

Disorientation / Appearing Confused

Feeling lost, not knowing where you are...?

What is disorientation?

Disorientation is a state in which a person may not know where they are, who they are, or what day it is. People may look dazed or have a lack of clarity in their thoughts. It can be hard for them to make sense of what is happening around them. Some people may appear confused and unclear about things.

How can I detect confusion or disorientation?

- Not knowing what day, date or time it is.
- Uncertain about where you are.
- Not sure of who you are.
- A lack of attention.
- Disorganised thinking.
- Lower level of consciousness, for example seeming very drowsy.
- A lack of clear thinking or behaviour.
- Feeling bewildered, overwhelmed or puzzled.
- Getting lost easily.
- Losing your train of thought.
- Feeling uncertain of how to do things or get places.

'Alan's' Story

'Alan' is a man in his early sixties diagnosed with a Glioblastoma (high grade tumour) in his left parietal lobe. He is very unwell and has undergone several courses of cancer treatment. 'Alan' has been showing some confusion in that he will stop in the middle of a speech, appearing to lose his train of thought. He has difficulty keeping track of the days and sometimes gets confused about what month it is. 'Alan' often appears aimless at home as he gets up out of his chair and wanders

into the kitchen without any plan of what he is doing. He needs help all the time when he goes out, as he is likely to get lost and no longer feels safe outside his home. His wife has now left work to be his full time carer and has to give him daily support and comfort.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- Use a whiteboard or timetable to write out your daily and weekly routine (Resource sheet – Timetable).
- Use lists to outline tasks that you need to do and tick off each task when it is done.
- Cross off days on a calendar to identify the day and date.
- Ask someone to come with you when you go to appointments.

For the carer or family member

- Maintain a regular routine.
- Label rooms or objects with names or symbols.
- Use a wall calendar and cross off the days with your family member.
- Let the person know daily, what day it is and the date.
- Give reassurance and reminders of where they are and where they are going.
- Give them help in making decisions.
- Try to give them only one piece of information at a time.
- Limit the number of people in the room at any one time.
- Keep noise levels as low as possible.
- Lay clothes out for the day if they are having difficulty working out what to wear.

KEY FACTS

A survey of people with a brain tumour found that:

- 37% frequently became confused.
- 13% were frequently or almost always disorganised.

- Try to only give simple, single step instructions and repeat them if needed.
- Make sure they feel safe and keep an eye on them to give any help they need.

Questions to ask your health professional

- What is the cause of the confusion?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the confusion/ disorientation be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the confusion/ disorientation to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle factors that can help the confusion/ disorientation?
- Will a psychologist be able to help treat this problem?



Links to other information:

- http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/documents/behaviour_mgt/changes_strategies.pdf

Perseveration

Do you repeat yourself or get stuck like a broken record... ?

What is perseveration?

Perseveration is getting stuck on something. It may be an activity, word, phrase, question or movement, such as tapping, wiping, or picking that is repeated again and again even when it is not appropriate for the situation at hand. Think of children on a long journey who ask every five minutes 'Are we there yet?' Perseverating is sounding or acting 'like a broken record'.

How do I know if I have perseveration?

- You keep asking the same question over and over again even when given an answer.
- Keep saying the same phrase or word.
- Repeating the same behaviour such as tapping the foot or scratching.
- Getting stuck on one idea and not being able to shift to a different idea.
- Bringing up a topic that has already been talked about over and over again.
- Unable to change your train of thought.
- Keep eating even though you may not be hungry.
- Appear to act in a very stubborn way.

'George's' Story

Since his diagnosis 'George' talks about his tumour and other favourite topics all the time. He seems to get 'stuck' on these topics and nothing can stop him once he starts. When someone else is talking, he does not really listen because he wants to get back to telling his story. He talks over and over about the tumour, retelling his experiences to as many people as he can. It does not matter if they have heard the story many times before. Other people find this boring but it is hard to get him to talk about other topics. His family members can be quite rude to him. They tell him to be quiet or just walk away when he starts on one of his stories. He finds this upsetting but it still does not stop his perseveration.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- Try to use lists and tick off the activities or tasks as you go.
- Set time limits for tasks to keep you on track.
- Write out tasks in steps so you don't spend too long on one task or thought.
- Try to let other people have their say when you are talking with them.

