

iapt

Improving Access to Psychological Therapies



The University Of Sheffield.

Stable stepping stones to recovering from depression

A 6-Session Guided Self-Help Relational Handbook





My therapy appointments

You can use this page to make a note of your appointment dates and times. At the end of each session, you will agree with your psychological wellbeing practitioner (PWP) on the things to do between the sessions in order to get the most of this help. So, you could make a note of these between-session tasks here also, if you want, so you don't forget them!

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: _____

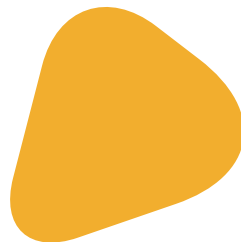
Summary of what I need to do to get the most out of this session:

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 Handbook

Well done!

Firstly, you have taken a very important step in terms of seeking help for the low mood that you are currently experiencing. Very well done for that; seeking help is a good thing to do and you have recognised that something needs to currently change in you, in your relationships and in your life. We want you to find this intervention helpful. The Handbook has been set out in a session-by-session format so that you and your PWP can work closely and effectively together in a manageable step-by-step way. Each session has been planned out so that you do not miss anything that is important. **Remember: small stepping stones.**

It is really horrible to feel depressed, as it is such an emotion-soaked and overwhelming experience. People tend to differ widely in terms of how they experience depression – but you might be feeling, for example, very self-critical, low in spirits, lack motivation, lack energy and don't feel connected to the people and activities that used to keep you in good spirits.

This handbook will help you to work out why you are prone to feeling down and then provide you with some help in terms of getting out of depressive patterns. The final aspect of the Handbook is hanging onto change in the future.





The approach taken in this Handbook

Each of our lives is unique and our history contributes to how we see the world and also how we form and then maintain our relationships. Having healthy relationships is a very important part of good mental health. This includes the relationship you have with yourself. So, the relationship we have with **ourselves and with others** is a really important part of our sense of well-being. The experiences that we have had in our lives are our own unique personal history. They influence and shape how we treat ourselves, how we relate to others and also how people relate to us.

There is nothing unusual about this – everyone and everybody is shaped by their history and so they have a personal template for how they relate to themselves and to others.

Experiences over our lives therefore mould and shape the way we see, treat and talk to ourselves and predict our tendency to feel low in mood. Our prior experiences also influence the roles that we take up in life. For example, having to look after a poorly sister or brother as a child means that someone quickly takes on a 'carer' role as an adult, but then is also less certain about how to care for themselves or maybe they feel guilty for caring for themselves? So, the roles we play in our lives can create and maintain low mood and also how we are with other people (i.e., the ways in which they relate to us and vice versa). In the example above, the person puts themselves last and also others first. This means that they are neglecting towards themselves and can feel low and isolated as a result.

This Handbook will help you to recognise the roles and patterns in your current relationships that create and maintain depression, and how they are grounded in your past experiences. Really importantly, this Handbook will help you to start to change your roles and patterns, so that they work better for you, are more flexible and so you start to feel more in control of your life and your feelings. Taking small steps towards change will feel so much better than staying stuck. Small changes can also make big differences. Change one bit of the pattern and the whole pattern then changes.

People can often feel, if they have been depressed for a while, that the way they see and do things is the only way, because it has become so familiar to them. People who experience depression often have a sense of feeling trapped in a cycle of low mood. These quite often quite narrow ways of relating to ourselves and others can be stifling and can be how depression is created and maintained.





Getting ready to change

It is important to recognise that it can be difficult to change depressive patterns if you have been stuck in them for some time, so you will need to both (a) push yourself and be really encouraging of the initial efforts you are making and (b) be patient and compassionate with your attempts to change. Being in these patterns can feel safe because they are familiar. It takes bravery to step into something different. Bravery that you have definitely already shown by asking for help.

You will be working with a psychological wellbeing practitioner (PWP) with this Handbook. Your PWP will work with you and support you in the decisions that you make and the changes that you put into action in your life. Forming a good teamwork-type relationship with your PWP will help you to change and make the process far easier for you two.

There are some exercises in this Handbook to help you reflect with your PWP on your therapeutic relationship. This is to make sure that the relationship is working well and nothing is getting in the way between you.

To summarise, you have made a very useful and important decision in deciding to seek help for the low mood that you are feeling right now. Pat yourself on the back for that. This decision shows that you can see that you need to make positive changes in your life and you are motivated to change - being ready, willing and able to change can make this Handbook really work for you.

Will this Handbook actually help me?

Research has shown that Handbooks such as this one can help you to feel less depressed if you work through all the exercises that are contained in it and also work closely with your PWP in discussing the exercises, the feelings that come up and the learning that occurs. It is important to try to do all the exercises in the Handbook and also the work that is planned between the sessions. The more you engage in the Handbook and with your PWP, the more this Handbook will be helpful for you. You don't have to excessively strive for change, but engaging with the Handbook will be helpful and taking small steps forward in your life.



Being balanced

Looking at the patterns in the way you relate to yourself and how others relate to you will no doubt show up some problems. When people are depressed, they can tend to ignore or neglect the positive things in their life. It is therefore also important to also recognise that you are so much more than the depression you feel right now. There are many good things about you as a person, such as your strengths, resilience and personal values. You may have got disconnected from these and your PWP will help you to reconnect to them. You 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 depressed in the present day. Be kind and gentle with yourself when you are doing those exercises and your PWP will also support you to do this. Understanding where your difficulties with depression come from (i.e., the roots of your depression) is the first step in learning to **live life to the full once again**, or in taking helpful, useful and manageable steps in that direction.

What to expect

Over the next 6 sessions you will stand back from yourself and your difficulties with low mood and think about them with your PWP by completing some exercises together in the sessions and completing some between-session tasks. This will show you that certain patterns of depressive thinking, acting and doing can maintain your low mood. This will also 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) also underpin the depression. When you start to make changes, in order to live differently, you will start to feel better – but this may take time, so you need to be patient with yourself. Small tweaks are so helpful in changing patterns, so don't feel like you need to make wholesale changes.



This Handbook is based on three stages

- **Stage One (sessions 1-2)** being able to better understand the patterns to your low mood, where these patterns come from and what keeps the patterns going,
- **Stage Two (sessions 3-4)** being able to step back from the patterns and recognise when you are in them so that you are more self-aware. Being more self-aware really helps people manage their mood better.
- **Stage Three (sessions 5-6)** putting in place manageable change that is personal to you and your goals.

Your PWP is well trained in helping people with low mood and they will be a great resource and source of emotional support to you. They will work **with you** and **alongside you**, but they cannot do the work for you. Your PWP will design with you some between-session tasks to help you understand yourself better or take a step forward in your life. Being honest and open with your PWP is a useful starting point – some of the exercises will help you to think about the therapeutic relationship you have with your PWP and whether this mirrors the relationships you have with others from your past and current life. So, talk to your PWP about any concerns you have in terms of the content of the Handbook, or the work that you are doing together.

You may feel better before the completion of the 6 sessions. The measures that you complete at each session will be a good tracker of your progress. You do not have to complete all the sessions, but what is important is that you do not dropout of the help that is being offered. If you are feeling better and want to stop, then discuss that with your PWP. Also, talk to your PWP if you are starting to feel negative about the help that is at hand, and they will problem-solve this with you.





Identifying where you want to get to

Whenever anyone is starting a journey, it is so useful to identify where you want to get to before you set off! Your PWP will help you towards achieving your goals and working through this Handbook 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 very deep-rooted and entrenched patterns is very difficult and might be 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 positive change: **push it where it moves** is a good way to think about what to target.

You and your PWP 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 handbook. 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**.





Example goal

"By the end of this help, I want to be seeing my sister for a coffee once a week and be open with her about how I am feeling."

Now write your goals here:

1.

2.

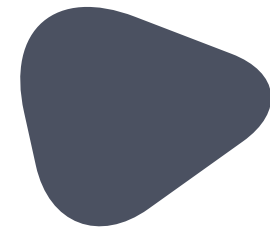
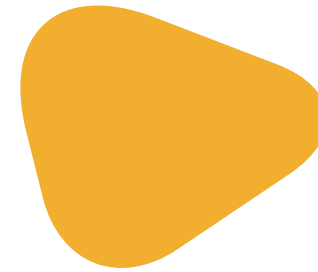
3.





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

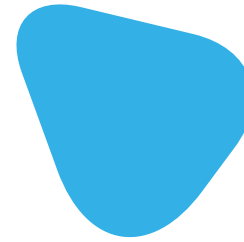
1. Know and see the patterns to your low mood more clearly.
2. Understand where these roles and patterns come from – the origins of your depression.
3. Understanding what keeps the roles and patterns going – how the depression is maintained day-to-day.
4. Develop a visual roadmap of your personal roles and patterns.
5. Putting in place small and simple steps to enable your recovery. The steps might be new things or things that you used to do before you were low in mood.





Session one

Identifying the current patterns of your low mood



The aim of this session is to understand the here and now patterns of your depression.

There are certain patterns to the way people think, feel and act which means that they frequently feel low in mood and do not achieve what they really want in life, or enjoy their life as much as they could. 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** depressive patterns of thinking, feeling and doing. Being more aware of your patterns will help you to change them, rather than you 'acting blindly' all the time (i.e., the pattern held in procedural memory see the definition below in the blue box). Being more aware of the patterns means you are becoming more self-aware and that is a good thing.

There are three types of patterns that keep depression going: **depression traps, depression dilemmas and depression snags.**

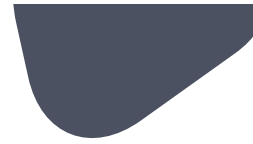
Your PWP will ask you now to talk through a recent time in which you were low in mood and then help you to analyse this in terms of it being a snag, trap or a dilemma. You just need to arrive at just one of these by the end of the session and do not necessarily need to do all three.

This Handbook will now explain what depression snags, traps and dilemmas are and there are some exercises to complete with your PWP to help you see these depression patterns might be occurring currently in your life.

Procedure memory definition:

This is when we have repeated a pattern so often we don't have to try to 'do' the pattern. It is held in memory and we do it without thinking, or conscious awareness or effort. It's all automatic.





Traps; what is a depression trap?

Traps are ways we think and act that makes depression feelings worse – Traps act like a self-perpetuating vicious circle that keep people trapped in the misery of feeling really low in mood.

There are five stages in a depression trap: based on a starting point.

1. Starting point: How we see ourselves

This is how we see ourselves, our beliefs about ourselves, our self-image or our self-esteem.

For example, someone might be depressed because they see themselves as incompetent or unlikable.

2. The aim or goal this generates

This is what we assume we should do or not do. When people are depressed, then their aim might be understandably self-protective in the short-term, but self-limiting or unachievable in the long term.

For example, for the person who sees themselves as unlikable, this might generate an aim of never making a mistake. For the person that sees themselves as incompetent, the aim might be never trying something new or challenging, so that the chance of failure is reduced.

