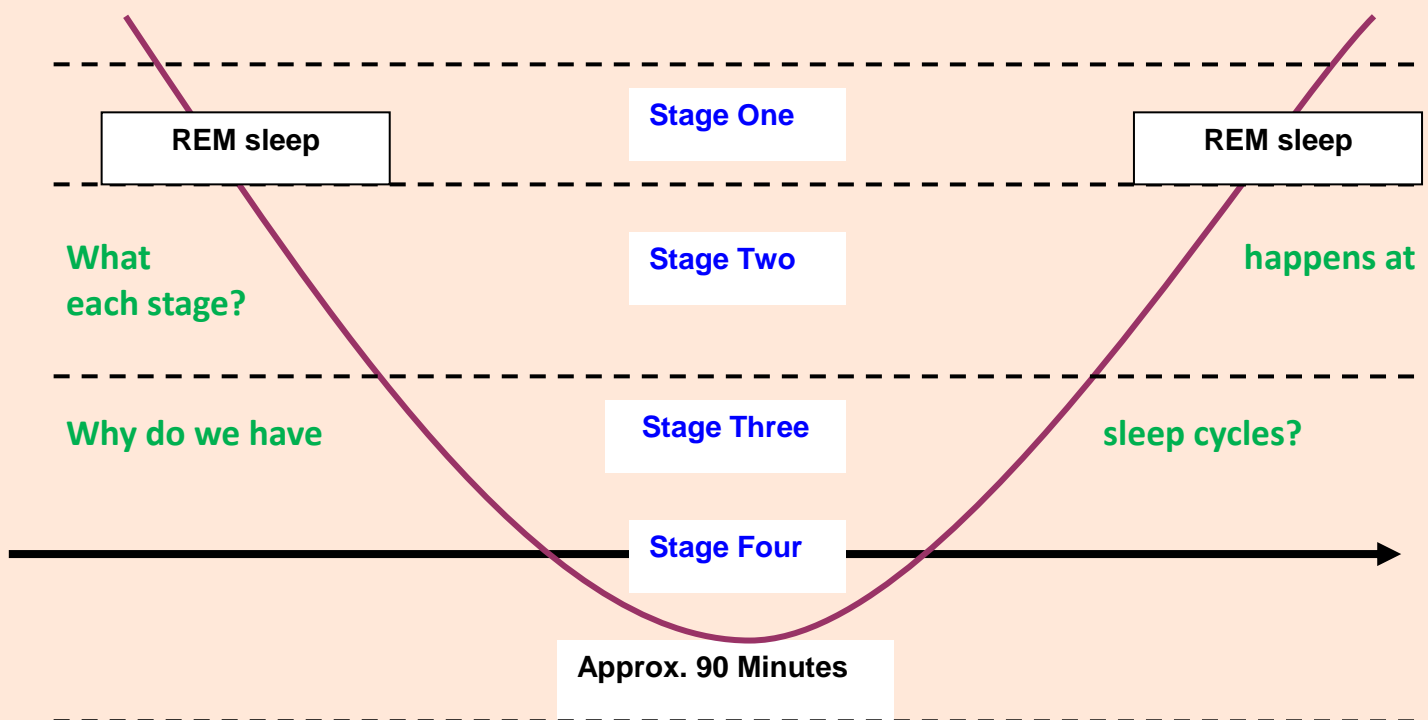
Appendix 1 contains some general sleep hygiene advice that you may find helpful.

Remember:

- The worst thing you can do is worry about sleeping, or lie there feeling frustrated
- Focus on relaxing and resting, even if you are not fully asleep
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation or breathing
- Close your eyes and focus on relaxing every tiny facial muscle, including your jaw and forehead
- Listen to a relaxation exercise or music through headphones
- Try some new relaxation techniques and experiment until you find something that helps

## The Stages of Sleep

When we 'go to sleep', we move through stages, from light to deep sleep, and back again up to light sleep or wakefulness. We go through these stages several times a night, and it is normal to wake briefly as you rise to the lighter sleep stages.





### **Drowsiness/light sleep - Stage 1**

We move from waking to sleeping – takes about 15 minutes

### **Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep**

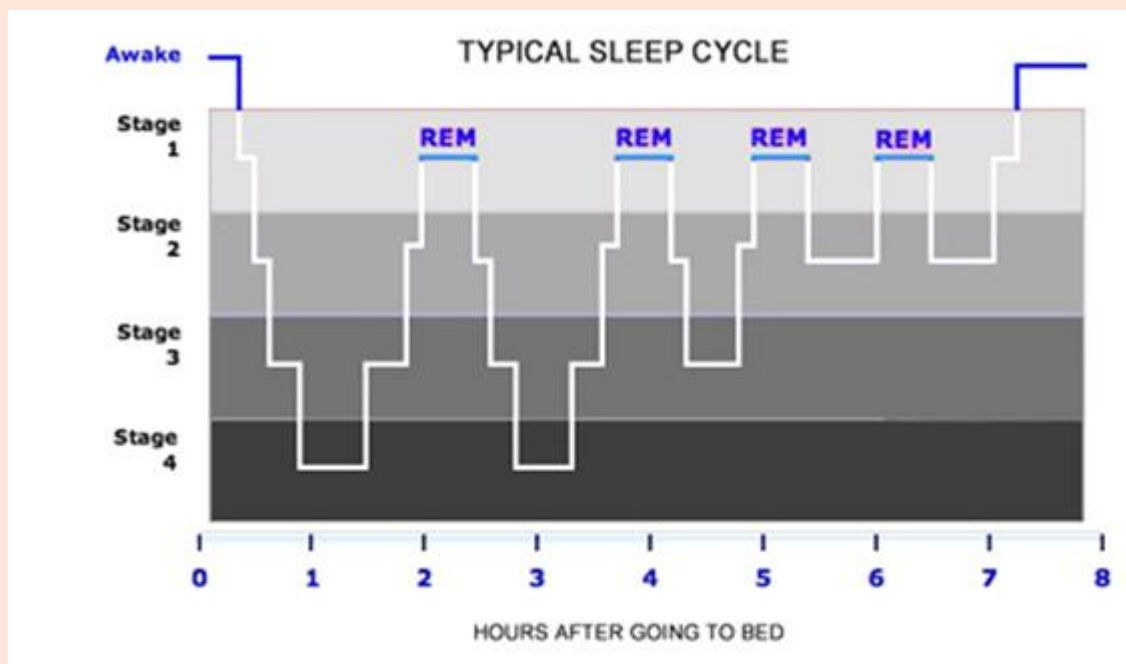
We spend around 25% of the night in REM sleep, which was only recognised in 1953, and is where most of our dreams happen. Apart from the eyes and essential muscles like the heart and breathing muscles, we cannot move! REM sleep may help us 'sort out' the day's events and defuse the emotions generated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



## Some tips for better sleep!

We can't motivate our sleep; we can't lie in bed and force ourselves to sleep.

