

CFS/ME Therapy: Putting Theory into Practice

This workbook has been developed to help you to make progress in managing your CFS/ME. The workbook is designed to support the "Theory into Practice" CFS/ME groups, and it is structured in sections which link with different sections of the course. It covers different skills, strategies and approaches. Each of the sections can be helpful by themselves, but we know they work best when individuals put all of these approaches together. They can be thought of "pieces of the jigsaw" that fit together to build a bigger picture. There may also be elements of your own self-management that you bring together with what you learn on the course.

The different sections of the workbook cover:

Section 1: Reviewing your self-management, and making changes using Action Plans

This section involves taking stock of what is already working well for you, and identifying any other areas which you might like to focus on during the course.

Section 2: Goalsetting leading to Action Plans

This section involves looking at different areas of life which are important to you as an individual, and finding ways of making sustainable changes using the Action Plan method.

Section 3: Improving health using therapeutic movement

We need regular, appropriate levels of movement to keep our systems healthy. This section explores ways of using movement to help improve health and ability levels.

Section 4: Managing Obstacles to Progress using Problem Solving

This section uses a problem-solving method to help to manage obstacles to progress. The problem-solving method can also help us to clear our minds if they get stuck in "problem-solving" mode, which can feed into worry and stress.

Section 5: Managing setbacks

This section focuses on identifying triggers for setbacks, and finding ways of managing setbacks to reduce their impact.

Section 6: Thinking about thinking

This section helps to clarify the way our thoughts influence what we do, or don't do, to self-manage CFS/ME.

Section 7: Communication strategies

This section explores different communication strategies which can be used to improve the way that we can work alongside other people.

The whole workbook is quite long, so we suggest that you read it in short sections.

Section 1: Reviewing your self-management, and making changes using

Action Plans

You already have some information about what we know helps people with CFS/ME to make progress. This worksheet will help you work out what you are doing already and what you could focus on next. For example:

Rest: "I rest using a relaxation technique when I get home from work"
 "My next step is to take a 3 minute break twice a day at work"

CFS/ME Therapy area	What are you doing to manage this area?	What is the next step for you?
Rest: planned rest periods, not "crashing"		
Sleep management		
Stabilising activity: using baselines not "boom and bust"		
Building up activity		
Appropriate levels of physical activity and/or exercise		
Balance of activity: enjoyable vs. "must do"		
Managing stress		
Communication: being able to "say no" etc.		

Now that you have thought about some "next steps" in your management, use the Action Planning approach on the next sheet to help you to make the changes successful.

Action Planning Worksheet

This worksheet is to help you to structure your Action Plan, to increase your chances of success. Remember, Action Plans work best if they are **SMART**:

- **Specific:** is your Action Plan too vague?
- **Measurable:** how will you know if you have achieved it?
- **Achievable:** how likely are you to be successful?
- **Rewarding:** will you enjoy the results? Is it important to you?
- **Time limited:** when will the action take place? Which days, what time of day?

My Action Plan is:

What? (try to be specific)

How much?

When?

How confident am I (0-10)?

How important/rewarding is it?

Action Plan Review

What went well?

What have you learned?

What would you do differently?

Section 2: Goalsetting leading to Action Plans

What are goals?

A goal is a clear statement of one of *your own* ambitions. This might be something you would like to be able to do, or an aspect of your life you would like to have better control over. A goal might related to activities and hobbies, exercise, rest and relaxation, or socialising. Some examples of different people's goals are:

Going swimming two times a week for 15 minutes

Walking to the local shops every other day

Joining friends for a cup of tea/coffee once a week

Putting aside half an hour to rest and relax every day

Why set goals?

- To help identify what is important to you
- To create a milestone that helps you to monitor your progress and recognise your achievements
- To help make a sound plan before trying out a change
- To aid motivation for changes that will last into the future

Example of goal setting and action planning:

Linda decided that despite feeling exhausted a lot of the time, she really wanted to go swimming again. She had been talking to her friends about going but she would often forget, things kept cropping up, she had other things to do, and she didn't ever seem to find the time and energy to go.