3. The aim then influences how we then think, feel and act

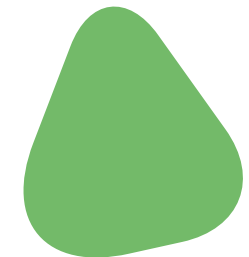
This is the negative thoughts, feelings and actions that then follow on from the aim. **For example, the person who has the aim of never trying something new for fear of failing, will think that they will make a mistake if they do it themselves. So, they avoid giving the task a go, taking on the action and so feel low in mood.**

4. The consequences of the action we take

When we do something, it generates a consequence for us or for the people around us. The consequence might be unintended. **For example, the person who gets other people to make their own decisions, never learns to trust their own opinions and gut feelings.**

5. How this then reinforces how we see ourselves

Consequences then confirm how we see ourselves, our self-image or our self-esteem. In this example the person continues to table themselves as incompetent. **The depression loop is then complete and the person is trapped.**

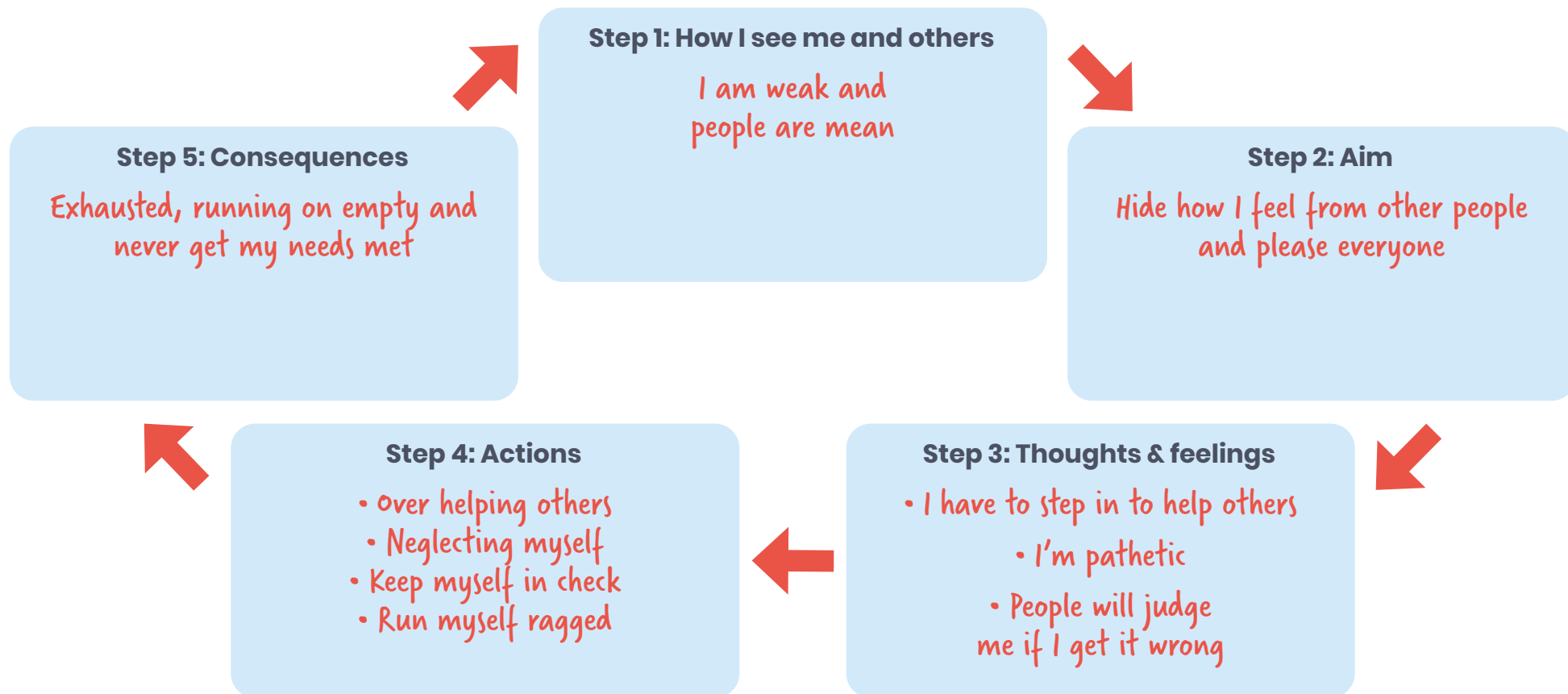


Caught in a depression trap; an example

We are going to give you an example of a trap. This is Kazim's trap as a diagram. Don't forget that there are a number of stages to a trap being created:

This is Kazim who has been feeling depressed for six months. They began seeing a PWP with the goal of spending one-hour each day creating their artwork in order to feel less depressed.

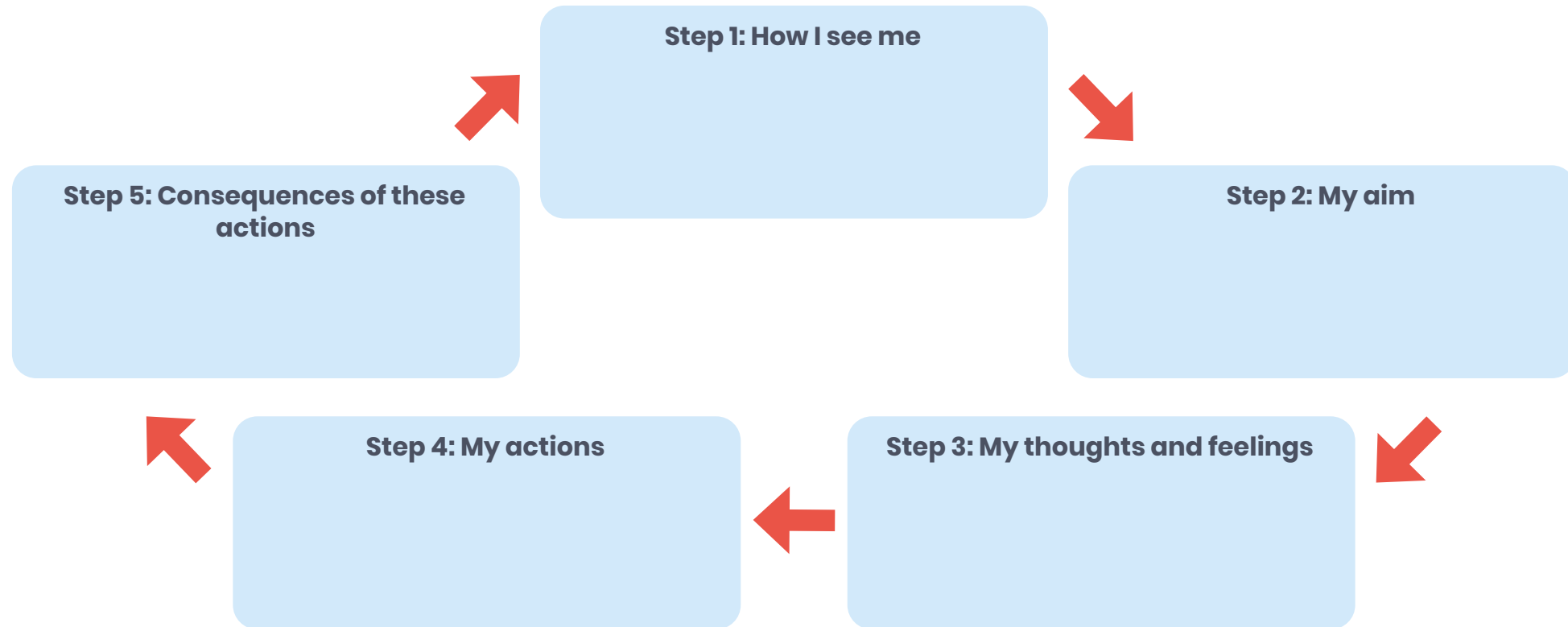
A visual example of being in a depression trap





In session task: naming my depression trap

From the initial discussion about your depression with your PWP, if you both decide that there is a depression trap in your life right now, then use the boxes below to sketch this out:



Depression Traps can also play out in relationships with PWP and in completing this Handbook. **Is there a 'Trap' you recognise about using this Handbook or working with your PWP?**

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





Depression Dilemmas: what is a depression dilemma?

Dilemmas are when we give ourselves only two ways of being or acting. This makes us believe we only have one or the other option, action or position in our lives. These choices are often the opposites of each other. For example, a boom or bust pattern might be the person who either runs around doing everything for everybody else (and gets exhausted) or comes to a complete halt (and feels guilty).

Depression can make it feel like there are only these stark choices, and this means that we can miss all the possibilities that exist in between.

Dilemmas can therefore be summarised **as I either am or do X or I am or do Y.**

We often don't realise that we see or think about life like this, but we can blindly act as if these are our only two possibilities. You might spend a long time on one end of the dilemma or you might ping-pong between the ends? Learning how to spot your depression dilemma is the first step to changing it and becoming more balanced in your life.

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 either please myself (and feel guilty)

Or

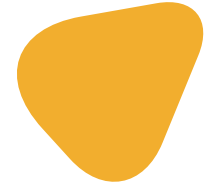
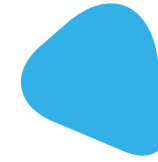
I look after others (and I feel resentful)

Either

I am a complete success at everything in life

Or

I am a complete flop



Naming my depression dilemma

From the conversation with your PWP, you may decide together that you are caught in a depression dilemma. Now try to name and write the depression dilemma that may have been leaving you feeling low in mood. Your PWP will try to help you to do this with you now the session.

Either

Or

Either

Or

There might be a dilemma you could add about using this Handbook or working with your PWP (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 here ...





Depression Snags: what is a depression snag?

Snags are the obstacles that we let get in the way of us changing in a positive way. When we sabotage the chance of positive change or how change might happen. Removing a snag in your life will lift your mood. Snags are what happen in our minds, when there is a desire or want to change and we say to ourselves or others 'I want to be less depressed, BUT

Sometimes, when we snag ourselves, it can feel like a relief as we are avoiding change and that can be more comfortable than changing. Sometimes, depression snags come from the important people in our lives not wanting us to change, or not being able to cope with us changing (e.g., when a partner doesn't like 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.

Here are some depression snags that people might have:

I want to feel less down today- but put this off until tomorrow.

I want to be nicer to myself to lift my mood - but I will not get off my own back.

I want to trust - but will not let others in.

I want to feel successful - but make my own achievements seem so small.

I want to be happy - but let other people spoil or limit this.

I have dreams - but never put these into everyday reality in a step-by-step manner.

I want to stop criticizing myself - but criticize myself for wanting this.

I want to feel happy - but will not give myself the permission.

