

What's the problem?



CAN YOU SAY YEST TO ANY OF THE ABOVE?

IF SO, YOU MIGHT THINK ABOUT STOPPING

What do I get out of it?

What do I expect substances will do for me?

Many of the thoughts people have about drinking alcohol and taking other substances are related to what people expect to happen to them while they drink or 'use'. These types of thoughts are called expectancies and are closely linked to why people use.

Some of the reasons people give for drinking or using other drugs include:

Drinking makes me feel outgoing and friendly

I drink because it's a habit

It helps me relax

Smoking cannabis makes me more creative

I get better ideas when I am drinking

It helps me sleep

It gives me more confidence

I couldn't leave the house without having a drink

Keeping a record

People may be drinking alcohol or taking other substances but do not really know exactly how much they are using and when. It is important to keep a record of how much you are drinking or 'using' so that you can see which substances are a problem, when you use them, how much you are actually spending and how you are feeling when you use them.

Over the page you will find a 'Substance Diary'. You can agree with your keyworker about how long you should complete the diary - this may be for a few days or a few weeks. Here, you have enough to complete 7 days worth but you can get more blank copies of the diary from your keyworker if you need it.

See if it reveals anything you didn't know!



Substance Diary

Day:	What were you doing? Where? Who were you with? How did you feel?	Substance taken	Amount
Morning			
Afternoon			
Night			
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Looking back over your diary you may see some interesting things about your substance use. For example, do you always use alone or with the same people? Do you usually start drinking or using other substances at the same time each day? Is there a usual feeling (sadness, boredom, anxiety) that prompts you to drink/use substances?

What about what was around you at the time? Are the situations similar or different for you each time?

What were you thinking? Did you have a craving or an urge to use or were you just bored?

What substance did you use most frequently? How much did you spend?

Now record your observations from the diary, you may wish to sit down and do this with your keyworker.

What do I get out of it?

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Some of the reasons people give for drinking or using other drugs include:

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It is very common, that our ideas about what a substance will do for us is not what really happens when we use. For example, a person who thinks drinking makes them more sociable in fact often feels more afraid of people and withdraws from them when they drink.

What are your expectations? Weighing up the pros and cons -
What do you gain? What do you lose? What are the good things?
What are the not so good things?



Good things about drinking/using?	Less good things about drinking/using?

Am I ready for change?

A useful way of describing where people are in their readiness to change appears below. Which description best fits you at the moment?



Happy user

The person sees no problem and wants to continue without making any changes.



In two minds

The person is thinking about change. They have acknowledged that there are one or more things about continuing that are a problem or are no longer good BUT the person still enjoys it.



Get ready, get set

The person has made a decision to change, is preparing to change but has not done so yet.



Go!

The person has put the idea of change into practice and may have very recently given up or cut down.



Keeping it up

The person has kept up their change over time and is in the process of reaching their goals.



To lapse or not to lapse?

They have resumed using substances either a little or a lot. They are reconsidering their options.

Do I want to change my substance use?

Now that you have become more familiar with how you drink or use other substances and what they do or not do for you, it is time to really think about whether you want to make any changes.

After completing your own 'scales' and thinking about how ready to change you are, how do things look to you?

Looking at the items on the not so good list, really think about whether these are things that really concern you. Are they really your own concerns, or those of someone else?

Making a decision

Now you have weighed up the 'good things' against the 'not so good things' and have considered your own personal concerns about continuing to drink or take other substances, it is time to set yourself a goal.

Your goal may be to reduce the harms or problems that the use is causing, it may be to cut down or quit altogether. If you are using more than one substance you may have different goals for each. List your goals below:



Substance	Goal

Now that you have set your goals, now is the time to think about making a plan to help you achieve them.

How do I stop?

If you have decided to stop drinking or 'using' altogether you will need to work out a plan on how to do this with your keyworker.

This may involve a detoxification if you are diagnosed to be physically dependent. We have various leaflets and information that will help you through this process. These can be obtained through your keyworker.

The Blame Game

Alcohol or other substance misuse problems are often related to having certain problems in life. Your alcohol/other substance taking behaviour may have increased following problems in your family, the breakdown of a relationship or losing your job. In some cases it may be a way of blocking out unpleasant or disturbing memories, maybe from your childhood.

When you have experienced such events, it's natural to want to blame others for your problems. It's very tempting to say "I'm drinking heavily because my wife left me..."