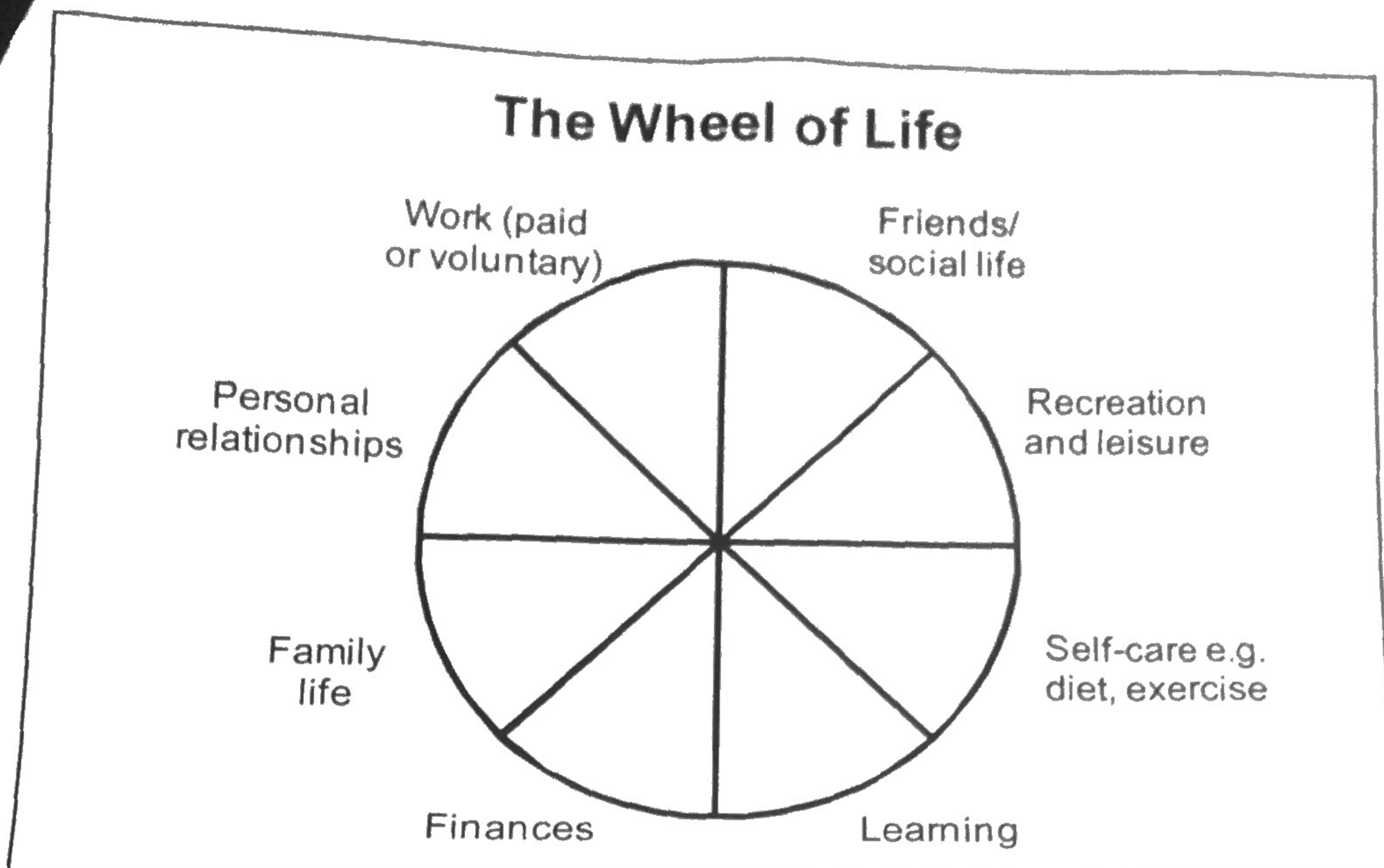
Eventually she found herself with an afternoon off and made it to the swimming pool. She loved it. She swam for half an hour and got out feeling refreshed and rejuvenated, tired but happy. It wasn't until the next day that she felt worse. It was too much exercise too quickly and her body ached all over so that she could hardly move. She had high hopes beforehand, it had taken a lot of effort, and now it seemed as though it had been a bad idea from the start.

However, Linda decided not to be put off by this experience. Using an action planning approach allowed her to set a realistic target for the next time she went swimming. She planned when and how to slowly build up her activity without overdoing it. Linda is now managing swimming and is starting to work on her next goal, by using action planning.

What is important to you?

Remember that the goals you set for yourself should relate to your personal ambitions and life circumstances. One way to do this is to think about the "Wheel of Life" which is shown below. The Wheel covers a wide range of areas. Think for a moment about the different aspects of your life that are important. Some suggestions are already included in the "Wheel of Life" diagram below.

The Wheel of Life



For each area, write down a score out of 10 to represent how **happy** or **satisfied** you are with that aspect of your life (1 would mean you are very dissatisfied, 10 would mean you are very satisfied). Remember that satisfaction is not the level to which you perform, it is how happy you are with that level of performance.

Is there something you would like to do but haven't felt able to do? Is there something you would like to do more of, or possibly less of in order to feel more satisfied with this area of your life?

Next, choose two areas where you would most like to build an improvement and consider the score you have given it:

- What things are you doing that mean you feel that it is worth this score? For example, what are you doing that means that the score is not lower?

My score	What I am doing that leads to me scoring it this way

Deciding what is important: example

Frank is trying to figure out his goal. He has the opportunity to change jobs and possibly earn more money, but he can see that this would take a lot of time and leave him much more fatigued.

He has at the same time been thinking he should try and find a way to spend more time with his children as they are growing up, but this would probably mean coming home

earlier from work so he is not exhausted on the weekends. Frank feels torn between these two aims because working on one would mean that the other would go backwards. When Frank rated his satisfaction with these aspects of life, he rated his work/career satisfaction as 6/10, and his satisfaction with the time spent with his family was also 6/10.

He now has to ask himself if he wants to change the **balance** of his work and family life, and if he does, which goal is the most **important**? Having spent time considering this, he decided to shift the balance toward his family and away from work as his family life was more important.

Your personal goals

Now think about your long term goal and plan a short term step towards your goal which would mean that you move 1 point forward on your satisfaction scale (see Mary's example below).

Goal 1:

Long term

Short term (move up 1 point in satisfaction score)

.....

Goal 2:

Long term

Short term

Example

In the Wheel of Life exercise Mary identified that **recreation and fun** were areas of her life she would like to be more satisfied with.

Recreation and fun	Why Mary gave it this score
Mary's score = 3	Mary sees friends very occasionally, has phone contact, occasionally socialises with family.
Long term goal	Regularly meeting up with friends in a café, occasional day trip with friends
Short term goal to move up to a satisfaction score of 4	Visit a friend at their house
Action plan	Contact a specific friend to discuss this further.

