

iapt

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies



University of
Sheffield

Changing old and unhelpful patterns

Creating stable stepping stones for change

Guided Self-Help for Anxiety: A 6-Session Workbook





My therapy appointments

You can use this page to make a note of your appointment dates and times. You will have things to do to get the most of the next session, so you could make a note of those tasks here also, if you want, so you don't forget.

Appointment - Session two: _____

Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

Things to remember to bring to this session:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Appointment - Session three: _____

Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

Things to remember to bring to this session:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____



Appointment - Session four: _____

Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

Things to remember to bring to this session:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Appointment - Session five: _____

Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

Things to remember to bring to this session:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Appointment - Session six: _____

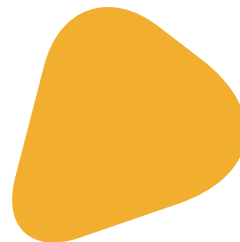
Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

Things to remember to bring to this session:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____



Use the 'my notes' pages at the end of each session to write down your own thoughts and reflections.





Introduction to this workbook

Each of our lives is unique and our history contributes to how we see the world and form and maintain our relationships. The relationship we have with **ourselves and with others** is a really important part of our sense of well-being and how prone we are to feeling anxious.

The experiences that we have had in our lives are our own unique personal history and they influence how we treat ourselves, how we relate to others and how others relate to us. There is nothing unusual about that – everyone and everybody is shaped by their history and they have a personal template for how they relate to themselves and to others.

Experiences over our life therefore mould and shape the way we see and treat ourselves and our tendency to feel anxious (i.e. the roles we play in our lives that create and maintain anxiety) and how we are with other people (i.e. the roles they play in relation to us and vice versa). For example, always putting yourself last and others first means that you neglect yourself and can feel anxious and isolated as a result.

This self-help workbook will help you to recognise the roles and patterns in your current relationships that create and maintain anxiety, and how they are grounded in your past experiences. Really importantly, this workbook will help you to start to change your roles and patterns, so that they work better for you and you start to feel more in control in your life.

People can often feel, if they have been anxious for a while, that the way they see and do things is the only way, because it has become so familiar to them.

These quite narrow ways of relating to ourselves and others can be stifling and can be how anxiety is created and maintained. It's really horrible to suffer from anxiety and this self-help guide is a route map to feeling more relaxed and less anxious in general.

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Getting ready to support change

It is also difficult to change anxious patterns so you will need to both (a) push yourself and be encouraging of yourself and (b) be patient and compassionate with your attempts to change. You will be working with a Low Intensity Therapist (LIT) with this workbook. Your LIT will work with you and support you in the decisions that you make and the changes that you put into action in your life in order to feel better and more relaxed. Forming a good relationship with your LIT will help you to change and make the process easier for you too.

You have made a very brave and important decision in deciding to seek help for the anxiety that you feel. This shows that you can see that you need to make changes in your life and you are motivated - being ready, willing and able to change can make this workbook really useful to you.

Will this workbook actually help?

Research has shown that this workbook will help you to feel less anxious if you work through the exercises that are contained in it and also work closely with your LIT in discussing the exercises, the feelings that come up and the learning that occurs. You need to try to do all the exercises in the workbook and also the work that occurs between the sessions. The more you engage in the workbook, the more it will work for you.

Being balanced

Looking at the patterns in the way you think, feel and act in your life will show up problems, as well as good things (such as your strengths and personal values). You will have many strengths as a person - please don't forget that! Looking at life experiences and relationships from your past will shine a light on why you are anxious in the present day. Understanding where your difficulties with anxiety come from (i.e. the origins of your anxiety) is the first step in **learning to live life to the full** once again, or take good useful and manageable steps in that direction.





What to expect

Over the next 6 sessions you will stand back from yourself and your difficulties and think about them with your LIT by completing some exercises together. This will help you to start to recognise that certain roles (how you relate to you, how you relate to others and how others relate to you) can create and maintain anxiety. Also, that certain patterns of anxious thinking, acting and doing can also maintain or increase your fears. When you start to make changes in order to live differently, you will start to feel better – but this may take time. Your LIT is well trained in helping people with anxiety and they will be a great resource and source of support to you. They will work **with you** and **alongside you**, but they cannot do the work for you. Your LIT will design with you some **between session tasks** to help you understand yourself better or take a step forward in your life. Being really honest and open with your LIT is a useful starting point – some of the exercises will help you to think about the therapeutic relationship you have with your LIT and whether this mirrors the relationships you have with others from your past and current life.

Identifying where you want to get to

Whenever anyone is starting a journey, it is really useful to identify where you want to get to before you set off! Your LIT will help you towards achieving your goals and working through this workbook with them will be a significant step in the right direction for you.

A useful way to approach problems is to pick something that is likely to be responsive to you attempting to change it. Trying to change really deep-rooted and entrenched patterns is very difficult and might be you setting yourself up to fail. This might put you off seeking and asking for help again.

Therefore, it is useful to think about goals where there is a chance of some change: **push it where it moves** is a good way to think about what to target.

You and your LIT may have already thought about what you want to get out of treatment. If not, then take a moment to think about where you want to be and what you want to achieve using this workbook. When identifying a goal, it is useful to think of something you want to **start** (rather than **stop**) and be **SMART**. This means **Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time Limited**.

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Example goal

"By the end of the six sessions, I want to be seeing my sister for a coffee once a week for a catch up."

Now write your goals here:

1.

2.

3.

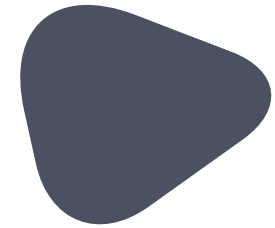
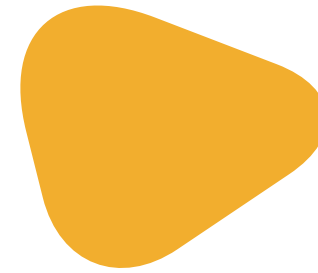


In summary, in using this workbook, you will work on developing a better understanding of the following:

1. The patterns in your anxiety so that you understand your problems a lot better and how they affect your life and wellbeing in the present day.
2. What may possibly be the roots of these problems – the origins of your anxiety.
3. Understanding how you learnt to survive in the past and how the patterns were laid down to get by at the time, but also how these old patterns may now be holding you back in your current life.
4. The roles you take up in your life that create patterns that keep the anxiety going.

And practising within and between the 6 sessions:

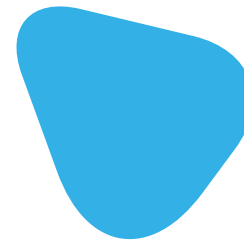
1. Exercises in thinking about and developing new roles and patterns that are better for you and create less stress.
2. Ways of doing things differently ('exits') to make your life better.
3. Developing the relationships you have with yourself and others.
4. Learning new skills (or coping strategies that you had forgotten) that you can then carry on using after completing this workbook.





Session one

Identifying the current patterns of your anxiety

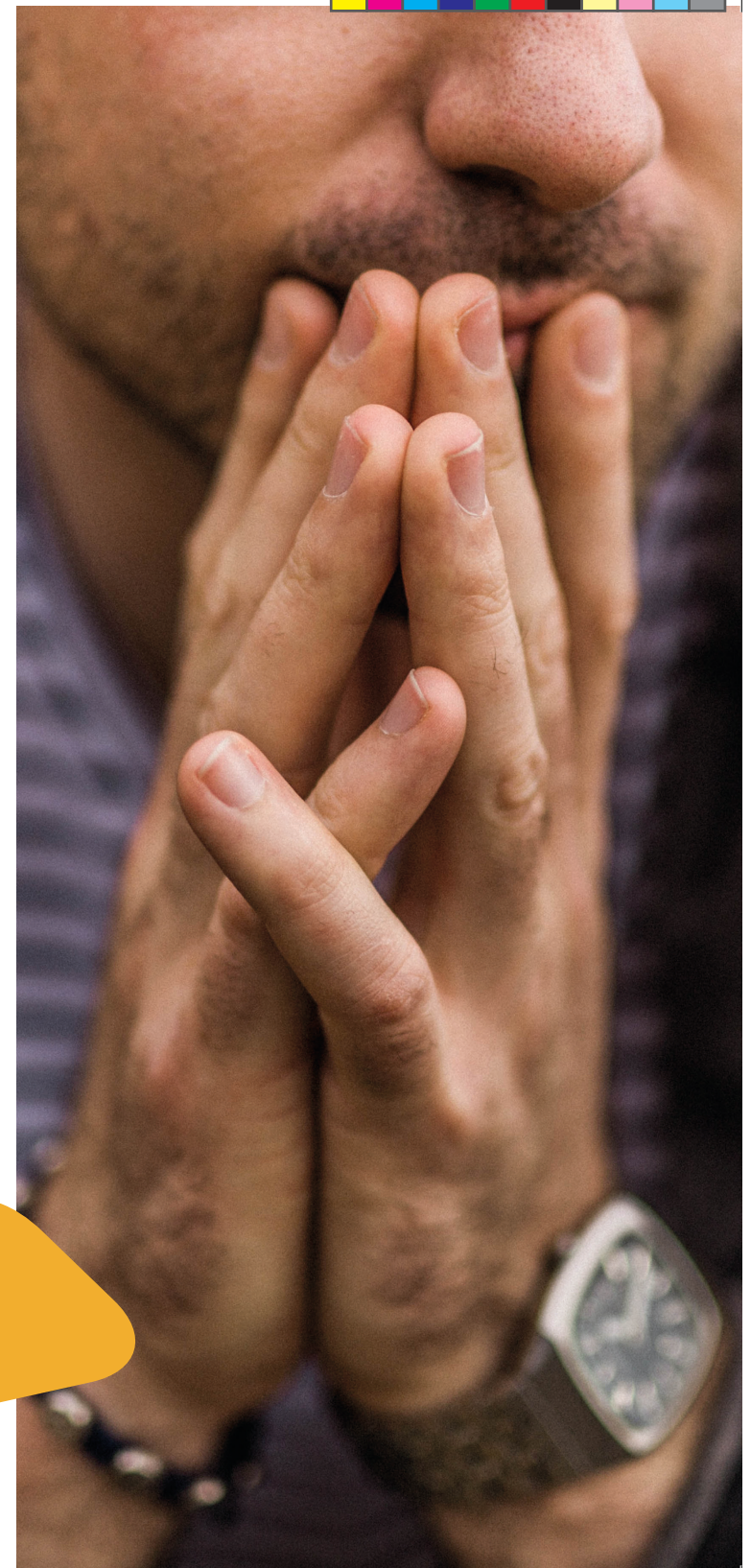


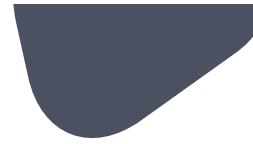
There are certain patterns to the way people think, feel and act which means that they frequently feel anxious and do not achieve what they really want in life. For example, they want to be a good parent, but find themselves fretting and snapping at their children, or they want to have good friends, but let people walk all over them or they want to do everything perfectly and are then crushed and exhausted by this heavy expectation that they have of themselves.

The first step towards change is learning to name and then spot anxious patterns of thinking, feeling and doing. Being more aware of your patterns will help you to change them, rather than 'acting blindly' all the time.

There are three types of patterns to anxiety: traps, dilemmas and snags.

This workbook will now explain what these are and there are some exercises to complete with your LIT to help you see how anxious patterns might occur in your life.



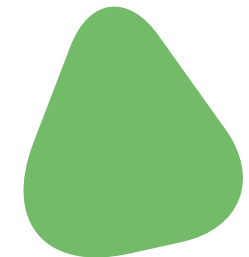


Traps; what is an anxiety trap?