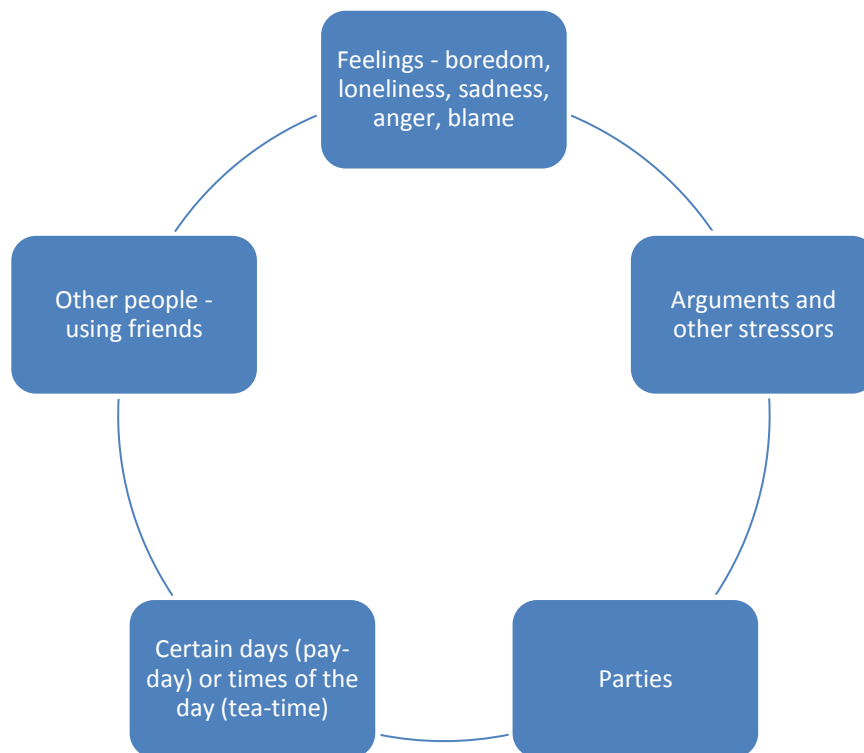
The fact is, though, that it is your problem - not theirs. You are the only person who can put things right. One of the main keys to overcoming a drink/drug problem is to accept that you are responsible for your recovery.

Your family and friends can give you tremendous support but they can't do it for you. Your keyworker can also help but it's you that's going to have to cope when times get tough. You have to accept that you are the main person who can make the necessary changes in your life. Do this and you will have more than a fighting chance of overcoming your addiction.

How do I stay stopped?

It is important that you work out a plan to help you on your way to remaining stopped. This will involve looking at risky situations, stressors and triggers and making some changes to your lifestyle.

Some triggers may include:



Once you know what are risks and triggers are you can make a plan and BE PREPARED.

You now need to take some time to think about your risky situations and triggers that may lead you to have a slip. Complete the table below - you may wish to do this with your keyworker or on your own. It asks you to look at what the triggers are, how you've dealt with them and how you may deal with them differently.

Trigger/Stressor	How do you feel emotionally/physically when this happens?	What do you do when this happens?	What could you do differently?
Example: argument with your partner	Angry and upset Heart races and cannot sit down	Have to get out of house so slam door and go to the pub	Go to another room and calm down. Think why partner is upset. Talk to partner when calmed down and try to sort the argument out

Avoidance of risk and triggers

A good initial plan for people who are starting off with changing things is to avoid the risky situations and triggers. This may seem obvious but for example some people go to the pub after only a few days of not drinking and think that will-power alone will stop them from having a drink.

It is important to remember that will-power alone does not equal skill-power and a person who places themselves at risk without the skills and tools to cope with the situation will frequently slip or relapse.

In the early stages of change, avoidance of obvious risks is important. For example avoid places where you drank or used to, the people who supplied you or you drank with (if you can) etc.

Avoidance is recommended while you develop the skills to manage these situations in the future. Avoidance is not recommended as a long-term plan though, as it is impossible for you to avoid triggers and risk all the time. An important point to remember is, avoidance of a situation is possible but avoidance of feelings is not.

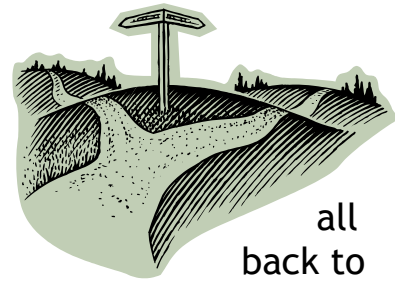
We often think that we are not very good at coping with difficult situations but EVERYBODY has a 'tool box' full of coping skills just sometimes they are forgotten.

Next is an exercise designed to get you thinking about preventing relapse in general terms and what skills you need to have to deal with different situations.



What can I do to reduce the risks of relapse?	Do I have the skills to carry this out?	How do I get these skills?
Example: I can delete my drug dealers number from my phone	Yes	-
Example: My mates always tease me if I do not go for a few pints with them - explain to them that I cannot drink anymore and try to make new friends that do not drink	I have never been assertive and always want to please people so I find it difficult to say NO - I have little confidence so will find it hard to make any new friends	Attend Personal Development Course at Day Centre where I can learn how to build up my self-confidence and assertive skills

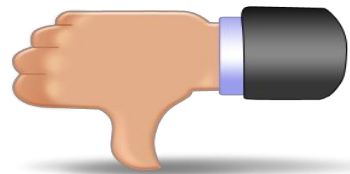
The Crossroads



This next activity involves weighing up the problems that could recur if you go drinking or taking drugs - and also the benefits of remaining abstinent or keeping your substance use under control. all back to

Firstly, note down all the negative things that might happen if you were to go back to your previous pattern of drinking or drug taking. Think about all the problems that may occur over the next six months or so. You could include medical problems, such as liver disease. You could also include relationship difficulties such as rows with family and loss of friends. Completing the exercise may be a bit depressing but it is a useful way to identify the problems that could lie in store.