KEY FACTS

Carers of people with a brain tumour who were surveyed said that 28% of their relatives frequently repeated certain actions or got stuck on ideas.

For the Carer/family member

- Try gentle distraction to shift focus away from repetition.
- Let them know that you have heard what they have been saying, and try to direct them to another task or activity that is enjoyable.
- Set up a timetable to limit the time spent on activities that get repeated over and over again.
- Try to keep your patience.
- If you start feeling stressed, walk away and give yourself a time out.
- Note the triggers that might cause an activity to be repeated and try to avoid those situations. For example, if driving past a familiar takeaway food outlet makes the person repeatedly ask for food, select another route.



Questions to ask your health professional

- What is the cause of the perseveration?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the perseveration be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the perseveration to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Will a psychologist be able to help treat this problem?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle factors that can help with the perseveration?

Links to other information

- <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/fact-sheets/perseveration---fact-sheet.html>

Being Self-Centred (Egocentricity)

Do you only think about yourself and find it hard to see other people's point of view...?

What is egocentricity?

Egocentricity is the characteristic of regarding oneself and one's own opinions or interests as the most important. The person may be more focused on his or her own needs, feelings, and circumstances. Egocentricity can also be defined as self-centredness or the inability to entertain feelings and thoughts of others. Self-centredness can occur as the person with a brain tumour's ability to empathise with others is damaged.

How do I know that I am egocentric?

- Lack awareness of the needs and rights of yourself and others.
- Seem to be selfish about your own needs.
- Be demanding or unreasonable when dealing with others.
- Fail to see or have difficulty understanding other people's point of view or their ideas.
- Not appreciate carers or family members.
- Have limited concern or even notice the needs of others.
- Find it hard to pick up what other people are feeling.
- Seem very focussed on your own needs or ideas.
- Want things done 'right now'!
- Have difficulty waiting.
- Become jealous or upset when activities and conversation do not centre on yourself.
- Want to take up all of your time and gets upset if others leave you.
- Unable to understand how others are feeling.

'John's' Story

'John' is a 42-year-old man with a high-grade frontal tumour. His wife says that 'John' used to be a thoughtful, considerate husband and father. His family are deeply upset by his diagnosis and have made many sacrifices since his hospital discharge but he tells them they have not helped him at all. No matter what his wife is doing, 'John' wants her to drop everything to do the smallest tasks for him whenever he asks. If she doesn't do it straight away, he gets angry and shouts at her. 'John's' wife gave up her job that she loved to look after him full-time. This has taken up so much of her time and been so tiring that respite was set up one day a fortnight so that she could do something as simple as have coffee with her friends for an afternoon. Every time she goes on these well-deserved breaks, 'John' sulks and complains that she doesn't really care about him.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- Try to look at situations from the other person's point of view.
- Try to 'step out of your shoes' and into the other person's 'shoes' and think about what life is like for them, and how you would feel if they treated you the same way you treated them.
- Tell yourself that other people have their own needs as well and can't spend all their time helping you.
- Take four deep breaths to help calm down if you are having to wait for someone to come to your aid (Controlled Breathing Resource sheet).

KEY FACTS

Carers of people with a brain tumour found that 25% of their relatives were more likely to be insensitive towards the needs of other people.

For the Carer

- Avoid sacrificing all of your life to meet the needs of the person with a brain tumour. Meeting the needs of the person with a brain tumour is important but not at the cost of failing to meet your own needs.
- Be aware that carers who are able to have some of their own needs met are happier. They are also better able to care for their relative over the longer term.
- Try not to let the person with a brain tumour get to the point where they expect that all their demands will be met.
- Be aware that your relative may be having real difficulty even thinking about your needs because of the damage the tumour has caused to the brain. You can help them by being clear about the importance of having space and time to meet your own needs.
- Be aware that the more you do things for the person, the more they can grow into the habit of relying on you for everything. Even if it takes them longer to do something for themselves, encourage them to do so whenever it is possible.



