



University
of Exeter

Cedar

STAYING WELL



A Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
evidence-based approach to help you
stay well after your treatment.

WELCOME!

Well done on choosing to use this workbook! You have already put time and effort into improving your mental health, so it is important to think about how you can keep feeling well in the future. This workbook is designed to help with that.

Difficult events can happen to anyone. When they do, it is helpful to have a plan to remember the things you've learnt and that have worked in the past. We hope this workbook can help support you in these times.



You may have come across this workbook on your own or it may have been suggested to you by a health professional supporting you to work through it. Either way, you're in control of how you decide to use it.

The aim of this workbook

This workbook can be useful throughout your treatment and after it ends to help you to stay well. It will support you to make progress, notice your learning and be better able to respond to problems in the future. Within this workbook you will learn how to:

- Recognise progress and what has helped during treatment
- Keep good habits going
- Plan how to manage future difficulties
- Spot early signs of a relapse
- Check-in on your progress after treatment
- Learn ways to help you stay healthy

“I was worried about ending treatment and having to deal with things alone. My practitioner was helpful in reminding me that the improvements I’ve made have come from the skills I’ve learnt, which I can continue to use to keep on top of things”

“Realising that many people go through similar experiences has helped me accept that what I was experiencing wasn’t unusual, and like many others I can manage this!”

“I found it helpful to remember that I haven’t failed if I slip back into my old ways or habits. Being able to use new strategies from treatment has given me new ways to feel in control and manage my problems”

“It was helpful to see treatment as equipping me with skills to deal with these problems in the future. In the same way that a physio may prescribe you exercises to help with a recurring pain, this psychological treatment has given me good practices to help me address any future problems I may have with my mental health”



RECOGNISING YOUR PROGRESS

Problem Statement

A problem statement can be created with your mental health professional, early in your treatment. It is a summary of your main problem. As a record of when things were difficult, it can also be used to measure progress and track wellbeing changes. While working with a mental health professional it can be helpful to keep looking back on your problem statement.

Below is an example problem statement:

“I have been feeling low in mood since I was made redundant last year. I feel tired all the time, I have stopped seeing my friends and I am struggling to do any hours in my new job even though I can’t afford to not work. I often have thoughts that I’m not good enough and I’m letting my family down. I feel sad and ashamed. As a result I am isolating myself and am at risk of losing my zero hours contract.”

If you have developed a problem statement, please record it here:

If you are starting to use this workbook while also starting to work with a mental health professional, it can be helpful to regularly reflect on whether there are changes to this problem statement. If you find it helpful, changes can be recorded in the notes section at the end of this workbook.

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on this statement. Perhaps underline or highlight anything that is noticeable at difficult times. These can be helpful warning signs that you need to use a tool or strategy to help manage how you are feeling.



If you didn't write a problem statement at the start of your treatment, you can still make a note of any symptoms you remember experiencing. It can be helpful to think about these in five different categories:

The main difficulties that I experienced were

My main problem was...
This made me think...
Which made me feel...
My body felt...
The impact of this was...

Recovery Statement

A recovery statement is when you write down how your life has changed since working on your mental health. It shows how the work you did made a difference to different parts of your life. It allows you to notice how things are different from when the problem statement was written.

Making a recovery statement can be really useful to remember what you have achieved. This can be especially useful if things are feeling more difficult. It can remind us of what we can do and help us have confidence we can do it again if we need to.

Below is an example recovery statement:

“Since completing treatment I feel more energised and positive about the future. I don’t feel as tired or down and I have been able to go out with my friends sometimes. I have made a start on clearing out my wardrobe and selling some clothes. I’ve enjoyed having things to look forward to and the money I’ve earned selling some clothes brings me a sense of achievement. I want to keep planning in things I enjoy and make sure I prioritise these. I’m also still planning in important but manageable activities I need to keep on top of. As a result I’m getting to meet new people and being more productive at work and home.”



You may find the following questions helpful prompts to help you to make your recovery statement:

- What improvements have you noticed to your main problem? Since you wrote your problem statement, what good changes have you noticed?
- What changes have you noticed in your symptoms? Since you started working with the mental health professional, how have your difficulties changed?
- What techniques or skills have you learnt that you will continue to use to keep yourself well?
- What impact have the techniques had on important areas of your life? It may be helpful to reflect on how your difficulties impacted your life and note down any positive differences you have noticed.

When you are at the end of your treatment, please record your recovery statement here:

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on this statement. It is important to recognise the progress you have made and the impact of how you are feeling now. It may be helpful to highlight the changes that have made the biggest difference so you can remember how you turned things around in the future.