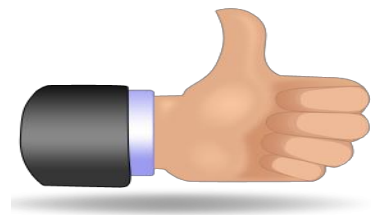
Negative things that may happen if I drink/take drugs again



The next thing to do is make a list of the positive things that could happen over the next coming months if you stayed clean.

You could include being in more control of your life and not worrying about your next fix or your next drink. You could also include feeling and looking healthier - and waking up in the morning feeling well. Your relationship with your partner may improve and you'd get on better with family and friends. Another advantage could be more money to spend on clothes, holidays or things for your house. You may also find that your work performance improves or that you increase your chances of finding a new job. You will have more time to enjoy sports, interests and hobbies.

Positive things that may happen if I do not drink/take drugs again



One you've finished read through each one slowly and carefully. You may see yourself as being at a "CROSSROADS". Your life may develop in two very different ways - depending on whether or not you return to using substances. By identifying the possible 'gains and losses' this exercise can help to sharpen your motivation and continue working at your problems. It can be particularly useful to read the lists when being tempted to take drugs or drink. You may just find that it reminds you of what is at stake and that this helps you avoid relapse.

Coping with cravings

Everyone experiences the uncomfortable craving or urge to drink or use other drugs.

It is important to know that cravings or urges to use, although not very pleasant are only thoughts and feelings and cannot hurt you. They will only last for a period of time and YOU CAN push through it if you believe you can.

Some people think of cravings as a wave that builds up, peaks and crashes over them and is then over. You are a surfer surfing your urge or craving to use. Imagine the craving as a wave next time it happens, time it if you like and how it builds up and fades away.



3 Ds

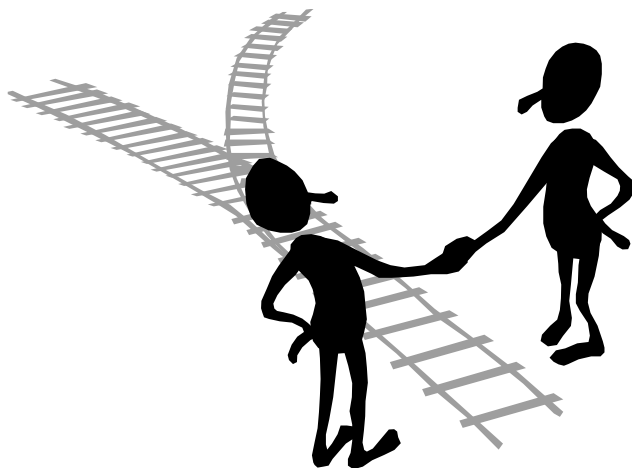
- Delay:** Cravings only last for a period of time and will pass - so delay using or drinking for a minute at a time until it passes.
- Distract:** Do some other activity that matches with the energy of your craving to distract yourself - brisk exercise or dig the garden.
- Decide:** Make that decision not to use - think of all the things that you don't like about using or drinking. All the things you have to lose. Cravings only remind you of the good things about using so challenge those thoughts and remember all the reasons why you decided to change in the first place. Look back at the lists you have made throughout this workbook to help remind you.

Breaking the associations

Before you stopped your use was probably linked to activities such as going to parties, watching football or listening to music. When experiencing these situations without drink or drugs you may feel uncomfortable and unsure of how to cope. You may experience cravings - which could put you at risk of a relapse.

In these situations it's vital that you have good support. If you have to attend a social function, for example, take a friend who knows about your problems and can give you encouragement.

Having a prior plan of action can also help. Rehearse some answers you can use if you're being pressured to take drugs or drink. These could include "I can't drink as I'm on medication" or "I've got to drive home later". If you're really struggling have a 'get out' plan - such as "I've got to pick up the kids". You should gradually develop an effective range of strategies and techniques. In time the association of drink or drugs with the above situations will diminish and they will be less and less difficult.



Emotional Roller-Coaster

People often feel that drinking or taking other drugs will help them to ease the feelings of sadness or depression but the truth is it makes them worse in the long run. People feel more depressed the day after drinking or using and often have to start again to feel better. An unhealthy cycle of drinking/using and depression occurs.

Many people assume that when they stop drinking or using other drugs they'll automatically feel better about themselves and about their life in general. This is certainly true for the majority of people. They feel healthier, happier, more positive and more self-confident. They also have more energy to do things - and they enjoy their lives much more.

For some though things don't go quite as well. After stopping many people experience what are known as 'mood swings'. They feel OK and quite cheerful and then really miserable the next day. Feeling irritable, bad-tempered, argumentative, and 'ratty' are particularly common. Needless to say all this can make life difficult for you and those around you.

These mood swings are sometimes thought to be because the body is adjusting to the chemical changes caused by stopping drinking or taking drugs. They may also be related to the need to find new ways of coping with the problems and difficulties of life. The majority of people who experience these difficulties find that after a few weeks their mood gradually levels out. Occasionally however, a person's low mood can carry on. If this happens to you please speak to your keyworker about it.