Action Planning and keeping going

When planning a journey we use a roadmap, timetable or itinerary. We break the journey into smaller manageable milestones, deciding routes and rest stops. Action plans are like this.

To increase the chances of success, this needs to be something that can be achieved during the next few days, something that is measurable in the sense that you know when you've done it. It also helps if achieving this first step is rewarding in its own right.

When moving toward your goal, remember your aim is not to over-commit yourself and risk failure. Instead it is about reaching an accessible place, consolidating, and moving on.

You might regard this first action plan as a 'stepping stone'. Because of its nature, after a few days it will be possible to re-assess and reflect on progress, make new plans as appropriate, learn from mistakes and ensure your ability to follow your plan. It's better to succeed with an inch than fail with a mile.

Mary managed to meet up with her friend at her house for a short time, but her goal was to go out with friends. She decided she wanted to go out with a friend by the end of next month. She realised she should probably start making an attempt before too long, but things kept coming up and the weeks slipped by. The thought of going out like she used to seemed impossible, and she couldn't imagine how to go about managing when she was out.

Mary realised that in order to reach her goal she would have to start with something she could imagine herself achieving. She decided she would start walking for five minutes, five days a week, and wrote an action plan for the week to put this into practice.

Although difficult at first, after a couple of weeks Mary found that she was becoming comfortable in her routine. She began to enjoy her walking, and when the time came to write next week's action plan, she felt ready to talk with her friend about going to a café in the daytime, rather than going out in the evening

Section 3: Improving health using therapeutic movement

What is exercise?

Many people think of exercise as being the same as physical exertion: pushing the body to the maximum, in order to build fitness. In our Service, however, the starting point with exercise is to redefine it in a more useful way. A helpful definition is to think about exercise as 'any movement which is performed with the aim of improving your health.' Using this definition, many gentle movements can count as exercise. Even sitting up in bed can be thought of as an exercise.

Is exercise the same as activity?

Daily activities often involve movement, so they will help to maintain our abilities to some extent. However, daily activity may not always help us to make the most of our abilities, which can be usefully thought of as the 'Four S' categories: **Strength, Stamina, Suppleness and Stability**. It is possible for a person with CFS/ME to make progress by focusing a small amount of energy on one (or more) of these categories, which they recognise as being important for them as an individual.

How does exercise fit with pacing?

If someone with CFS/ME starts with *too little* exercise and finds that it is sustainable, then they have learned some very useful information which they can build on. If somebody starts with too much exercise, and finds that it is unsustainable, the information which they have learnt is less useful and the experience is often unhelpful. For this reason, it is important to link exercise with other self-management strategies, especially pacing, and also rest and relaxation.

Does it matter what form of exercise or movement is done?

We're not in a position yet to be strongly recommending one form of exercise over another. One person may prefer to start with yoga, another with walking, another with Tai Chi. It is useful to remember that each form of exercise is likely to be more helpful with some of the 'Four S' categories (strength, stamina, suppleness and stability) than others: this allows an individual to choose a form of exercise which fits their own needs.

A gentle stretching program can be worth exploring, because it is low-energy, relaxing to do and can help with suppleness, balance and coordination. These forms of movement can help some people to maintain the equilibrium between recuperative rest and movement on a quieter day. Gentle stretches can be practised by people with different levels of CFS/ME.

At a later stage, some form of exercise which improves stamina by increasing the breathing and circulation seems to be helpful. This could involve walking, using an exercise cycle, or doing step-ups on the bottom step of the stairs. It is possible to set a very low "baseline" for this kind of exercise: for example, a baseline of 30 seconds on the exercise cycle, or two step-ups on the stairs, will be enough to start with for some people.

What are the benefits of exercise?

There are a wide range of benefits, which are important for all of us, regardless of our state of health. Some of these relate to the "Four S" categories: strength, stamina, suppleness and stability. Other benefits include a sense of well-being, improved sleep, improved digestion, improved circulation, and keeping the bones and joints healthy. The body does not need to be "pushed to the maximum" to gain these benefits. Regular, appropriately paced exercise will help people with CFS/ME to **maintain** their general health.

In addition to these general benefits, research has shown that some people with CFS/ME can feel much better, and increase their activity levels, by gradually increasing the amount of exercise which they do. A large research trial (The PACE Trial, White 2011) has shown that people with CFS/ME who had support from specialist therapists to gradually increase their exercise levels were more likely to report improvements in function and symptoms at the end of the year-long study.

Section 4: Managing Obstacles to Progress using Problem Solving

People who have CFS/ME are likely to experience some limitation or difficulty in carrying out normal everyday activities. The difficulty may be a combination of any of the following:

- Limited time you can stand
- Difficulty in planning activity because of "brain fog"
- Difficulty in carrying items
- Poor balance
- Clumsiness
- Limited power in arms or legs
- Concern that an activity could provoke a setback

The problem solving approach aims to analyse an activity and explore possible solutions to each part of the problem as follows:

- **Identify** the problem
- **Explore** any underlying problems
- **"Brainstorm"** possible solutions
- **Look at pros and cons** of each solution
- **Try** the best solution
- **Review** progress and alter the plan accordingly

Problem Solving Example

Problem - Difficulty drying washing outside

a) Exploring problem:

Element 1: Weak arms make carrying load of washing difficult

Element 2: Arms fatigue reaching above head

b) Brainstorming possible solutions

Element 1:

Carry a few items over shoulder

Ask for help to carry basket outside

Element 2:

Only attempt to hang out a few preferably lighter items

Get help if possible with larger items

Set a baseline for hanging items up and rest in between

Have the line a little lower then prop it up

Strengthen arms: start a home exercise programme

Use a tumble dryer

Good principles for carrying out activities

- Think about how to approach an activity before you do it.
- Break up activity into small achievable stages.
- Take rests in between activity.
- Change position regularly.
- Do small amounts regularly.
- Remember the principles: planning, pacing, positioning and prioritising.