We have to regulate our body and this can take time and consistency.

### **Bedtime Routine and Baby**

Having a good routine is important it gives us a few things:

- a) It primes our body and brain for sleep
- b) It makes sure we have time set aside to relax

Baby's routine can be really changeable so ours might change around it so it's good to have a set routine that we can change depending on how the bedtime changes.

- **Try and set a one hour routine before bed.**
- **Use the hour to relax and unwind.**
- **Try and avoid screens for the hour before bed.**

<b>My Bedtime Routine</b>
<b>When do I normally go to bed .....</b>
<b>What do I normally do the hour before bed .....</b>
<b>What would help me unwind the hour before bed ....</b>

### **Bedtime Environment**

Ideally it's most optimal for our body to sleep in a dark, calm, cooler environment.

- **Try black out blinds or an eye mask**
- **If you can keep the room quiet do, ear plugs if you have a snoring partner or even using white noise could help distract you**
- **Either keeping windows open, using a fan or swapping to a lighter tog duvet**
- **Avoid having work or paperwork in the bedroom to keep it as calm and serene as possible!**

## **Sleep hygiene: lifestyle factors**

Some of the things we do during the day can impact our sleep, changing these can be small changes that can help us sleep better.

- **Eating late**

When we eat too late or too close to bed it can cause our body to be overloaded with jobs. Between metabolising and digesting food and preparing the body for sleep with processes like producing melatonin it will pick breaking down food first.

- **Eating too much sugar too late at night**

Sugar is a quick energy boost which can be handy during the day when we're tired but late at night it can mean our bodies get a boost of energy when we don't need it.

- **Caffeine**

If you're breast feeding then you may have restricted your caffeine intake anyway but if you're using formula it's worth keeping in mind your caffeine consumption.

Caffeine has several effects on our body as well as waking us up! When we're already feeling anxious or stressed our brain is probably getting fairly used to scanning for any threats in our environment.

Caffeine wakes us up, it is in fact a stimulant.

One of the most common side effects of both anxiety and caffeine consumption is sleeping troubles.

If anxious thoughts make you restless at night, caffeine can compound the problem.

## **Sleep hygiene: Thoughts**

Speaking of thoughts, if you find that once you get into bed that your brain starts going then it might be worth trying a 'brain dump.'

A brain dump is a piece of paper or a notebook you keep by the bed where before you fall asleep if you notice any thoughts, to-do lists or worries pop into your mind jot them all down on the bit of paper.

It doesn't need to make sense at all, it can be doodles or just one word it only needs to make sense to you.

The brain dump fulfill a few different purposes:

- It allows us to have some physical distance between us and our thoughts
- It means we don't have to hold on any thoughts or try and remember them for the morning that bit of paper isn't going anywhere!
- Often when we write out things such as to-do lists they are often much easier than they feel in our mind

### **Sleep hygiene: 20 min rule**

If you find that you still can't sleep then after about 20 minutes **get up!**

Get up and leave the bedroom and go and do something **boring**, so don't go and watch TV, don't read a good book, do something dull like ironing.

You don't want to do anything that is going to stimulate your mind which is why it should be boring.

Then when you start feeling sleepy go back to bed.

Here's the tricky bit – if you go back to bed and another 20 minutes pass without you falling asleep then rinse and repeat!

- This is all about building up a strong association in your brain that bed is a place for sleep and bed **is not** a place to lie there awake!
- This uses sleep restriction techniques so that actually you'll become so tired that you will fall asleep
- This technique is tough but very effective, but you have to be very strict with yourself

## **Relaxing and Being in the Moment**

In behavioural activation we touched upon how important it is to have those pleasurable activities in our life and making sure we have activities to help us relax isn't just good for our mood it's good for our sleep as well.

Think back to our sleep cycle on **page 49**, when we reach that stage 1 part of sleep throughout the night we can find that if we've been stressed or had a lot on our mind that instead of staying asleep we might wake up.

This is your body's way of checking for any threats or danger

We can get really caught up in our own thoughts, which means that our body is in the present moment, but our mind is very much elsewhere.

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

### 5 senses

This uses all your different senses to ground you in the moment and it will get harder going down the list which will make us focus more on our current environment

5...4...3...2...1

VISION 5: Acknowledge FIVE things you see around you.

TOUCH 4: Acknowledge FOUR things you can touch around you.

HEARING 3: Acknowledge THREE things you hear.

SMELL 2: Acknowledge TWO things you can smell:

TASTE 1: Acknowledge ONE thing you can taste.

### 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, etc. Take a moment to think about the various everyday routine tasks you do, that you could use as an opportunity to exercise your attention

and really focus on the details as you engage in that activity (e.g., doing the dishes, hanging washing, taking a shower, vacuuming, eating a meal, brushing teeth, walking, etc.

### Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally. This increases awareness, clarity and acceptance of our present-moment reality. There are various apps or videos online that can help with practising Mindfulness.

### Active brain exercises (e.g. cleaning, puzzles, colouring books)

Doing puzzles, crosswords, Sudoku or other word games, reciting a poem, singing a song or counting backwards from one hundred, are all useful distraction exercises. The important thing is that they take your attention away from the difficult thoughts.

We may have a lot going in our lives, and relaxation might not seem like an important thing to focus on, but actually - it can really help improve how we are feeling. Tension is the body's natural response to threat, part of the body's alarm or survival mechanism.