Symptoms of low mood can include some of the following:

Feelings of sadness, guilt, numbness or despair;
Crying a lot or being unable to cry at all;
Losing interest in things that you used to enjoy;
Changes in appetite, eating and weight;
Not sleeping properly;
Loss of energy



There are some suggestions and ways to help you manage the symptoms of low mood:

Plan your day with some activities you have to do and some activities you enjoy

Break down some difficult tasks into smaller parts

Get some exercise

Remember that depression passes - focus living one day at a time

Give yourself credit for even the smallest things you get done

Listen to music you enjoy

Eat nutritious foods

Get involved in a fun activity with someone you enjoy

Get emotional support from a family member, friend or mental health professional

Talk to a trusted, understanding, non-judgemental person for as long as you need

Buy yourself something you have been wanting

Read a funny book or watch a funny DVD

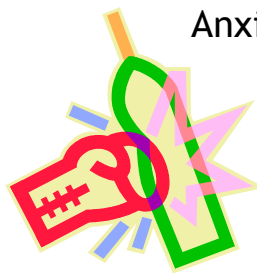
Managing Anxiety

It is not surprising that people turn to drugs or alcohol to deal with frightening, uncomfortable feelings of anxiety. However, alcohol and drugs make these symptoms worse in the long run.



Anxiety is something that we all experience from time to time. It is a normal response to situations that we see as threatening to us. Most people can relate to feeling tense, uncertain and perhaps fearful at the thought of sitting an exam, going to hospital, attending an interview or starting a new job. You may worry about how successful you will be or feeling uncomfortable, appearing foolish. In turn these worries can affect your sleep, appetite and ability to concentrate.

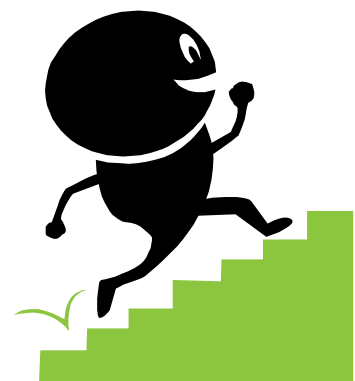
Fight or flight reflex



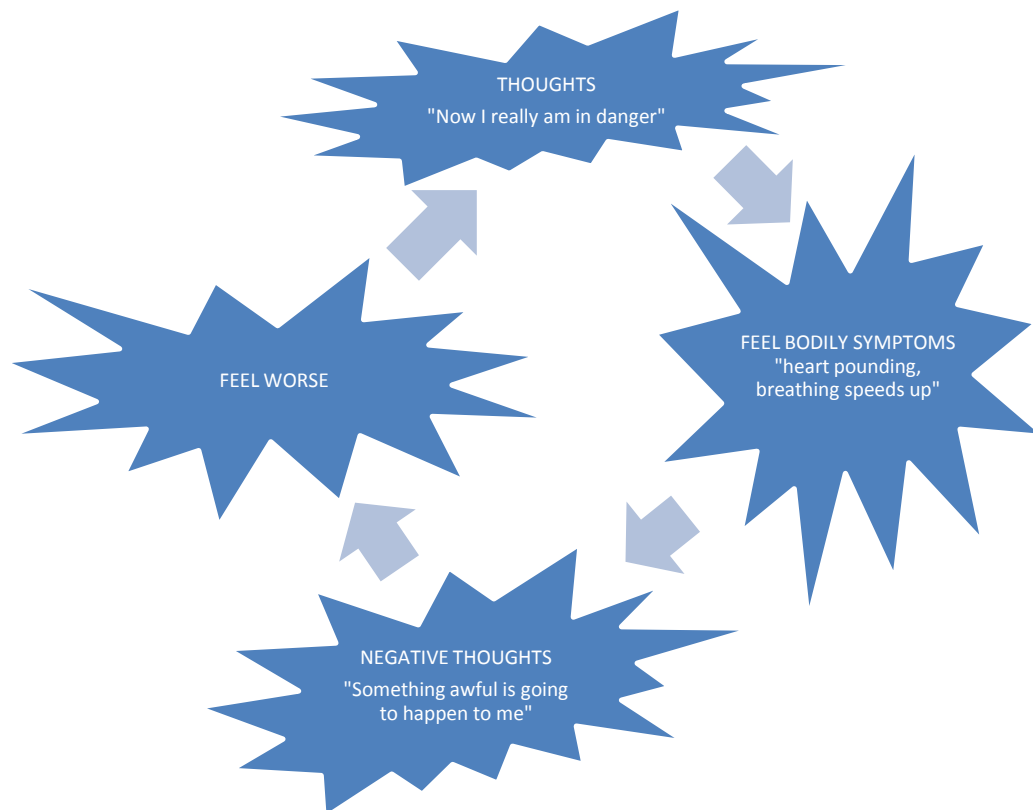
Anxiety is the body's way of responding to danger. Anxiety and fear trigger the release of hormones such as adrenaline. Adrenaline causes your heart to beat faster so it can carry blood where its most needed. You breath faster to provide the extra oxygen required for energy. You sweat to prevent your body over heating. Your mouth may feel dry as your digestive system slows down to allow more blood to be sent to your muscles. Your senses become heightened and your brain becomes more alert.