Obstacles to applying a problem solving approach

- Attempt too much too soon.
- Convince yourself that the task can only be done in one way.
- Set too high a standard for performance of the task.
- Refuse all help rather than asking for some help.
- Not recognise that a slow increase in fitness and flexibility can help

In order to approach everyday activities with success, an awareness of good posture and correct ways of handling items can be important. The exercise programme should help you to improve your movement. This improved movement can then be used to do a little of some activities that may have seemed impossible for you to attempt before.

Section 5: Managing setbacks

Most people with CFS/ME will experience setbacks: times when their symptoms worsen for a period of time. It can be difficult to maintain your planned levels of activity during these times. Different things will provoke setbacks, and they may last for varying lengths of time. Each person will have different ways of dealing with a setback. The purpose of this handout is to encourage you to become aware of those things that may trigger a setback for you, and to develop a plan for coping with a setback when it happens.

What causes setbacks?

Setbacks don't always have clear-cut causes, but there are a number of things which can contribute to one:

- **Overdoing it** - This may be the result of taking on too much, or as a result of doing one activity for too long. Setbacks can be triggered if you increase activities too quickly, or if you don't plan and prioritise effectively.
- **Stress** - A period of stress in your life may provoke a setback. Be aware of those things that upset you and spot the signs that you are becoming unduly stressed. Stress management may be especially helpful at these times.
- **Periods of illness** - Following a bout of illness, you may be more prone to a setback. Remember to restart activities and exercise gradually by **setting baselines**.
- **Low mood/seasonal factors** - many people find that there is an interaction between their frame of mind and their energy levels at certain times of year. Cold damp weather may play a part in this, and low light levels affect some people more than others.

Not all these factors apply to everyone. It can be worth recognising as many "early warning signs from your own experience of setbacks to help you to avoid some setbacks in the future. Use the space below to list those warning signs which you have noticed before, and add any new ones as you become aware of them.

Warning signs:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Even with the best of planning, it may be impossible to avoid a setback. However, if you do have one, could you use it as a way to learn? Did you ignore the signs? What could you have done differently?

Setback management

An important part of learning to manage your CFS/ME is learning to manage setbacks as best you can. This means that you will be able to recover more quickly, and feel more confident in the way you handle a setback. During the programme we have discussed a number of ideas for managing them, and here are some reminders:-

- **Relaxation:** Remember the importance of proper, recuperating relaxation? Try to use your favourite relaxation technique.
- **Planned rest:** What have you found out about the most effective use of rest? Is it planned, time limited and enjoyable?
- **Exercise:** It's tempting to stop completely during a setback, but remember what you have learnt, and adjust your baseline accordingly.
- **Prioritise:** Put your energy into the most important areas of your life first.
- **Compromise:** Are you asking too much of yourself at present? Don't be afraid to step back and reconsider your expectations during a setback. Remember to recognise what you are achieving!
- **Socialise:** If you're feeling worse, it's easy to feel like isolating yourself. Remember that being in touch with someone can be helpful, so what about giving someone a ring, or inviting a friend round?
- **Thinking:** Remember the way we think influences how we feel. In the midst of a setback it is easy to slip into bad habits and dwell on the negatives. Try to be aware of this, and try out more realistic ways of thinking.
- **Pamper:** Decide now how you will indulge yourself next time a setback occurs.

Not all these strategies will apply to you, and you may have developed some additional ideas for successfully managing or reducing the length of a setback. Use the space below and write down those ideas that you have for managing your own setback, and add any new ones that may help.

Setback plan:

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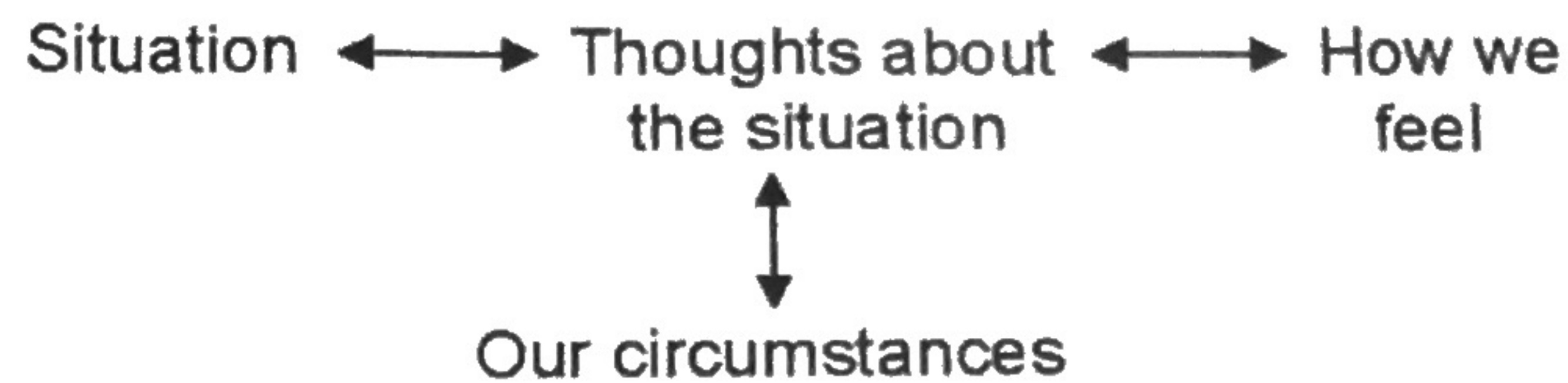
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Section 6: Thinking about thinking

