Part One Worksheets

What’s going on?
WORKSHEET 1

‘Real-life stories’

We talk throughout this programme about ‘virtual’ stories of four people who have harmed themselves. You may feel you have things in common with some of them. We will introduce them properly later, but for now, here is a snapshot of their stories.

**CASSIE**

‘The nothingness inside just takes over . . . I cut myself to feel something, anything’

**JESSICA**

‘I’ve done it for ever . . . I can’t imagine what my life would be like if I didn’t self-harm’

**KATY**

‘The arguments and stress built up inside me until I couldn’t handle it anymore . . . that’s when I took the pills’

**MARK**

‘I cut myself to get rid of the crap feelings inside . . . I like the sight of my blood, it makes me feel better’
WORKSHEET 2

‘Time-line of self-harm’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WORKSHEET 3

‘Why you self-harmed’

**How you feel before you self-harm**

Think of your most recent experience of self-harm and answer any of these you feel comfortable with:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What led you to do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you feel before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What else was important at the time (events, thoughts, memories, exhaustion, voices, etc.)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there anything else in the background (something current or an echo from the past)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you spend a long time thinking about harming or was it spur of the moment, or both?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is that your usual way (if not, what was the difference)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**How you feel after you self-harm**

Think of your most recent experience of self-harm and answer any of these you feel comfortable with.

- How did you feel immediately afterwards?
- How did you feel a bit later?
- How do you feel about it now?
- How do you think your self-harm has helped?
- How do you think it doesn’t help?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Is that your usual way (if not, what was the difference)?
- How do you feel now?
WORKSHEET 4

‘Problems and goals’

Problems and goal setting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems (score 0–10)</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Cognitive-Behavioural model – what’s it all about?
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy is an effective way of helping people to deal with their problems. It explores the link between what we think, how we feel and what we do, our behaviour.

For example:

**Thinking** that you are not very good at talking with people may make you **feel** very worried when you are out with your friends. You may **go quiet** (behaviour) and not talk very much.

**Thinking** that no one likes you may make you **feel** sad. You may **stay at home** on your own.

**Thinking** that you never get things right may make you **feel** angry. You may **cut yourself** to get rid of this feeling. You may then **feel** sad because, yet again, you have **done something wrong**.

Let’s look at a more detailed example and think about how the thoughts that go through your mind affect how you feel and what you do (your behaviour).
‘Unmixing the feeling cocktail’

Session tasks:

We are going to look at your feelings in more detail. Look at this list of different feelings and, following my instructions, point to three different feelings, one at a time.

When you pick one, read it out loud and tell me what you think it means in your own words. (It’s not a test and some are difficult, but just let me know how you understand it.)

- Can you give me an example of when you have recently felt like this or when a friend/relation has felt like this?
- Can you try to describe exactly what was happening when you felt like this?
- Now can you do the same for the other feelings you have picked and describe how another young person your age might behave and what they might be thinking if they felt like this?
### WORKSHEET 8

**‘Emotions list’**

**Emotions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scared</th>
<th>Afraid</th>
<th>Confident</th>
<th>Brave</th>
<th>Happy</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>Tearful</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Hurt</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Disgusted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgusting</td>
<td>Out of control</td>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Jealous</td>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Ashamed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embarrassed</td>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Miserable</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
<td>Helpless</td>
<td>Exploited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furious</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>Excited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Used</td>
<td>Grumpy</td>
<td>Mad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKSHEET 9

‘Feelings scale’
WORKSHEET 10

‘Emotions diary’

*Keeping an emotion diary*

Keeping a diary of your feelings can be helpful in a number of ways. By looking back at the diary, you might discover that there is a link between what you were doing and how you felt. You might find that your feelings are stronger at certain times of day, or that they are not as frequent as you thought they were.

*How to fill in the diary sheet*

The diary sheet breaks down each day of the week into one-hour boxes. In each box, write down the following information:

- What you were doing and who you were with
- How you felt and the strength of the feeling on a scale of 0 to 10 (where 10 is the strongest)

You do not need to write in any detail, just a word or two will do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>8–9 am</th>
<th>9–10 am</th>
<th>10–11 am</th>
<th>11–12 pm</th>
<th>12–1 pm</th>
<th>1–2 pm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2–3 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–5 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–6 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–7 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–8 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–9 pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9–10 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12 am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Feelings are our friends’

Okay, so maybe that sounds a bit silly, but it’s true! Think about it for a minute . . .

Most people would say that happiness is a positive feeling, and that anger is a negative feeling, almost one that you shouldn’t have at all. But we all have lots of different feelings at different times, even if some of them are pretty unpleasant! It’s not bad to feel angry; it’s what you do with the feeling that counts.

Let us consider some of the positive aspects of some of the more ‘difficult’ feelings . . .

ANGER: Can give you strength to stand up for something
What does my anger do for me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

ENVY: Can help you strive for something
When has being envious helped me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

GUILT: Can help you change how you act
How has feeling guilty helped me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

FEAR: Can help you to protect yourself
How has my fear helped me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

SHAME: Can help you to be more considerate of those you love in the future
How has it helped me to feel shame?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

SADNESS: Can help you to move on
How has my sadness helped me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

DISAPPOINTMENT: Can help you to be more realistic in your expectations of others and yourself
When has my disappointment helped me?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

What have you found out about yourself from doing this exercise?
……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………
‘What feelings do I squash, bottle or swallow?’

Self-harm is often considered to be a way of managing overwhelming feelings such as anger, frustration, despair or sadness.

Sometimes it can feel like these intense feelings are so great that they will overflow like a volcano and this might be too much to handle. So, when we experience these feelings, we often try to find a way to manage them. Sometimes we might swallow our feelings or bottle them up in order to feel in control of them and some people may harm themselves to get relief.

For some young people, it can be difficult even to know how to describe such intense feelings. By unmixing the feelings cocktail earlier on, you may feel more able to identify and understand your feelings. The next task is to help you to identify those particular feelings that you try to squash or bottle up . . .