These changes enable your body to take action and protect itself in dangerous situations by either running away or fighting. It is known as the 'fight or flight' reaction. Once the danger has passed other hormones are relased which may cause you to shake as your muscles start to relax.

Sometimes this response happens whether the danger is real or whether we believe danger is there when there is actually none, when the danger is in our heads rather than reality. It works so well that it can kick in even when it's not needed.



Short-term anxiety can be useful. Feeling nervous before an exam can make you feel more alert and enhance your performance. Symptoms of anxiety whilst uncomfortable are not dangerous. However, if the feelings of anxiety overwhelm you and the symptoms go on and on, it can stop you from doing what you want to and living your life.



Vicious Circle of Anxiety

As the bodily symptoms of anxiety can be frightening, unusual and unpleasant, people often react by thinking that there is something physically wrong, or that something truly awful is going to happen. This in itself causes more symptoms and so a vicious circle develops.

Once a vicious circle of anxiety has developed with lots of anxious thoughts increasing anxiety symptoms, avoidance is often used as a way of coping. It is natural to avoid something that is dangerous, but the sorts of things that people tend to avoid when they suffer from anxiety are most often not real dangers but busy shops, buses, crowded places, eating out, talking to people etc. Not only are these things not dangerous but they are quite necessary. Avoiding them can make life very inconvenient and difficult. This sort of avoidance can also result in a great loss of confidence which can affect how good you feel about yourself, which in turn makes you feel more anxious - another vicious circle.

Now spend some time trying to write down any of these ways that your anxiety may be kept going.

Unpleasant/frightening symptoms you experience

Your beliefs and thoughts about these symptoms

Everyday things that you are avoiding

Current stresses in your life



Anxiety Diary

For a two week period (or longer if you prefer) keep an hourly diary of your anxiety and activity level. Rate your anxiety from 0-10. Note down anything that seems important. Were you at work or home, who were you with, what were you doing, and what were you thinking about? You may start to become more aware of situations that make you anxious or that you may even be avoiding. What is your general level of stress like? This information will help you begin to tackle your anxiety.

If we can break into the vicious circle we can learn ways of reducing our anxiety and getting it to be more manageable.

Problem Solving

If you become aware that you have a realistic worry or problem that you feel may be causing you anxiety, a problem solving approach may help.

A good way to begin is to write down a problem. Define it as clearly as you can, for example “I never have any money”, is too vague, something like “I owe £3,000 to different credit card companies” is more helpful. Next, write down as many possible solutions as you can. It doesn’t matter how silly you may think the solutions are the point is to think of as many as you can.

Try to think how you have solved similar problems in the past. Ask a friend what they might do.

Think to yourself what you might advise a friend to do if they had the same problem.

Problem/Worry	Possible Solution(s)
I owe £3,000 to different credit card companies	Get all debts on one loan with less interest Agree on affordable payments See a debt counsellor Get a part-time job Sell car

Choose what seem like the best solutions and write down all the steps it would take to achieve that solution, who might help? What might go wrong? Often it is helpful to think “what is the worst thing that could happen?” If you can think of a plan to cope with this, your anxiety might reduce.

This may be an exercise you wish to do with your keyworker.

Possible Solution(s)	Steps to achieve
See a debt counsellor	Get number from telephone book Phone and arrange an appointment Gather up all papers relating to debts Organise someone to look after children whilst at appointment Attend appointment with a friend

Relaxation

A Moment for Myself

Try to find time to relax at least once a day. Pick the same time each day if you can, so that relaxation becomes a natural part of your routine. Let people know not to call or visit you at this time. Find somewhere warm, comfortable and quiet to sit and contemplate. Play some music or light some candles to help create a mood of tranquillity. You might practise one of the relaxations techniques that follow or you might simply sit quietly and empty your mind of the events of the day.

In order to reduce the severity of physical symptoms it is useful to 'nip them in the bud' by recognising the early signs of tension. Once you have noticed early signs you can prevent anxiety becoming too severe by using relaxation techniques.

Relaxation is a skill like any other which needs to be learned and takes time. The following exercises teach deep relaxation, and many people find it very helpful in reducing overall levels of tensions and anxiety.



You may find it helpful to get a friend or your keyworker to read the instructions to you. Don't try too hard just let it happen.

Deep Muscle Relaxation

- Lie down, get comfortable and close your eyes.
- Concentrate on your breathing for a few minutes, breathing slowly and calmly; in two-three and out two-three. Say words “calm” and “relax” to yourself as you breathe out.
- Starting with your hands, breathe in and clench one fist tightly. Think about the tension this produces in the muscles of your hand and forearm. Study the tension for a few seconds and then breath out and relax your hand. Notice the difference between the tension and the relaxation. You might feel a slight tingling; this is the relaxation beginning to develop.
- Do the same with the other hand.
- Bend your elbows and tense your arms. Feel the tension especially in your upper arms. Remember, do this for a few seconds and then relax.
- Press your head back and roll it from side to side slowly. Feel how the tension moves. Then bring your head forward into a comfortable position.
- There are several muscles on your face but it is enough to just think about your forehead and jaw. First lower your eyebrows in a frown. Relax your forehead. You can also raise your eyebrows and then relax. Now clench your jaw, notice the difference when you relax.
- Take a deep breath, tense your chest and hold it for a few seconds, notice the tension then relax. Let your breathing return to normal.
- Tense your stomach muscles as tight as you can and relax.
- Squeeze your buttocks together and relax.
- Straighten your legs and bend your feet towards your face. Finish by wiggling your toes.