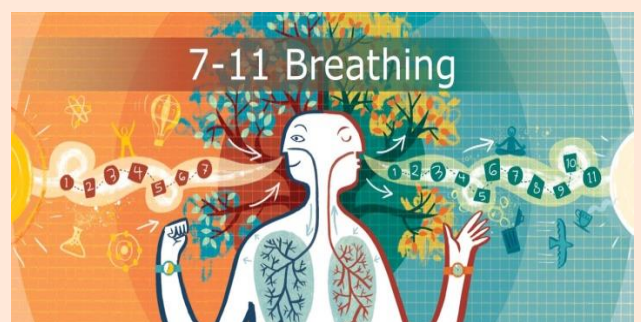
Relaxation is about allowing physical and mental tension to be released in order to help reduce stress, worry and anxiety.

Of course, there are so many ways to relax, and it is about learning what works for you. Some people enjoy walking, reading, watching a good movie or a long, warm bath. However, there are also some great relaxation practices that you can include to help you to relax throughout your day. Some ideas are:

**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. PMR is based upon the simple practice of tensing, or tightening, one muscle group at a time followed by a relaxation phase with release of the tension. **Here is how you do it:**

1. Choose a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
2. Make yourself comfortable, either sitting or lying down.
3. Start to breathe slowly and deeply.
4. Gently tense and hold the muscle, then relax; each part of your body, starting with your feet and working your way up to your face and head.
5. As you focus on each area, think of warmth, heaviness and relaxation.
6. Let go of any thoughts that pop into your mind; imagine them floating away.
7. Don't try to relax; simply let go of the tension in your muscles and allow them to become relaxed.
8. Let your mind become quiet. Some people find it helpful to visualise a calm, beautiful place such as a garden or meadow.
9. Stay like this for between 10 - 20 minutes, then take some deep breaths and open your eyes, but stay sitting or lying for a few moments before you get up

**7/11 Breathing** is a simple technique that you can do anywhere that can help bring you into a state of calm and relaxation. Practising this breath helps to bring the parasympathetic nervous system into work in our bodies. This is the part of the nervous system which helps us to slow down and to relax, so is particularly helpful if we are tense, worried or stressed.



**Here is how you do it:**

1. Breathe in for a count of 7.
2. Then breathe out for a count of 11.

When you breathe in, bring the breath deep down into the belly, so you notice that your belly expands on your inhale and contracts on your exhale. Often when we are tense, we tend to breathe shallow breaths into the chest a lot, which means we don't get all the

oxygen we need. Bringing deep breaths down into the belly helps our bodies know it's okay to relax.

If you find that it's difficult to lengthen your breaths to a count of 11 or 7, then **don't worry!** Start with breathing in for **3** and out for **5**, or whatever suits you best, **as long as the out breath is longer than the in breath**. Continue in this way for 5-10 minutes or longer if you have time – and enjoy the calming effect it will have on your mind and body. An added bonus of 7-11 breathing is that the very act of counting to 7 or 11 is a distraction technique, taking your mind off your thoughts.

You could also try:

- Breathing techniques
- Yoga
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness

Anything at all as long as you enjoy it!!

## **CBT Home Practise:**

How is your sleep at the moment?

If you're struggling to sleep then try the strategies above. Remember consistency is the key with sleep so you have to keep doing the same thing again and again!

Think about your bedtime routine using the table on **page 50**.

Try something new to relax! Give either 54321, PMR or 7/11 breathing a go this week and see how you find it!

Keep going with the thought challenging 😊

Try and keep going with the balanced activities!

## Week 7: Feeling Anxious

### CBT Reflections:

Did you spend time reflecting on your sleep?

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Did you try making changes to your bedtime routine?

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What were the breathing techniques like?

---

Did you prefer any of the relaxation strategies?

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Are you still using strategies to manage your thoughts and/or behaviour?

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### What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a very common additional symptom for many women who experience Postnatal Depression! Anxiety can particularly arise as we adjust to big changes in our lives (like your new role as a parent, or if this is not your first child, then adjusting to coping with more children)

When you become a parent, especially for the first time; it is common to feel worried, unsure or uncertain about a whole range of things surrounding life with a new baby. Anxiety, worries and fear are natural emotions that we can all feel from time to time. However understandably, the more worried we can become, the more likely this is going to give rise to our stress response.



## The Fight or Flight Response

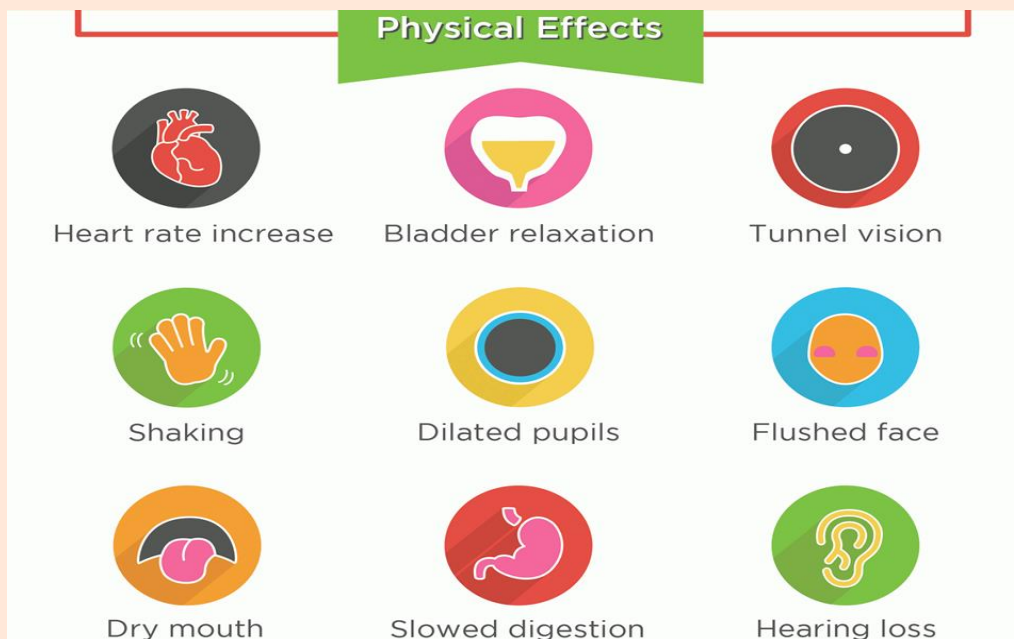


You've probably heard of the term, the 'fight or flight' response before in the past, and this is what gets activated when we are very anxious or in a high state of stress.