‘What feelings do I squash?’

‘What feelings do I bottle up?’

‘What feelings do I swallow?’
‘My relationship map’

Place yourself at the centre of the following diagram and then add the other people in your life.
WORKSHEET 14

‘Strengths’

My strengths – things I’m good at!

What I’m good at.

What would your family say are your strengths?

Why my friends like me.

Things I’ve achieved.
‘Are you ready to make changes?’

The fact that you are reading this means that at least a small part of you is considering change. Any decision about change is not easy as it involves juggling mixed feelings. The following rulers may be able to help you.

**Importance of change:**
Ask yourself the following questions. How important is it for you to change? What are your reasons and needs for change? What score would you give yourself out of 10?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Ability to change:**
Ask yourself the following questions. How confident are you in your ability to change? What score would you give yourself out of 10?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Once you have rated yourself on both rulers think about the following questions?

- Why have you given yourself this score rather than a 0 or 10?
- What needs to happen to give you a higher score?
- What would you notice about yourself if you had a higher score?
- How would other people be able to help you to get a higher score?
- What strengths and supports do you have that would help you to get a higher score?

**How much do other people close to you want you to change?**
Mark this on the line below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If there is a big difference between your own rating and that of other people, what does that tell you?

**Reflection box:** What have I learned from this?
‘Getting things into balance’

It is very easy to feel pressurised by people around you to give up your self-harm. It is likely that your self-harm means a lot of different things to you, some positive and some negative, and that at different times you feel differently about it. So let us try to step back and look at the good and not so good aspects of harming yourself in your life, now and in the future.

Complete the balance sheets below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good things about my self-harm for me now . . .</th>
<th>Not so good things about my self-harm for me now . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good things about my self-harm in relation to other people now . . .</th>
<th>Not so good things about my self-harm in relation to other people now . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good things about my self-harm for me in the future . . .</th>
<th>Not so good things about my self-harm for me in the future . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good things about my self-harm in relation to other people in the future . . .</th>
<th>Not so good things about my self-harm in relation to other people in the future . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Looking at self-harm through other peoples’ eyes’

(Role-play)

The aim of this task is for you to look at your self-harm through the eyes of other people. With your therapist, you are going to act out the following situations. Your therapist will pretend to be you each time and you will imagine you are . . .

1. An adult figure like a teacher, family friend, favourite aunt or parent. It should be someone you know will be fair and whom you respect. If you do not know someone like that, make him or her up. It could be someone from TV, a film, a book, or a character from history who has these qualities.

In a letter write what you think this person would say to you about how they understand and see your self-harm. Explain the advice you think they would give you on how to change your life for the better (5 minutes).

2. A close and kind friend. Imagine someone whom you deeply trust who will accept you, no matter what. Again if you can’t think of anyone like that in your life, invent such a friend.

How does your friend see you? How has your self-harm affected them?
What are their thoughts and feelings? What advice do they have for you and your future?
Again, talk to your therapist as you imagine your friend would talk to you (5 minutes).

3. Yourself (when you are older and wiser) talking to yourself (now) about your self-harm.

What would you tell yourself? Talk to your therapist in the way you would like the ‘future you’ to talk to you as you are now (5 minutes).

Reflection box: Spend the final 5 minutes thinking back over what you have talked about. Briefly write down what you’ve learned from this . . .

Looking at self-harm through other people’s eyes

(Letter writing)

The aim of this task is for you to look at your self-harm through the eyes of other people. Take a piece of paper and write three letters to yourself, one from each of the following three people (spend 5 minutes on each letter) . . .

1. An adult figure like a teacher, family friend, favourite aunt or parent. It should be someone you know will be fair and whom you respect. If you do not know someone like that, make him or her up. It could be someone from TV, a film, a book, or a character from history who has these qualities.

In the letter write what you think this person would say to you about how they understand and see your self-harm. Explain the advice you think they would give you on how to change your life for the better.

2. A close and kind friend. Imagine someone whom you deeply trust, someone who will accept you, no matter what. Again, if you can’t think of anyone like that in your life, invent such a friend.

Imagine you are your friend writing to explain things to you from their point of view.

How does your friend see you? How has your self-harm affected them?

What are their thoughts and feelings? What advice do they give for you and your future?

3. Yourself (when you are older and wiser) writing to yourself (now) about your self-harm.

What would you tell yourself?

Reflection box: Spend a final 5 minutes looking back over what you have written. Briefly write down what you’ve learned from this . . .
**WORKSHEET 18**

‘**Thinking about the future**’

Another task that can help you think about whether you’re ready to change is to think about how things might be in the future if . . .

1 = you still self-harm  
2 = you no longer self-harm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Still self-harm</th>
<th>A few years into the future if I still self-harm, the following will have happened in these areas . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How fit I am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much I enjoy life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy I will find it to get a job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy it will be to finish education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How happy I feel about my body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good I feel about myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much exercise I get</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having friendships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a close relationship with my parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a close friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going on holidays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having hobbies/interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. No longer self-harm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>A few years into the future, after I have stopped harming myself, the following will have happened in these areas . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How fit I am</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much I enjoy life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy I will find it to get a job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How easy it will be to finish education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How happy I feel about my body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How good I feel about myself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much exercise I get</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having friendships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a close relationship with my parents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a close friend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going on holidays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having hobbies/interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection box:** What have I learned from these two exercises?
FORWARD THINKING EXERCISE

One evening in the next week, spend some time doing this exercise.

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in the future

If you are 16 or 17, imagine that you have just had your 18th birthday.
If you are younger than 16, imagine that you have just had your 16th birthday.