Traps are ways we think and act that makes anxiety worse – traps act like a vicious circle that keep people trapped in the misery of feeling stressed and anxious.

There are a number of stages to an anxious trap;

1. How we see ourselves
(this concerns how we see ourselves, our beliefs about ourselves, our self-image or our self-esteem; **for example, someone might see themselves as incompetent**).
2. The aim or goal this generates
(this concerns what we think we should be trying to achieve; when people are anxious their goals can become concerned with not being anxious, not being humiliated or not feeling exposed; **for example, the person who sees themselves as incompetent would aim to get someone to make their decisions for them, in case they make a mistake**).
3. What we then think, feel and do because of the goal
(this concerns the often negative automatic thoughts that we have that create feelings of anxiety and what we choose to then do, because of the influence of the feeling; **for example, the person who has the aim of getting someone else to make their decisions will think that they can't rely on themselves and this makes them feel anxious**).
4. The consequences of the action we take
(this concerns knowing that when we do something it generates a consequence for us or the people around us; **the person who gets other people to make their own decisions, never learns to trust their own opinion**).
5. How this then reinforces how we see ourselves
(this concerns how the consequence tends to unfortunately confirm how we see ourselves, our self-image or our self-esteem). In the current example, the person continues to feel incompetent and so anxious.



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Caught in an anxiety trap; an example

The diagram on the next page is an example from someone who is struggling with feeling anxious and stressed all the time. This is Julia who has been feeling really stressed and anxious for six-months and she is seeing a LIT with the aim of getting back into a healthy eating and exercise routine.

Don't forget that there are a number of stages to a trap being created:

- Q.** How did Julia see herself?
- A.** Julia had labelled herself as someone who can't cope and is a failure.
- Q.** What was the aim or goal she created as a result?
- A.** Julia does not want other people to see how she really feels inside.
- Q.** So, what did she then think, feel and do as a result?
- A.** She predicts that she will fail, feels anxious as a result and so hides from the world and does not approach others.
- Q.** What were the consequences of the actions she took?
- A.** She is lonely, isolated and feels stressed and people do not know this.
- Q.** How did this then reinforce how Julia saw herself?
- A.** Her sense of herself as a failure deepens and sense of not being able to cope widens.

An example of being caught in an anxious avoidance trap

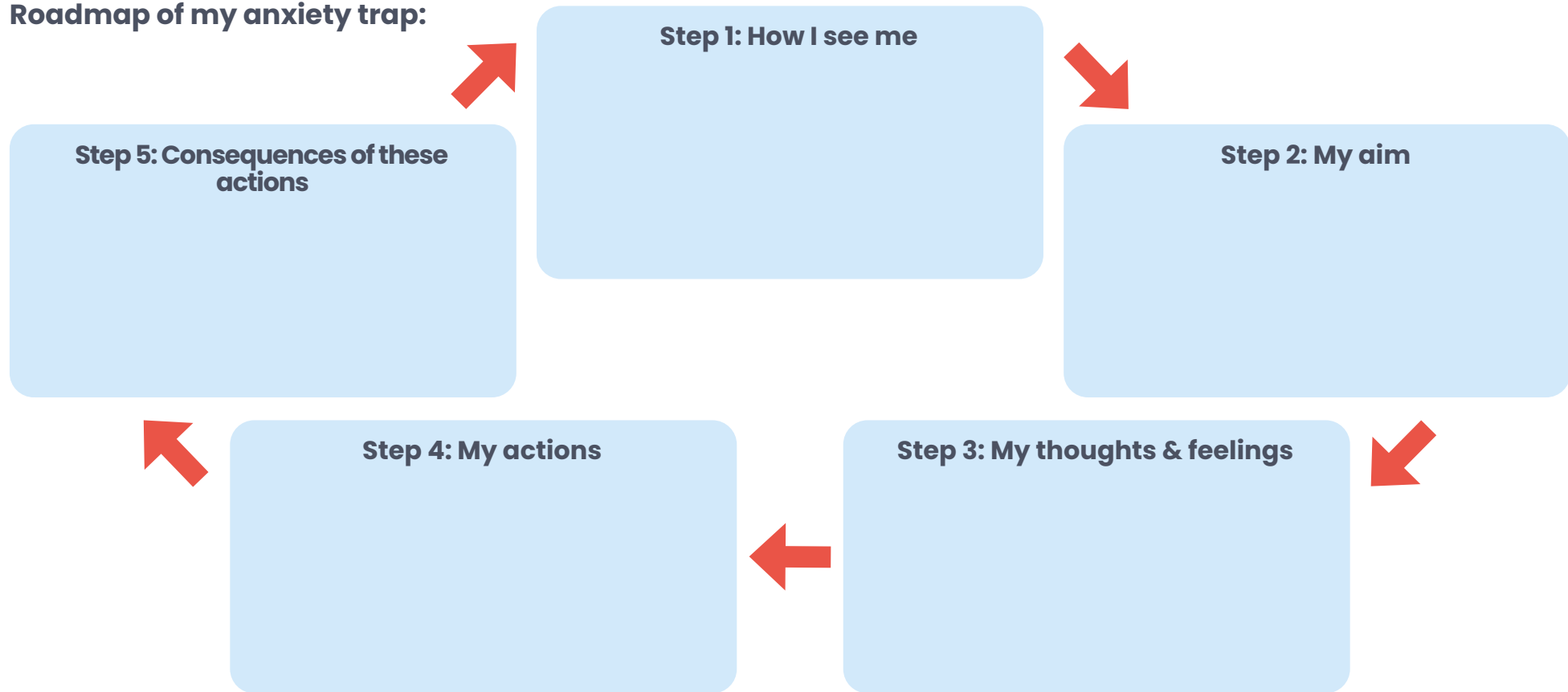




What are my anxiety traps?

Now work with your LIT in the session to sketch out your own trap. It might help to use an incident when you felt really anxious about something recently.

Roadmap of my anxiety trap:



There might be a 'Trap' you could recognise about using this workbook or working with your LIT?

If there is, feel free to write this as well...



Dilemmas; either/or anxious patterns

Dilemmas are false-extreme choices which make us believe we only have (or can take up) one or another option, action or position in our lives.

These choices are often the opposites of each other. An example might be a boom or bust pattern of exercising. Anxiety can make it feel like there are only these false choices, and this means that we can miss all the possibilities that exist in between.

Dilemmas can therefore be summarised as **I either do X or I do Y, or I either feel X or feel Y, or think X or think Y.**

We often don't realise that we see or think about things like this, but we can blindly act as if these were the only two possibilities. Learning how to spot your anxious dilemmas is the first step to changing them. Below are a few examples of common dilemmas:

Either

I try to keep everything (and me) in perfect order

Or

*Everything turns into a terrible mess
and falls apart*

Either

I put everyone else first and neglect myself

Or

I am too selfish and neglect people close to me

Either

Try to face my fears (but get quickly overwhelmed)

Or

I avoid everything (and stay stuck)



Naming my anxiety dilemmas?

Now try to think of some dilemmas that may have been leaving you feeling anxious.

Try to write at least one 'either/or dilemma'. Your LIT will try to help you to do this with you in the session.

Either

Or

Either

Or

There might be a Dilemma you could add about using this workbook or working with your LIT.

(e.g. I either open up too much and feel too vulnerable or I don't trust and stay too distant?) If there is, feel free to write this also...



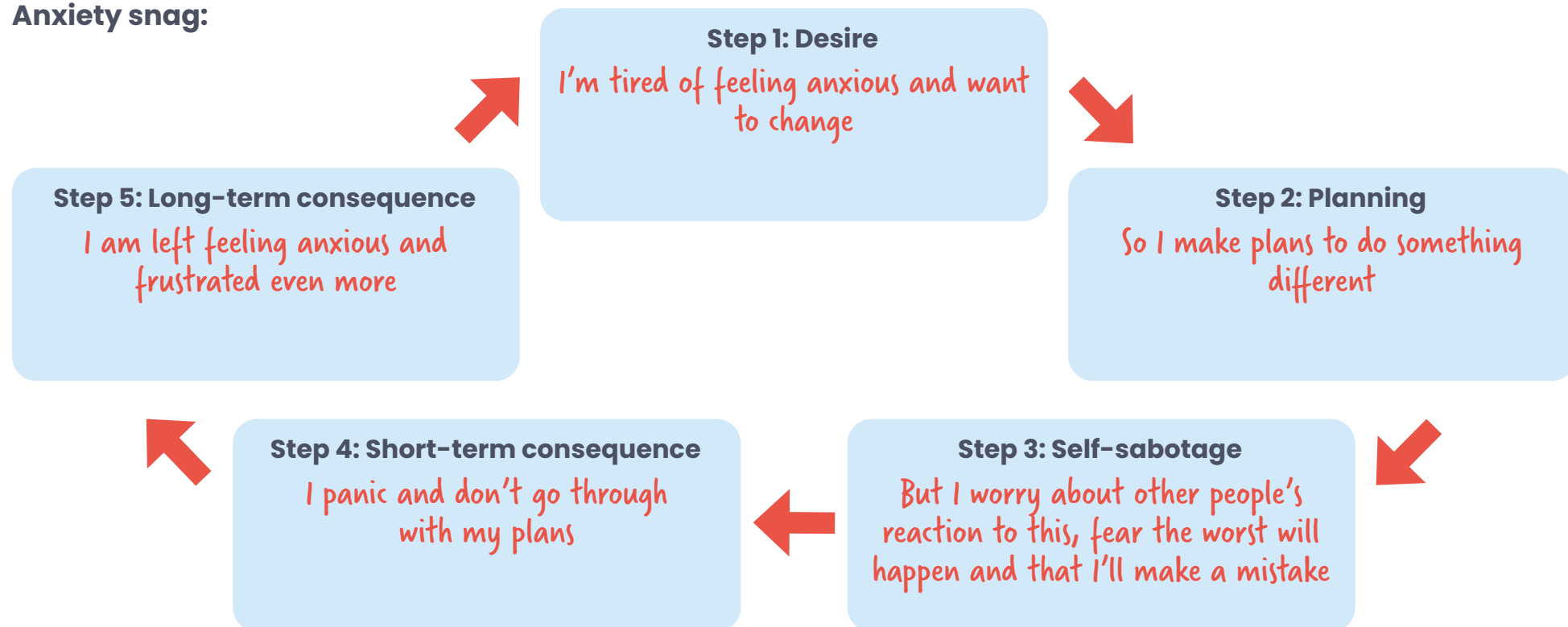
Anxiety snags

Snags are the obstacles that get in the way of us changing in a positive way, in order that we lead a more fulfilling and less stressful life. Snags are what happen when we say to ourselves or others 'I want to be less anxious, but...'

Sometimes, the snags with anxiety come from the important people in our lives not wanting us to change, or not being able to cope with us changing (e.g. our partner doesn't like it when we become more confident). Sometimes snags come from us anticipating feeling guilty if things go well (and so we spoil the chance of change) or from feeling we do not really deserve to be calm (and so we spoil the chance of change). As a result, we feel that we have to sabotage pleasure, success, or new ways of living life to the full.