- Set up some rules about your time and your space. This is a win-win situation. It will help you and also help your relative.
- Manage your own stress levels in a positive manner to avoid carer burnout (see Resource sheet on Stress Management).

Questions to ask your health professional

- What is the cause of the self-centredness?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the self-centredness be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the self-centredness to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Will a psychologist be able to help treat this problem?

Links to other information:

- <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/fact-sheets/self-centredness---fact-sheet.html>
- Resource Sheet – Stress Management
- Resource Sheet – Controlled Breathing

Impulsivity

Do you sometimes act without thinking...?

What is impulsivity?

Impulsivity is appearing to act without thinking in advance. It can include a lack of control in the way a person speaks or acts.

How do I know if I am impulsive?

- Finding it hard to wait your turn.
- Speaking over the top of people or breaking into other people's conversations.
- Acting on an impulse without thinking the idea through.
- Not appearing to think about the consequences of what you do or say.
- May seem to be abrupt or rude to others.
- Act inappropriately toward other people.
- Get involved in dangerous activities without thinking about the possible risks.
- May spend unwisely large amounts of money on things you don't need or you already have.
- Come up with an idea and act on it without thinking it through.

'Jill's' Story

'Jill' is in her early thirties and was diagnosed with a large meningioma in her frontal lobe. Before her diagnosis, she was a fun-loving person, who liked to do things on the spur of the moment. She had a lot of friends and a busy social life. After surgery, she became extremely impulsive, rushing off on the first idea that came to head. She would travel to one side of town to buy a gelato. After starting to eat her ice cream, she would suddenly want to get back into the car and drive off to the beach on the other side of town

to buy fish and chips. 'Jill' would spend all her money on the day she was paid, buying unnecessary gifts for all her family and friends. She also went out and bought a puppy. A few days later the puppy became lost and was picked up by the pound. Just as quickly, 'Jill' then decided that she no longer wanted the dog.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- Use self-calming techniques to lower any feelings of agitation. For example, try relaxation or controlled breathing.
- Use positive self talk, telling yourself 'just wait your turn' or 'slow down'.
- Try to set goals and stick to them to stop acting on the spur of the moment.
- Plan things to do with family or friends to help make sure you are being realistic.
- Get someone else to manage your money and give you a set amount each day.

For the carer/family member

- Let the person know straight away if they have acted inappropriately, don't wait for a 'better time'.
- Give positive instructions for the right behaviour. For example, when the person is agitated and keeps interrupting, say 'when I have stopped speaking, then you can tell us your news', rather than 'shut up' or 'stop interrupting'.
- Aim to keep the person's behaviour at a set level and try to limit the number of lapses that occur. Otherwise the person's behaviour may start to get worse over time.

KEY FACTS

Carers of people with a brain tumour who were surveyed said that 19% of their relatives frequently or almost always acted impulsively.

- If the person has problems with spending too much money, give them a weekly amount and limit access to bank accounts or credit cards. You may need to think about seeking a financial management order (speak to the social worker or your solicitor about this matter).

Questions to ask your health professional

- What is the cause of the impulsivity?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the impulsivity be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the impulsivity to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Will a psychologist be able to help treat this problem?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle factors that can help with the impulsivity?

Links to other information:

- <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/fact-sheets/impulsivity---fact-sheet.html>
- Resource sheet - Controlled Breathing
- Resource sheet - Relaxation

Neglecting Personal Care / Looking after yourself

When how you look no longer seems to be important...

What is neglecting personal care?

Neglecting personal care is no longer caring about showering and dressing, and not feeling like cooking or eating meals. This lack of care with the way one looks and well being may be due to a range of problems including:

- Apathy
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Changes due to surgery or treatment.

How do I know if I am neglecting myself or not looking after myself?