When we were evolving and adapting as early humans, the threats we faced were very immediate and very real. We needed to be able to respond quickly and effectively to protect ourselves and our young. We needed to be able to run away, to fight, or sometimes freeze to be a less visible target.

### Adrenaline

When the Fight or Flight response is triggered by our brain, adrenaline is released, which gets our body ready for action. Below are is a list of the main physical sensations that you may experience.



- Heart rate increases, and blood pressure increases.
- Rate of breathing increases, so oxygen levels in the blood increase.
- 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 bloodflow 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, ie blurred vision.
- Brain function changes, we become more instinctive and less rational or cognitive

## Real Threat or Thoughts?

Fight or Flight is our mind and body's way of responding to being in danger. This happens whether the danger is real or whether we believe the danger is there when actually there is none. It is the body's alarm and survival mechanism and in many ways keeps us safe. It works so well, that it often kicks in when it's not needed - **when the danger is in our minds rather than in reality.**

The part of our nervous system that activates the fight or flight response is called the **"sympathetic"** nervous system, and is responsible for stress hormones like cortisol & adrenaline. When this is over-activated, we might notice things like tension in our bodies, an increase in heart-rate and difficulties sleeping.

When we are in a constant state of worry, our minds can't differentiate between an actual, immediate threat to our survival and a **thought**. With this in mind, all of our current worries may lead us to feeling constantly 'on edge' due to our fight or flight system working for us, even though it doesn't need to.

A good analogy is the 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!

## What is Stress?

Stress can be described as a feeling of being under pressure. We experience stress when the demands of the situation are perceived to be greater than the resources we have available to manage them.

When we are feeling overly stressed, we also often underestimate our ability to cope, when in reality we can cope and adapt even in difficult circumstances.

**Examples:**

- Dealing with new challenges of having a baby but feeling that we don't have the necessary skills, or perhaps with limited or no social support.
- Lots of daily tasks to complete but not enough time to complete them in

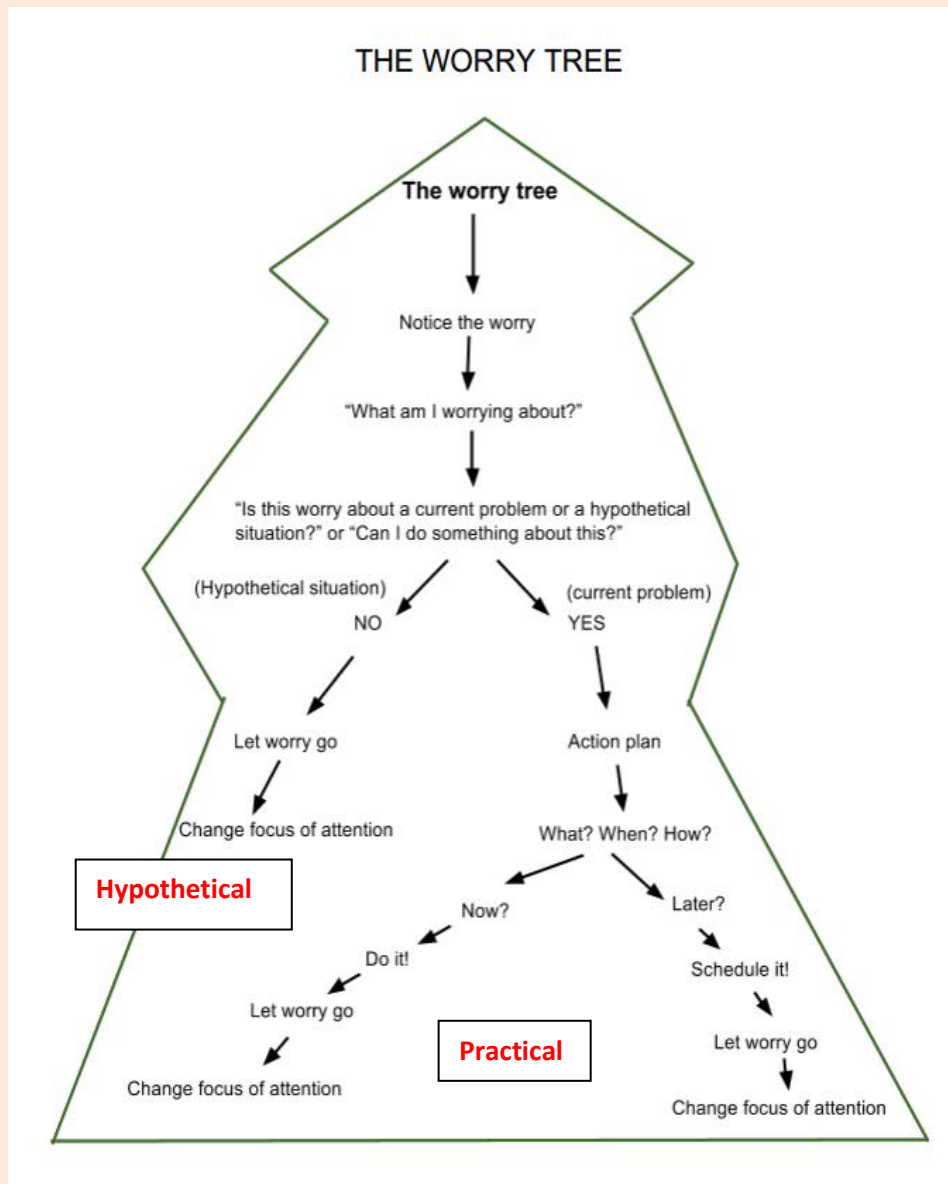
**Stress Bucket Analogy**

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.