Then open your eyes and write yourself two letters

In the first letter, describe what your life looks like if you have stopped self-harming.
In the second letter, describe what your life looks like if you are still self-harming.
Part Two Worksheets

Feeling, thoughts and behaviour
**WORKSHEET 19**

‘Positive pleasant events’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Soaking in the bath</th>
<th>41. Flying a kite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Planning activities for the future</td>
<td>42. Playing a game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Relaxing</td>
<td>43. Singing around the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Taking some ‘me’ time</td>
<td>44. Arranging flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Listening to music</td>
<td>45. Going to the beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Going to watch a film</td>
<td>46. Thinking that I’m an OK person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Going for a walk</td>
<td>47. Meeting up with an old friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lying in the sun</td>
<td>48. Going skating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Recalling funny/happy memories</td>
<td>49. Reading jokes from a joke book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Laughing</td>
<td>50. Sleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Listening to others</td>
<td>51. Playing a musical instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Reading a magazine/book</td>
<td>52. Writing poems/stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Talking to people</td>
<td>53. Going to a beauty parlour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Picturing a beautiful place</td>
<td>54. Photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Going shopping</td>
<td>55. Daydreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Thinking about going shopping (!)</td>
<td>56. Watching my favourite programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Doodling</td>
<td>57. Going for a bike ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Looking after a plant or pet</td>
<td>58. Buying gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Meeting new people</td>
<td>59. Completing a task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Planning what I might do if I won the lottery</td>
<td>60. Planning what a date would be like with someone I am attracted to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Painting my nails</td>
<td>61. Thinking about pleasant events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Writing in my diary</td>
<td>62. Doing something creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Doing a puzzle</td>
<td>63. Dancing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Going on a picnic</td>
<td>64. Taking the first step towards a goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Reflecting on the day-to-day things I have achieved</td>
<td>65. Thinking ‘I did pretty well’ after doing something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Talking on the phone</td>
<td>67. Playing cards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Going to a museum</td>
<td>68. Having an interesting discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Getting a massage</td>
<td>69. Positive self-talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Reminding myself of my good qualities</td>
<td>70. Doing some voluntary work in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Surprising someone with a random act of kindness</td>
<td>71. Planning where my favourite place in the world would be to visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Going bowling</td>
<td>72. Going somewhere different for a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Doing a good deed for the day</td>
<td>73. Playing a computer game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Sitting in a café and people-watching</td>
<td>74. Going to an aquarium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Writing someone a letter</td>
<td>75. Looking at a nice view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Doing something new</td>
<td>76.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Going horse-riding</td>
<td>77.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Making something</td>
<td>78.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Having a sauna or jacuzzi</td>
<td>79.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Doing a jigsaw puzzle</td>
<td>80.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WORKSHEET 20

#### ‘Cassie’s activity schedule’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>Activity/Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8–9 am</td>
<td>Lying awake in bed SAD 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–10 am</td>
<td>Got up late for school SAD 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 am</td>
<td>In English lesson WORRIED 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12 pm</td>
<td>Still in lesson WORRIED 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–1 pm</td>
<td>Lunch break alone SAD 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–2 pm</td>
<td>In PE with friends WORRIED 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–3 pm</td>
<td>In English OK 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3–4 pm</td>
<td>Walk home from school OK 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4–5 pm</td>
<td>Tea with mum IRRITATED 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–6 pm</td>
<td>Up in my room MISERABLE 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–7 pm</td>
<td>Talked to my sister HAPPY 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7–8 pm</td>
<td>Dinner with family BORING 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8–9 pm</td>
<td>Watch TV RELAXED 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9–10 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–11 pm</td>
<td>Went to bed WORRY 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–12 am</td>
<td>Can’t sleep WORRY 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WORKSHEET 21

**‘Blank activity schedule’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8–9 am</td>
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</table>
‘Mark’s help triangle’

**Situation**

My friend didn’t bring my Playstation game back when he came to my house.
He said that he would.

**What you THOUGHT**

He did it on purpose to wind me up.
It’s not fair.
He is trying to get me angry and into trouble.
He doesn’t like me.

**What you DID**

Slammed the door.
Shouted.
Didn’t talk to friend for a few days.
Punched the wall.

**How you FELT**

Angry.
Shaky.
Hot.
Tense.
Let down.
WORKSHEET 24

‘Glasses’

Jumping to conclusions

1 + 2 = 5 ?

Black-and-white glasses

Over-generalising
Blowing things out of proportion

‘I should/must/ought’ glasses

WORKSHEET 25

‘Thinking pitfalls’

You may have heard the expression ‘looking through rose-tinted spectacles’ to describe someone who always sees things in a hopeful or cheerful way even when things are bad. This is a kind of thinking pitfall because it is unrealistic.

The person *sees the situation from only one viewpoint* and does not see the negative aspects of the situation.

Thinking pitfalls or biases are unhelpful ways of thinking. Everyone makes these pitfalls, but when they happen regularly, they can make you feel bad and affect your behaviour.
There are many different types of thinking pitfalls, but the are five main ones to look out for are:

1. **Black-and-white thinking**

Looking at things in an ‘all-or-nothing’ way. For example, someone who sees things as being either wonderful or terrible, total success or complete failure, etc., with nothing in between.

2. **Jumping to conclusions**

Thinking that you know how someone else thinks or feels (‘mind-reading’) or thinking that you know what will happen (‘fortune-telling’). For example, not sitting a test because you ‘know’ you will fail or thinking that someone no longer likes you because they did not say hello.

3. **Over-generalising**

Blowing things out of proportion, you can often spot these when there is an ‘always’, ‘never’, ‘everyone’ or ‘no one’ in the thought. For example, getting a bad grade and thinking, ‘Everyone else is better than me, I am never any good at anything.’

4. **Should/must/ought**

Giving yourself a hard time! ‘I must do better’, ‘I should be better’, ‘I ought to have known better’. These are often linked with over-generalisations ‘I should always . . .’, etc.

5. **Blaming yourself**

When you feel responsible for things that are not your fault or that are beyond your control: ‘My dad left because of my behaviour’, ‘It is my fault that I got beaten up’, etc.