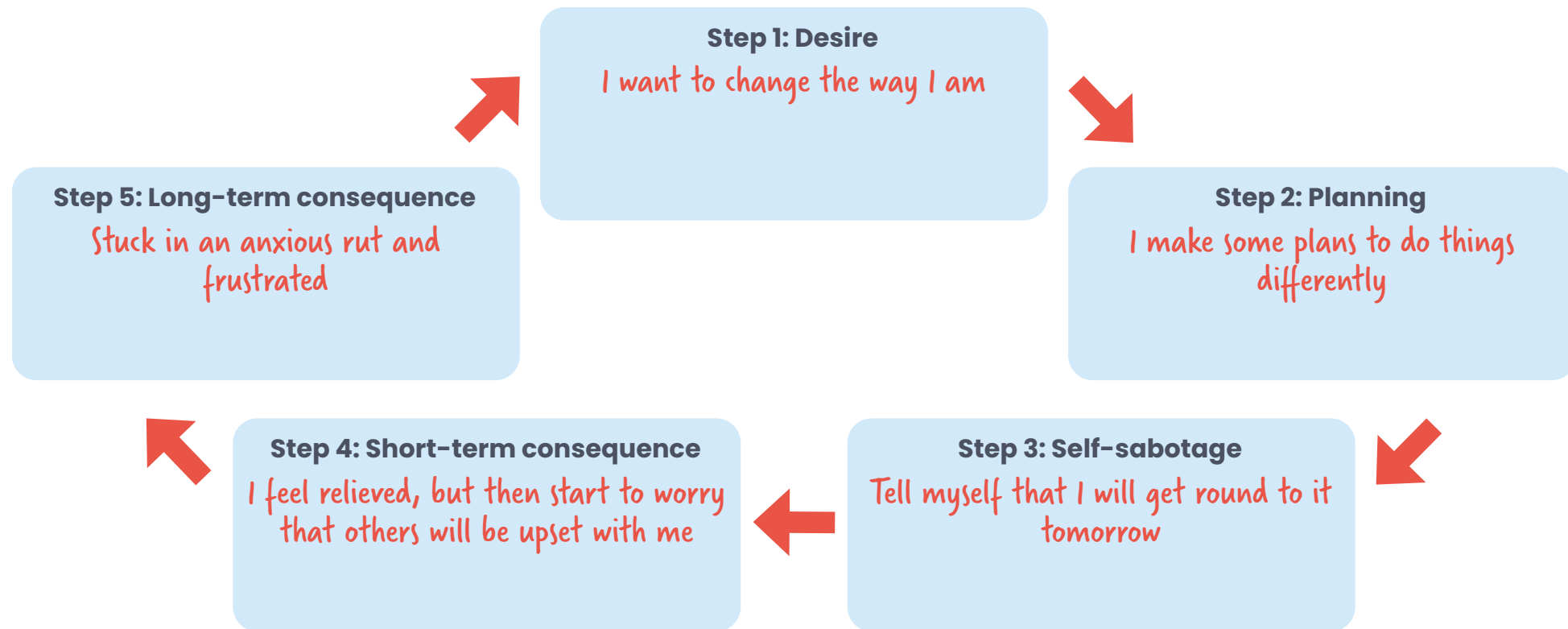
Below is an example from Jakub. He felt very anxious about changing and facing his fears. He would plan to change, but would self-sabotage by starting to worry about what might happen, and sometimes he would panic about that too. When this happened, he would give up and remove himself from the scary situation, which proved to him that he was unable to change.

Anxiety snag:





Another example of an anxiety snag for Lena:

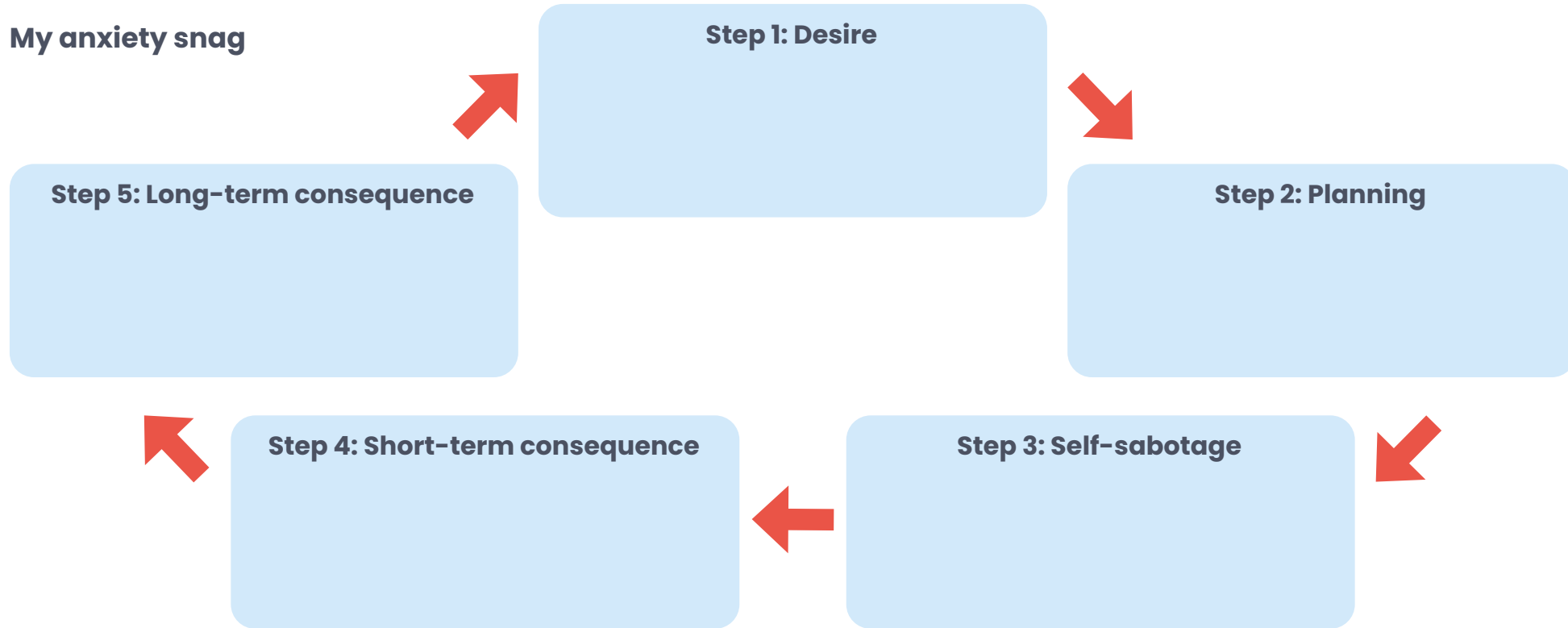




What are my anxiety snags?

Again, with your LIT draw out your own snags. (Tip: What comes to your mind when you think about changing? Do you have fears about how other people will react or what it might bring for you? Or perhaps (deep down) you don't feel that you deserve good things or deserve to be calm and relaxed?)

My anxiety snag



There might be a Snag you could write about using this workbook or working with your LIT?

If there is, feel free to write this also...





At home tasks

Over the following week(s), please try to notice when the anxious snag, trap and/or dilemma that you have identified in the session has occurred. Please read about the other patterns, if you have just done one in the session with your LIT. It might be that you notice the pattern after it has happened, whilst it was happening or just before it was about to happen. Any noticing work is great work.

Don't be obsessive about noticing or be self-critical when you are noticing the patterns – just notice and log them without passing judgement on yourself. It's really helpful for change if you can start to notice a pattern before it starts, because then you can start to do things differently. You are being more self-aware.

It might be useful to use the table below to help you to notice the patterns:

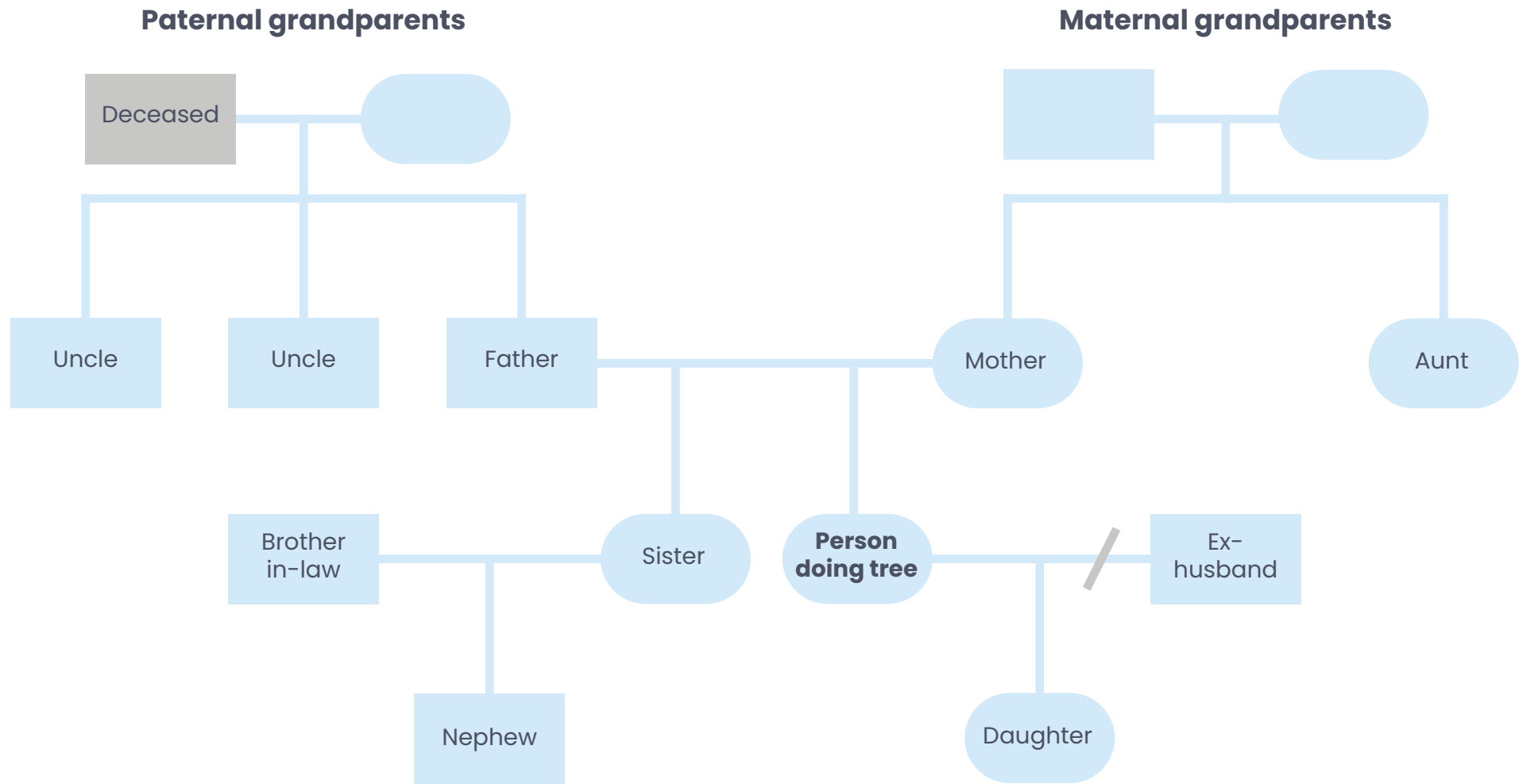
	How often did this happen? (keep a tally)	What am I learning about me to take to the next session with my LIT?
Snag description summary:		
Trap description summary:		
Dilemma description summary:		

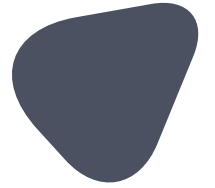
Next time we meet we're going to talk about your experiences of growing up, your personal history and close relationships. To prepare for this please also draw out a family tree like the one on the next page. Please also complete the timeline on the following page to help identify any crucial times in your life that might have had a bearing on why you feel anxious now. There are two example time lines to help you to do this.