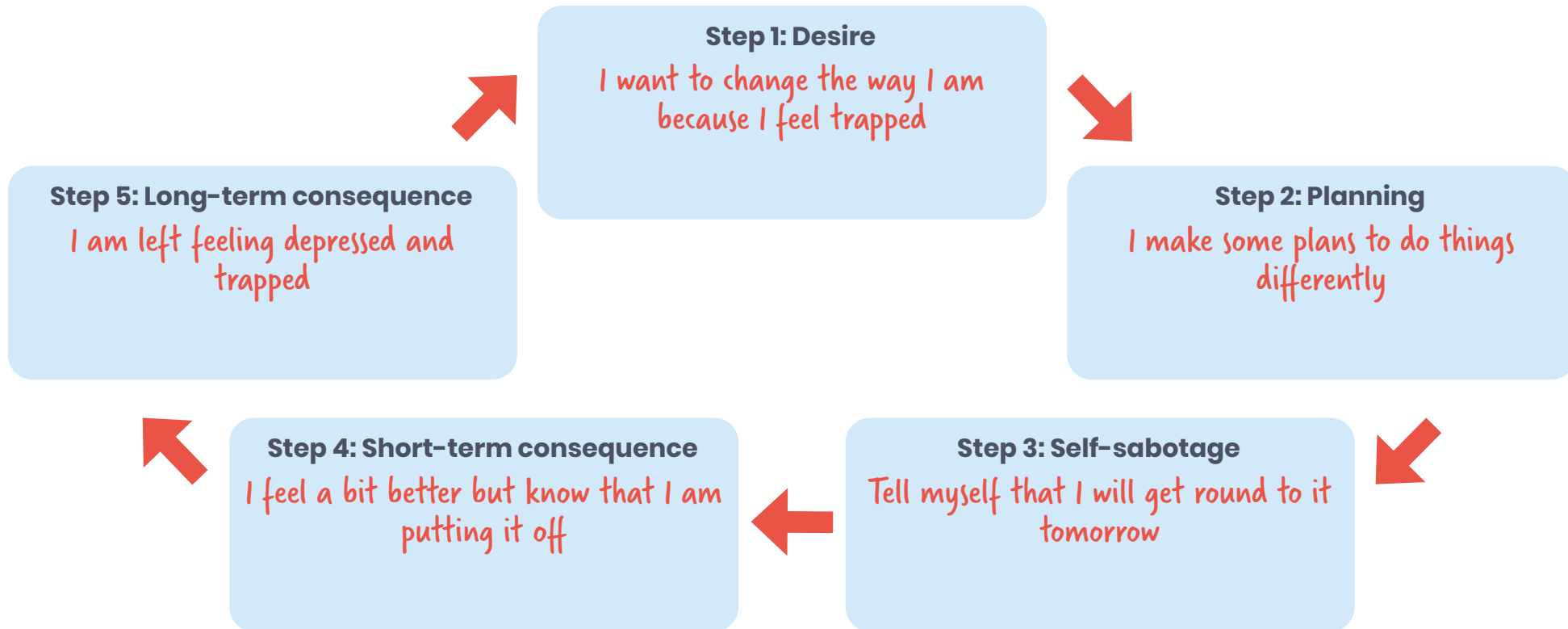
I want to feel confident - but will not accept a compliment.

Here is an example of a depression snag from Jerzy. He felt very depressed and uncertain about what change would mean for him. He wanted to feel better, and he would plan to do things with his life that would lift his mood. Then he would self-sabotage the possibility of that change by not then doing the actions that would make a difference, start drinking too much alcohol and telling himself he was a fool to even try. When this happened, he would give up on the changes planned, which proved to himself that he was unable to get out of the depression and so deserved to feel this way.

If it helps to see a snag as a flow diagram, then the diagram provides another example from a woman called Saumya who is also struggling with depression.



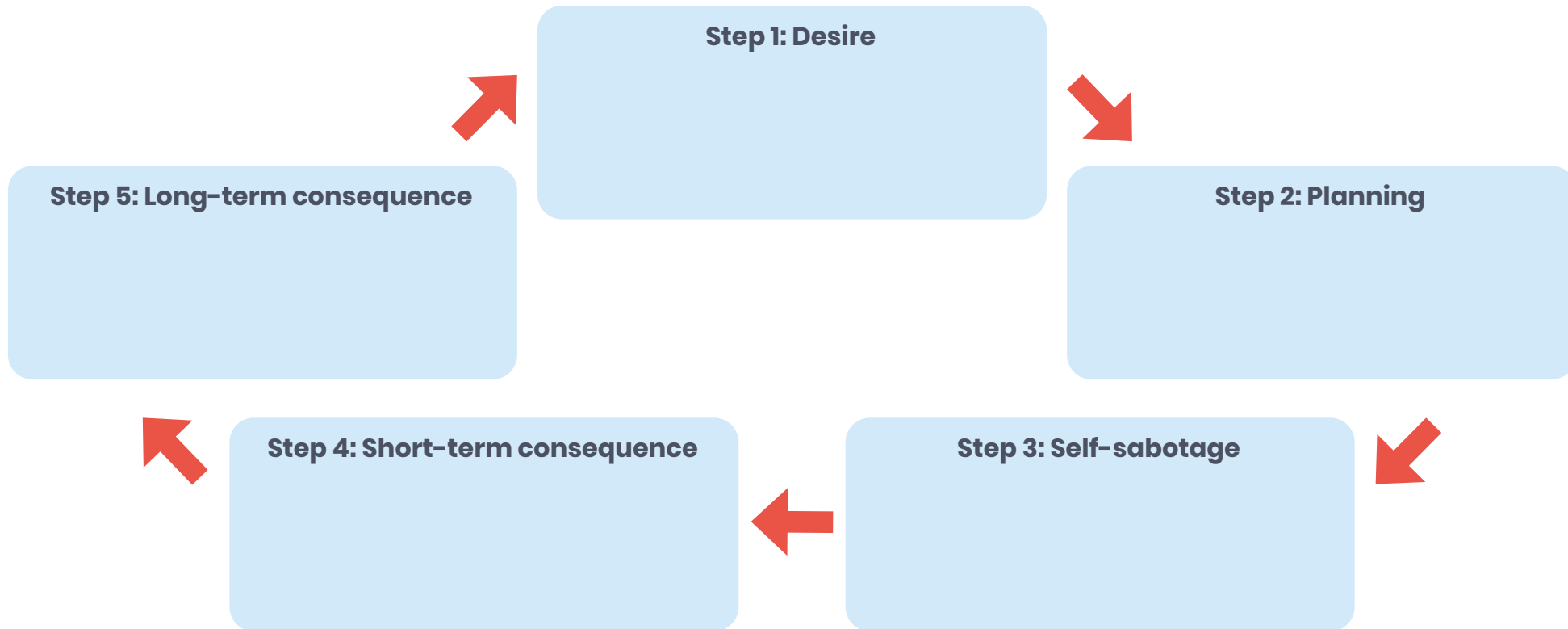
A flow diagram example of an depression snag for Saumya :





Naming my depression snag?

Again, with your PWP now draw out your own depression Snag.



There might be a snag you could write about using this Handbook or working with your PWP? If there is, feel free to write this also...





At home tasks

Well done on identifying a depression snag, trap or a dilemma. That is really good progress. Now, over the following week(s), please try to notice when your depression snag, trap and/or dilemma is active and you are caught up in it. This is the between-session work. This will help you be more self-aware. If noticing the snag, trap or dilemma makes you want to do something differently, then please feel free to experiment. But, noticing is great right now, if experimenting feels too much.

There are three ways of noticing; (1) you notice the snag, trap or dilemma after it has happened, (2) whilst it was happening or (3) just before it was about to happen. Over time you will start to notice the snag, trap or dilemma more easily and probably before it is about to happen.

Please don't be obsessive about noticing or be self-critical when you are noticing the patterns in your depression – just **notice** and **log them** without **passing judgement** on yourself.

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

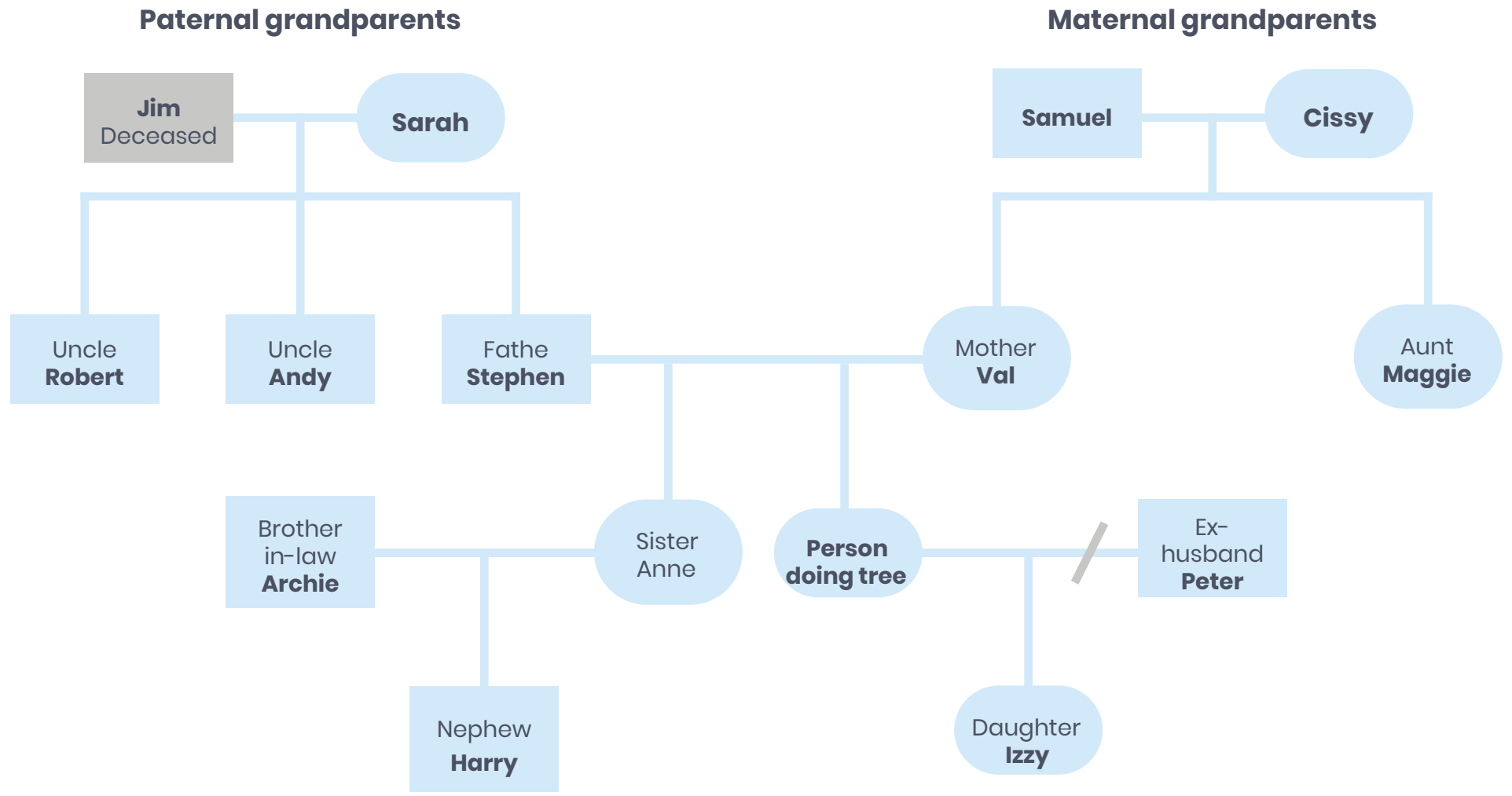
	How often did this happen? (keep a tally, or make a note of the date and time)	What am I learning about me to take to the next session with my PWP?
My depression snag summary:		
My depression trap summary:		
My depression dilemma summary:		

Also, at the next session, we're going to talk about your experiences of growing up, your personal history and close relationships. As homework, 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 depressed now.