Don’t worry if all of the above sound familiar to you! They are all pitfalls that everyone makes. You may find that you do one more than the others or that you combine different types of thinking pitfalls.
# Worksheet 26

‘The thought record’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>What were you feeling? Scale rating</th>
<th>What thoughts were going through your mind? (NATs)</th>
<th>How much do you believe these thoughts? %</th>
<th>What evidence supports your belief in these thoughts?</th>
<th>What evidence challenges your belief?</th>
<th>Can you spot thinking pitfalls?</th>
<th>How much do you believe these thoughts now? %</th>
<th>Possible alternative thoughts</th>
<th>How do you rate feelings now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

WORKSHEET 27

‘The belief scale’
WORKSHEET 28

‘Quick reference guide’

Ask the young person to record the following when they next experience an unpleasant mood or troubling thought:

1. The Situation
   - Where were you? What were you doing? When? With whom?

2. Feelings
   - Use one word to describe each of your feelings at the time.
   - Rate their strength (out of 100%).

3. Thoughts
   - Describe any thoughts you noticed going through your mind.
   - NATs?

4. Beliefs
   - Rate how much you believe each thought (%).

5. Balancing
   - Record evidence that you can see supports your thoughts.
   - Look for and record evidence that challenges your thoughts.

6. Thinking Pitfalls
   - Look back at your NATs. Can you spot any thinking pitfalls?

7. Beliefs Again
   - Re-rate your belief in each thought (%). Has it changed?

8. Alternative Thoughts
   - Now you’ve balanced your thought out, try to think of more weighed-up or balanced thoughts.

9. Feelings Again
   - Think about whether your feelings have changed and record this.

**TIPS!** It can sometimes be helpful to imagine someone (such as a best friend, sister, brother, etc.) and think, ‘If they had the same problem/thought, what would I say to them about how they were thinking?’

After using the chart a few times have you noticed that you tend to make the same types of thinking pitfalls over and over again?

**WORKSHEET 29**

‘Sample thought record – Katy’s situation’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>What were you feeling?</th>
<th>What thoughts were going through your mind? (NATs)</th>
<th>How much do you believe these thoughts? %</th>
<th>What evidence supports your belief in these thoughts?</th>
<th>Can you spot thinking pitfalls?</th>
<th>How much do you believe these thoughts now? %</th>
<th>Possible alternative thoughts</th>
<th>How do you rate feelings now?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argument with my best friend</td>
<td>Angry (100%)</td>
<td>I’m unvalued. I have never meant anything to her. I’m pathetic.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>She often makes me feel worthless. She seems to pick fights to upset me and break our friendship.</td>
<td>Overgeneralising</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>It’s OK to disagree. I can still be important to someone even (especially?) if we argue.</td>
<td>Angry (40%) Hurt (60%) Cheated (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hurt (90%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheated (75%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘Help with challenging yourself’

**Challenge yourself!!**

We have seen that, at times, we can all fall into ‘thinking pitfalls’. Thinking in these ways can make us experience some unpleasant feelings, like sadness, anger, etc.

Sometimes we are self-critical and we start to accept these thoughts as true facts. Checking these thoughts out, and challenging them, can help to stop them going round and round in our heads. If we don’t challenge them, we can end up feeling worse. Remember the help triangle?! (What we think affects how we feel and what we do.)

Challenging your thoughts is not just about thinking positively about things; it is about having *balanced thinking*. Balanced thinking involves looking for evidence to support & challenge your thought/problem.

**How to challenge yourself . . . using a thought record**

When you next experience an unpleasant mood or troubling thought use the chart and record the following:

1. Record the situation
   - Where were you? What were you doing? When? With whom?

2. Feelings
   - Use one word to describe each of your feelings at the time.
   - Rate their strength using your feelings scale (out of 10).

3. Thoughts
   - Describe any thoughts you noticed going through your mind.
   - NATs?

4. Beliefs
   - Rate how much you believe each thought (%).
   - Use the belief scale.
5. Balancing
   
   - Record evidence that you can see supports your thoughts.
   - Look for and record evidence that challenges your thoughts.

   This is hard, but your therapist will practise with you.

6. Thinking pitfalls
   
   - Look back at your NATs. Can you spot any thinking pitfalls?

7. Beliefs again
   
   - Re-rate your belief of each thought (%). Has it changed?

8. Alternative thoughts
   
   - Now that you've balanced your thought, try to think of more weighed-up or balanced thoughts.

9. Feelings again
   
   - Think about whether your feelings have changed and record this.

TIPS!

   It can sometimes be helpful to imagine someone (such as a best friend, sister, brother, etc.), and think, ‘If they had the same problem/thought, what would I say to them about how they were thinking?’
WORKSHEET 31

‘The pen-friend, or new Facebook friend’

Imagine you are writing to a pen-friend, someone who has never met you, and you are describing yourself.

Use the following prompts to fill in the details (can be discussed with your therapist).

I am ……..
Other people see me as ……..
Other people are ……..
Relationships are ……..
The world is ……..
The future is ……..

My main CORE BELIEFS are:

My CORE BELIEFS lead to these RULES OF LIVING:
WORKSHEET 32

‘Jessica’s formulation’

Why me?

**Early experiences:** Sister was the ‘golden child’, I was bullied at school, mum was depressed, at home there was a lack of expression of emotion and no arguments

My beliefs and rules of living (based on pen-friend exercise and early experiences)

I’m not good enough/I’m unlovable

**Other people’s needs always come first**

If people disagree with me, then they don’t like me OR

Other people’s opinions are more important than mine

Why now?

**What happened before (my problems got really bad)?**

Broke up with my boyfriend

Why still?

**What keeps my problems going?**

Avoiding going out, not getting close to anyone, not telling people how I’m feeling

Good stuff!

**What helps?**

Listening to music, cousin phoning, forcing myself to go to friend’s (small) party, my positive self-statements and challenges to my crucial thoughts
WORKSHEET 33

‘My journey’ (formulation)

Why me?