# Worry

Thoughts	Physical	Behaviours	Emotions
<p>“What if the baby gets ill?”</p> <p>“I can’t cope”</p> <p>“Is that cough normal?”</p> <p>“Are they breathing ok?”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Difficulty sleeping</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Muscle tension (g grinding teeth, neck and shoulder pain, back pain, muscle twitching)</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating and focusing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worrying</li> <li>• Ruminating</li> <li>• Pacing</li> <li>• Seeking reassurance</li> <li>• Extra checking</li> <li>• Snapping at people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Nervous</li> <li>• Worried</li> </ul>



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

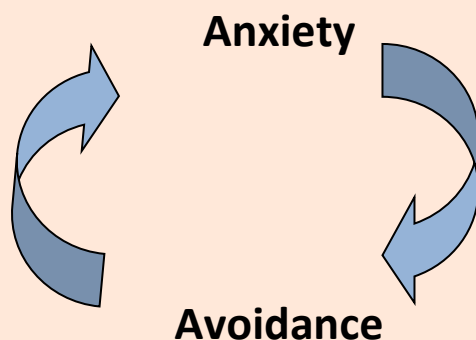
If it's **hypothetical** and you can't change the outcome of the likelihood or it happening or not happening then it's about pulling yourself away from the worry back into *the here, the now, the present*. How do I bring myself back to the present? Anything at all that grabs your attention is great. Go back to **page 52** for ideas!

If you're having a **practical** worry then it's about problem solving those practical worries with the sheet below.

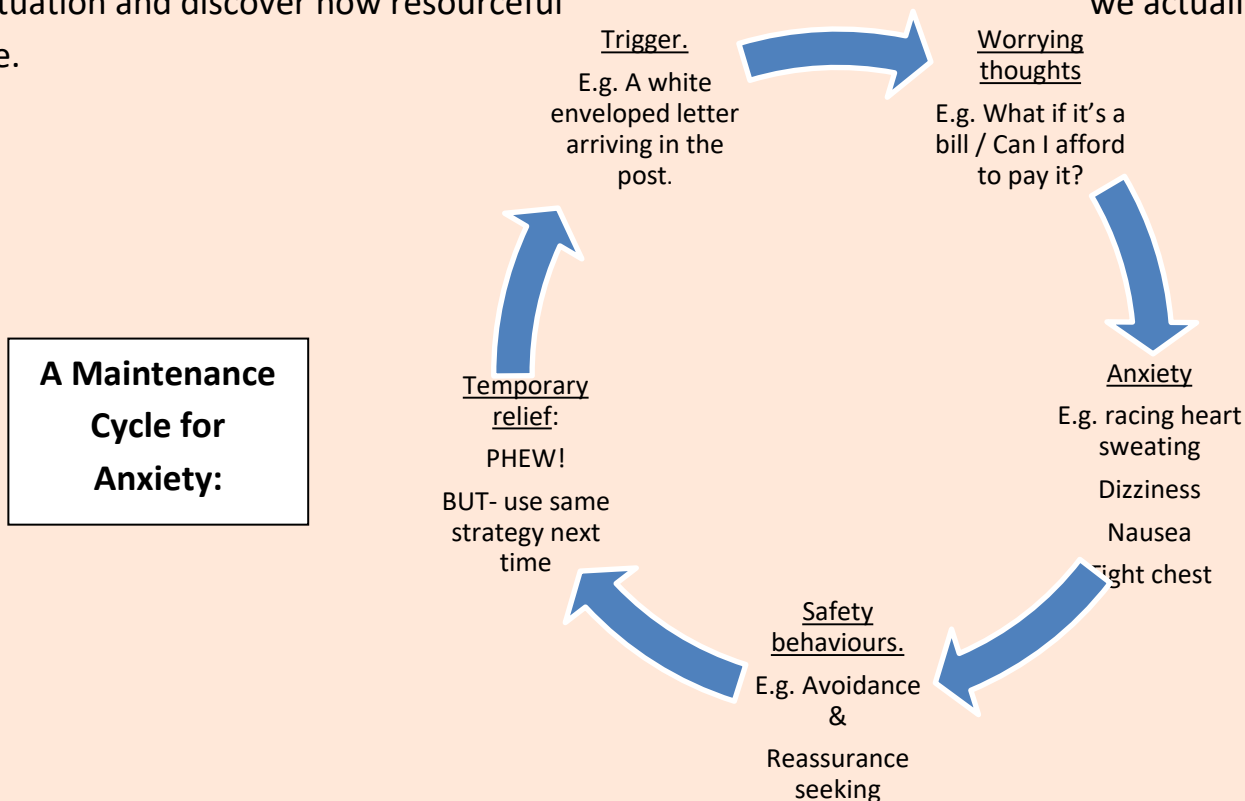
<b>Problem Solving</b>	
<b>STEP 1 Problem Identification</b>	Write the problem you want to try and solve here.
<b>STEP 2 Solution Identification</b>	What solutions are there? Don't reject anything at this stage, however silly it may seem!
<b>STEP 3 Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis</b>	What are the strengths and weaknesses for each solution? Use worksheet B to write these down for each solution considered.
<b>STEP 4 Solution Selection</b>	Review strengths and weaknesses on worksheet B, select a solution and write it below.
<b>STEP 5 Implementation Plan</b>	What steps will you take to apply your solution?
<b>STEP 6 Implementation</b>	What did you do? Use worksheet C to keep a diary of exactly what you did.
<b>STEP 7 Review</b>	How did it go? Use worksheet C to review how well your solution worked.

## Anxiety and Avoidance

When we feel anxious we experience a physical reaction, but may also notice anxious thoughts or worries, as well as the emotional reaction of fear, or apprehension. Anxiety can also affect our behaviour, and often leads us to avoid the trigger or situation. Whilst this can reduce our anxiety in the short-term, in the long term avoidance actually maintains our fears.



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.