Your Tools and Resources

If you are, or have been, working with a mental health professional, you are likely to have used different tools and resources which may include workbooks like this one. It can be helpful to keep a record here of the workbooks you have used and also any specific resources or strategies you have found especially useful in helping improve your mental health. You can use the table below to help with this.

It's important to recognise the strategies, tools and skills that have helped you get to where you are now. We will revisit these during the My Reviews section (page 16).

Name of Resource	Page numbers/sections which I found useful	Reflections on Learning

WHAT IS A LAPSE?

It is normal to experience fluctuations in mood or anxiety as we journey through life's ups and downs. Everyone faces problems changes at different times, which may be linked to a specific situation, but this is not always the case. These things can all impact on our mood. Most people will experience a **lapse** which are times when your symptoms come back. This is common and does not mean that all the progress you have made is lost. Often things start to improve again with a little extra attention.

WHAT IS A RELAPSE?

If you have a period of feeling better, then you notice difficult symptoms return and stay, this may be a **relapse**. This may or may not be in response to a difficult time or situation. These symptoms might mean it becomes more difficult to use skills learnt during treatment and we may notice going back to old or less helpful ways of coping. This can then result in our symptoms getting worse over time. It is important if we notice a relapse that we take action to address this.

WHAT IS RELAPSE PREVENTION?

Relapse prevention is another way of talking about 'staying well' for as long as possible. It is also about knowing what to do when times get difficult.

Relapse prevention isn't about constant happiness; feeling bad is part of life. While we can't avoid unexpected stressors or mood shifts, we can control how we respond to them.



STAYING WELL

Through the work you have already done, you have made positive changes and achieved personal goals. The aim of 'staying well' is to keep those changes going, so you stay in control of your future. You can do this by taking your new skills and making them habits so they become a familiar part of a well-lived life. Habits are easier to do when we practice them regularly.

Even with the best intentions, carrying on with good habits can be difficult. We all have a list of things we intend to do, but actually doing it is often much harder. How often do people manage to stick to New Years resolutions? Evidence has shown it can be helpful to plan where and when to do things. Having the plan in place means you do not need to make a decision or feel motivated, you just need to follow the plan.

A plan can help you create good habits that will maintain your mental health. If it is made clear enough, with enough repetition, you will automatically do the thing at the time and place you hope to.

Here is an example:

The Plan	Where and When
To meet my friend for a coffee	Every other Saturday at 10am at the coffee shop on the corner of my street
To walk my dog	Every evening at 5pm before I make dinner



There will be times when you won't be able to implement your plan, so it is also useful to have 'if-then' plans. Having these in place means unexpected challenges will be less likely to cause problems and helpful habits can be maintained:

If	Then
I've had a bad sleep and don't want to go out	I will remind myself how much the dog needs the walk, and that I do enjoy it once I am out
I feel down	I will message my friend to let them know I am having a bad day and want to talk about it over coffee
It is raining	I will have a waterproof or umbrella ready to help me stay dry on the walk

It is important to make sure that these plans are **specific** enough so when they occur it brings to mind the response you have planned. It can be helpful to share your plans with someone who supports you, perhaps a friend or family member who can also offer encouragement.

Struggling to think of a good habit? The Five Ways to Wellbeing may be a helpful on page 18.



It is also important to make sure the plans are **realistic**, and you do not set too many at once. Perhaps start with 2 or 3. If they do seem to be too difficult, you can change them to be more achievable.





It can be really helpful to keep a record of how your plans are going. You can use the blank record sheets below and keep a note of successes and any barriers. You can use the tables below, or keep notes on your smart phone or in a diary.

The Plan	When and Where	Notes
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
If	Then	Notes

MEDICATION

People take medication for many reasons, for both physical and mental health. Sometimes, medication can be helpful to get through tough times. When life becomes easier, the medication can be stopped. Other medications become part of day to day living and it is much better to carry on taking them as prescribed.

If you do take medication, the choice is yours and you can always change your mind. When medication is taken for a while, it is important to regularly speak to a health professional (often your GP or a Mental Health professional if they are still offering you support). To make sure the medication works as well as it can, sometimes people need to change how much they take, take it in a different way, or use another type of medication. A review can be helpful to check how well it is working and get information and guidance. If, at any time, you think changes to your medication are needed, speak to your GP (or whoever prescribed the medication).



People also stop taking medication for lots of reasons.