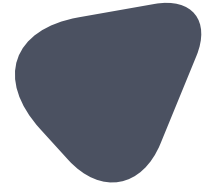


Family tree example





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



Session two

The roots of my depression

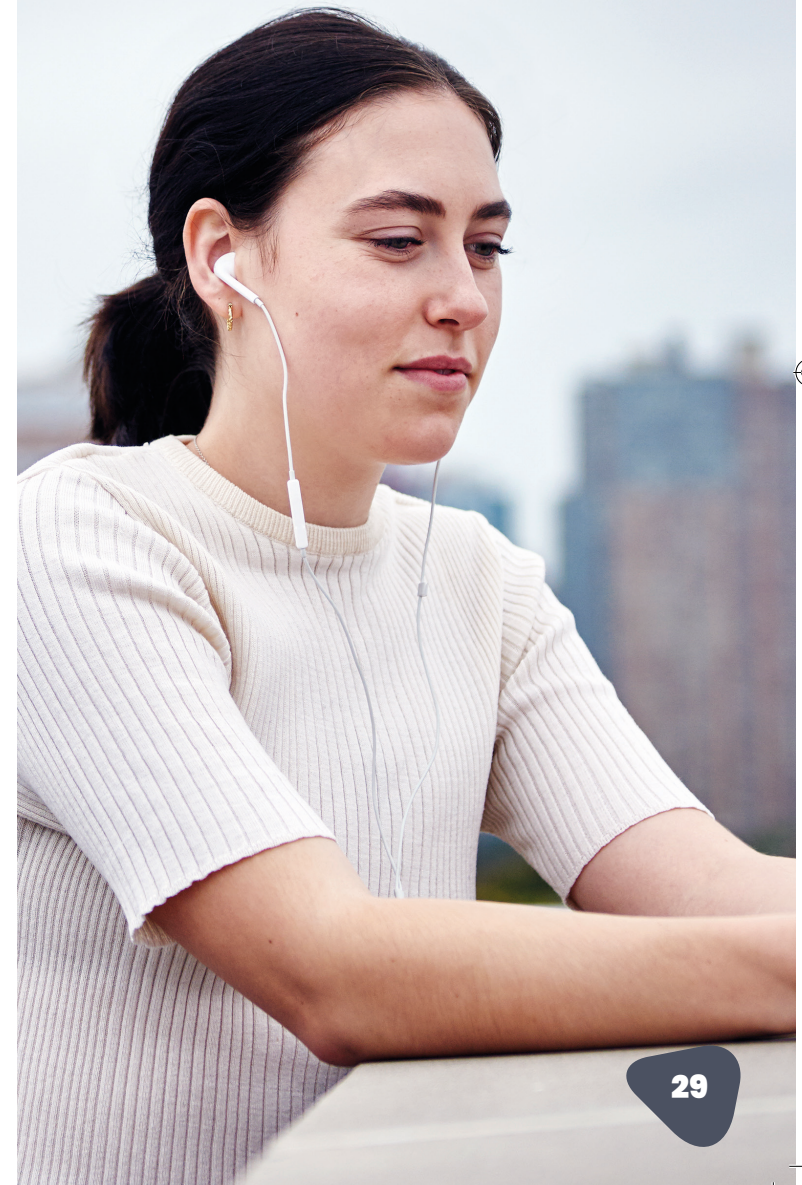
The aim of this session is about understanding the influence of your past on your present feelings of depression.

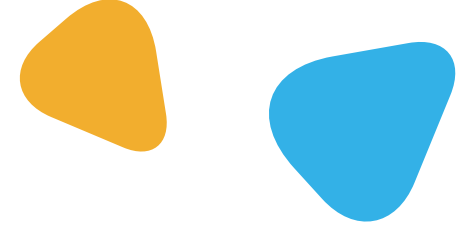
First, have a quick review of your diary concerning what you noticed about your depression snag, trap or dilemma. Also, have a look at the family tree and your timeline with your PWP.

Understanding the impact of how we grew up

What happens to us as a child and the way we are brought up and were treated affects how we feel about ourselves and others and our interactions with the world. Our pasts can make us more resilient to depression or more vulnerable to depression. 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 emotionally resilient adults who feel cared for and are of value, have confidence in ourselves and can accept the limits set by others or our life circumstance. Our relationships with other people will generally go relatively well, as we treat people well and they treat us well in turn.

If we had different life experiences, through for example people being criticising, rejecting, bullying, neglecting (or even abusing), things are not so likely to go well for us and this is what makes us vulnerable to becoming depressed. We are likely to feel that we are not valuable or worthwhile (because we are self-critical), predicting that others are going to hurt us or let us down (making us feel low in mood) and that any limits set by others are 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 and the influence of our adolescent years.





Thinking about your origins

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

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

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





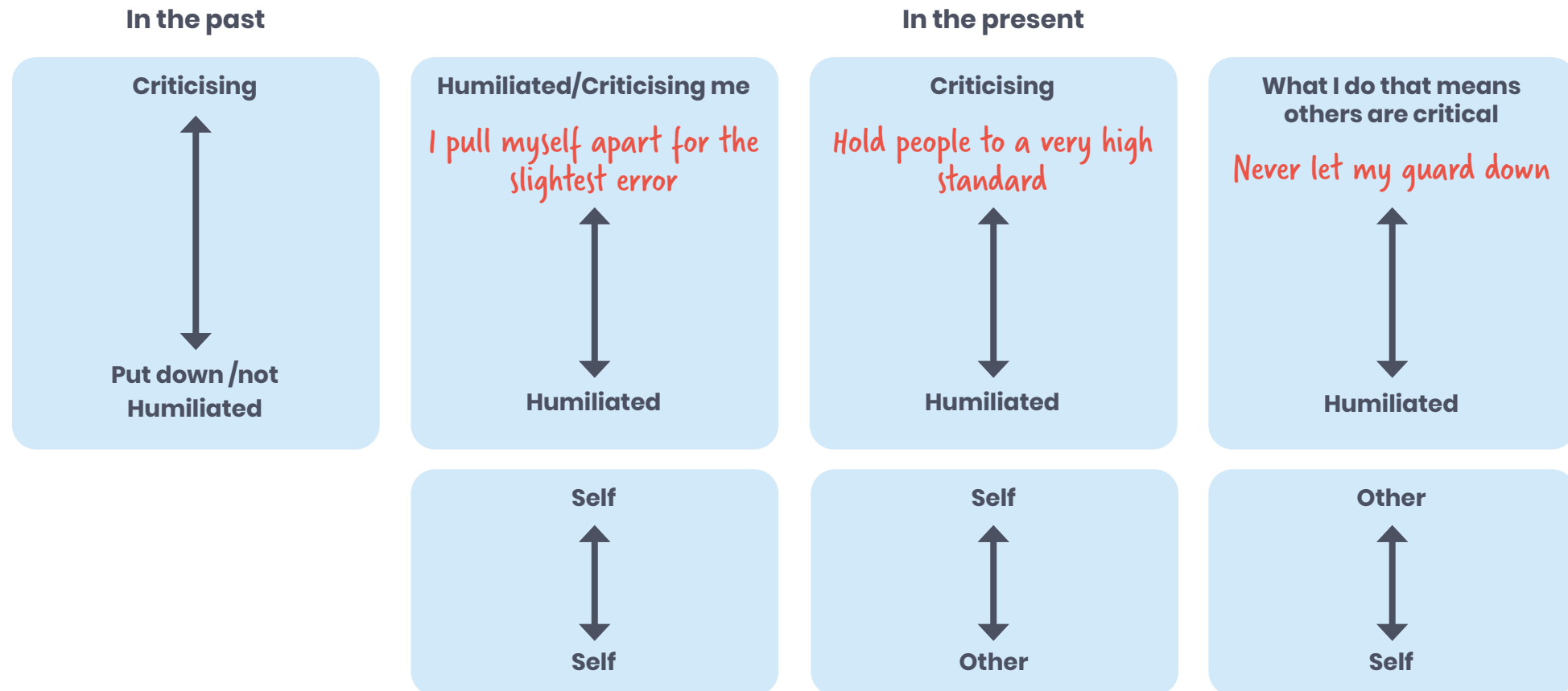
So, what did you learn from these experiences?

The way we learn to relate to people and ourselves when we are young can then 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. We have **internalised** the critic and now apply that to ourselves and others or behave in ways that elicit criticism from others.

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 and internalised **both ends** of the role. This is a crucial learning point of this Handbook.

Here is an example: You will see that from the past, therefore in the present this influences self-self relationships, self-other relationships and other self-relationships





The diagram below sets this out:

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 PWP below:

Another important step for you towards positive change, is now to start to recognise the relationship roles that keep the depression going as they are happening in the present day.

Summarise your key relationship role:

DOING/BEING:



FEELING:



At home tasks

This week try to stand back from how you have been feeling once a day and have a think about your relationship roles. You may notice the feeling first (i.e., the bottom of the role) and then try to connect that to how you have been with yourself or others (i.e., the top of the role).

Like last week, please don't get caught up in criticising yourself for what you are starting to notice. Just recognise it **without passing judgement** on yourself. You don't have to do this obsessively.

It might be helpful to use the chart below to help you with recognising the relationship role.

Days	What am I noticing about the relationship role? Write down what you are noticing and learning. How were you in the top of the relationship role for example? Or keep a tally of when you are in the top or feel in the bottom of the relationship role.
Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	



Session three

Linking my past to my present

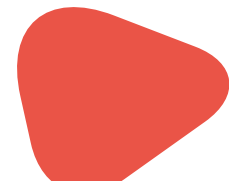
Bring your diary concerning your relationship roles to the session and your PWP will review this with you now. Quickly try to summarise together what it is that you have learnt about:

- **The relationship you have with yourself now? How do you see and treat yourself?**

Summarise this below:

- **The relationship you have with others now? How do you see and treat them and how do they see and treat you?**

Summarise this below:





In session one, you reflected on your current situation and your current depression patterns. In session two, you reflected on your past and the important relationships and experiences you've had.

In session three you are going to put them together with your PWP, linking your past experiences to your present depression feelings. This will focus on what you understandably did to survive in the past and how you can still get caught up doing this in the present, but recognising that it does not work so well for you now.

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 to support the family – Faisal often felt alone, ignored and unloved because as a child he didn't understand why his mother was not there. As an adult, Faisal feels depressed in his current relationships, as if the threat of being alone and unloved is never that far away. Faisal therefore 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 needs and neglects his physical wellbeing by binge eating and drinking too much alcohol.

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?	So, 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 Don't look after myself

This pattern might repeat itself in Faisal's work with a PWP. For example, the ending of the six sessions was difficult for Faisal and he felt like his PWP 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 PWP. This will help you talk through these feelings with your PWP and you will feel better for doing that.

It's also important to recognise that you may also have roles and patterns that are supportive of good mental health and are really working for you. They may not need the attention of this work and are not really the focus of this Handbook. These roles are nevertheless important! This Handbook focuses on the ones which are problematic in terms of depression.





Linking my past to my present

Let's start by looking over the work you completed in the last session. You and your PWP 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 PWP to fill out the table below. This might be an eye-opener for you, so you need to go easy with yourself and be kind. This is trying to make sense of your tendency to become depressed 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 in relationships with others now?	How do I relate to myself now?

Will this 'survival strategy' happen between you and your PWP during this treatment? How will it show itself?



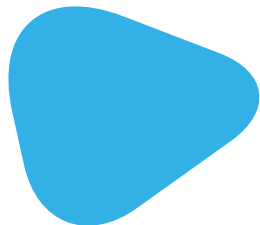


My 'problem statement'

Next session you and your PWP will start to look at making changes to your life. It is helpful to have a 'problem statement' to focus those changes on. So, use the sequence you identified in the session today to guide the stages of your depression problem statement. This will identify the roots of your depression and how the roles established then show themselves in your relationships with yourself and with other people. In short, how your current patterns (**i.e., your depression traps, dilemmas and snags**) link to your past experiences (**i.e., your relationship roles**).

Look at the example below;

"I am vulnerable to depression because 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 bully and humiliate me if I make a mistake, show the real me or stop pleasing them. I find it so difficult to trust people. I bully myself up for being depressed and I am on my own back all the time."





My at home tasks

The next step towards positive change is to recognise when you are using old survival strategies in the current day. This will deepen your self-awareness; you will be able to recognise how the past is affecting your present and shaping how you relate both to yourself and to others. You can only change a pattern by first recognising the pattern. Again, no need to do this obsessively and don't give yourself a hard time for what you can now see.