# Strategies for managing Anxiety and Stress

## 1) Know your triggers – high stress times

- Dinner time
- 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
- Long trips in the car with a screaming baby
- Tensions with partner or an absent partner
- Baby crying

### My High Stress Times

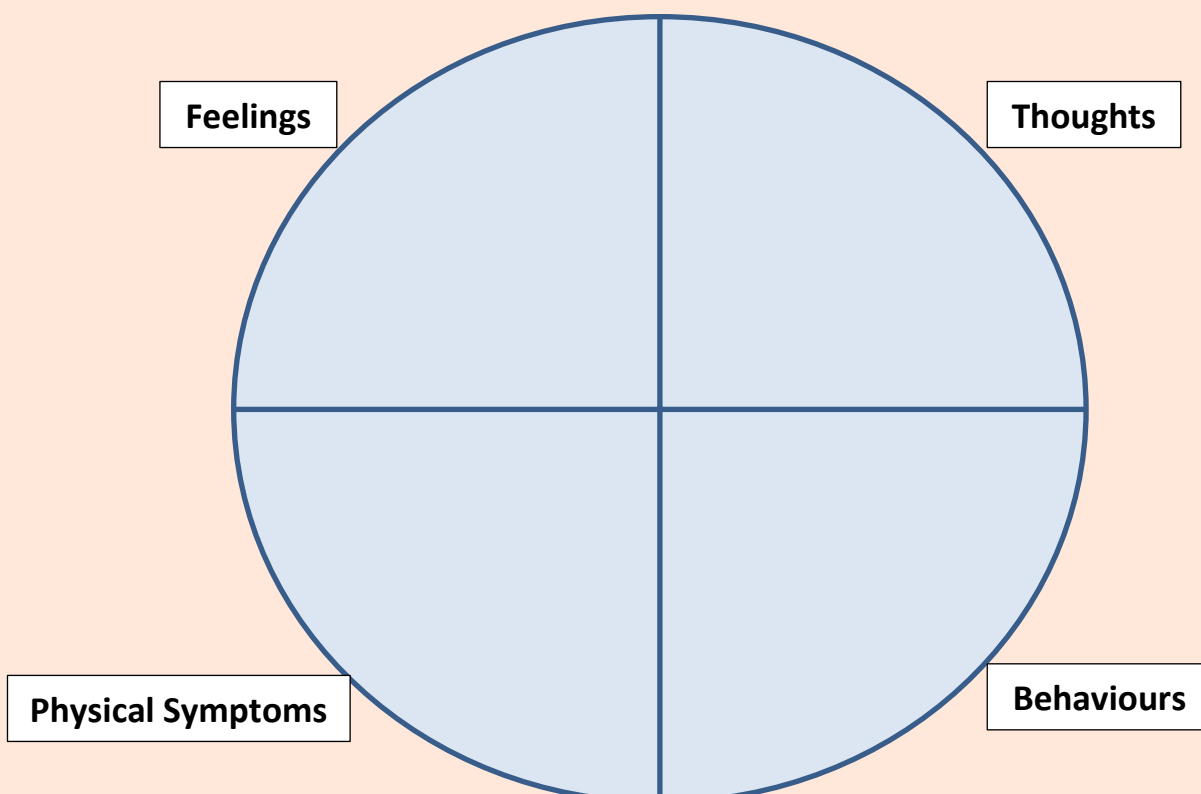
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Knowing the signs

Learn to recognize the signs of stress or anxiety

These could be thoughts that pop into your mind, physical sensations (like fight/flight response) or behaviours.

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



**3. Develop some coping strategies:** techniques that calm the physiological anxiety reaction are really helpful. Once you are calmer, you can think more clearly and decide how to manage the situation.

### Smart Phone Apps for Anxiety:

- **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](http://www.headspace.com)
- **Calm** – meditation app with sleep stories and relaxing music, £36 per year’s subscription
- **Breathe2Relax**- breathing exercises app
- **Breath: Meditation** – app for relaxation, aid sleep, mindfulness
- **Catch It** – encourages you to record negative thoughts and to look at it from a different perspective
- **Relax Melodies** – Music for sleep and relaxation

### CBT Home Practise:

One week left of Steps 4 Mums!

Are you having many worries? Use the worry tree [page 60](#) to think about what kind of worries you’re having.

If you’re having practical worries, try use the problem solving on [page 61](#).

If you notice you’re having more of those hypothetical worries where you can’t do anything to change or influence their outcome, then use attention refocusing strategies on [page 52 to 55](#) to bring yourself back to the present moment.

Keep going! Keep going! You’re doing great!



## Week 8: Relapse Prevention

### CBT Reflection: Last one together!

How are you feeling?

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---

How has the past week been?

---

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Have you been doing things you need, and things that you enjoy during the week?

---

---

How have your thoughts been over this last week?

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---

How is sleep for you and for baby at the moment?

---

---

Are you making sure you get little snippets of activities in to relax?

---

---

How have any worries been for you?

---

---

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

**(MaternalOCD.org)**

**GOAL CHECK IN**

**My Short Term SMART goal was:**

Did you manage to achieve this?

---

---

If no did you readjust?

---

---

If yes, brilliant! Did you do anything to continue this goal?

---

---

**My Medium Term SMART Goal was:**

Did you manage to achieve this?

---

---

If no did you readjust?

---

---

If yes, brilliant! Did you do anything to continue this goal?

---

---

**My Long Term SMART Goals was:**

Did you manage to achieve this?

---

---

If no did you readjust?

---

---

If yes, brilliant! Did you do anything to continue this goal?

---

---

## Thinking forward.....

It's really normal for us to have rubbish days or rubbish weeks, life throws some curve balls at us and sometimes it can take a little longer for us to get back on our feet. It's normal for us to have a lapse, but what we want to try and avoid is a relapse.

### What's a lapse?

A lapse is a brief return to feeling down or anxious, or changes in your behaviour as a result. A lapse in how we feel or what we do as a result at times is normal. As long as we don't let it maintain itself in that vicious cycle and we put back into practice the low-intensity CBT techniques we have learned we can get back on track. A lapse can become a relapse if you allow it to take control due to worrying thoughts or seeing it as a sign of failure. The key thing is to see a lapse for what it is, just a temporary thing and not let it make you give up doing things you need to do or make you dwell on failure. Continuing to do and act against any off-putting thoughts and continuing to do things despite feeling like avoiding them can help a lapse not turn into a relapse. Don't give up. Just keep doing the things you identify within this guide that have helped you before.

### What is a relapse?

A relapse is when negative thinking and those ways of behaving that were tackled within treatment creep back over a longer period and things start to spiral again making you feel worse. Often when a relapse occurs it is easy to think of it as a total setback, rather than the fact you have the skills and techniques that helped before to help again. The key thing is to notice early warning signs of the symptoms starting to affect how you feel and the things you do. If these are starting to impact you again, you can work your way out of it using the strategies that helped previously.

Think about what changes for yourself, think back to that first CBT cycle.

What changes for you when you're feeling depressed?

My thoughts  
tend to be....