Family tree





Your family tree

Me



Bill's timeline

Approximate dates/age	What happened for me? Why was it difficult or beneficial?
0 years	I was adopted
14 years	Parents seperated - found my birth mother
16 years	Engineering apprenticeship
19 years	Married
24 years	Twins born - great!
50 years	Stress due to daughter's drug issues and her pulling away from the family
55 years	Head of engineering at work - stressful, too much work
60 years	Retired - felt lost and alone





Mary's timeline

Approximate dates/age	What happened for me? Why was it difficult or beneficial?
0 years	I was born
5 years	Started in a lovely quiet primary school - lots of friends
9 years	Parents divorced - stressful, lots of arguing and being asked to choose a lot
11 years	Started secondary school - felt lost and victim of bullying
12 years	Mum met step-dad - never liked or trusted him
16 years	Did well in my exams and left to go to college
24 years	Got married - but we drifted apart and argued loads



My timeline

Now please create a timeline of any important negative life events on the timeline below that might help to explain your proneness to feeling anxious. If you want to add in positive events and memories for balance, then also feel free to do this.

Approximate dates/age	What happened for me? Why was it difficult or beneficial?



Session two

The roots of my anxiety

Have a quick review of your diary concerning your snags traps and dilemmas, family tree and timeline with your LIT – they will help to help you see the patterns more clearly.

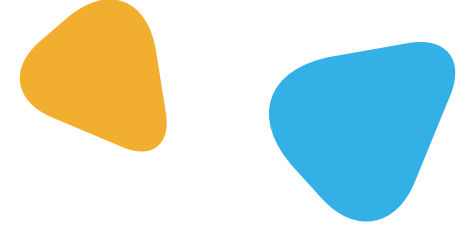
Now, you and your LIT should have a bit of a better idea of some of your current problems and the patterns that underpin them. These can be seen as patterns of traps, snags or dilemmas which are making it difficult for you to live your life to the full and mean that you are feeling anxious a lot of the time or limiting your enjoyment of life. These patterns often emerge because of the way our lives have developed and the influence others have had upon us. These relationships are what you and your LIT will be looking at this week during session two.

The impact of growing up

What happens to us as a child and the way we are brought up and treated affects our personality and the kind of person we become. If we have parents/ carers/siblings/ friends who love and encourage us (but also set limits when that is their role), then we are likely to become adults who feel cared for and are of value, have confidence in ourselves and can accept the limits set by others or life circumstance. Our relationships with other people will also generally go well. If we had different life experiences though, through for example people being criticising, rejecting, bullying, neglecting (or even abusing), things are not so likely to go well for us. We are likely to feel that we are not valuable or worthwhile (we are self-critical), predicting that others are going to hurt us or let us down (making us feel anxious) and that any limits set by others feel more like a personal punishment. We learn how to look after ourselves and navigate our relationships with others, by how we are raised as children.

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Thinking about your origins

Please write down up to 5 words that best describe your mother's (or main carer's) personality or behaviour when you were growing up.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Please write down up to 5 words that best describe your father's (or secondary carer's, or leave blank if there was not a secondary carer) personality or behaviour when you were growing up.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____



Thinking about your origins

Please write down up to 5 words that describe your relationship with your brothers and sisters when you were growing up (if you had them).

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

Please write down up to 5 words that people close to you might use to describe you now?

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





So what did you learn from these experiences?

The way we learn to relate to people and ourselves when we are young can also repeat itself throughout our adult lives. So, for example, if our father is very critical when we are growing up, as an adult we will be likely to feel criticised by other people a lot of the time and also be very self-critical too. These repeating patterns are called **'relationship roles'**. There are two sides – upper bit for an action by others and lower bit for your resulting feeling(s). You will have learnt **both ends** of the role. The diagram below sets this out:

In the past

Criticising



Put down /not good enough

With myself or towards others?

I pull apart my own achievements and/or pick up on tiny failings in others

In the present

Others are to me?

I feel that others are on my back and often interpret what people say to me as if they are putting me down

What I elicit from others?

I tend not to try and people have a go at me for that

Think about your past and present relationships discussed in the session today and from the family tree and the timeline. Can you see the roles that exist in your close relationships? Try drawing these out with your LIT below:

In the past



How I am with myself?

How I am towards others?

How others are to me?

What I elicit from others?



At home tasks

The power of recognition

In this session, you and your LIT have looked at the relationship roles that you have learnt to take up in current relationships and how these reflect, are related to and are a repeating pattern of your past relationships.

Another important step for you towards positive change is to start to recognise the relationship roles that keep the anxiety going as they are happening in the present day. Between sessions, please monitor the relationship role(s) you have identified in the session today.

My key relationship role: _____

	Frequency of being in the top or the bottom of the role (keep a tally of both)	What am I learning about me to take to the next session with my LIT?
Day 1		
Day 2		
Day 3		
Day 4		
Day 5		
Day 6		
Day 7		





Session three

Linking my past to my present

Bring your diary concerning your relationship roles to the session and your LIT will review this with you. Try to summarise together what it is that you have learnt about:

- **the relationship you have with yourself?**

Summarise this below:

- **the relationship you have with others now – how others make you feel and how you make them feel?**

Summarise this below:

- **what you do, that means people often don't treat you well in your everyday life?**

Summarise this below:





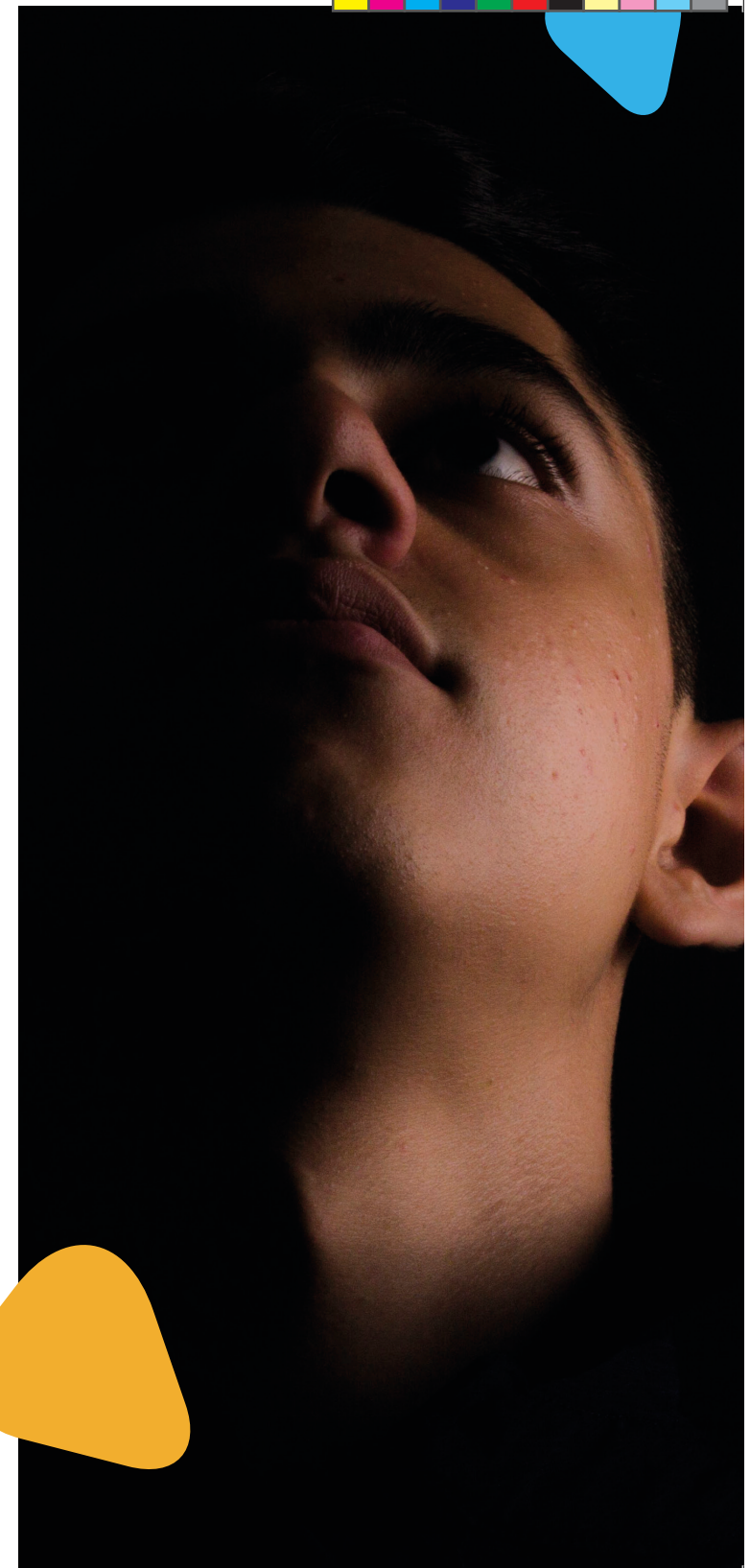
In session 1 you thought about your current situation and your anxiety. In session 2 you thought about your past and the important relationships and experiences you've had. This week you are going to put them together with your LIT, linking your past experiences to your present anxious feelings. Have a look at the example below to get you going:

Faisal's mother was away a lot when he was growing up – because she had to work two jobs – Faisal often felt alone and scared because as a child he didn't understand why his mother was not there. As an adult, Faisal feels anxious in his current relationships, as if the threat of being alone and scared is never that far away. Faisal also acts in an abandoning way towards others, pushing people away to avoid any real emotional intimacy or closeness. He can also sometimes ignore his own feelings and abandon his needs.

It can help to draw out this process in a table like the one below.

Past	Past	Past	Present	Present
How people were with me	How did this make me feel?	What did I do to survive and get by?	How does this show itself with others now?	How do I relate to myself now?
Abandoning Not there	Unwanted Neglected	Stopped trusting others Pulled away from people Pushed feelings down	Never let anybody in, in case they leave me Keep people at arm's length	Ignore my own feelings My own feelings are not important

This pattern might repeat itself in Faisal's work with a LIT. For example, the ending of the six sessions was difficult for Faisal and he felt like his LIT did not care and was abandoning him. If you have similar feelings, it is important to talk about your feelings about the end of this course of treatment with your LIT.



Linking my past to my present

Let's start by looking over the work you completed in the last session. You and your LIT can use this information to start to think about the important relationships you have had and what they may have taught you about yourself, other people and the world. Notice that the first two columns of the table here are essentially the relationship role you have identified in the previous session.

Now work with your LIT to fill out the table below. This might be an eye-opener for you, so you need to go easy with yourself. This is trying to make sense of your anxiety over time; how you learnt to get by in the past has become a rut in the present or a way of living life in neutral.

Past	Past	Past	Present	Present
How people were with me	How did this make me feel?	What did I do to survive and get by?	How does this show itself with others now?	How do I relate to myself now?

Will this pattern re-occur between you and your LIT? How will it show itself?



My 'problem statement'

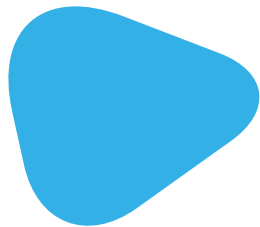
Next session you and your LIT will start to look at making changes to your life. It is helpful to have a 'problem statement' to focus those changes onto what's important to you in your life.

Use the sequence you identified from the last page to guide the stages of your problem statement. This will identify the roots of your anxiety and how the roles established then show themselves in your relationships with yourself and with other people.

In short, how your current anxiety (**your traps, dilemmas and snags**) links to your past experiences (**your relationship roles**).

Look at the example below;

"I was badly bullied at school and I survived by learning to hide from the bullies, push my feelings down and please people. Now, I fear people will humiliate me if I make a mistake, or show the real me. I find it so difficult to trust people. I beat myself up for being anxious, tense and uptight around others. When I get the opportunity to open up or get close, I freeze, feel anxious and so hide from people all over again."





My at home tasks

The next step towards positive change is to recognise when your relationship roles tend to predict the patterns, to try to see when this happens and to link them together.