The Complete Breath

- Remove your shoes, loosen your clothing and lie down on the floor with your eyes closed and your arms relaxed by your sides. Breathe in slowly through your nose and visualize your lungs expanding and filling with air as you do so. When you have reached your maximum lung capacity, hold your breath for a moment before exhaling slowly (through your nose) to empty your lungs fully.
- On the next in-breath keep the inhalation short (2-3 seconds) then gradually increase the length of every exhalation until it takes 7-8 seconds.
- Concentrate on keeping the air movement slow and continuous (don't breathe out too quickly and then hold your breath for the end of the count before breathing in again). Continue for as long as you feel comfortable.

Make Your Escape

- Sit comfortably, close your eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths. In your mind's eye visualize a brightly coloured hot-air balloon anchored to the ground.
- The balloon seems inviting - a great way to escape the pressures of the day. It sways gently in the breeze. Imagine that you climb into the wicker basket.
- You look down, trying to work out how to take off and you see that the basket is weighed down by stones - these stones represent your everyday problems.
- You heave the stones over the side, one by one. The basket soon starts to wobble and before long the balloon begins to drift upwards. High up in the sky you feel free - spend a few moments imagining that you navigate in the gentle breeze under a warm welcoming sun



Visualization - Desert Island

- Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Retreat in your mind to a small desert island with golden sand, turquoise sea and lush tropical trees.
- Use all of your senses to explore this imaginary world: feel the warm sun on your skin, the soft sand beneath your feet and the gentle breeze blowing through your hair. Revel in the vibrant flashes of red, yellow and orange in the birds and flowers; smell the scent of jasmine or the salty scent of the sea. What sounds can you hear?
- Delight in this scene until you feel calm. When you feel ready, gently bring your awareness back to the present.



Visualization - Secret Garden

- Sit comfortably in a quiet place with low lighting. Close your eyes and imagine your favourite colour - allow this colour to cover your whole field of vision.
- Now visualize a garden filled with plants and flowers - splashes of green with yellow, orange, red, pink and white. Wisps of cloud float in a blue sky and golden sunlight filters down through the trees.
- Bring in your sense of smell and hearing. You can detect the scent of roses and honeysuckle in the air. In the background you hear the buzz of insects and the wind rustling in the leaves, while birds chirrup and sing. Tune into these scents and sounds for a moment as you drift into a relaxed, meditative state.
- When you feel ready to do so let the image of the garden slowly fade from your mind and gently open your eyes.



Sleep

Everyone needs sleep. It is almost important to your health and well-being as food. Although your body always makes sure you get enough sleep to survive, getting enough sleep to feel refreshed, alert and ready to face the day isn't so easy.

There are two types of sleep:

REM - when you dream and go over the day's events

NON-REM - when the body is resting and recharging

We pass through cycles of these two types of sleep - every 90 minutes we have a period of REM sleep.



Some common myths about sleep:

People need an average of 8 hours sleep per night

FALSE

Different people need different amounts of sleep; some people can get by quite well of 5 hours, others need 10

As you get older you need more sleep

FALSE

The older you get the less sleep you need

If I don't get enough sleep I will become ill

FALSE

Our bodies take as much sleep as they need - lack of sleep might make us feel uncomfortable but it won't make us ill

If you don't get to sleep in 30 minutes you should give up and take a sleeping tablet

FALSE

The use of sleeping tablets will only mask any bad sleeping habits you might develop

Virtually everyone who stops misusing substances will have some trouble with their sleep pattern. You may have a problem with getting off to sleep or that you are constantly aware during the night. This can make you feel irritable, bad-tempered and worn-out. It may also affect your concentration and memory.

It is not surprising that many people become frustrated by sleeping problems and that it is a common cause of relapse. Sleep problems tend to develop over a long period but in time it should improve, although this can take several weeks. There is no quick solution to sleep problems but there are some strategies that you can use to improve your sleep pattern.



Regulate you 'body clock'

Your body clock is your body's sense of whether it is time to be asleep or awake. Your body clock can be affected by things like going to bed in the early hours of the morning, getting up later in the day and sleeping during the day. Get into a routine - go to bed and get up at the same time each day. Avoid napping during the day. This may mean making fairly big changes to the way you organise your day and night. Getting into a routine that sets your body clock so you can sleep at night is a really important part of sorting out sleep problems.

Check your sleeping arrangements

Think about comfort, temperature, light and noise levels.

Learn to de-stress before bed

Dismiss nagging thoughts by writing them down. Have a warm bath, practise a relaxation technique, or listen to a relaxation tape (but don't read or watch TV in bed).