My emotions  
tend to be....

My body  
feels....

I change  
doing/start  
doing....

## Toolbox Reminder!

Ready here is a whistle stop of what we covered and a cheat sheet about what might be a good place to start if you're still experiencing certain symptoms:

Week	Title	What we covered
1	Introducing CBT	How CBT works, SMART goals
2	Behavioural Activation - Introduction	Using BA to target motivation and energy
3	Behavioural Activation - One Step Further	Doing the right amount, thinking about our values, considering change and reducing reumination
4	Cognitive Restructuring - Getting Started	What kind of thinking we're doing
5	Cognitive Restructuring - "Taking the Thought to Court"	Taking the thought to court!
6	Sleep and Relaxation	Getting a good bedtime routine in place!
7	Feeling Anxious – Fight v Flight and worries	It's normal for our body to do this, thinking about what we can and can't control about our worries

Remaining Symptoms	Suggested strategy
Lack of interest (PHQ9, Q1)	BA ( <b>week 2</b> ) and values ( <b>week 3</b> ) to focus on something that is important to you
Difficulty sleeping (PHQ9, Q4)	Sleep routine in place as much as you can with baby? Use a guided relaxation from week 6 before going to bed? Try a brain dump? ( <b>all week 6</b> )
Feeling on edge (GAD7, Q1)	Guided relaxations and mindfulness techniques ( <b>week 6</b> )
Feeling irritable (GAD7, Q4)	Guided relaxations and exercise ( <b>week 6</b> )
Thinking badly of ourselves or that something bad will happen (PHQ9, Q6; GAD7, Q7)	Check what thinking style you're doing ( <b>week 4</b> ), then take the thought to court ( <b>week 5</b> ) or think about what kind of worry it is ( <b>week 7</b> )

**You've been putting aside one hour every week for 2 months now to focus on you and spend some time thinking about what you need and how you are feeling.**

**Going forward it's important to keep checking in with yourself! People can notice change continues to happen for months with CBT as it's so much about you practising the strategies.**

**Try to put 20-30 minutes aside to check in regularly with yourself. It's up to you how often this is but take the time to ask yourself these questions:**

- **How has the last fortnight been?**

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- **Have any of those thoughts started to creep back in?**

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- **Have you stopped doing anything from your normal routine? Have you stopped any pleasurable activities?**

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- **How has your sleep been?**

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---

- **Have you been making time to relax?**

---

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At the start you made your goals moving forward think about maybe some more SMART goals that you'd like to make that would help you live in line with your values:

Values I identified on page 24:

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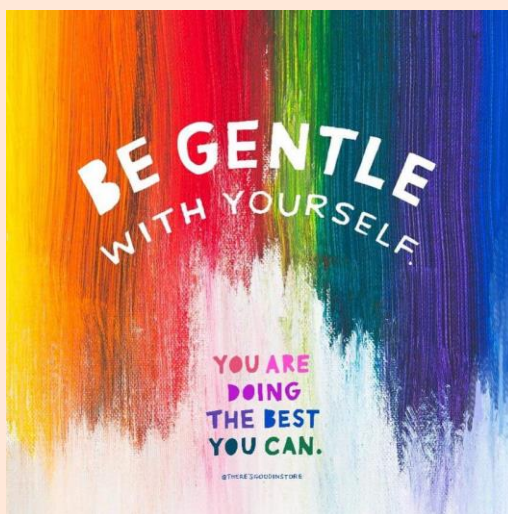
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My next short term SMART goal – over the next two weeks

My next medium term SMART goal – over the next two months

My next long term SMART goal – over the next six months

Thank you for all your contributions! Keep going and take care!



# More Resources!

## Useful Websites

- <https://maternitymattersdorset.nhs.uk/> Online guide to local services, including information about emotional health and where to access support. Also a link to the “DadPad” app
- [Perinatal Treatment - Perinatal Treatment \(perinatal-treatment.com\)](http://perinatal-treatment.com) – Website with information and signposting about online treatments and support around a number of perinatal difficulties.
- [ParentTalk](#) – Virtual peer support group in Dorset for parents with children under 5. Accessible via Health Visitors.
- [Dad Pad \(https://thedadpad.co.uk/\)](https://thedadpad.co.uk/) The DadPad was created to provide information on what to expect and how to care for their baby.
- Andy Meyers: Bournemouth University researcher, specialising in education and information for supporting Mothers and Father’s mental health locally to Dorset. <https://andrewmayers.uk/>. Fathers specific information via this link: <https://andrewmayers.uk/fathers-mental-health>
- [DorPip \(https://www.dorpip.org.uk/\)](https://www.dorpip.org.uk/) - 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).
- [Families And Babies](https://www.familiesandbabies.org.uk/pages/breastfeeding-support-groups-in-bournemouth-christchurch) (breastfeeding support groups)  
<https://www.familiesandbabies.org.uk/pages/breastfeeding-support-groups-in-bournemouth-christchurch>
- [Perinatal Mental Health Partnership](#) - The Perinatal Mental Health Partnership is a group of health professionals, charity leaders, mental health campaigners, and advocates with lived experience of perinatal mental illness.
- [www.pandasfoundation.org.uk](http://www.pandasfoundation.org.uk) Post and **AN**tenatal **D**epression **A**dvice and **S**upport
- [Make Birth Better](#) - Make Birth Better is a network of perinatal mental health professionals, campaigners, academics and researchers who have come together to influence better understanding 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
- [Maternal mental health alliance](#) - The Maternal Mental Health Alliance (MMHA) is a coalition of over 70 national organisations, for whom improving perinatal mental health is central to the work that they do.