This will deepen your self-awareness; you will be able to recognise roles and patterns and how they are related to you. You can only change a role and associated pattern by first recognising the role and the pattern. For example, if you identified a relationship role of *criticising to put down*, and an associated pattern of anxiously hiding from people, you may choose to recognise that role and pattern between sessions.

There are example relationship roles at the back of the workbook, if you need any help.

My key relationship role:

My key associated pattern:





	What did I notice? The role? The pattern? Both?	Before, during or after the role or pattern happened?	What have I learned from noticing?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			



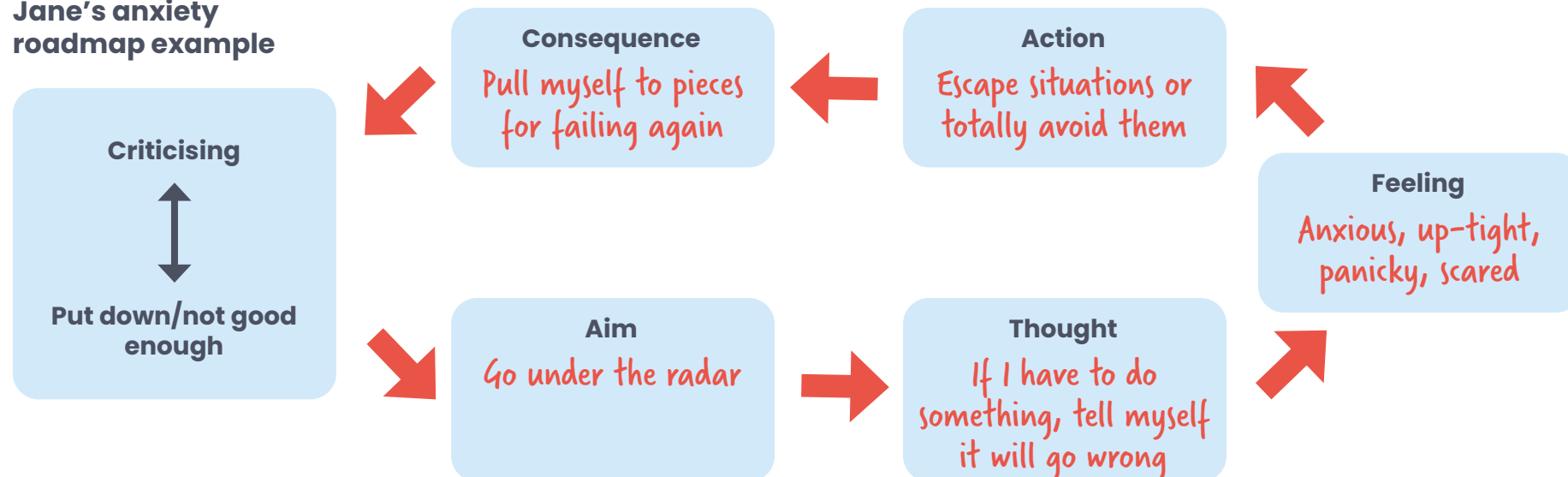
Session four

Making a 'roadmap' of my problems and then how to make an exit off the roadmap

Bring your diary concerning your relationship roles and patterns to the session and your LIT will review this with you. Discuss what you are starting to see more clearly.

Over the course of the sessions so far, you and your LIT will have identified some patterns of relating to yourself and others which have been creating anxiety and holding you back. Over the next three sessions you and your LIT will discover the wider choices and new more helpful ways of doing things that are available to you. It is really helpful to have the pattern drawn as a 'roadmap' diagram like the one below:

Jane's anxiety roadmap example



This roadmap shows how a relationship role can set off a cycle of events that always ends with the same anxious feeling. Drawing out our anxious patterns like this helps us see more clearly the problem and particularly the ways we interact with people that can make things worse for us. Roadmaps help us to identify ways of doing things differently, which you will start next session. There are more examples on the next page.



Jim's anxiety roadmap example



Consequence
Get exhausted, but stay on the treadmill



Action
Always on the go, checking everything, over working, constantly striving



Feeling
Anxious, up-tight, panicky, scared



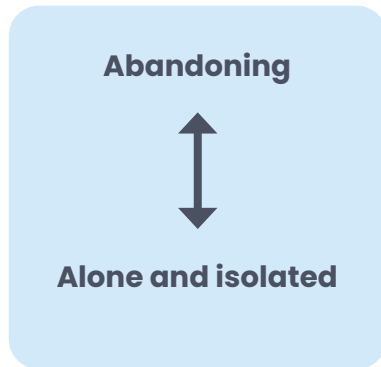
Aim
To be the best



Thought
I've got to be better than others and do tasks perfectly



Elif's anxiety roadmap example



Consequence
People pull away from me and I feel they are



Action
Push others away, be aloof, mistrust others



Feeling
Anxious, up-tight, panicky, scared



Aim
Never to feel this way again



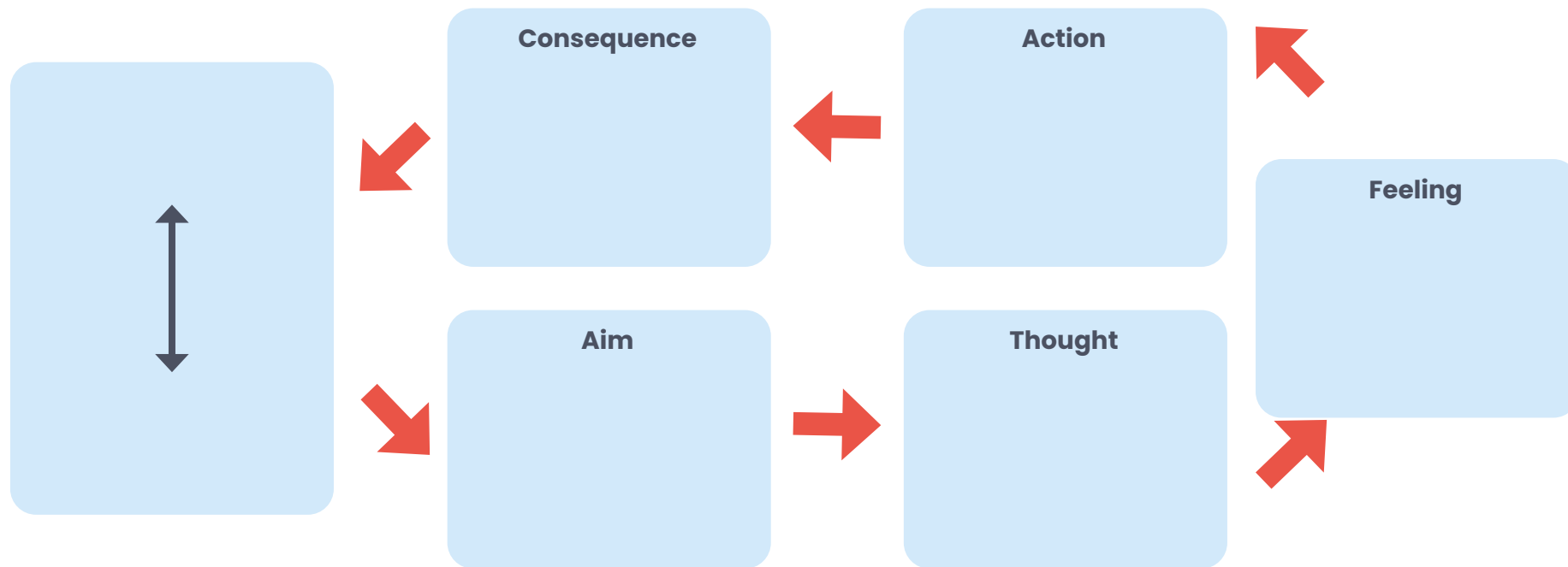
Thought
I can't let anyone get close to me





My anxiety roadmap

Now try drawing out your own anxiety roadmap diagram with your LIT, like the one on the previous page. Start with one of your relationship roles and then draw out how this creates an aim, thought, action and consequence loop that means you end up back where you started. You may be able to put on your relationship with your LIT and how this fits with the general pattern. The loops can go from the bottom of the relationship role to the top (as in the example below) or from the top to the bottom. It may take a few attempts to get it right so that it is personal and accurate to you; that's OK.



If it helps, think about how your work with your LIT might mirror aspects of your roadmap. For example, does it feel like the relationship role gets activated when you work together or do you think, feel and do in the sessions in the same way as on the road map?



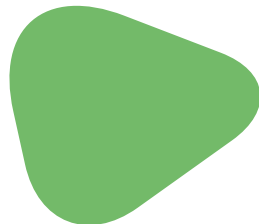


What is an exit?

At this point, you have drawn a 'roadmap' of the roles and patterns in your life that create and maintain anxiety. Now it is time to focus on positive change. **Exits** are the strategies you and your LIT will work on together to apply to your roadmap to improve your life, your relationships and your well-being.

It's important that the exits are your own - you need to find out what works for you and put that into action. You might change how you approach your life (e.g. being more spontaneous), you might change how you treat yourself (e.g. being more compassionate), you might change how you treat others (e.g. being more patient and understanding) or how you are with others (e.g. by being more assertive with them).

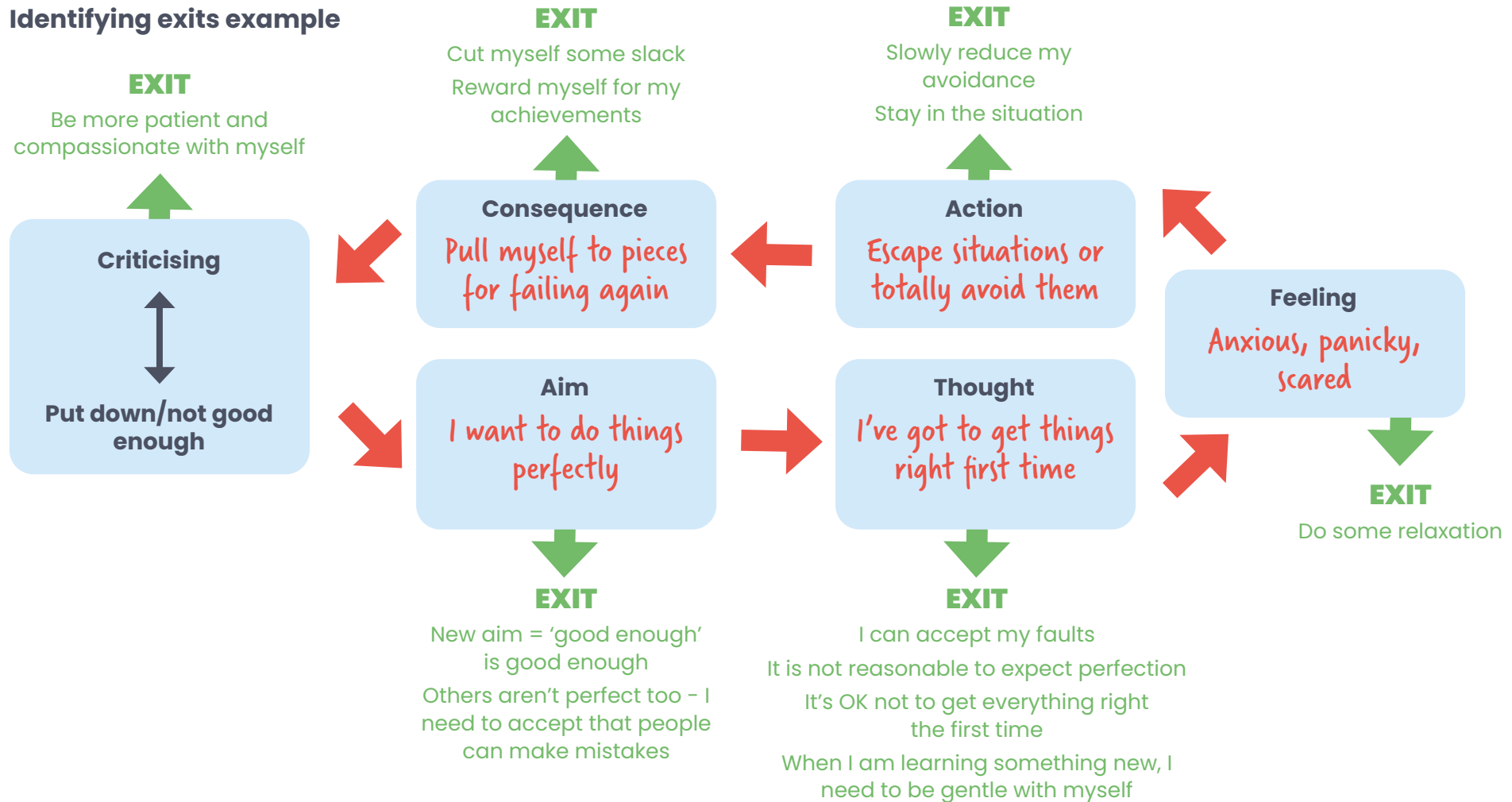
An important way of choosing an exit is '**push it where it will move**'. This means don't choose something that has been stuck for ages, or 'bite off more than you can chew'.