How thoughts affect our feelings

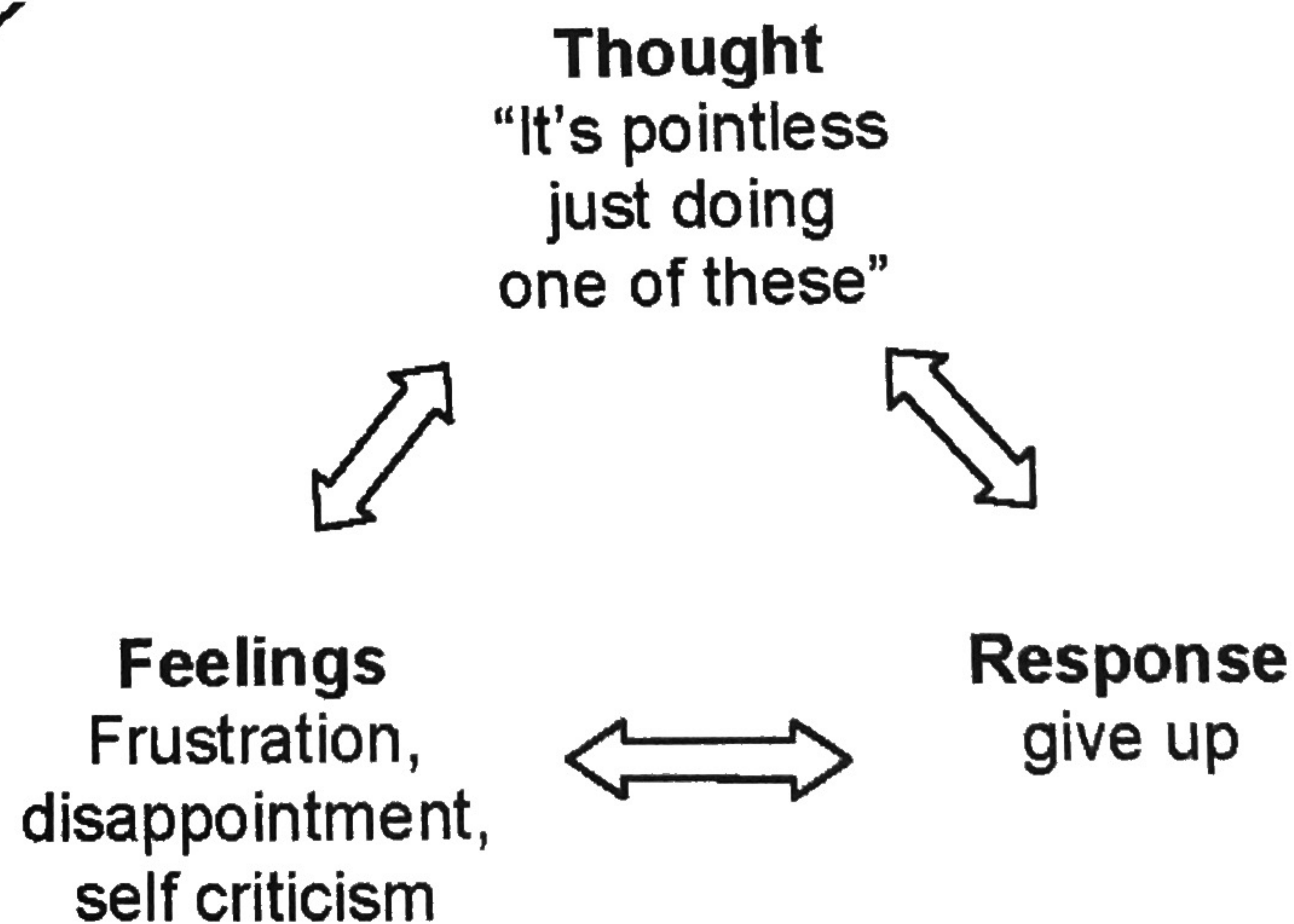
Stressful situations, such as being exhausted or being in pain, can produce a range of feelings including frustration, sadness, uncertainty, anger, and helplessness. Factors such as our circumstances (e.g. our relationships, our finances, others' beliefs) and our thoughts about events can also influence how we feel.