- You might not want to take it anymore as a personal preference.
- You might feel your wellbeing has improved for a while and do not want to keep taking it.
- You may find your medication has stopped helping and would prefer to try different ways to cope.
- You may have side effects from medication that impact on your life in a negative way.

Remember, it is important to speak to your health professional before changing how you use medication.

Coming off medication is a personal decision and discussing this with a professional can help to think about the advantages and disadvantages of stopping medication. It is also important you stop medication under the guidance of your health professional, usually this needs to be slow and gradually and your health professional can work with you to create a plan to do this safely.





EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Early warning signs are clues to look for so old problems do not have chance to sneak up on you. If maintaining good mental health starts to become more difficult, you might notice your behaviours, physical feelings, emotions and thoughts start to change. Left alone, they can work together to create a vicious cycle which keeps the problem going and allows it to grow bigger. If we notice the changes as soon as possible, the cycle can be stopped before it gets too bad.

Some of these triggers may be the similar to the symptoms recorded earlier page 4.



Knowing your early warning signs is one of those two important tasks we mentioned. Make a note of your early warning signs here:

My Behaviours
My Emotions
My Physical Symptoms
My Unhelpful Thoughts

It could be useful to have some help with this. You could consider sharing this with supportive friends or family. Is there anything they might notice that would be useful to make a note of here?



MY TRIGGERS

Now you have identified your early warning signs, it is also helpful to identify your triggers. These are different for everybody and hopefully you know some of these from the treatment you have worked through. For some people, their triggers are about specific life events which cause them stress. For some people they might notice certain times of year are more difficult. For some people they can be about changes in the people around us, or busier times. Take a moment to write down your triggers in the table below.

My Triggers



MY REVIEWS

As well as taking time to know your early warning signs, it can also be helpful to continue reviewing your progress after you have finished your treatment. You can use the chart below to help you do this. This regular review can help you to recognise what is going well, how to keep this going and also identify any areas that may need some additional support. This can also help you to think about the next steps you can take to stay well.

Some of these triggers may be the similar to the symptoms recorded earlier on page 4.



Check-in date	
How have things been since my last check-in?	
What has gone well?	
What am I finding useful or helpful? How can I keep up this progress?	
What am I finding unhelpful or more difficult? Has anything been challenging for me?	
What could I do next? What has helped me before? What have I learnt that could be helpful?	
Next steps: What am I going to do? When will I do it?	
Date of next check-in	

By knowing how to recognise your early warning signs, and undertaking your regular check-ins, you are in a good position to take positive actions to help you to stay well. Through this workbook, you have developed a toolkit you can draw on, which includes:

- The strategies, tools and skills you have learnt (page 7)
- The plans you have put in place to help good behaviours become habits (page 11)
- Recognising your early warning signs (page 14)
- Regularly reviewing how you are (page 16)

It is important to know who you can talk to if you notice things are more difficult to manage on your own. You could contact your GP or access your local NHS mental health service for support.



FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is an evidence-based approach to help people have good mental health. It can be difficult to think of ways to create positive experiences during difficult times. You may feel unsure of where to start. The Five Ways to Wellbeing can help you think about ways to put your mental health first.

These ways to wellbeing can be useful to think about when creating plans and good habits on page 11.



1. Connect



2. Activity

3. Take notice



4. Learn

5. Give



1. Connect

Finding ways to connect with others can create positive shared experiences and help us feel heard and valued.

- **Arrange regular meetups with others.** It could be scheduling a monthly date night, coffee with friends or video call with someone if you cannot meet in-person.
- **Re-connect with someone you haven't spoken to in a while.** You could give them a call, write a letter or send a message to let them know you are thinking of them.
- **Get to know others better.** You could participate in a befriending service or meet others through hobbies and voluntary work to connect with people who share similar interests.



2. Activity

Activity can produce chemicals which boost our mood, bring a sense of accomplishment and improve our physical health. Activity can take lots of forms and doesn't just mean exercise!

- **Make it fun.** It's important to find an activity that makes you feel good. Some good examples are gardening, yoga, dancing, swimming, sports, but you could also try an activity you've never done before!
- **Try opting-into activity.** This could look like taking the stairs rather than the lift, walking or cycling to work, meeting someone in-person rather than calling.
- **Not sure where to start?** The NHS has helpful [physical activity guidelines](#) including for wheelchair users. These can provide some ideas of where to start.



3. Take notice

Observing what's happening within and around you can improve awareness of how you are feeling and draw attention to the present moment.