Finding a way out: learning how to exit the roadmap

The first step in making a positive change to your life is choosing where to start. This can feel quite daunting and so it is important to be realistic and start small – remember, push it where it moves. Once we begin to change even the smallest thing, other changes naturally follow, like a domino effect, if we keep on track and encourage ourselves. **The exits in the map below are written in green.** Don't forget, each stage of the pattern is an opportunity for change!

Identifying exits example



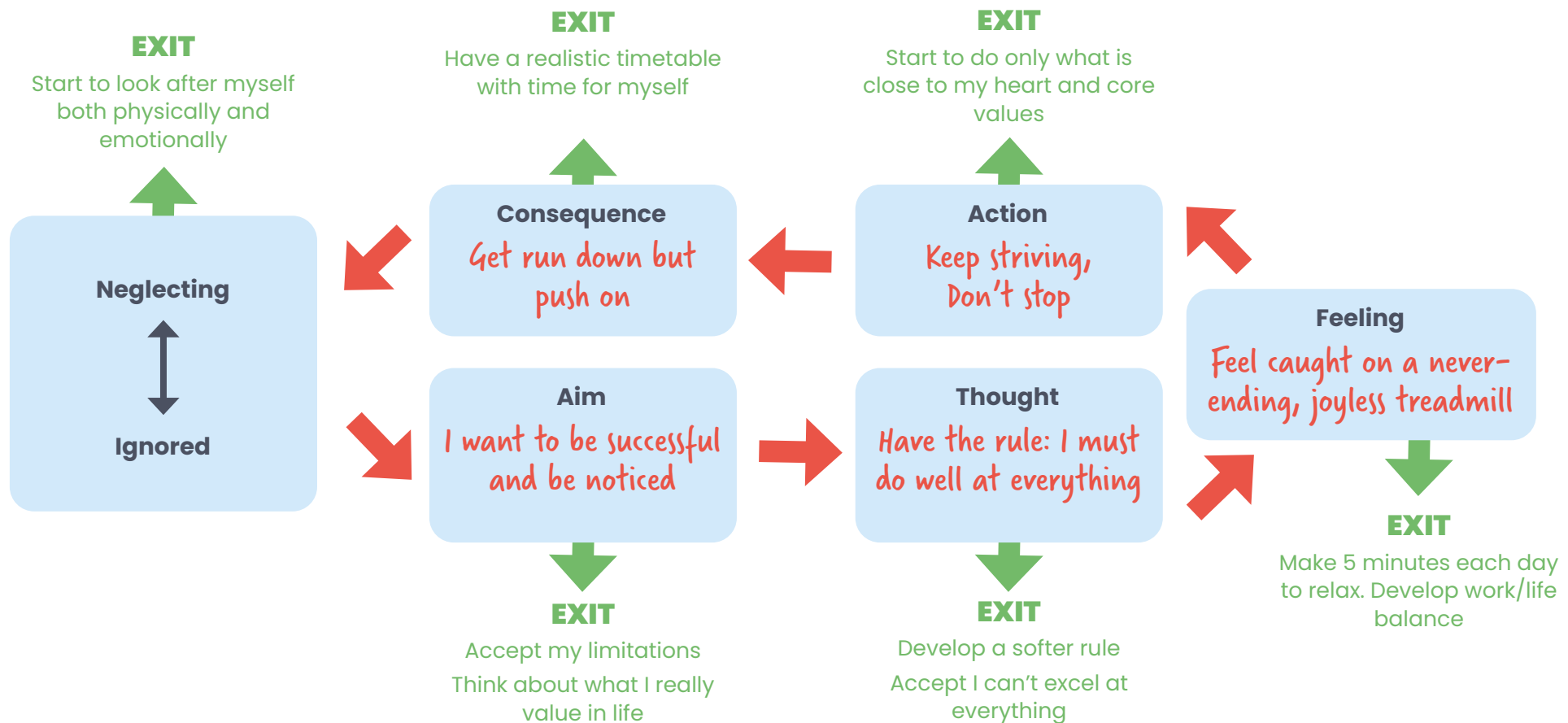
Changing old and unhelpful patterns: Creating stable stepping stones for change

Krisna's anxiety cycle and how he changed:

Have a look at Krisna's problem statement below and see how it can be illustrated in a diagram and see how the **exits** can be applied at each stage.

Krisna's problem: **Feeling exhausted and anxious**

Krisna's problem statement: **Because I came from a large family of eight siblings and my father had to work away a lot I learned that I had to strive hard to get noticed. As an adult I feel I must achieve great things in order to be valued. I work so hard that often I neglect myself, but I feel like I can't stop for fear of failure and I certainly don't have time to reward myself for any achievements. I feel caught on a never-ending, joyless treadmill.**

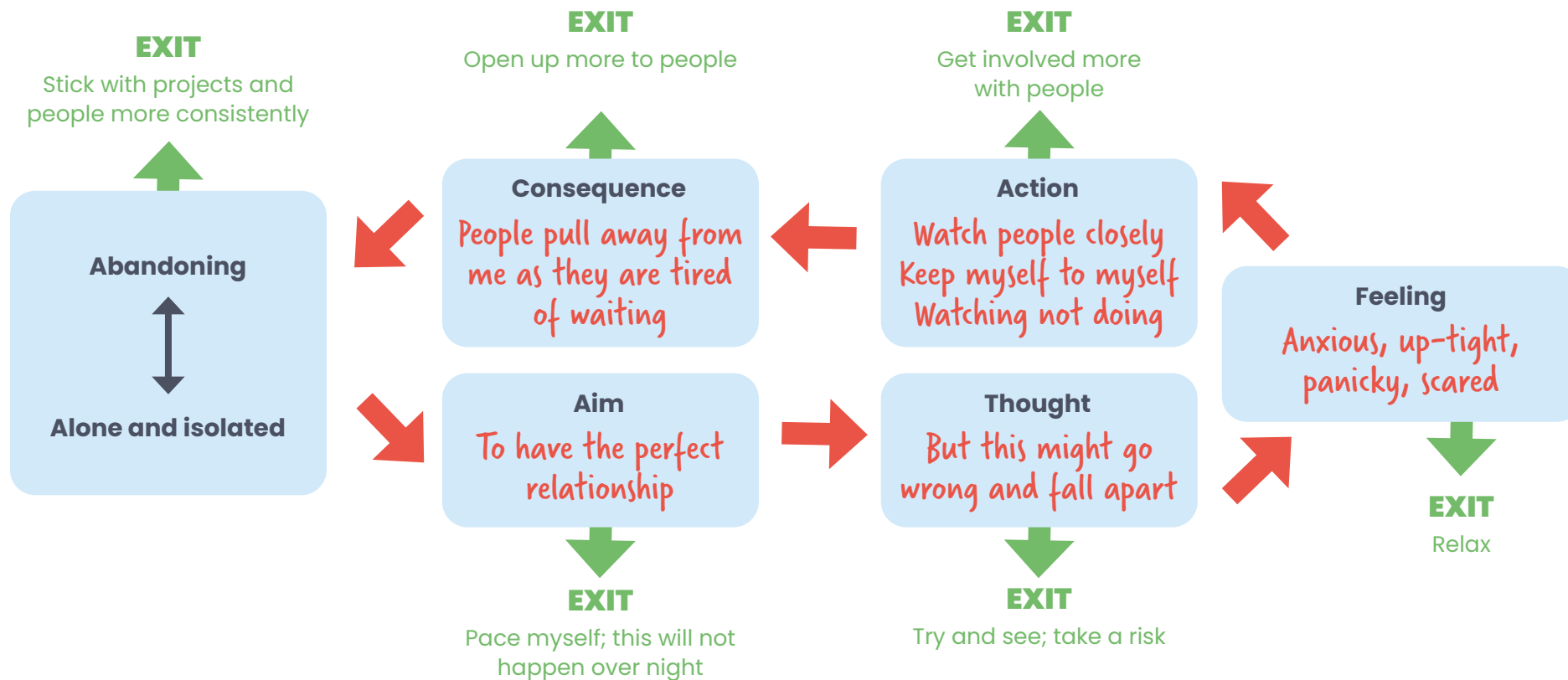


Patrick's anxiety cycle and how he changed:

Have a look at Patrick's problem statement below and see how it can be illustrated in a diagram and see how the **exits** can be applied at each stage.

Patrick's problem: *Feeling anxious, alone and isolated*

Patrick's problem statement: *Because my Mum and Dad divorced when I was young and I was particularly close to my Dad, it was hard when I did not see him as much as I needed and wanted. I felt abandoned by him and anxious as a result. As an adult, I want to, but find it really hard to get close to people and it creates anxiety in me. They feel I am not interested and pull away and I feel abandoned again.*



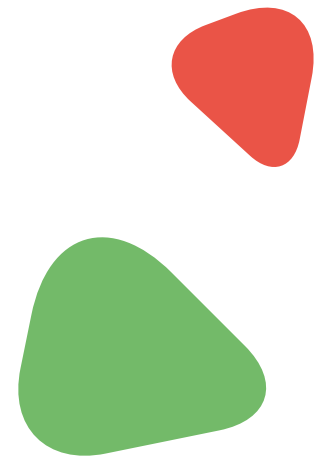


Starting to generate an exit from the anxiety in your life

Take out your roadmap from earlier. Have a think about where to start in terms of making a positive change. Work closely with your LIT to find different 'exits' from the roles and patterns. These will help you break free from your old anxious and unhelpful roles and patterns. Write them onto the roadmap and then make a clear 'if-then' plan with your LIT to help you to make the change.

Exit strategies that people find useful:

- Practising seeing and recognising the pattern before it starts
- Practising doing the opposite – for example practising facing your fears in small manageable steps rather than avoiding them
- Noticing when you misinterpret what others might be thinking or doing because of the influence of your relationship roles
- Practising new ways of thinking about yourself and others
- Sharing feelings with others, rather than bottling them up – open up!
- Practising doing things you are scared of, to see if they are as bad as you predict
- Accepting your feelings but make changes where you can, when you can see that the feeling gets in the way of living your life to the full
- Be kind to yourself and assertive with others
- Rewarding yourself when you have made a step forward
- Accepting that you will stumble occasionally
- Take some time to relax each day – practising relaxing!
- Not letting the anxiety bully you all of the time
- Think about what's really important to you in your life and concentrate your efforts there
- Let other people in, let them support you – being more trusting
- Spend time with people you love; be loving towards them and accept their support
- Develop a model of how you look after you – and stick to it





My at home tasks

Exit practice really helps

Between sessions you are going to practice whatever **exit** strategies you have chosen today. The important thing to remember is that practice is the next step. Learning new ways of relating to yourself and relating to others takes practice. You might not make the change in one step; it may need to be broken down into smaller steps. This is something your LIT will explain.