It might be helpful to use the chart below to help you with recognising the survival pattern.

	What am I noticing about how I have reacted? Write down what you are noticing and learning. How am I repeating the old survival patterns?
Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	
Day 6	
Day 7	



Session four

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

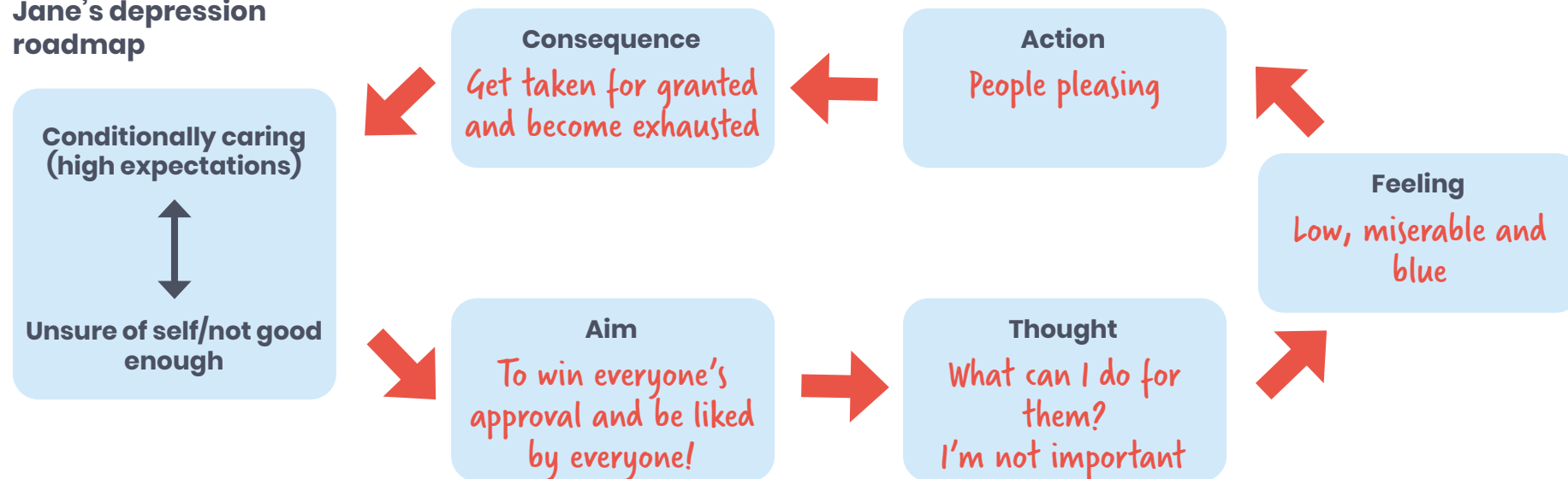
Bring your diary from last week about survival patterns and your PWP will review this with you. Discuss together what you are starting to see more clearly. Over the course of the sessions so far you and your PWP will have identified some relationship patterns which have been creating and maintaining depression and so holding you back in your life. Well done for sticking with this, as it might have been hard for you. Be kind with this new self-awareness and self-knowledge.

Over the next three sessions you and your PWP will discover the wider choices and new more helpful ways of doing things that are available to you.

In this session you and your PWP will connect your relationship role and your current pattern of relating.

It is often helpful for people to have the pattern drawn as a 'roadmap' diagram like the one below for Jane:

Jane's depression roadmap



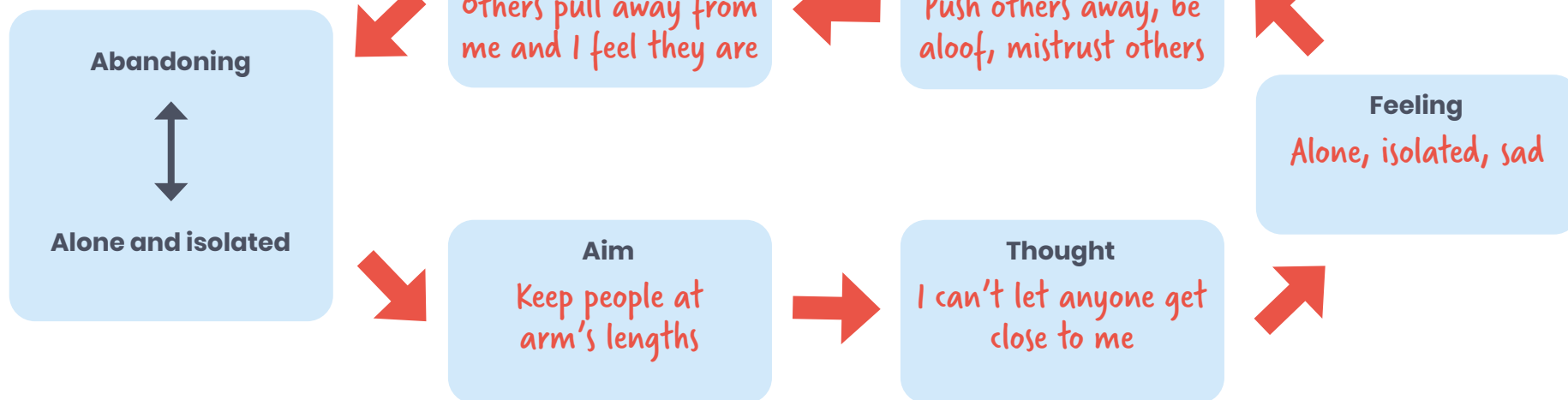
This roadmap shows how a relationship role can set off a cycle of events that always ends with the same relationship role. Drawing out depression patterns like this helps us see more clearly the problem and particularly the ways we interact with people that can make things worse for us. Roadmaps help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



Jim's depression roadmap



Elif's depression roadmap example

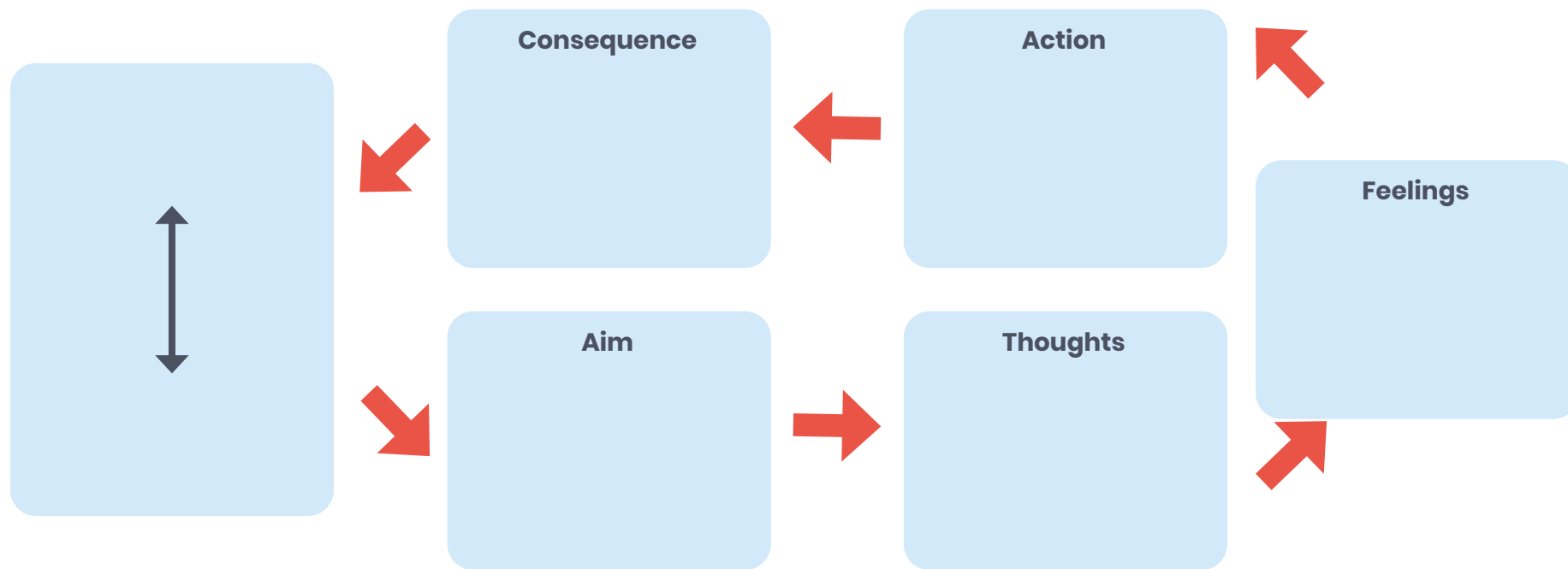




My depression roadmap

Now try drawing out your own depression roadmap diagram with your PWP, just like the one on the previous pages. Start with your key relationship role and then draw out how this creates an aim, thought, action and consequence loop that means you end up back where you started. Drawing your road map might feel scary and daunting. People can feel nervous about this because it brings to light what they are struggling with. This is a huge step forward you are taking in understanding your depression patterns; well done. Remember, be gentle with yourself. This exercise will also help you and your PWP think about change to the depression roadmap.

You may want to add your relationship with your PWP 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.





What is an exit?

At this point, you have drawn a 'roadmap' of the roles and patterns in your life that create and maintain depression for you. Now it is time to focus on positive change! Exits are the strategies you and your PWP will work on together to apply to your roadmap to improve your life, your relationships and your well-being. There is not a right and wrong exit, you need to find what works for you.

It's very important that the exits are your own - you need to find out what works for you and put that into action in an achievable and manageable way.

In terms of this exits might be ones that you have had success with in the past, or ones that you want to give a go to. Some **experimenting** might be helpful here, but don't take on too much, too soon or something that is just too difficult to do. Work within a **zone of achievability** - something that might stretch you, but not something that is impossible.