- **Practice mindfulness.** As we go about our lives, we can engage the senses and notice new colours or sights, exciting tastes or flavours, soothing sounds, smells and textures.
- **Observe the within.** Acknowledge that our minds are busy, and thoughts will come and go, but we don't need to try to control them. It may be helpful to name any thoughts or emotions to help with noticing and letting them pass; "This feeling is anxiety"; "That thought was about missing the bus tomorrow".
- **Using gratitude.** Try writing a list of three things you are grateful for. Sometimes appreciating the little things can help us recognise the small blessings in each day.



4. Learn

Learning can be a rewarding way to develop your skills in an area you are interested in, providing a sense of achievement and greater self-confidence.

- **Do something new.** Try cooking a new recipe, read about something you'd like to understand more or learn a new practical skill such as DIY.
- **Learn and connect.** Sign up to a course or group, ask a friend or family member to share a skill with you or offer to teach someone a skill that you have already.
- **Find clear and easy-to-understand guides.** There are lots of places where you can learn using video tutorials to go at your own pace.



5. Give

Giving can be a powerful way to share skills, resources and positivity with others and the world.

- **Show appreciation.** Tell someone in your life what you admire about them, do a random act of kindness or go out of your way to say thank you to someone.
- **Community and causes.** Volunteer within your community, fundraise for a charity or donate time or what you can afford to a cause you feel passionately about.
- **Environment.** Recycle what you can, upcycle what you aren't using into something you can use, and reuse what you already own.



NOT THE END

As you reach the end of this workbook, you have put together a plan for staying well. You have met your problems and found a way to overcome them. The authors of this workbook recognise and celebrate that success, but what matters far more is that you can look back and let yourself be proud of what you have achieved. Your Problem Statement shows how challenging things were, your Recovery Statement reminds you of your strength and abilities to overcome these challenges.

Your achievement has come from changing your behaviours and how you think: because you made those changes, you could break the vicious cycle. You have recorded a plan to turn those changes into good habits, making it difficult for the vicious cycle to start again. Those good habits will be a powerful protection from low mood, anxiety and other difficult emotions.

You now know the difference between lapse and relapse. With this in mind, you made a list of warning signs, so you can tell when your difficult days become something more. The earlier you spot those signs, the earlier you can take action. Taking action sooner means you can be back on the right track before the problems take a hold on your life. But, one day you might find yourself in a very hard situation and even your good habits aren't enough to shield you from ill health. In this book, you now have a plan for that too. You know the things to do and the people who can help.

Together, these things equip you to take on the world and if you get knocked down, you have the best chance of getting up as quickly as you can.

Well done for making the commitment to yourself to stay well through this workbook and the positive steps you are taking. Keeping this regular practice to maintain your recovery is a worthwhile journey.

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Workbooks for common mental health difficulties](#) These workbooks provide tools and techniques to help manage difficulties, which can be used alongside this resource to support you.

[Urgent support](#) Who to contact if you need to speak to someone right now.

[Mental wellbeing questionnaire](#) A helpful tool to review to explore and reflect on your wellbeing.

[Healthy living guidance](#) A healthy lifestyle can promote physical and mental wellbeing.

[Stories of Hope](#) Stories from people who have experience of mental illness and reflections on what keeps them well.

These links were selected at the time the workbook was published.





MY NOTES

AUTHORS

Liz Kell: Liz is Co-Director of the Low Intensity CBT Portfolio within Cedar; Psychology. She is a highly experienced Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner having initially trained over 20 years ago. Liz has significant industry experience including involvement in national workforce developments, championing new roles within the Psychological Professions. Liz has worked in Higher Education focused on the training and development of Psychological Professions, particularly PWP's for over 10 years. She has also authored self-help books and developed workbooks to help people manage their mental health and wellbeing.

Rose Wysocka: Rose is a Lecturer on the Level 6 Certificate in Psychological Wellbeing Practice programme within Cedar; Psychology. She worked as a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner

and has held various positions in student mental health organisations. Rose leads the OCD training for trainee and qualified PWP's and is a co-author of the Overcoming OCD workbook. Outside of work, Rose is involved in a local Church and enjoys travelling and running.

Shane Fitzgerald: Shane has held various positions in Cedar over the last eight years, creating and developing psychotherapy programmes and leading on peer support worker training. Currently, he is joint Clinical Lead with High Intensity CBT and Clinical/Academic Lead with Mental Health Wellbeing Practitioner programmes. He has practiced as a therapist since 2000, in voluntary organisations, the NHS, the private sector, and in private practice. Despite liking music, he sings with a shanty crew.