Please write down the exits you are going to practise over the next week(s) in the diary below:

Identified exit	When?	Where?	Who with?	How long?
Being more assertive	Each day Mon - Fri	At Work	With my boss and team	I need to stick with it until people get the message





My at home tasks

Over the coming week(s) also fill out the diary below. "What did I notice?" Can be a relationship role you saw yourself slipping into, or part of the roadmap (e.g. aim, thought, feeling, action). Then make a note of the exit you tried and how it went. How did it go and what did you learn? This will help you keep track of your progress. You can discuss any successes or barriers with your lit next session.

	What did I notice?	Which exit did I try?	What did I learn?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			





Session five

Developing a new, healthy and more flexible you

Have a look at the exits that you identified in the last session and how you have got on in terms of using them at home. Review this with your LIT - there will be lots to learn and reflect on. This week you and your LIT will again focus on discussing and planning for change. Next session is also your last session, so it might be important to start to think about how this makes you feel and note this with your LIT. Is the ending triggering a relationship role cycle for you - how do you feel about the ending? Discuss this with your LIT.

Healthy self

So far in this therapy you have been focussing on changing your life for the better. You are developing a better sense of awareness about yourself, the way you treat yourself, your relationships, the people in them and what you bring to them. As you develop this self-awareness, you may have noticed that you have become less rigid and that you have more healthy control over your life. At this point it is helpful to start to focus on what a more "healthy self" might look like. Every one of us can develop a more "healthy self." This is being able to live life to the full, give and receive kindness (to ourselves and others), whilst accepting the things outside of our control that we can't change. So, today you are going to start to think about your developing further your strengths, positivity and attributes.

Changing old and unhelpful patterns: Creating stable stepping stones for change

Exercise: My strengths and resiliences

List down 3 key strengths (what you can do) and 3 key aspects of resilience (things you do that help when you are feeling stressed or anxious).

Strengths (e.g. I stick to my values)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Resiliences (e.g. problem solving and facing my problems)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____


When we try to help ourselves we are experimenting with or re-connecting with a **healthy self**. To change we need support (a helping hand or kind word from yourself or from a friend), nurture (patience with yourself or from another) and commitment to change (staying with what you really value).

This can be summarised in the **exit** of developing a positive relationship role. For example: **Encouraging – Supported**. Think about your strengths and resiliences, the positive aspects of your relationships or the areas of your life that work well. Write down a positive relationship role that exists (or is to aim for) in Box 1 on the next page. Remember, this can be a relationship you have with yourself, friends, family, partner or work colleagues. In Box 2, write down a description of what your LIT has done for (and with) you and discuss and name how you might start doing this for yourself in Box 3.

Changing old and unhelpful patterns: Creating stable stepping stones for change




Box 1



Box 2


LIT



You

Box 3

You



You

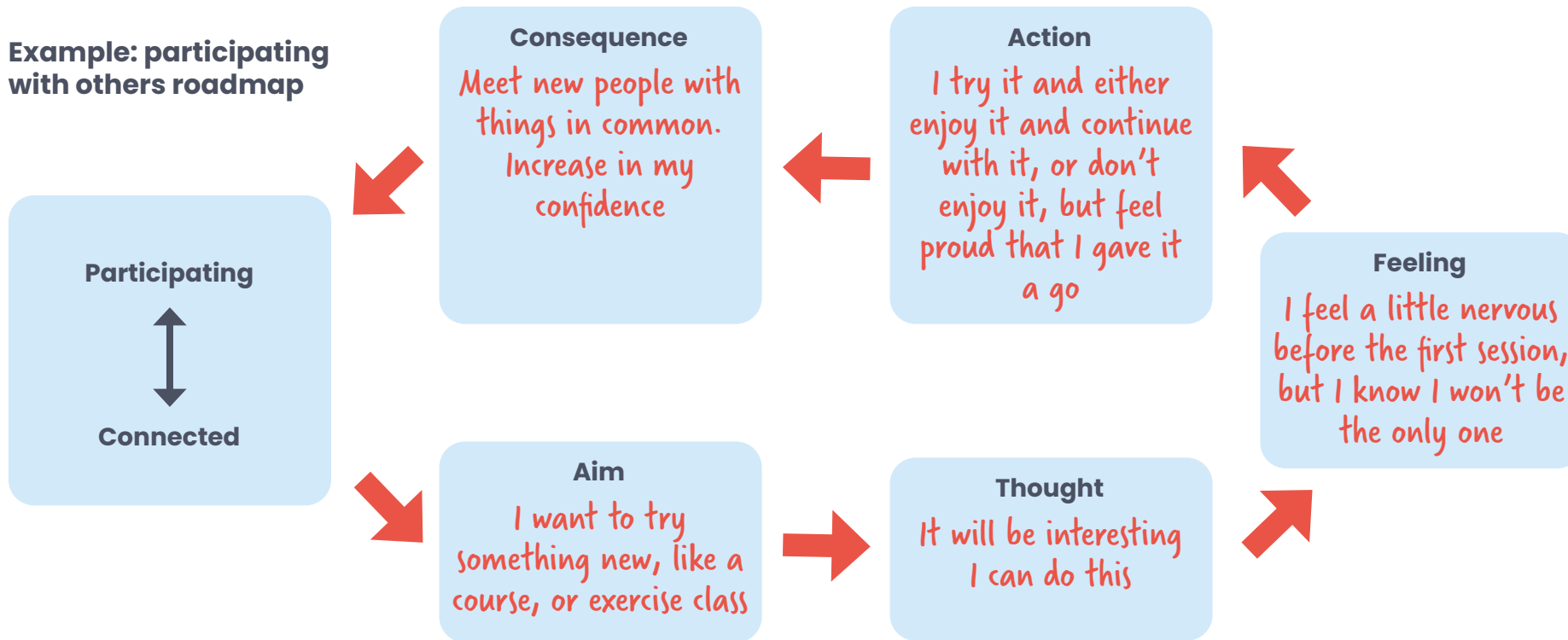


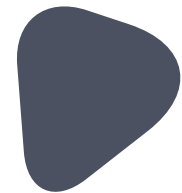
New positive roles and patterns

It can also be helpful to think of how the new positive relationship roles create associated positive patterns. For example, if we join in and participate in something (whether that be a class or group or even just engaging with the local community by visiting the shops and building relationships with our friends and neighbours) this will lead to a sense of 'belonging' and feeling of 'connectedness'. A sense of belonging can make us feel accepted and confident, which may then lead us to try new things and participate more.



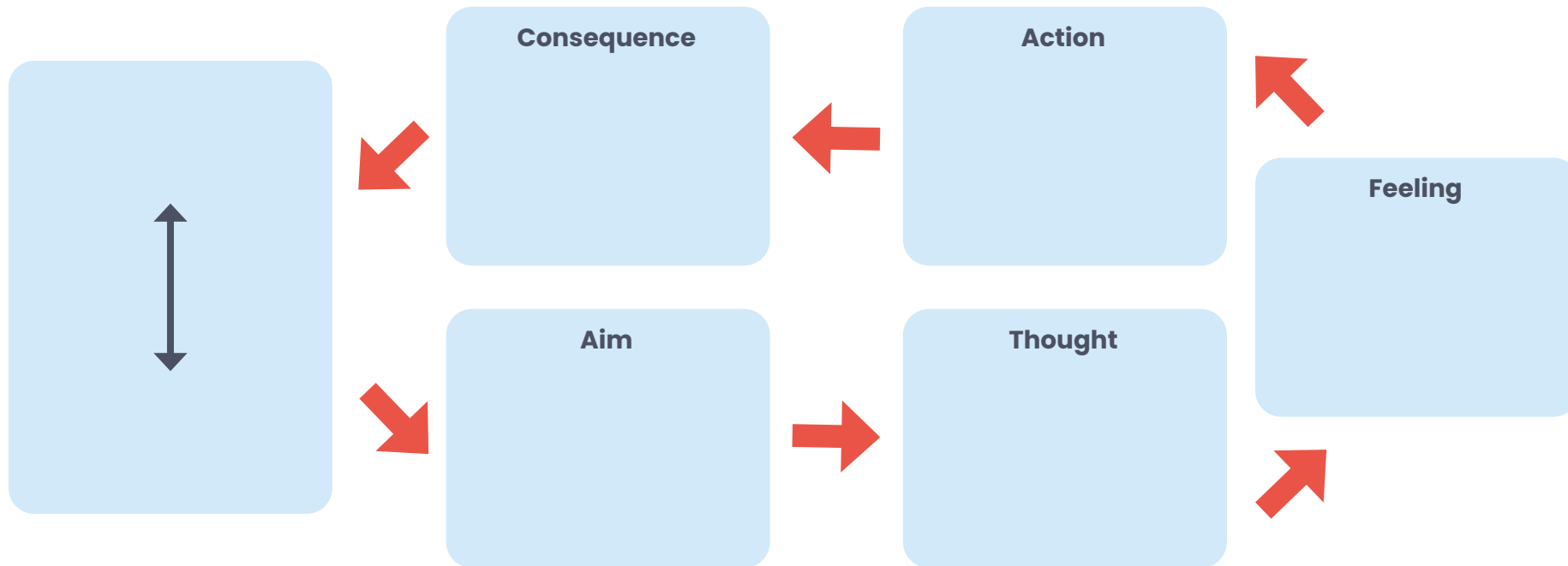
Example: participating with others roadmap





Positive relationships

Now spend some time drawing out a positive relationship role to practise over the coming week(s). This can be based on the strengths or resiliences you already have, or could be something completely new to try. This new role can be how you treat yourself, a change in how you relate to others or being different with other people, so that they treat you differently. The new relationship role will create a new pattern for you; write this below.





My at home tasks

Fill out the diary below. This exercise tries to support you in working on, building and developing a better relationship with yourself or with other people.

	What aspect of healthy self was I working on?	Describe how the new pattern looked	What did I learn from this?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

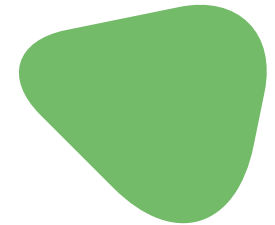
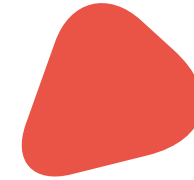




Session six

Ending and preparing for the future

Have a look at the healthy aspects of self that you identified last session and how you have got on in terms of engaging with healthy roles and patterns between the sessions. Review this with your LIT - there will be lots to learn and reflect on. You have now come to your final session. Before you and your LIT begin to look to the future spend a bit of time looking back over the last five sessions. You have worked hard on developing your roadmap and recognising the patterns holding you back from living your life to the full. You have started to practise relating to self and others differently to make life better for you and those close to you. These are skills that you can carry on using after this help has ended. This work with your LIT can function like a stable stepping stone to getting the most out of your life and relationships from now on. The ending of this guided self-help is the start of your new life.



Exercise 1: Acknowledging the ending emotionally

The first step of finishing is to share with your LIT how this ending is making you feel and you can write this below. In doing this try to think about whether how you feel is an expression of some of the roles that you have discussed during completing this workbook:





Exercise 2: Defining the change in me

Think about which **exits** and **positive roles** have really helped you over the last 6 sessions and write them down in a list below.

1. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
2. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

Exercise 3: Risk of sabotaging the change

Think about how you might, and write them down in a list below.

1. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
2. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

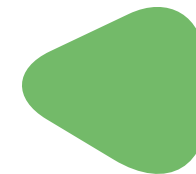
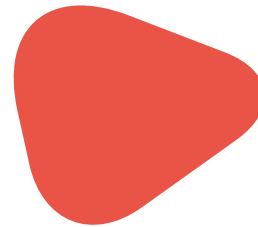




Exercise 4: Holding onto change

Now think about how you can 'look after' any changes you have made. Write these strategies down below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____





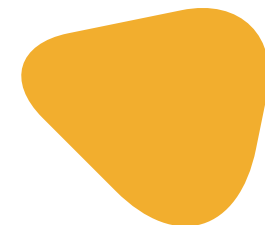
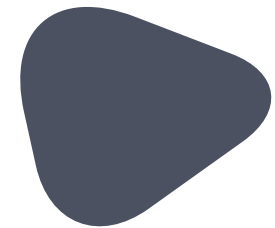
If you want to say anything to your LIT about the help and the relationship you have formed together, now would be a good time!

Final thought

It is important to remember that all the things you have learnt over the past few sessions still need practice in order to become a new and well established helpful patterns or habits. The old patterns may have been around for a long time, so they will not just disappear overnight and they will almost certainly pop up now and again at points in the future. Being anxious is not a sign that you are back at stage one again!

Please remember if you trip up, the most important thing is to get up again, be kind to yourself and definitely not beat yourself up over it.

The most important relationship you have is with yourself – so make it really work for you.

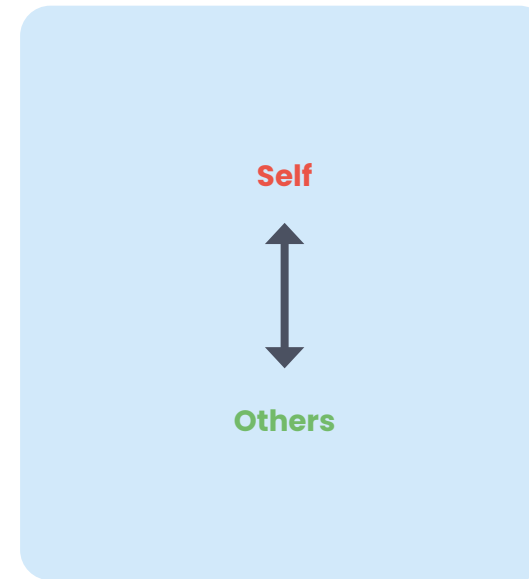
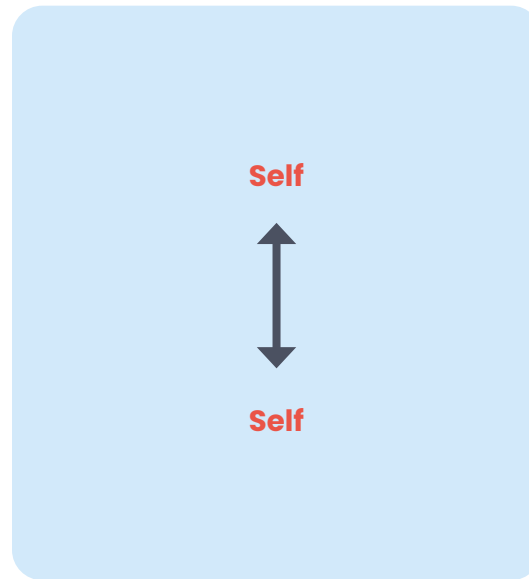




Appendix

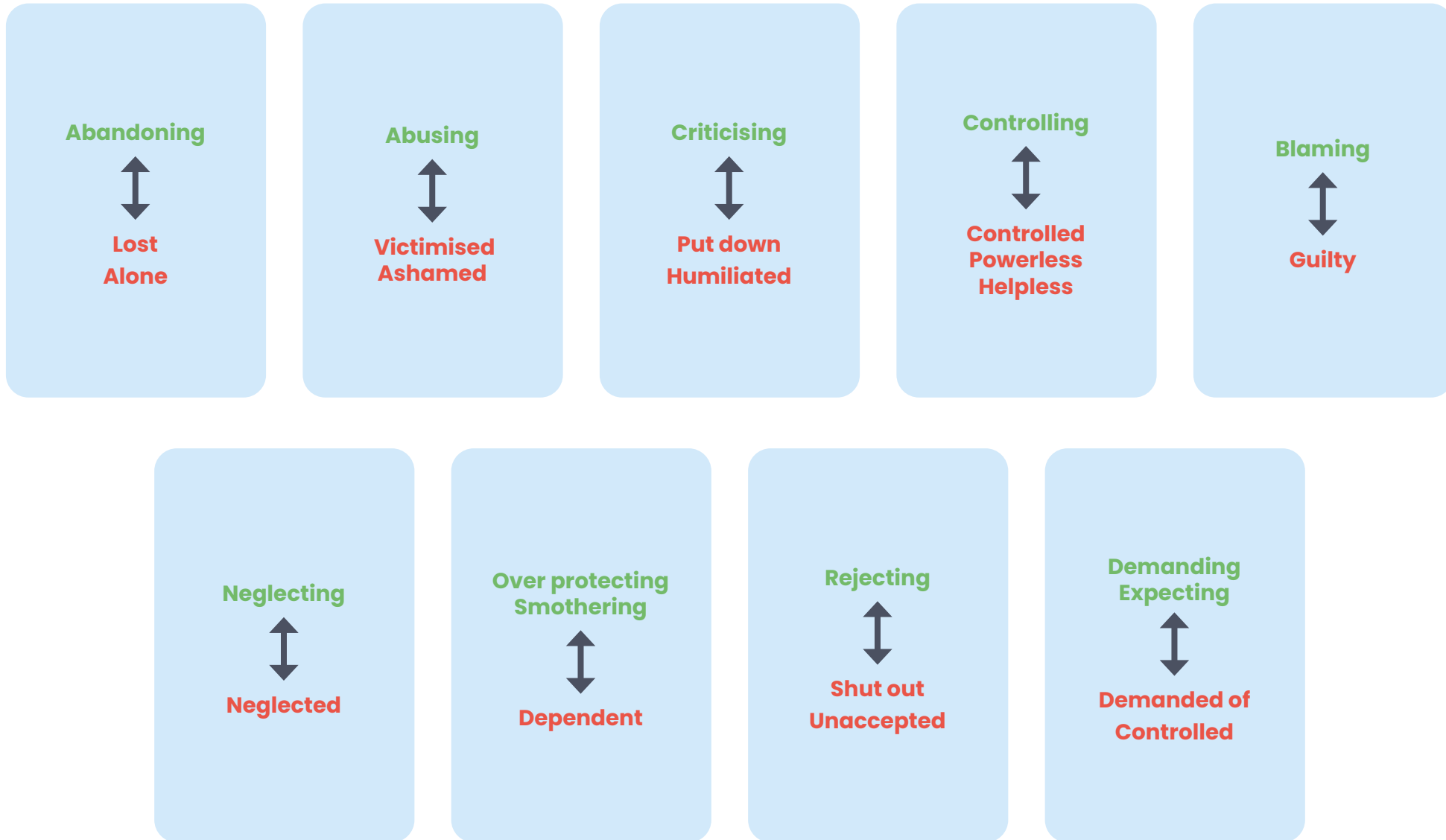
Relationship roles

How we experience others early and across our life sets up a 'template' for how we navigate relationships in our lives. We 'internalise' both ends of the role, so that we learn how both enact the top 'active' part of the role and also the bottom 'feeling/reaction' part of the role. The top part of the role is often summarised as a verb, because it was an action from another person (e.g. humiliating, abandoning, neglecting etc etc). We then enact the top part towards ourselves, and towards others – and also act in ways that means that others are more likely to act in that way to us in the present day.



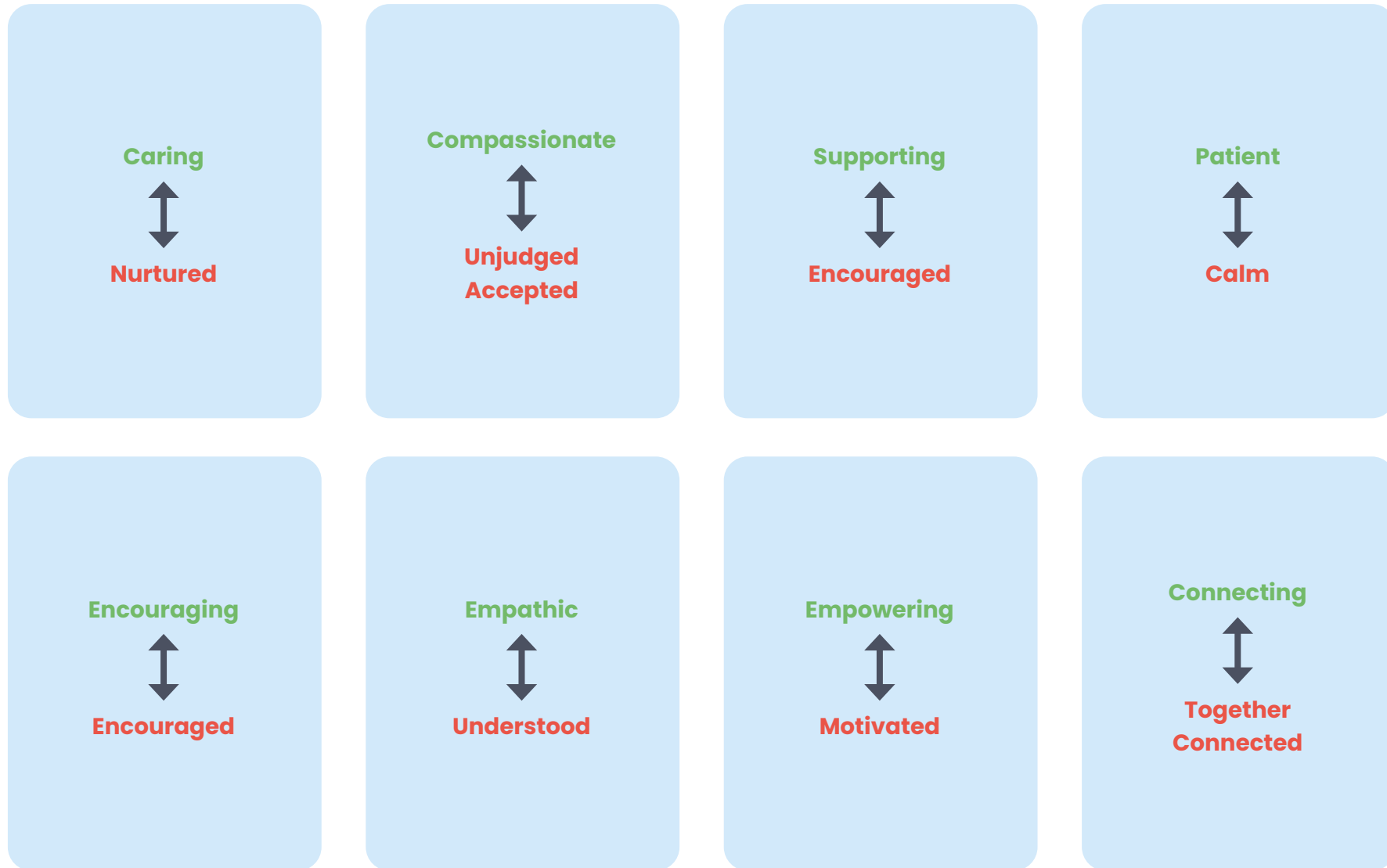


Negative relationship role examples





Positive relationship role examples







**This workbook was produced by
Dr Stephen Kellett and Dr Joanne Meadows**

Designed by Ink & Water