Early experiences

My beliefs and rules of living (based on pen-friend exercise and early experiences)

Why now?

What happened before (my problems got really bad)?

Why still?

What keeps my problems going?

Good stuff!

What helps?
WORKSHEET 34

‘Mark’s core belief’

‘I am a total failure!’

‘That, I’m a terrible writer’

‘I’m not good enough’

‘This piece of work is sh**!’

• And if that were true, what would that mean to you?

• And if that were the case, what would be so bad about that?

• And if that were true, what would that mean to you?
‘Cassie’s core belief’

- ‘I don’t know what to say’
  And if that is the case, what does that mean to you?

- ‘I’m being boring’
  And if that were true, what would be so bad about that?

- ‘If people get to know me, they might not like me’
  And if that were so, what would that mean to you?

- ‘I’m unlovable!’
  (Cassie’s core belief)
Part Three Worksheets

Coping strategies
WORKSHEET 36

‘The coping tree’

FEELINGS, THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOURS RECOGNITION
Use help triangle to interpret thoughts, feelings and behaviour

BEING MINDFULLY AWARE
Become aware of how you are feeling

SELF-ANALYSIS
Step back from the situation and recognise what is going on, internally and externally

SURGE OF EMOTION
Recognise when your thermostat is at 5 or more

- Anger management
- Alternatives/distraction
- Challenging thoughts
- Facing the situation (behavioural)
- Problem-solving
- Assertiveness
- Taking care of yourself
- Being mindful
- Self-soothing
- Riding the wave

‘Problem-solving’

Hassles and problems are part of everyday life. Parents, friends, boy- or girlfriends, school, work – in fact almost everything – can create problems in your life at some time or another. Luckily, we are usually quite good at coping with many of our problems and are able to sort them out quickly and successfully.

Other problems seem more difficult. This may be because:

- They happen fairly often
- They have been around for some time
- They feel totally overwhelming – this can happen with either one big problem or lots of smaller problems
- They seem to affect everything you do.

Sometimes these problems take over and life becomes one big worry. Other times, when you try to solve it this makes things worse, or doesn’t have the effect you want, or all the solutions you can think of have a downside; so you feel caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. Problem-solving can be as simple as making a decision about what to have for breakfast, or can be more complicated, such as deciding which A-levels to choose, or how to make up with a good friend. It is important to tackle problems rather than avoid them (even if we don’t feel like thinking about them). Otherwise we can become overwhelmed by feelings or by the attempt to find the ‘perfect’ solution.

Learning how to sort out problems and finding ways to try to solve them (or at least have a go!) is what we’ll do in this module.

**Katy**

‘I don’t know what to do. It’s awful! It happened yesterday! What happened was I was on the bus with my so-called mate Shelley and we were talking about my other mate Lennie. I only said he was nice! But she got totally the wrong end of the stick and I arrived at school this morning and everyone’s talking behind my back! Lennie’s girlfriend is giving me evil looks and I’m scared she’s gonna hit me. Everyone’s laughing at me! I can’t ever go back to school!’

**Jessica**

‘This always happens! I’m sick of his stupid rules, he makes my mum do what he thinks and he doesn’t even live at home! Why can’t he just leave me alone and let me have a life?! This time it is about this gig that everyone is going to! It’s so stupid. I’m not allowed to go because apparently it finishes “too late for a school night”. Who does he think he is? He has never cared about me before!’
Step 1: Identify, what is the problem?

- How is Kate going to deal with her friend, Lennie and the other people at school?

Step 2: List every possible solution

1. Never go to school again
2. Send Shelley a nasty email
3. Arrange a fight with Lennie’s girlfriend
4. Kiss Lennie
5. Ignore people laughing
6. Go home, cry and take some tablets
7. Confront Shelley and try to sort it out
8. Talk to Lennie and his girlfriend about what really happened
9. Ask another friend to talk to Lennie
10. Tell a teacher

Step 3: Assess each possible solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibility</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I don’t need to feel embarrassed</td>
<td>My dad would kill me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t like school anyway</td>
<td>I won’t get any GCSEs or get into college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Etc...

Step 4: Choose the best solution or combination of solutions (this might be the one that has more pros than cons, or the one that you are happy to have a go at).

8: Talk to Lennie and his girlfriend because, although it won’t be easy, there are more pros than cons for this.

5: Ignore the laughing because I don’t want them to feel they’ve won!
**Step 5: Plan** how to carry out the best solution

- Jot down what I want to say so it’s clear in my head
- Plan a good time to catch Lennie with his girlfriend on their own (after English)
- Let them know that I want to talk to them, not fight
- Explain the situation that I only like him as a friend and I’m not trying to steal him from her! Shelley got it all wrong.
- Make sure I’ve got my friend to talk to afterwards.

**Step 6: Review** how it’s going

- What obstacles might get in the way?
- How might you deal with them?
- What is your plan B?

This could work and your problem will be solved, which is great!!! But if it doesn’t, remember you’ve got lots of other options to try, like in Katy’s case . . .

I tried really hard to find them on their own but there were always loads of people with them. I just couldn’t do it in front of everyone else!! So I wrote them a note and it’s all okay again now.
Problem-solving

Step 1: Identify, what is the problem?

Step 2: List every possible solution

Step 3: Assess each possible solution

Step 4: Choose the best solution or combination of solutions

Step 5: Plan how to carry out the best solution. Think about what support you might need to carry this out.

Step 6 Review how it’s going

- What obstacles might get in the way of your plan?
- How might you deal with them?
- What is your plan B?
‘Assertiveness’

Saying what you really feel and negotiating what you want

Do you sometimes find yourself going along with something when you don’t really want to, and then feeling angry or upset with people afterwards?

It is not always easy to say ‘no’ to someone, especially a friend, and this can be particularly hard when you want to fit in and don’t want to be different. You might worry that if you say what you really feel, then people won’t like you. The idea of not being liked is pretty horrible, so you could end up under pressure to do things you don’t really want to do, like: telling people your private details, taking drugs, skipping school or going to a party or club that you don’t want to be at.