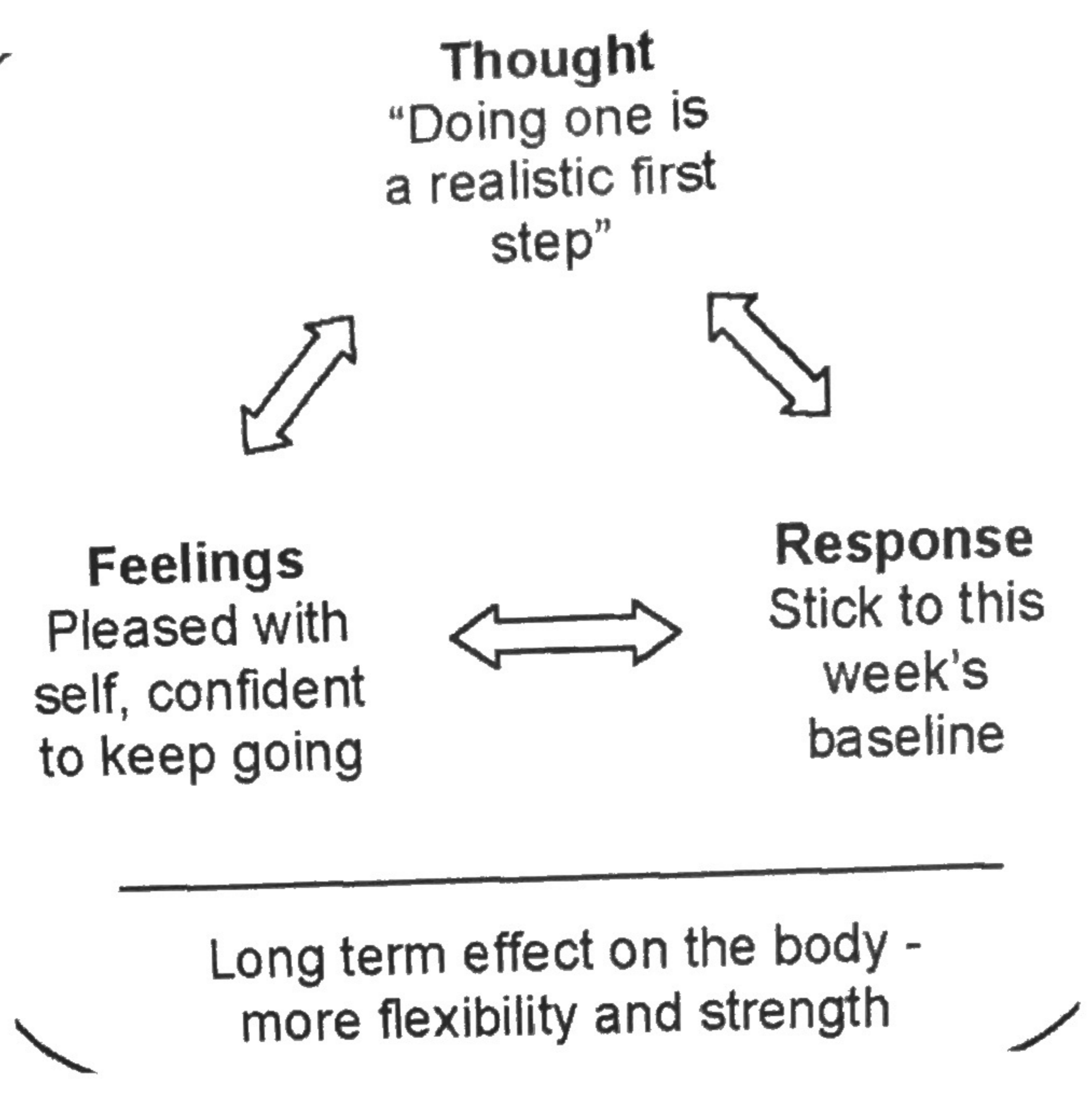
Jenny's example

Let's say Jenny has recently started sessions at the CFS/ME Service and she is keen to improve her mobility. The person she is working with has done a session on setting baselines and has advised her to exercise at a level she could achieve every day. Jenny has worked out her baselines and for some of the exercises this is one repetition.

- What might she be thinking?
- How might this link to how she is feeling?
- How might this affect what she does?