- <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.
- [Gingerbread \(https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/\)](https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/) – offers practical support for single parents
- [Lullaby \(https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/\)](https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/) – information on safer sleeping for baby
- [Bluebell](#) - provide support to help families manage their mental health and wellbeing during pregnancy and after birth
- <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/> A national charity set up to help people experiencing different forms of anxiety.
- [www.selfcompassion.org](http://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.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/> introduction to mindfulness and meditation, including videos to watch
- <http://www.freemindfulness.org/breath> mindfulness of the breath practice
- <https://www.pocketmindfulness.com/6-mindfulness-exercises-you-can-try-today/>
- [REACH \(http://www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/reach.html\)](http://www.dorsetmentalhealthforum.org.uk/reach.html) – Social and community activities free for all in Dorset

## **Smart Phone Apps**

- **MUSH app & website** <https://letsmush.com/>- social networking, to help mums connect and meet up
- **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](http://www.headspace.com)
- **Mind the Bump** – mindfulness app for new and expecting parents
- **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
- **Baby Buddy**: recommended by the Department of Health, offers support and information during pregnancy. From the charity Best Beginnings.
- [Baby Check App](#) – free app to help work out how poorly baby might be

## 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 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
- [Books on prescription \(https://reading-well.org.uk/\)](https://reading-well.org.uk/) - Recommended reading in relation to range of areas of mental health and wellbeing

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.

# Extra Sheets

# C1 Behavioural activation diary

	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					

# C1 Behavioural activation diary

	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					

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	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					

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	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
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<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
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<b>Sunday</b>					

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<b>Morning</b>					
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<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					



# C1 Behavioural activation diary

	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who	What Where When Who
<b>Morning</b>					
<b>Afternoon</b>					
<b>Evening</b>					
<b>Monday</b>					
<b>Tuesday</b>					
<b>Wednesday</b>					
<b>Thursday</b>					
<b>Friday</b>					
<b>Saturday</b>					
<b>Sunday</b>					

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)

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)

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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)

## Fun activities catalogue

Here is a list of activities to help you start thinking about what you could do. Look through the list and mark those activities that you think you might have enjoyed at one point, might have considered at one point or which you are willing to try. Don't expect to feel any great enthusiasm for any of them straight away. 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. Feel free to add your own activities to the list.

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Planning my career
3. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
4. Going for a holiday
5. Recycling old items
6. Relaxing
7. Going on a date
8. Going to a movie
9. Jogging, walking
10. Listening to music
11. Giving myself credit for things
12. Recalling past parties
13. Buying household gadgets
14. Lying in the sun
15. Planning a career change
16. Laughing
17. Thinking about my past trips
18. Listening to others
19. Reading magazines or newspapers
20. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
21. Spending an evening with good friends
22. Planning a day's activities
23. Meeting new people
24. Remembering beautiful scenery
25. Saving money
26. Card and board games
27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics
28. Eating
29. Getting out of debt/paying debts
30. Practising karate, judo, yoga
31. Thinking about retirement
32. Repairing things around the house
33. Working on my car (bicycle)
34. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
35. Wearing sexy clothes
36. Having quiet evenings
37. Taking care of plants
38. Buying, selling stocks and shares
39. Going swimming
40. Doodling
41. Exercising
42. Collecting old things
43. Going to a party
44. Thinking about buying things
45. Playing sports
46. Flying kites
47. Having discussions with friends
48. Having family get-togethers
49. Riding a motorbike
50. Sex
51. Playing squash
52. Going camping
53. Singing around the house
54. Arranging flowers
55. Going to church, praying (practising religion)
56. Playing cards
57. Going to the beach
58. Thinking I'm an OK person
59. A day with nothing to do
60. Having class reunions
61. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading
62. Going sailing
63. Travelling abroad
64. Sketching, painting
65. Doing something spontaneously
66. Doing embroidery, cross stitching
67. Sleeping
68. Mental riddles or puzzles
69. Entertaining
70. Going to clubs (garden, sewing, etc.)
71. Thinking about getting married
72. Going birdwatching
73. Singing with groups
74. Flirting
75. Playing musical instruments
76. Doing arts and crafts
77. Making a gift for someone
78. Buying CDs, tapes, records
79. Watching boxing, wrestling
80. Planning parties
81. Cooking, baking
82. Going hiking, bush walking
83. Writing books (poems, articles)
84. Sewing
85. Buying clothes
86. Working
87. Going out to dinner

88. Discussing books
89. Sightseeing
90. Gardening
91. Going to the beauty salon
92. Early morning coffee and newspaper
93. Playing tennis
94. Kissing
101. Listening to a stereo
102. Refurbishing furniture
103. Watching TV, videos
104. Making lists of tasks
105. Going bike riding
106. Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
107. Buying gifts
108. Travelling to national parks
109. Completing a task
110. Thinking about my achievements
111. Going to a football or rugby game
112. Eating favourite foods
113. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
114. Photography
115. Going fishing
116. Thinking about pleasant events
95. Watching my children (play)
96. Going to plays and concerts
97. Daydreaming
98. Planning to go to school
99. Thinking about sex
100. Going for a drive

117. Staying on a diet
118. Star gazing
119. Flying a paper plane
120. Reading fiction
121. Acting
122. Being alone
123. Writing diary/journal entries or letters
124. Cleaning
125. Reading non-fiction
126. Taking children places
127. Dancing
128. Going on a picnic
129. Thinking "I did that pretty well" with that
130. Meditating
131. Playing volleyball
132. Having lunch with a friend
133. Going to the hills
134. Thinking about having a family
135. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
136. Look at old photos
137. Playing with a baby or children
138. Having a political discussion
139. Playing cricket
140. Making a photobook
141. Knitting/crocheting/quilting
142. Doing crossword puzzles
143. Shooting pool/Playing billiards
144. Dressing up and looking nice
145. Reflecting on how I've improved
146. Buying things for myself
147. Talking on the phone
148. Going to museums, art galleries
149. Thinking religious thoughts
150. Surfing the internet
151. Lighting candles
152. Listening to the radio
153. Going crabbing
154. Having coffee at a cafe
155. Listening to the radio
156. Getting/giving a massage
157. Saying "I love you"
158. Thinking about my good qualities
159. Buying books
160. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
161. Going skiing
162. Going canoeing or white-water rafting
163. Going bowling
164. Doing woodworking
165. Fantasising about the future
166. Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
167. Debating
168. Playing computer games
169. Having an aquarium
170. Erotica (sex books, movies)
171. Going horseback riding



172. Going rock climbing
  173. Thinking about becoming active in the community
  174. Doing something new
  175. Making jigsaw puzzles
  176. Thinking I'm a person who can cope
  177. Playing with my pets
  178. Having a barbecue
  179. Rearranging the furniture in my house
  180. Buying new furniture
  181. Going window shopping
- Thinking I have a lot more going for me than most people