When you think about it, though, always going along with others and trying to please them usually ends up with you feeling worse and other people actually respecting you less.

Standing up for your rights can mean saying ‘no’ or giving your opinion when it is different to others. There are different ways you can do this.

For example, it can be done in an aggressive way with shouting or threatening; this way usually does not work very well because it just makes the other person angry and leads to an argument. Alternatively, it can be done in an assertive way, which means you stand up for yourself, but try to be mindful of the other person’s feelings and wishes too. This way can work very well, but a lot of young people find it really hard to do (and so do many adults!).

Look at Cassie’s example:

‘Although it was a huge effort, I did go to my friend’s party but when we left, my friends decided to go on to another house party. I didn’t want to because I felt too drunk and miserable, and I just wanted to go home.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘Pleasing others’ response</th>
<th>Aggressive response</th>
<th>Assertive response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘I ended up going and hated it! And then I got into a lot of trouble as I had to get my step-dad to pick me up. I felt so crap I went home and cut my arm really badly. I wish I’d stuck to what I wanted to do.’</td>
<td>‘None of them appreciated I’d come out when I didn’t want to and said I was selfish if I wanted to go home. I went mad and told them all to f*** off. When they left I threw my bottle after them. The neighbour called the police and I’ve lost all my friends!’</td>
<td>‘I really didn’t want to go and so I said I was really tired and that I’d had enough. They were disappointed and tried to persuade me but I didn’t budge. Eventually my friend Sally said she was tired too and she’d come with me. We had a really good chat on the way home.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have you got any examples of when you were not as assertive as you would have liked? Maybe you were a ‘people pleaser’ or got aggressive?

What happened afterwards? How did you feel? What did you do?

What would you have liked to have done or said?

Think of someone you respect/admire for being able to stand up for themselves (e.g., friend, family member, celebrity or character on TV). How would they respond?
How do you become assertive?

**Preparation**

*What I want to say*

Describe the situation or problem that is important to you rather than focusing on the other person or their actions. Try to be as specific as you can. E.g.:

‘I can see you all want to go to the other party.’

*My feelings*

Say how you feel about the situation or problem. E.g.:

‘I am sorry/sad I won’t be able to go with you to the party.’

*My needs*

Say what you want to happen that respects your own needs. E.g.:

‘I need to go home to go to bed.’

*The outcome*

The way that you assert yourself and behave will improve the situation for you and the other person. E.g.:

‘If you all go to the party and I go home, we will all be happier.’
Some strategies to try!!

When you want to stick to your guns, try imagining you are an old style vinyl record that has got stuck, or a CD that is scratched saying ‘no’ or expressing your opinion over and over again. In spite of what the other person says or does just keep repeating the same thing.

Concentrate on acting confident, even if you don’t feel it! Imagine how a friend or someone you admire might be in the situation and try to ‘act cool’ like them.

Sometimes you have to ‘give to get’! Without forgetting about what you want, try to find a way of meeting the other person half-way. See if there is something else you can offer whilst keeping hold of your ‘no’. Maybe reduce your demand to something that can be fulfilled.

If you are feeling pressurised in any way try ignoring what the other person is saying or doing. This can be really hard to do, but it sends a powerful message!

Turn the problem over to the other person! Ask them for what you can do together, but without giving in to something you are not happy with. E.g. say, ‘I can’t say yes to that, even though you want me to . . . What can we do about it?’

Write out what you want to say before hand and ‘rehearse’.

‘SCRIPT IT’

‘IGNORE’

‘BROKEN RECORD’

‘TURN THE TABLES’

‘GIVE TO GET’

‘ACT COOL’

How do you become assertive?

Being assertive is not always easy . . . The best way to build your confidence is through practice!!

Can you think of any situations in your day-to-day life where you could practise being assertive? Remember it might be easier to start small!

Here are some examples if nothing comes to mind straight away . . .

- Go to a shop and ask where something is (e.g. in a chemist’s, ask for the shampoo).
- While talking with someone, change the subject to something you want to talk about.
- Ask for no sauce/a different topping in a fast-food restaurant.
- Ring directory enquiries for a phone number.
- Ring the local swimming pool and ask for opening times.
- Invite a friend out to the cinema/shopping.
- Go into a shop and ask for change for the bus.
- Ask a friend to do you a favour.
- Disagree with someone’s opinion (e.g. say that you don’t like Eastenders).
- Give someone a compliment/accept a compliment by saying thank you.

What happened when Cassie used an assertive strategy

‘My friend wanted me to bunk off English with her as she hadn’t done her homework. I knew she was really worried about it and I didn’t want to let her down, but at the same time English is my favourite lesson! It’s the only one I really enjoy at the moment, as we are writing poetry, and I really didn’t want to miss it. She said I was selfish if I went to the lesson, as then she would have to go too. I decided to try being a “broken record”. I told her I knew she was worried about her homework but I wasn’t going to bunk off the lesson with her. She tried really hard to convince me but I just kept saying, “No. I like English. I’m not bunking off.” I felt stronger every time I said it! After a while she accepted it and we talked about what excuses she could give for not doing her homework.’

Situation/s I will practise being assertive in

How I got on
WORKSHEET 39

‘BEST skill’

Guidelines for achieving your objectives effectively: getting what you want (as long as it’s reasonable!)