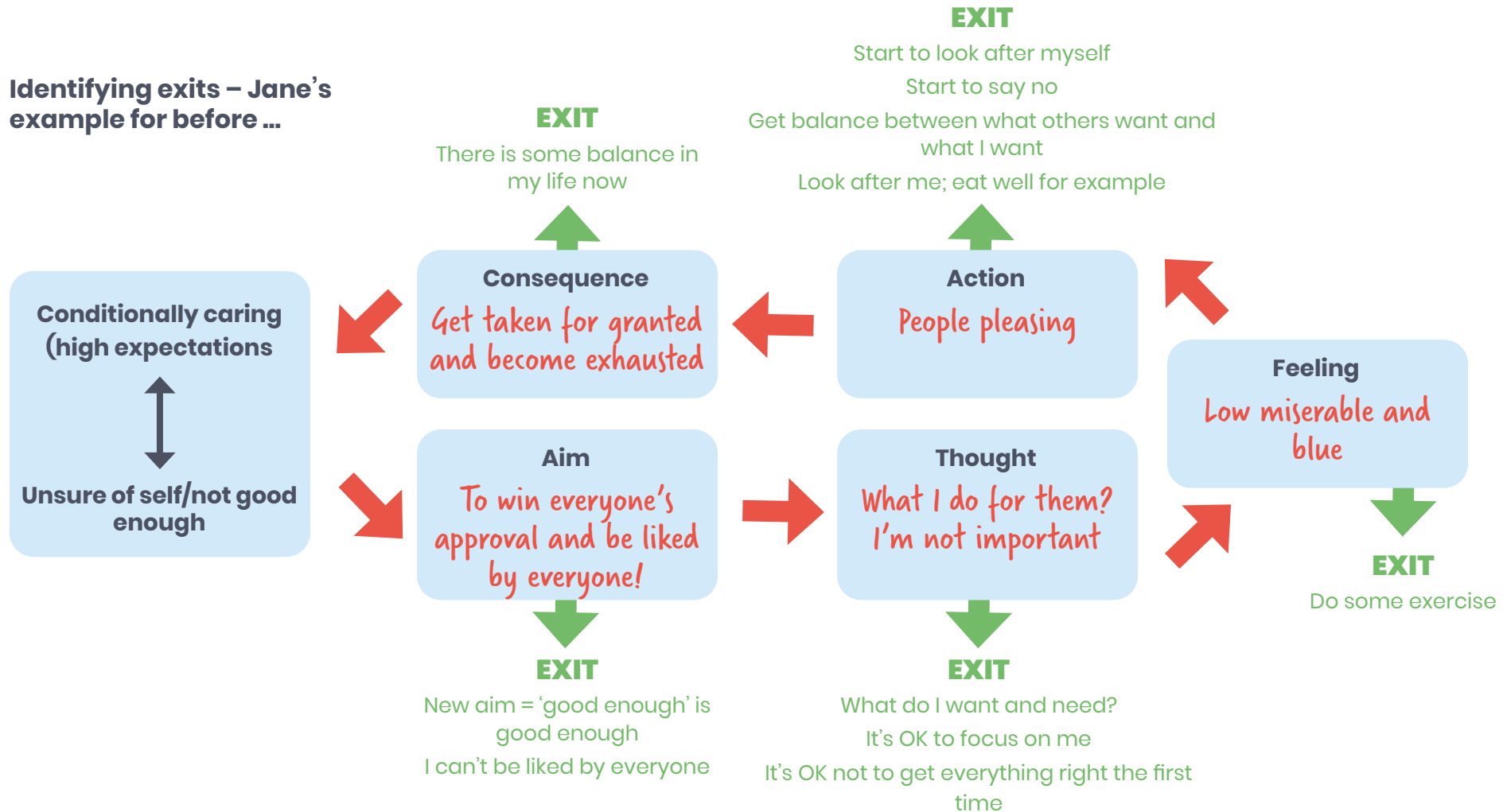
You might change how you approach your life (e.g. being more spontaneous), you might change how you treat yourself (e.g. being more compassionate), you might change how you treat others (e.g. being more patient and understanding) or how you are with others (e.g. by being more assertive with them).



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 – Jane's example for before ...

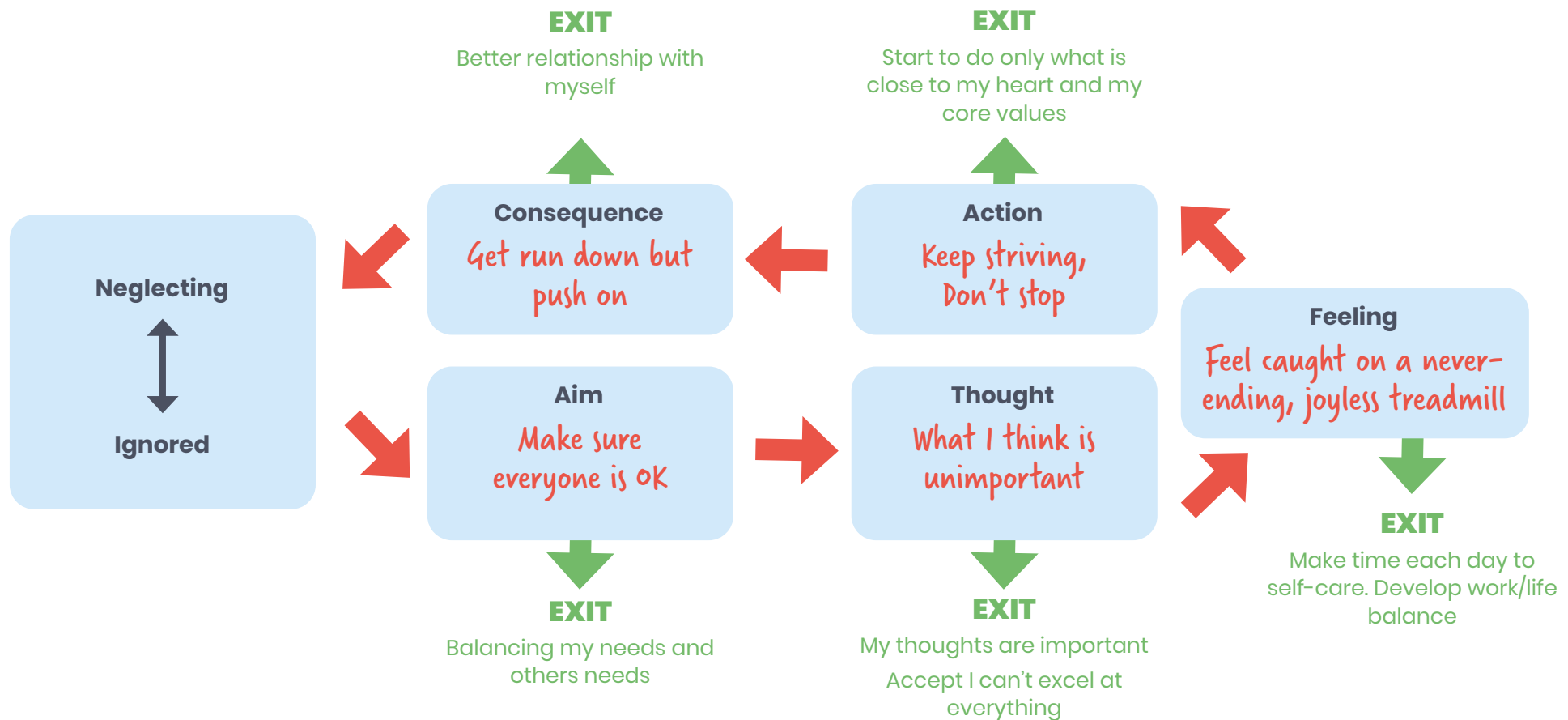


Krisna's depression cycle and how he used his exits to change:

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 worn out and really down**

Krisna's problem statement: **Because I was the oldest in a large family of eight siblings and my father had to work away a lot of the time to support us, I learned that I had to look after others needs first and that my own needs were less important. As an adult, I get dragged into looking after others all the time, I am the person that people always go to for help and I push my own needs down and so get depressed.**



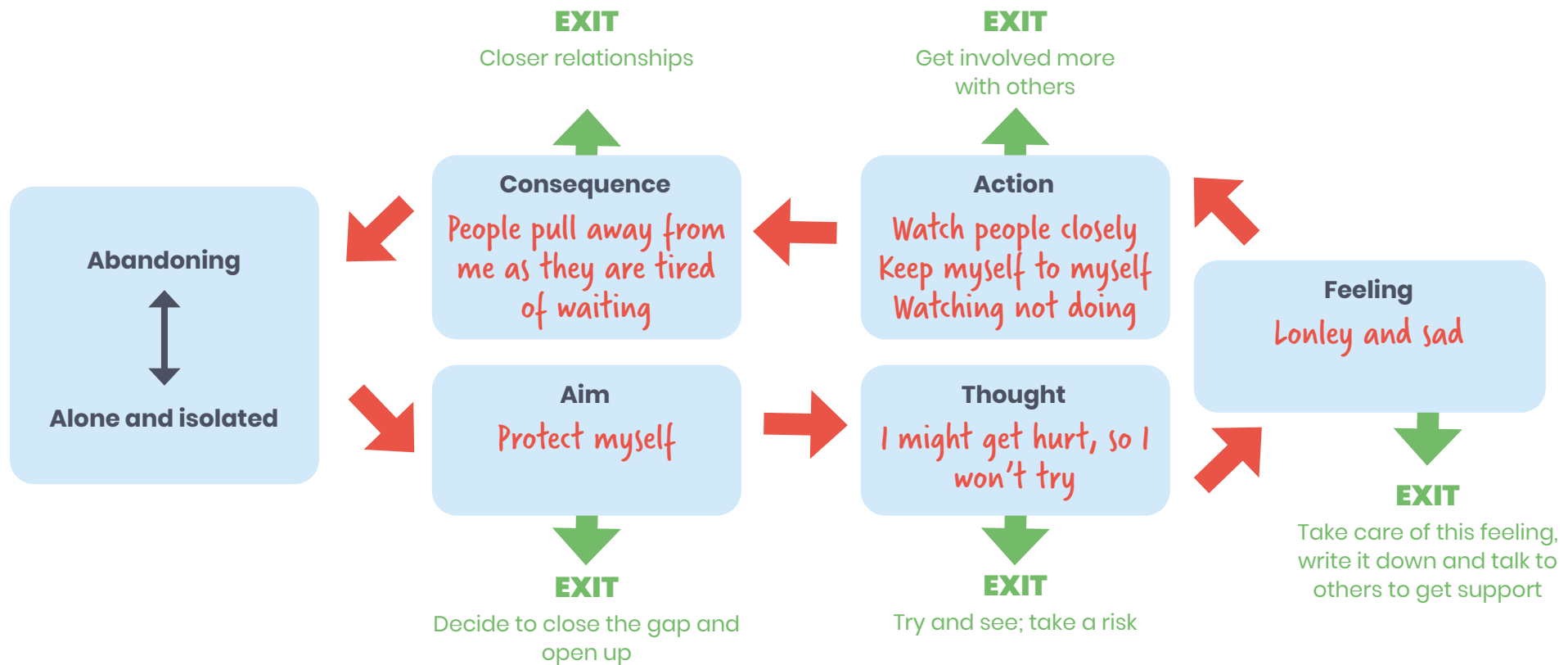


Patrick's depressions cycle and how he used his exits to change:

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 sad, 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 as a kid. I felt abandoned by him and left to my own devices. As an adult, I want to, but find it really hard to get close to people and the distance between me and others creates depression in me. They mistakenly feel I am not interested and pull away and I feel abandoned again.*