- Not showering or washing your hair on a regular basis.
- If female, no longer caring about your looks such as wearing makeup or putting on nice clothes.
- Sitting around in pyjamas all day.
- Not worrying about trying to eat or having healthy meals.
- Avoid looking in the mirror because feeling upset about changes in looks because of:
 - o Scarring from surgery
 - o Hair loss from 'chemo'
 - o Changes to shape of face (becoming rounder and flatter – cushingoid) from steroid medications
 - o Putting on weight or losing a lot of weight due to treatment.

'Sandra's' Story

'Sandra' is a 38-year-old woman with a high-grade brain tumour. Since her diagnosis, she has needed a lot of help to carry out simple tasks such as personal care. 'Sandra' could not shower or get ready to go out by herself. She needed many prompts to do things such as rinse her hair after

shampooing, and to wash all parts of her body, particularly her back or legs. When dressing, she sometimes put her clothes on inside out or back to front and did not notice.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- With your family member break down tasks into steps and tick off each step when done (see Check List for Getting Ready).
- Set up a daily routine where you shower, clean your teeth and eat meals at the same time.
- Use a weekly timetable to set out activities and set times for all tasks including personal care.
- Use a Dosette box or Webster pack for any pills.
- Ask for help.
- Make sure you shower or take a bath every day.
- Always wear clean clothes that are tidy and ironed.
- Make sure you clean your teeth at least once per day (preferably twice).
- Use makeup to cover any scarring or facial changes, seek advice on makeup usage.
- Go to the hairdresser and seek advice about hairstyles after your surgery and keeping your hair in better condition.
- Use clothing or accessories to cover any unsightly scars.
- Purchase clothing in the right size to address any changes in your body from weight loss or gain.

KEY FACTS

- A survey of people with a brain tumour found that 9% sometimes or frequently neglected their personal care.
- Carers of people with a brain tumour who were surveyed indicated that 10% found the personal habits of their relative were very poor and they needed prompts from others.

For the carer/family member

- If a person is finding it hard to keep to a personal care routine, try giving regular prompts, but do not do everything for them.
- Give the person choices about what to do next to lower feelings of powerlessness.
- Set up tick lists, timetables or whiteboards with a daily or weekly routine (see Resource sheet – Timetable).
- Help them in setting out clothes for the day and the selection of appropriate clothing for their weight changes or the weather.
- Give them positive feedback and reassurance about their appearance when they make an effort.

Questions to ask your health professional

- What is the cause of the thinking problems?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the thinking problems be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the thinking problems to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Can a psychologist help to treat this problem?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle factors that can help the thinking problems?
- Who else could I speak with to help with the thinking problems?

Links to other information:

- Resource Sheet – Check List for Getting Ready
- Resource Sheet – Timetable

Low Mood – Depression

Do you feel sad, tearful, can't seem to enjoy yourself...?

What is Depression?

Depression is a mood state linked to changes in feelings and in a person's body. People have strong feelings of sadness, guilt or low self-worth. They can also lose interest or pleasure in activities that they usually enjoy. Bodily signs of depression include problems with sleep or appetite, low energy, poor concentration and sometimes agitation or restlessness.

How do I know if my mood is low?

- Experiencing a loss of pleasure in things that you usually enjoy.
- Feeling sad, empty or hopeless.
- Having trouble getting through each day.
- Feeling worthless, lacking self-esteem and unable to see anything good in yourself.
- Feelings of guilt.
- Sleep too much or not being able to sleep.
- Eat or drink too much or not having any appetite.
- Not able to get started or not being to finish tasks once you start.
- Feel tired and fatigued.
- Do not want to live anymore.
- Often think of dying.
- Feel like being in a big black hole.
- Feeling irritable or short tempered.
- Not being able to feel happy about anything.
- Not able to see or plan a future.
- Have difficulty concentrating or focusing.

If symptoms persist for longer than two weeks, consult your health professional for a formal assessment of mood.

'Mary's' Story

'Mary' is a 70-year-old grandmother with a Glioblastoma (high grade tumour). She usually displays a bubbly and positive personality. Her family have become increasingly worried about her mental state since her recent diagnosis. 'Mary' is flat in her emotional reactions, and is making negative comments to family members such as "what is the point" and "just leave me alone to die". 'Mary' is physically well enough to carry on her activities of daily living but she refuses to get out of bed and get dressed each day. She appears to have given up.