- **Be clear** when explaining the situation you are in. Stick to the facts and give the person a clear description of events or experiences you need to talk about. Do not include judgements or assumptions of the other person’s motives.
- **Express your feelings.** Give a brief non-blaming description of any feeling triggered by the situation. Start the sentence with ‘I feel . . .’ or ‘This makes me feel . . .’ rather than ‘You make me feel . . .’
- **Say what you want** in a confident and clear way, holding strong in your position and ignoring threats. Ask for changes in behaviour, not attitude, personality or beliefs. Only ask for one change at a time and something that can be changed now. Be specific. If they are happy to do what you want, stop here. If not, try to negotiate.
- **Try to negotiate:**
  - Turn the tables by turning the problem over to the other person by asking them for alternative solutions, e.g., ‘What do you think we should do?’ or ‘How can we solve this problem?’
  - Be willing to give and get. Stick with ‘no’ but offer to do something else to solve the problem another way. Focus on what will work.
  - Motivate the other person with a reward by explaining the consequences. Tell the person the positive effects of getting what you want or need. Help the person feel good ahead of time for doing or accepting what you want. Reward him/her afterwards.
- **Good negotiation skills are very effective and useful in helping us to get what we want.**
WORKSHEET 40

‘My anger scale’
WORKSHEET 41

‘Help with challenging your thoughts’

Sometimes the words that you use to describe yourself are also self-critical thoughts! Write any of your self-critical thoughts in the box below:

Think back to when you worked on challenging your thoughts . . . Use Worksheet 30 ‘Help with challenging yourself’ to check them out and find alternatives . . .

Choose three alternative thoughts that challenge your critical thoughts about yourself or positive words from the previous exercise and write them in the left-hand boxes . . .

Over the next week look for the evidence to support your new thought . . .

It might be something you do, or something someone tells you . . .

Write your evidence in the boxes on the right . . .
Self-critical thoughts

Unlovable . . . Moody . . . Fat . . .

Jessica looked back at her thought record and saw her previous evidence for and against her NATs. She wrote down the alternatives and went to look for evidence during the week . . . .

*Sometimes I get moody, but so does everyone . . . and I’m happy a lot of the time . . . It’s good that I can show my feelings . . .

*When I feel bad that I’m moody I should just check out if that’s how I really come across . . .

*My mate Sonia said she wishes she could be more like me and let people know she felt crap and didn’t feel like mucking around that day . . .

*My support worker said what a good week I had had and how lovely it was to be around me . . . But I had thought I had been a right moody cow . . .
WORKSHEET 42

‘Facing my fears ladder’
WORKSHEET 43

‘Riding the wave’

When it seems as though what you are feeling is going to wash you away in a tidal wave . . .
Just stay with it . . .
Remember the feeling will not stay this intense for ever.
It WILL pass . . .
You just need to ride it out!
So go on!! Get on your surfboard and ride the wave!

What do I need to help me surf the wave?
WORKSHEET 44

‘Mindfulness’

Previously we’ve looked at the range of different feelings we experience, and talked about how, even though sometimes we think we shouldn’t feel certain things, our feelings can often be helpful.

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally. This can mean being aware of and accepting your thoughts and feelings without trying to stop them.

We have different ways of seeing things and behaving, depending on what frame of mind we are in. One way of looking at these different minds is to divide them into three:

- our ‘Wise Mind’, our ‘Emotional Mind’ and our ‘Reasonable Mind’.

When we are in our ‘Emotional Mind’ we are led by our feelings! It is almost impossible to think about things reasonably because we act based on our feelings and we may overreact to things . . . This is when you ‘can’t think straight’.

When we are in our ‘Reasonable Mind’ we are able to think in a logical way. We approach things in a cool, non-emotional way (e.g. revising for something). This is when you are ‘thinking straight’.

When we are in our ‘Wise Mind’ we have the benefit of both our Reasonable Mind and our Emotional Mind, plus ‘gut feeling’! So we are able to recognise our feelings and think rationally . . . You can feel and think straight and have a feeling of what is the best decision for you, which helps you make more helpful decisions about what to do and how to feel better (e.g. ride the wave, self-soothe or distract, etc).

Being mindful is about balancing our Reasonable Mind and Emotional Mind to achieve a Wise Mind. We need feelings, but we don’t want them to take over! If intense feeling occurs, suspect Emotional Mind. Give it time; if you are still certain about something, especially when you are feeling calm and secure, suspect Wise Mind.
Mark is in his bedroom alone. He has had a really bad day and an argument with his dad. He feels angry and depressed inside. He is listening to depressing hard rock music and he is getting his razor ready to cut his arm.

Which mind do you think Mark is in?

Mark starts to think about the argument with his dad. He pieces it together a bit and begins to see how the argument developed out of nothing.

Which mind do you think Mark is in now?

Imagine that Mark is able to go into his Wise Mind . . . What might happen?

Mark recognises he is feeling angry and depressed and he is able to see how the argument and the bad day at school led to him feeling this way. He’s now in a position to make a decision about what to do next . . .
‘How to get into your wise mind’

Learning to be in control of your mind, not letting your mind be in control of you!

When you are in your **Wise Mind** you are aware of what is happening, how you feel, what you are thinking and experiencing. In order to get into your **Wise Mind** (and be able to make reasonable decisions when you get a surge of feelings) you have to notice what is going on right then in that moment. You almost need to press a ‘pause button’ and notice in detail all that you are experiencing, feeling and thinking. It is like you are stepping into yourself and observing everything that is going on without trying to change it.

Having a **Wise Mind** is easier when people feel good, and much harder when they don’t.

**STEP 1 – Observing**

This is sensing or experiencing without describing or labelling the experience. It is noticing or paying attention to something.

Consider in your head what is going on for you *right now*. Imagine this instant is freeze-framed.

Now the trick is to **stay** with the awareness, stay in your Wise Mind.

Naturally we try to stop painful feelings or only hold on to feelings that we like . . . Just try staying with your awareness without trying to change it.

Keys that might help:

Try not to judge what is going on for you. It is neither good nor bad. Just let it happen.

Focus on one thing in the moment. If worries, thoughts or distractions pop into your head, let them float by and try to turn your attention back to the focus.

**STEP 2 – Describing**

This is using words to represent what you observe.

After considering in your head what is going on for you *right now*, describe what is happening in as much detail as you can.
**Home-task**

These exercises are very difficult. Everyone has a Wise Mind but some people may experience it rarely or never, and no one is in their Wise Mind all the time. It takes a lot of practice!