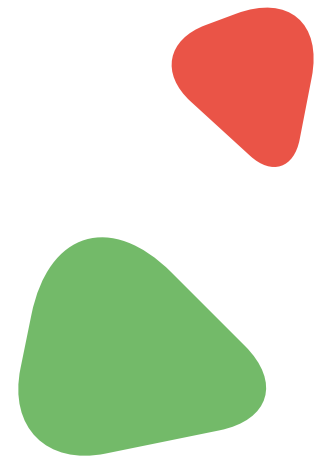


Starting to generate an exits from the depression in your life

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

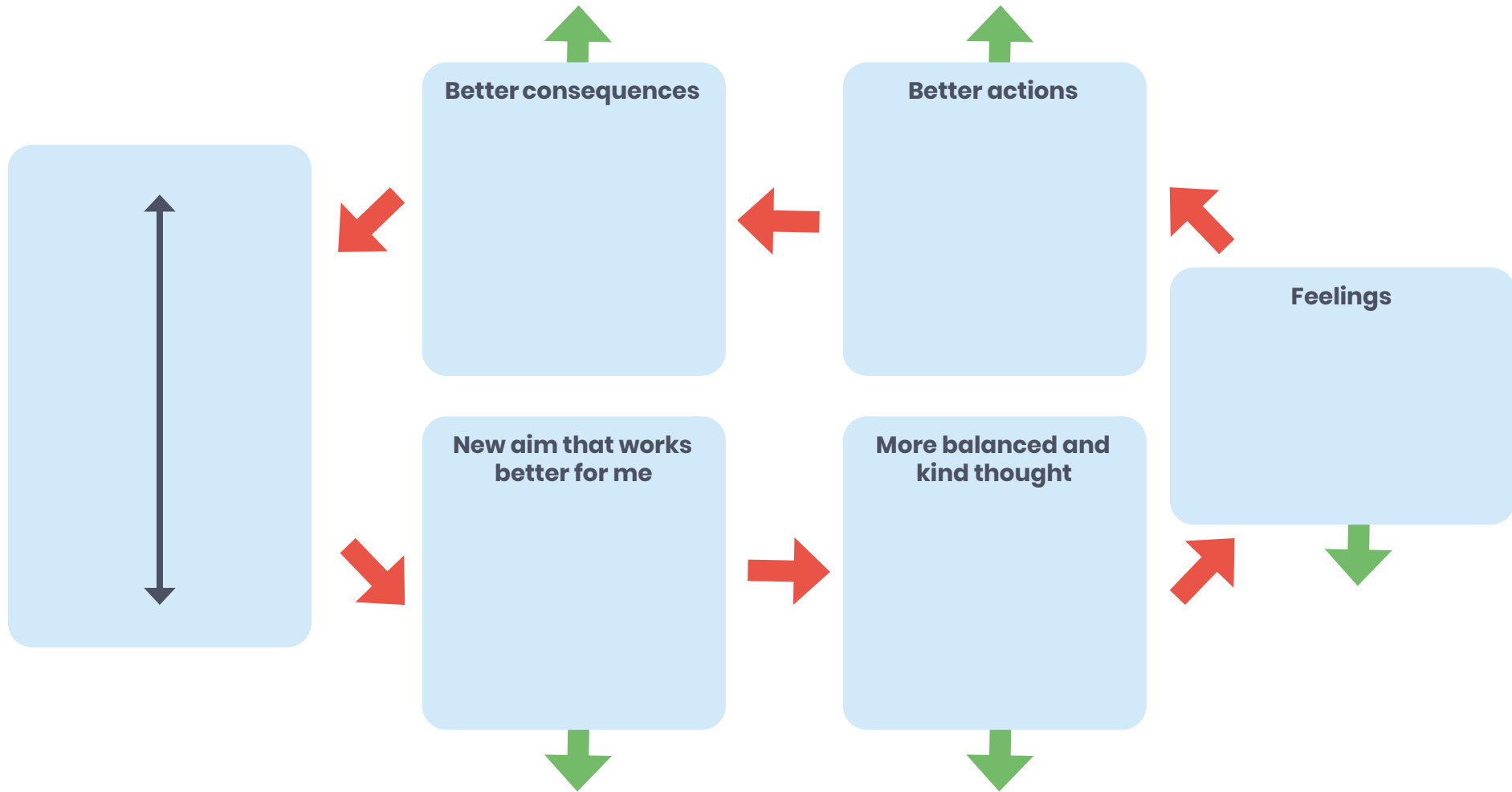
Exit strategies that people find useful for lifting mood ...

- Practice recognising the depression pattern before it starts
- Being kind, patient and compassionate to yourself
- Being a good friend to yourself and to others
- Practise doing the opposite - for example practising facing your fears in small manageable steps, rather than avoiding them
- Notice when you misinterpret what others might be thinking or doing because of the influence of your relationship roles
- Practise new ways of relating to yourself
- Practice new ways of relating to others
- Share feelings with others, rather than bottling them up – open up!
- Practise doing things you are scared of, to see if they are as bad as you predict
- Accept 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
- Reward yourself when you have made a step forward
- Accept that you will stumble occasionally
- Take some time to self-care each day
- Don't let the depression bully you
- Think about what's really important to you in your life and concentrate your efforts there
- Let other people in, let them support you
- 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





Write in and agree with your PWP now what your exits are going to be o your roadmap.





My at home tasks

Exit practice really helps

Between sessions you are going to practise whatever exit strategies you have chosen today with your PWP. The important thing to remember is that practice is the next step. Learning new patterns 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 PWP 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?	How did it go? 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 PWP – there will be lots to learn and reflect on. This week you and your PWP will again focus on discussing and planning for change and this week the focus is on changing relationship roles. 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 PWP. Is the ending triggering a relationship role cycle for you – how do you feel about the ending? Discuss this with your PWP.

A more healthy and balanced self

This Handbook is about changing your life for the better. In using it, you are developing a better sense of awareness about yourself, the way you treat yourself, your relationships, the people in your life and what you bring to these relationships. As you develop this **relational-awareness**, you may have noticed that you have become less rigid and that you have more control over your life.

At this point it is helpful for us now to start to focus on what a more “healthy self” might look like for you. 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 also accepting the things outside of our control that we can’t really change.

So, today in the session, you are going to start to think about developing further your strengths, positivity and attributes with your PWP..





Exercise: My strength and resilience

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

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 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 resilience, 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. 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 PWP has done for (and with) you and discuss and name how you might start doing this for yourself in Box 3..



Box 1

Box 2

PWP

Me

Box 3

Self

Self

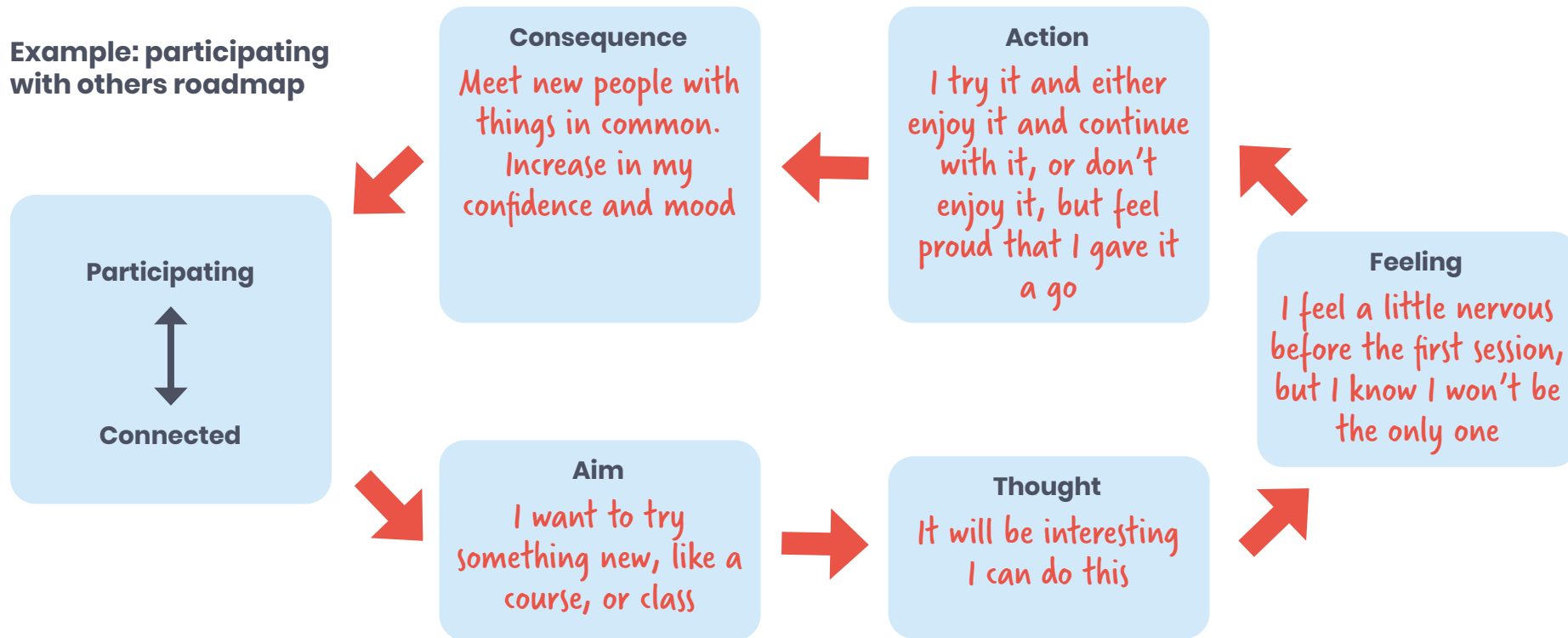


New positive roles

It can also be helpful to think of new positive relationship roles that you can develop now. 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. This will help you to feel less low in mood.



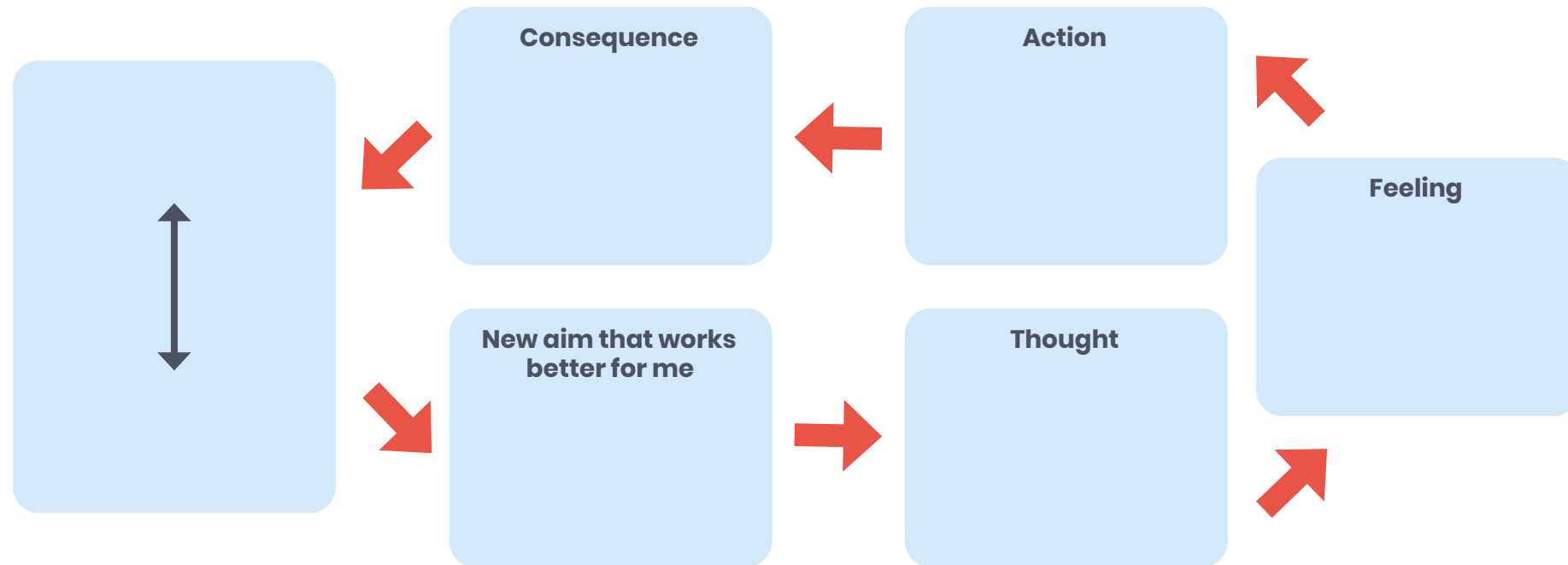
Example: participating with others roadmap





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 resilience 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.