Long term effect on the body -
more stiffness, less strength

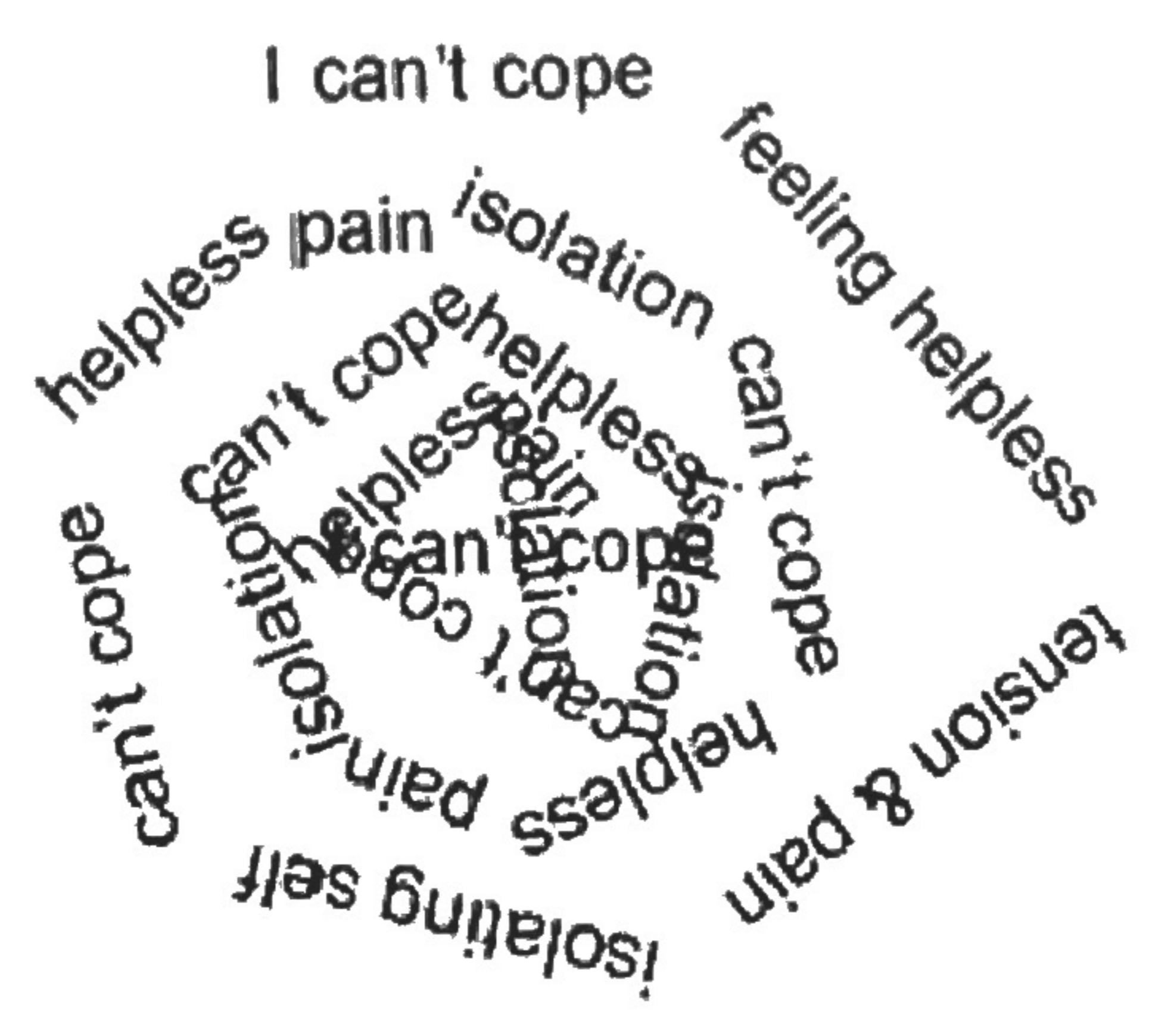


The mind: A double-edged sword

We have probably all noticed the internal chatter – the constant flow of thoughts going through our minds. This gives our mind the amazing ability to think, solve problems, learn from the past, and think about the future. However, when we face something stressful our minds often focus on negative information. This can be like putting on dark glasses when it's cloudy.

Our minds use automatic systems to protect us from danger. To do this, they have an automatic setting of 'assume the worst and play it safe!' Like dark glasses, these ways of thinking can distort our view of things and lead us to feel low or anxious about what is going on. It can sometimes feel as though we are thinking in circles, e.g. worrying about the future, doubting our abilities, and regretting the past.

Getting caught up in our thoughts can add to our distress and make it harder to cope with persistent symptoms. It can affect how we feel in our bodies (e.g. increased tension), as well as our emotions and actions. This can lead to a negative spiral of thoughts and feelings.



Thinking patterns

There are a number of thinking patterns which can distort our view of things. They are very common and can become more automatic over time. We tend to fall back on automatic thinking patterns when we are in pain, when we feel low in mood, or if we feel under pressure. Recognising when our minds are using a thinking style in an unhelpful way gives us choices.

Common thinking patterns

All-or-nothing

Looking at a situation as two extremes (either good-bad, right-wrong) with no middle ground.

Thinking the worst - 'catastrophising'

Imagining and believing that the worst case scenario is happening

Jumping to conclusions

Making snap decisions without first checking the facts

Mind-reading

Believing we know what others are thinking (or that they know what we are thinking)

'Shoulds' and 'musts'

Thinking or saying 'I should' (or shouldn't) and 'I must' can make us feel pressurised and can set up unrealistic expectations.

Examples

"If I don't do all of the housework I may as well have done none of it"

"If I don't exercise til I'm out of breath there is no point in exercising at all"

"I'm having a setback, I'm back to square one, things are going to get worse, I know I am going to end up in a wheelchair, I won't be able to look after my kids"

"This won't work so what's the point in even trying?"

"He thinks I am making it up"
"They don't like me"

"To be a good parent, I should be able to play football with my children in the park"

"I must push through the fatigue and keep fighting"

Regaining the Balance

Some people find it helpful to change the way they respond to their thoughts. This can change the impact thoughts have on how they feel. These are some strategies which people have found helpful in dealing with difficult thoughts. Like learning any new skill, it can take time and energy to make changes in how we think about our thoughts. Practicing these strategies a few times each week can help people find the ones that work best for you. With practice, it becomes easier to use them.

1. Increasing our awareness of thinking patterns and triggers

Taking a moment to stop and become more aware of our internal chatter can be useful. Patterns of thinking can become automatic over time. We probably don't notice much of what we are saying to ourselves. In order to redress the balance, the first step is to start noticing thoughts.

Trying to notice what we are saying to ourselves and writing these thoughts down can help us to understand what is going on. When we are feeling unhappy or upset, what thinking patterns are we getting into? It may be helpful to carry a notebook for a week or so to record thoughts and feelings in different situations.