Below are some suggestions for you to try.

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Over the next few days, see if you can get into your Wise Mind . . . Don’t stop what you are doing; just notice how you are doing it and what you are feeling!! Stay with it . . . Just be mindful of what is happening for you . . .

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### OBSERVING

- **Experience your hand on a cool surface, e.g. table or chair.**
- **Stroke just above your upper lip, then stop and notice how long it takes before you can’t sense your upper lip any longer.**
- **‘Watch’ in your mind the first two thoughts that come in.**
- **Observe thoughts and label them as thoughts. Maybe put them into categories, e.g. thoughts about me, thoughts about others etc.**
- **Imagine that your mind is a conveyor belt, and that thoughts and/or feelings are coming down the belt. Put each thought and/or feeling in a box near the belt.**
- **No matter what happens, ‘step back’ within yourself and observe.**
- **Experience your hand on a cool surface, e.g. table or chair.**
- **Listen to music and observe what you think and feel.**

---

### DESCRIBING

Try to describe some situations and jot down whatever comes to mind. Use the examples above or some others of your own.

- **If you have an argument, try to be mindful and observe then jot down words to represent what you saw and felt happening.**
- **If something fun is coming up, make a mental note to try to be mindful and later jot down your observations.**

---

‘Self-soothing’

Here are some ways of thinking about soothing yourself when you feel distressed . . .

Highlight the ones that you like and add your own.

**Things you look at . . .**

- Buy yourself some pretty flowers
- Go to an art gallery or look at pictures online
- Watch the stars at night
- Light a tea-light and watch the flame
- Watch a ballet or dance performance
- Look at nice pictures in a book or magazine
- Do your nails so they are pretty
- Go to an art gallery or look at pictures online

**Things you listen to . . .**

- Listen to some soft or relaxing music
- . . . Or listen to some loud music!!!
- Sing your favourite song
- In a park, listen to the sounds of birds, etc.
- Play an instrument
- Be aware of noises around you but just allow them to drift away
- Listen to some soft or relaxing music
**Things you smell . . .**

- Light a scented candle
- Buy some essential oils
- Use your favourite perfume or scent
- Go to the park or woods and smell nature
- Bake cookies, cakes or bread

**Things you taste . . .**

- Have a hot chocolate or herbal tea
- Have some ice-cream
- Have your favourite meal
- Chew on your favourite gum
- Buy your favourite sweets

**Things you touch . . .**

- Stroke a cat/dog/hamster
- Sink into a really comfy sofa
- Take a bubble bath
- Cuddle a soft cushion
- Hug someone
- Brush your hair for a long time
- Go to the park or woods and smell nature
- Buy some essential oils
- Use your favourite perfume or scent

‘What else can I do?’

Here are some suggestions of other things you can do rather than harming yourself. Read through them and tick the ones that have worked for you in the past, or those you would like to try . . .

- Use a red, water-soluble pen to mark the skin instead of cutting
- Make lots of noise! Scream, shout, bang a drum or pots and pans or cry
- Write your negative thoughts on a piece of paper and put it in a safe place or rip it up
- Write your thoughts and feelings in a diary
- Give yourself permission not to injure yourself
- Scribble on a big piece of paper with a red pen
- Hold a chunk of ice against your skin or stick your hands in a sink filled with ice water
- Put an elastic band around your wrist and flick it against your skin
- Look at a picture of a previous cut
- Eat something hot or strongly flavoured
- Be aware of your surroundings – go through all five senses
- Call a friend
- Concentrate on your breathing. Use deep, cleansing, relaxing breaths
- Watch a funny movie
- Massage the area you want to hurt
- Take a warm bubble bath or shower OR a cold shower
- Look at photos/pictures
- Throw beanbags
Read a book

Scream into a pillow

Build something with blocks or Lego and knock it down

Colour in a colouring book

Watch a video

Throw water balloons

Remind yourself that there are other ways to express and cope with overwhelming feelings

Stay in a public place

Play an instrument

Create and go to a safe/no injury place in your house/in your mind

Give yourself permission NOT to think of the memory right now

Rate your feeling on the feeling thermometer. Set your alarm for 15 minutes and at the end of this time re-rate. See if you still want to hurt yourself

Push against a wall/hug a big tree

Pet an animal

Take your pulse

Ask your therapist to make a tape with you that you can use during difficult times

Go for a walk in a familiar place or go for a brisk run

Clean up your room/change your room around

Exercise. Go Swimming

Write on a piece of paper that you want to hurt yourself and put it in a drawer. Leave the room and do something else for five minutes before coming back. Then, if you still want to harm yourself, write another message

Write in the boxes the alternatives that have worked for you. You might have your own ideas, too . . .

‘Sometimes I paint how I feel in my book. The pictures can be pretty gruesome but I don’t show anyone – they’re just for me.’
Part Four Worksheets

On you go!
‘Staying safe’

Think about the future and write down a list of possible events, people’s reactions, feelings and thoughts that would push you into harming yourself again.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.
**WORKSHEET 49**

‘My life plan’

What are your personal goals for the next week, month, etc.? Think of your goals in all the different areas of your life and try to fill in as many of the boxes as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Diet</th>
<th>Relationships/friends</th>
<th>Hobbies</th>
<th>School/college/work</th>
<th>Lifestyle</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
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<td>2–6 months</td>
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<td>6–12 months</td>
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<td>1–2 years</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
‘First-aid kit and toolbox’

*First-aid kit for future crisis*

Write in the empty spaces of the first-aid kit different things that will help you to cope when in crisis in the future.
Keeping well toolbox

Write in the empty spaces of the toolbox the skills you will use in order to stay well.
‘My path’

*Things I look forward to in the next 12 months . . .*
This is to certify that

____________________________________

has successfully completed the CUTTING DOWN programme!

Particular achievements include...

1. ____________________________________

2. ____________________________________

3. ____________________________________

Signed ______________________________

Date ______________