Don't eat late

Avoid rich, spicy or sugar-rich foods, red meat and cheese. Choosing wholemeal, low-fat, magnesium-rich foods (green salads, broccoli, nuts and seeds) may encourage sleep, as may drinking hot milk.

Get enough exercise

Fit people sleep better.

Don't toss and turn

If you can't sleep, get up after 30 minutes and go through your relaxation routine. Repeat this as often as you need to.

Avoid nicotine and caffeine

Both are stimulant drugs and they increase your heart rate and release adrenaline. Although many smokers feel that cigarettes calm them down, nicotine does not have any sedating effect - it only feels calming because it relieves nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

Self-Esteem

We tend to go through life evaluating ourselves and others according to a scale of worth. The idea of self esteem is the amount of value that we consider we are worth. These values vary from person to person. Whilst we might rate ourselves as being of little value, others might rate us much higher. If we get into the habit of thinking negatively about ourselves then low self esteem or placing little value on ourselves is the result.

Low self esteem can be a result of negative life experiences, particularly when we're young and most vulnerable. These experiences may include being criticised or judged negatively such as from a parent or school bullies. As adults abusive relationships and very stressful life events can also cause low self esteem.

Low self esteem can stay low because of our self-critical thoughts which can be triggered by criticism or perceived criticism (even if none is intended we believe we are being criticised).

Low self-esteem can affect our emotions, thoughts and behaviours. We can think "I'm so stupid", "It's my fault", "I'm not good enough". We can try to please others, get defensive when we believe we're being criticised. We can be shy and passive around others, avoid situations and people and neglect or abuse ourselves.

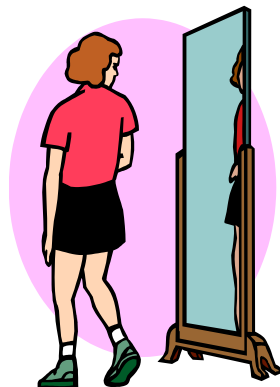


The above illustrates how these thoughts and behaviours can keep our self-esteem low.

Your Self-Esteem

Take a few minutes to write down a short description of yourself.

How did you describe yourself? What words did you use? Is your description of yourself generally positive, balanced or negative? What value did you place on yourself or aspects of yourself? Is that value positive, balanced or negative?



Take some time to discuss that above with your keyworker.

Challenge your negative thoughts

Jot down some negative thoughts you have about yourself in the first box and then use the next box to identify thoughts to challenge them. You may wish to do the first few with your keyworker then the rest on your own.

Negative Thought	Challenge
I am just not good enough.	I am not perfect. Like everyone else. I am good at some things and not so good at others.
I'm hopeless at everything. I'll never sort myself out like this.	Just take one step at a time. Totally condemning myself is nonsense. I've overcome more difficult problems than this.

Making Changes

Doing things differently:

- Communicate with others assertively;
- Set achievable and realistic goals - when you achieve them congratulate and treat yourself and allow others to congratulate you;
- Accept compliments - say thank you and smile;
- Act the person you want to be - play the role for long enough and you become that person;
- Visualise positive change;
- Look after yourself - eat healthily, exercise, do more things you enjoy doing;
- Stand, walk and talk confidently;
- Change your image - hair, clothes, make-up;
- Take up a new hobby or interest;
- Learn a new skill;
- Reward yourself for achievements and successes - however small;
- Thank others - show your appreciation and others will appreciate you;
- Do things for others - help someone out - it makes us feel better about ourselves;
- If you can do something well, let others notice - when they notice your work, so their opinion of you will be raised which in turn raises your own self-esteem.

Think differently:

STOP! Pause, take a breath, and ask yourself:

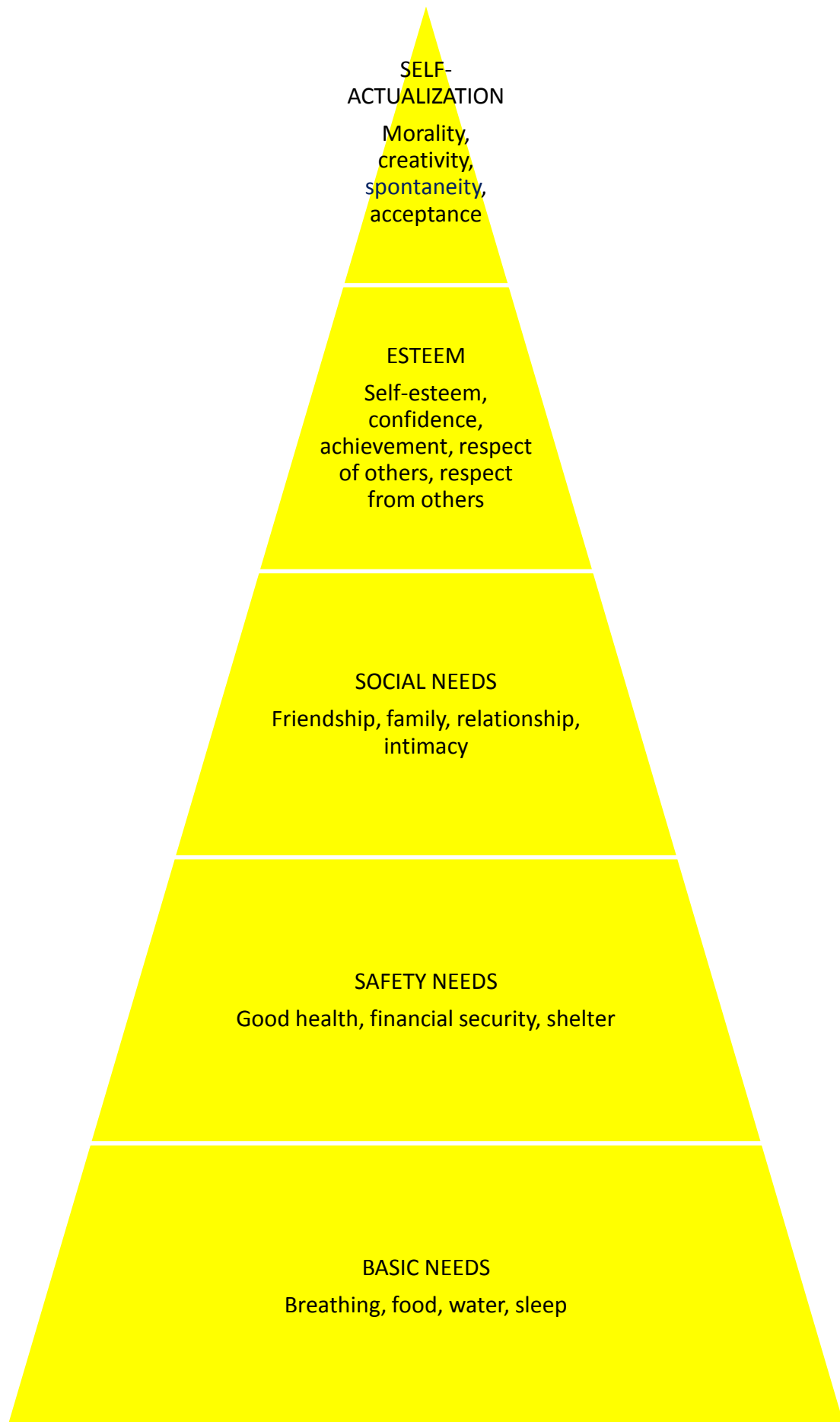
- What am I reacting to? What have I been thinking about here?
- Is that 'internal critic' operating again?
- Am I looking at things through those gloomy specs again? IS there another way of looking at it?
- Am I getting things out of proportion?
- How important is this really? How important will it be in 6 months time?
- Am I expecting something from myself that is unrealistic?
- What's the worst (and best) that could happen? What's the most likely to happen?
- What would I think about someone else in this situation?
- Am I spending time fixed about the past or worrying about the future? What could I do right now that would help me feel better?



Unmet Needs... do you have any?



As human beings we all have various needs; from basic (food and water) to social (being part of a family and having relationships) and emotional (good self-esteem and confidence). When these needs are not met the person is unfilled and unhappy. A man called Abraham Maslow undertook lots of studies on this subject and developed a theory 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs'. Maslow believed that we all have needs and they need to be met in a particular order. He represented his theory in the shape of a pyramid.



This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

You may wish to do this exercise individually or with your keyworker. Answer the following questions - can you say yes to any of them?

Do you have people in your life who are important to you and to whom you are important to?

Do you feel secure in your home life, work life, environment?

Do you feel you receive enough attention?

Do you think you give other people enough attention?

Do you feel in control of your life most of time?

Do you feel part of the wider community?

Can you get privacy when you need it?

Do you have a least one close friend?

Do you have an intimate relationship in your life?

Do you feel an emotional connection to others?

Are you achieving things in your life that you are proud of?

Do you feel competent in at least one major area in your life?

Are you mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense of meaning and purpose?

Take some time to identify any unmet needs you may have, thinking about the questions and the pyramid above.

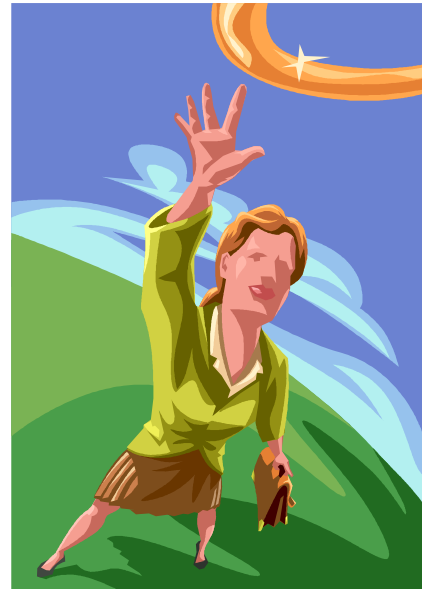
How might you fulfil the needs now?

Life Goals

It is always useful to have 'goals' about what you want from your life. Whether these are around relationships, work, housing, money or anything else you want to achieve.

Take some time to write down any goals you wish to reach and how you can achieve them.

Once you have done this, meet with your keyworker to discuss.



Goal	How can you do this/get there?