Strategies

For the person with a brain tumour

- Distraction such as listening to music or watching television.
- Light exercise such as walking.
- Talking to someone, seek out peer support or join a group.
- Do activities that you enjoy or help you to stay positive.
- Keeping busy such as working on a project.
- Keep in touch with other people.
- Set short-term plans and act on them.
- Learn positive self-talk.
- Try relaxation or mindfulness exercises (see Resource Sheet).
- Speak to a counsellor.
- Medication may be an important help if your mood does not seem to get better.

KEY FACTS

A survey of people with a brain tumour found that:

- 28% had severe or extremely severe levels of depression.
- 13% had high levels of both anxiety and depression including feelings such as panic and losing all hope.

Strategies for the carer or family member

- Encourage any form of physical activity, such as light exercise or going for walks.
- Seek help from a doctor or psychologist if you feel they are not coping.
- Be there to give them support when they need it.
- Get them involved in activities and social events.
- Listen to them, don't offer meaningless advice.
- Realise that negative thinking is a symptom of depression and will go away with treatment.
- Provide reassurance, try to stay positive but not be excessively optimistic.
- Keep in mind that caregivers and family members can also become depressed. Go seek help for yourself if you need it.



Question to ask your Health Professional

- What is the likely cause of the depression?
- Is it related to the tumour itself?
- Is it related to the treatments given for the tumour or other medications?
- Could the depression be an unrelated medical condition and does this need treatment in itself?
- Do I/we expect the depression to get better or worse over time?
- Are there any medications that can help the problem?
- Can a psychologist help to treat this problem?
- Are there any diet or lifestyle factors that can help with the depression?
- Who else could I/we speak with to assist with the depression?

Links to other Information:

- <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/factsheets/depressionincarersfactsheet429.html>
 - <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/factsheets/depressionfactsheet431.html>
 - <http://braininjury.org.au/portal/fact-sheets/depression-and-brain-injury---fact-sheet.html>
- Resource Sheet – How to Cope with Depression
Resource Sheet – Activity Scheduling

RESOURCE SHEET

Anger Management

Your anger is a normal human feeling. Everyone feels anger and it can serve some useful functions. The aim of anger management is to express your feelings but to stay in control whenever possible. You can learn to use various strategies for managing anger and staying in control.

1. Identify triggers

Anticipate situations where you are more likely to experience anger. This can be different for each person but you will begin to see what is likely to trip an angry outburst. Examples can include noisy environments, at the end of the day when feeling fatigued, 'hot' topics which cause an intense emotional response. Over a period of a week, record your moods and note the situation when you felt angry or lost control. If you can avoid this situation do so, or make changes to the situation so it will be less stressful.

For Example: Turn off the television when you have a conversation with someone, undertake tasks when you

are feeling less fatigued, avoid topics that cause strong emotion, educate your family on these issues.

2. Early Warning signals

Learn to identify the early signals that you are becoming angry to alert you to use strategies in order to stay in control. Learning to recognise when one is angry involves understanding the "signals" that are often indicators that emotions are high. The key to recognising these early signals is to develop self-awareness. Strong emotion like anger has three parts: body signals, thought signals and actions signals.

Below are some examples of anger signs.

BODY SIGNALS

- Muscle tension in neck, shoulders, jaw, stomach or chest
- Increased heart rate
- Increased sweating
- Shaking
- Clenching fists
- Grinding teeth
- Hot face
- Shoulders raising

THOUGHT SIGNALS

- Changes to your thoughts
 - Jumbled thoughts
 - Irrational thinking
 - Thoughts racing
 - Overgeneralising
 - Jumping to conclusions
- Examples:
The children are deliberately making a mess
He/she always nags me

ACTIONS SIGNALS

- Unable to sit still, agitation, getting up and moving around
- Voice getting louder, higher, more abrupt
- Pointing your finger
- Shaking your fist
- Hitting something

Record your early warning signals and implement your anger management strategies before your anger escalates out of control.