2. Bringing ourselves back to the present moment

When we feel stressed, our minds are often predicting what could happen in the future or dwelling on events from the past. It can be helpful to purposefully bring ourselves back to the here-and-now, for example by noticing our breathing or noticing the sounds around us. This strategy is called 'grounding' and it can help us to respond thoughtfully rather than just reacting.

3. Creating some distance between us and our thoughts

Trying not to think about things doesn't always help in the longer-term. What can be more helpful is noticing our thoughts and recognising them as just thoughts, rather than seeing them as facts.

One way of doing this would be by labelling our thoughts as thoughts. For example, rather than "*I just can't cope with this*" remind ourselves '**I'm having the thought that I can't cope with this**'. This can provide some distance from the power of the thought. Another strategy is looking **AT** our thoughts rather than **FROM** our thoughts, for example by watching our thoughts come and go, like leaves floating down a stream or clouds floating in the sky.

4. Exploring the helpfulness of thoughts and gently challenging them

There are often alternatives to the emotionally-charged thoughts we have. It can be helpful to spend some time testing out our thoughts with questions like:

- What's the evidence for this thought?
- What's the evidence against it?
- How realistic is this thought? Are there more realistic alternatives?
- If a friend was in this situation, what would I say to him/her?
- Can we take a different tack? For example, instead of asking ourselves "why?" we could also ask ourselves "what can I do about it?"
- How helpful is it for me to cling onto this thought? Does it take me where I want to go in life?

5. Using affirmations

Some people find affirmations helpful. These are encouraging phrases, positive statements, words of wisdom or prayers. You could write some down and carry them with you so that you can read them when you find yourself getting caught up in challenging thoughts.

6. 'Worry time'

If you are 'a worrier' it can be helpful to put aside some 'worry time' each day, where you sit down and look over your worries. If you notice yourself worrying at other times, you can gently remind yourself that you will look at those worries later and return to what you were doing. Some people find it useful to write the worries down to come back to later, to:

- a) problem-solve those aspects that are within their control, and
- b) recognise aspects that are out of their control in this moment.

7. Express ourselves!

This could be with other people or by ourselves, such as writing a letter about our thoughts and feelings about the pain, painting a picture or just doing some scribbling.

Summary

How we think about our pain can affect how we feel about it and how we act.

Getting caught up in our thoughts can add to our distress and make it harder to cope.

There are a number of strategies that can help to regain the balance

Section 7: Communication

Why improve communication?

Many of the symptoms of long-term conditions can vary over time and are invisible to our family, friends and colleagues. We need to find a way to communicate to the people around us, what it feels like and what we can do and cannot do. By stating more clearly what our needs and abilities are, we increase the chances that these will be respected. If we try and hide the fact that we are having difficulties with symptoms from people who know us well, they often realise that something is wrong and will come to their own conclusions, which may be wrong.

Poor communication can cause misunderstandings, hurt feelings, anger, stress, resentment and frustration, for all concerned. Being able to communicate your needs and abilities clearly and honestly, while being aware of the needs of others, is an important aspect of managing your condition.

Ways of communicating

We communicate with our whole body as well as the words we use. Communication involves actively listening, body language, such as eye contact, use of our hands and posture, as well as the tone and content of what we say.

Styles of communicating

There are three common 'styles' of communication that are well known: assertive, passive and aggressive communication. The table of communication styles on page 15 of this handout shows these three basic styles. It can be helpful to recognise these different styles of communication and when we might use them. Also, it helps to be more aware of the consequences for us and those around us when we use these styles of interacting with others.

Assertiveness

The word assertiveness is used to describe a style of communicating where open and honest communication is achieved. This is considered the most effective and desirable communication style. It is a skill that requires awareness and practice. Trying to change our communication requires us to think about how we currently communicate in certain situations and what we would like to change.

So what is assertiveness? The box outlines some ideas:-

- Having and appropriately expressing your own feelings and opinions while listening to and respecting other peoples.
- Asking for what you want and setting your own priorities.
- Saying "no" without feeling guilty.
- Making your own decisions and dealing with the consequences.
- Sometimes changing your mind.

Things to think about when communicating with others

1. Recognise that it is OK to express your thoughts and opinions and that this can lead to more open and honest discussions with others.
2. Be aware of your feelings, needs and wants. In order to be assertive you need to understand what you are feeling about a situation, and what you would like to happen. You cannot assume that people know how you are feeling and what it is that you want.

3. Overcome mental obstacles. Often we talk ourselves out of asserting ourselves because we feel that we should not be assertive or we may be fearful of the consequences. It may be useful to identify any unhelpful thoughts and beliefs and see if there are any more helpful and supportive ways of looking at the situation (see the handout on thoughts and feelings for more information).

4. Manage anxiety: it helps to be as calm as possible before and during communication by using diaphragmatic breathing, relaxing your jaw and by using helpful self-talk.

5. Consider your body language. The way that you hold yourself has an impact on how you feel as well as how you are perceived and treated. Assertive people generally stand upright in a confident way with a relaxed manner, looking people calmly in the eyes, with open hands, the tone of voice is calm and speech is clear. It is also worth knowing that we can look and feel more confident simply by adjusting our posture and sitting or standing more upright.

The next time you talk to someone, you could be aware of:

- Where you are looking?
- How would you describe your body position?
- Consider your tone of voice.

6. Knowing what to say when being assertive.

It is helpful to think through the different options that can be taken in a particular situation and talk these through with somebody to help you to prepare what to say.