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?	Which exit did I try out and do	How did it go? 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 at home. Review this with your PWP – there will be lots to learn and reflect on. You have now come to your final session. Before you and your PWP 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 doing things 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 PWP can function like a stable steppingstone 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

The first step of finishing, is to share with your PWP 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 Handbook:





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 lose, drop or limit change, 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. Define what will nurture and isolate the change.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



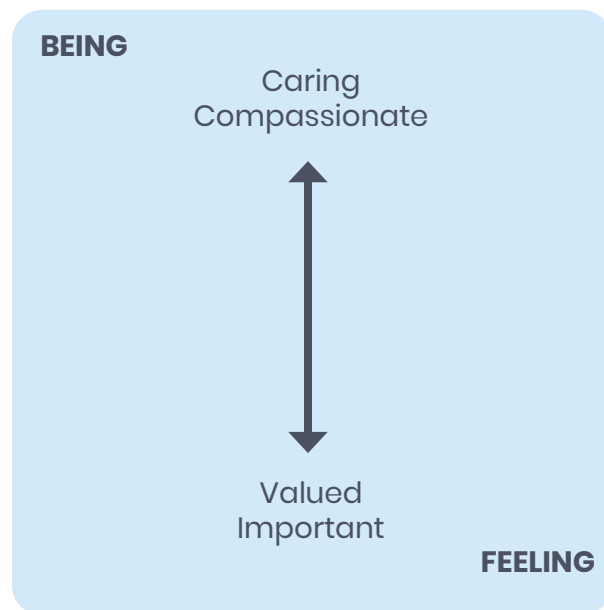
If you want to say anything to your PWP about the help and the relationship you have formed together, now would be a good time!

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 role pattern or habit. 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 low in mood one day is therefore 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.



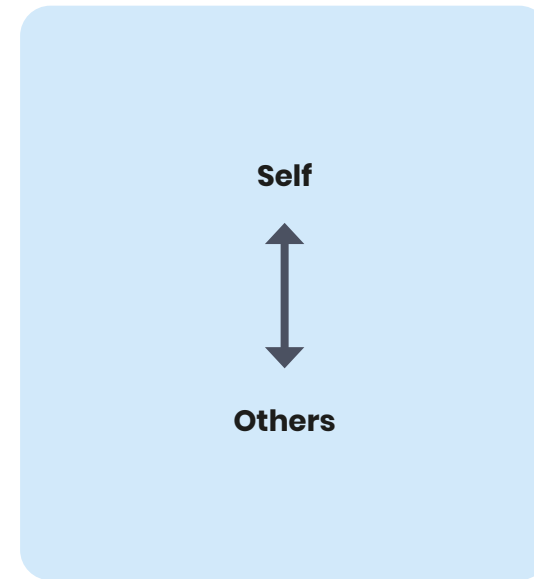
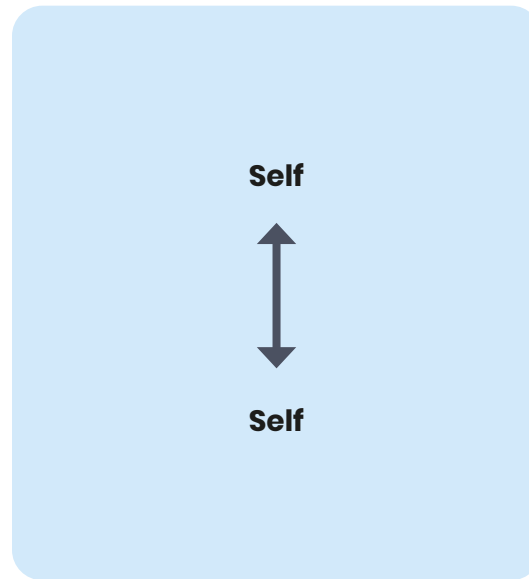
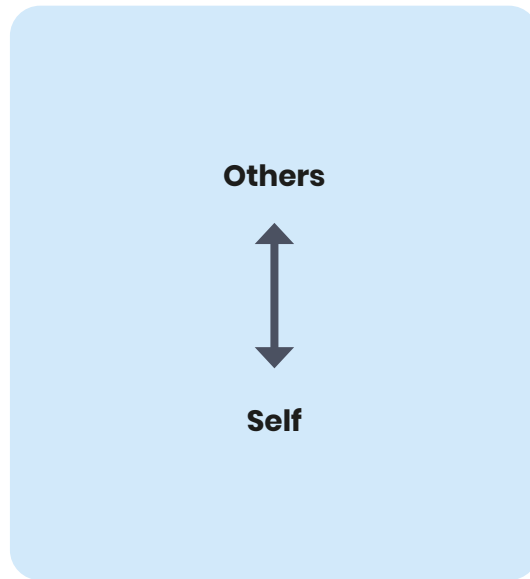
Guided Self-Help for Depression: A 6-Session Handbook



Appendix

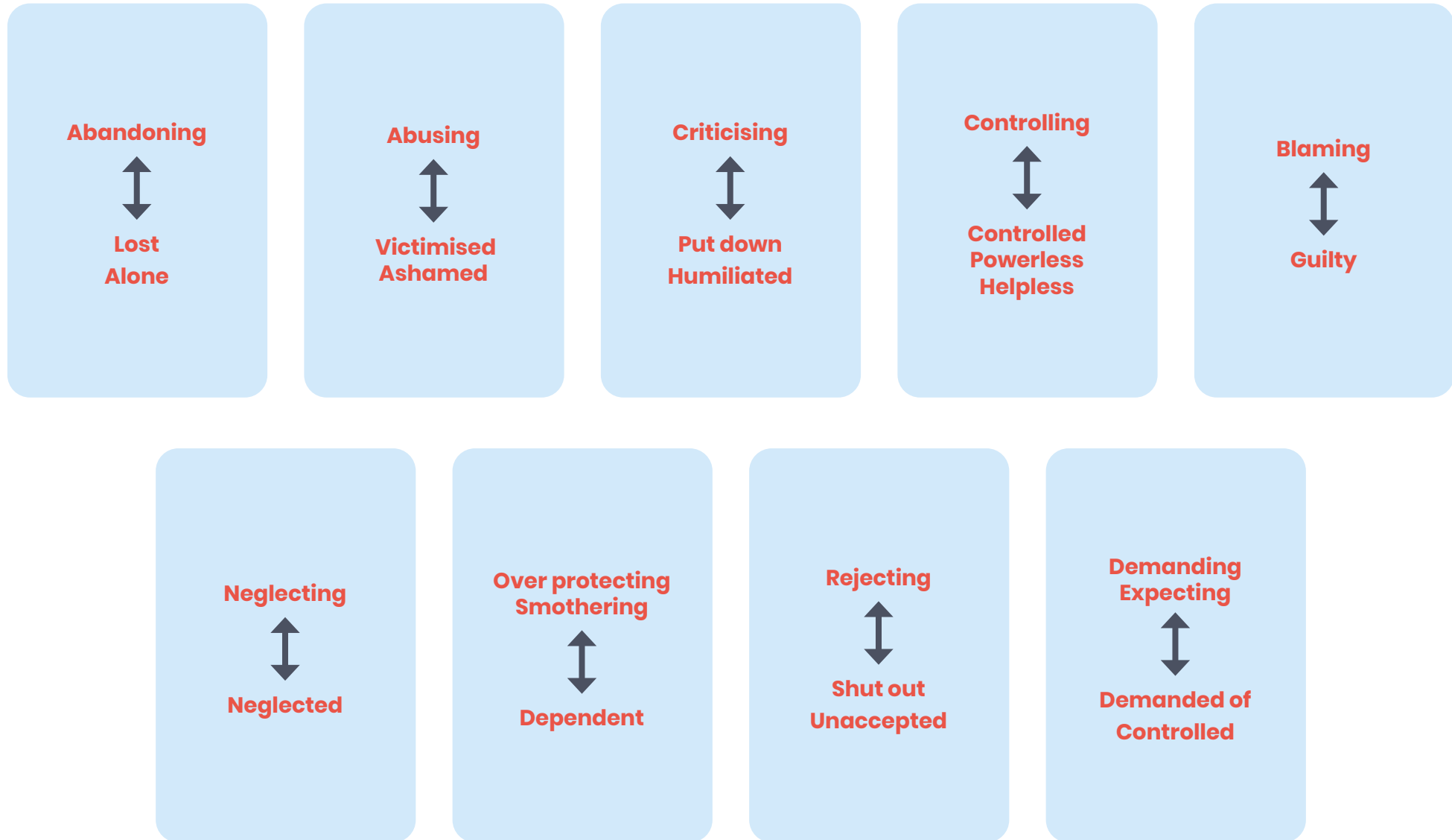
Relationship roles

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.



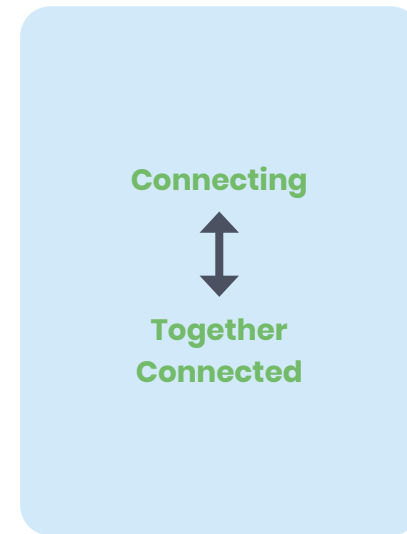
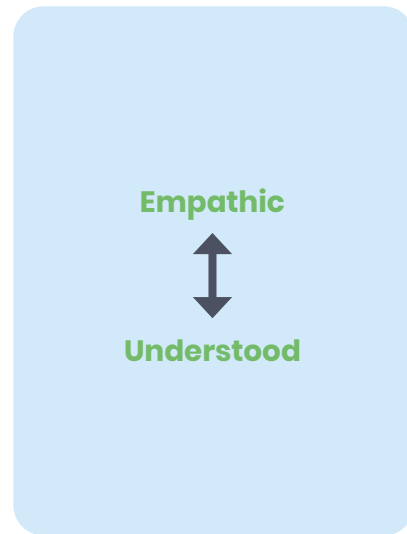
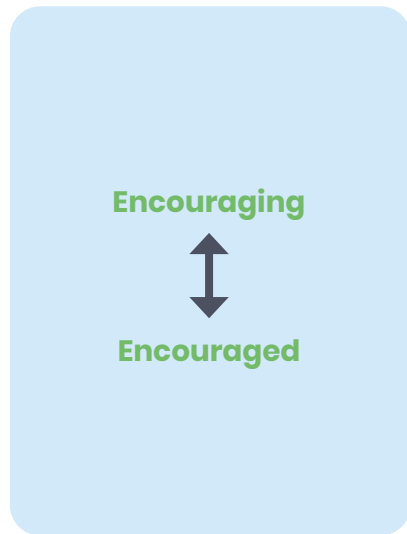


Negative relationship role examples





Positive relationship role examples



You might be interested in knowing how this Handbook was developed and who the authors are.

We wanted to include this section for transparency – so you know how this Handbook was developed and who was involved.

Both authors work fulltime in NHS mental health services.

Authors:

Rebecca Kelly – Trainee Clinical Psychologist

“I’ve developed this Handbook alongside Dr. Stephen Kellett as part of my training to become a Clinical Psychologist. I believe that relational approaches to mental health are really important and a useful tool to help people to feel better. I also believe people are more complex than just their relationships and this tool can be used alongside social support and community work.”

Dr Stephen Kellett – Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Psychotherapist

“I have worked with Rebecca on developing this Handbook because I passionately believe in providing choice to people in mental health services and this Handbook expands what can be offered in IAPT to people struggling with depression. I do hope you find it helpful in your recovery journey.”

This Handbook has been developed from speaking to professionals, experts by experience, and it is based on previous research using a similar approach with anxiety. We are very grateful for everyone’s contributions.

Designed by Ink & Water