Step One - Personal Coping Strategy

This is a short statement of up to five words to remind you when to intervene when you are becoming angry.

Examples:

- Calm down Charlie Brown
- Shit happens
- Its okay, walk away
- Let it go

Step Two – Walking Away

We often use walking away as a communication tool, eg. Slam down our pen and stomp away, slamming the door. We then let the other person know that we are angry even though we haven't said anything, we use body language to communicate our anger. In order to walk away properly we need to be calm and not communicate our anger.

The problem with walking away is that we start thinking unhelpful thoughts. To stop the thoughts we need another technique...



Step Three – Distraction

You need to undertake an activity to take your mind away from your unhelpful thoughts. Examples include counting backwards, thinking about a fantasy holiday, pulling weeds in the garden.

Rules:

Don't do anything that is automatic so that you can still think about what made you feel angry e.g. ironing, washing dishes.

Focus on the distraction task, immerse yourself in the physical sensations (this is called mindfulness)

Keep doing the activity until the thoughts go away

Don't undertake an activity or task that you find frustrating such as something that takes too much attention.

So what is a good activity or task to use for distraction:

An example of a good activity is to go outside, sit in the sun and pat the dog. Focus on the feel of the dog's fur, talk to the dog, feel the sun on your face, the warmth, notice any breeze around your face. Listen to the outdoor sounds, the traffic, the breathing of the dog, any noises it makes in response to your attention.

Summary:

- Personal Coping Strategy
- Walk Away
- Distraction

Let your wife, partner or family members know what you are doing, give them these handouts to read.

They can assist in the process, you don't have to do this alone.

4. Relaxation

In order to be more in control of your anger it is important to learn to relax. There are a range of relaxation techniques you can use and one is identified below:

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Practice deep breathing, also called diaphragmatic breathing, by following the instructions detailed below. This will aid in the relaxation process.

1. Place one hand on your stomach, just above your waistline and the other on the middle of your chest, Use your hands to assist the breathing process as they can tell you what part of the body you are moving.
2. Open your mouth and let out a big sigh, as if you are feeling tired and overwhelmed. As you do this, you will feel your shoulders lower and relax. Don't empty all the air out of your lungs, just release any tension in your shoulders.
3. Now just wait for a few moments.

4. With your mouth closed, inhale slowly through your nose and with your lower hand, feel your stomach expand. Only inhale as much as is comfortable and then stop. At this time you should not feel any movement in your chest or shoulders.
5. After inhaling, just pause again for a few moments, for as long as you feel comfortable.
6. Now open your mouth and exhale by contracting your stomach, feel your hands lower.
7. Pause.
8. Continue the exercise repeating steps 4-7 for a few minutes.

Use your hands to control the exercise; if you are feeling your chest rise then you are not breathing into your diaphragm. If you feel dizzy, you may be breathing too quickly, this is not a problem, just slow down your breathing.

5. Self Talk – Controlling your thinking

When you're angry, your thinking can become exaggerated and irrational. Develop a list of things to say to yourself before, during and after situations in which you may get angry. You may find it helpful as these things focus on how you are managing the situation rather than what you think other people should be doing.

Before:

- 'I'll be able to handle this. It could be rough, but I have a plan.'
 - 'If I feel myself getting angry, I'll know what to do.'
- Practise your strategies of personal coping statement and controlled breathing.

During:

- 'Stay calm, relax, and breathe easy.'
- 'Stay calm, I'm okay, s/he's not attacking me personally.'
- 'I can look and act calm.'

After:

- 'I managed that well. I can do this. I'm getting better at this.'
- 'I felt angry, but I didn't lose my cool.'

RESOURCE SHEET

Stress Management & Relaxation Techniques

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation focuses on the major muscle groups and learning to recognise the difference between tension and relaxation in the muscles.

Commencing at your feet and working upwards

Bring your attention to your

- Thighs, buttocks, calves and feet

Tense the individual muscles for 5-7 seconds and then relax for 10-15 seconds

Repeat for the following groups

- Hands, forearms and biceps
- Chest, stomach and lower back
- Head, face, throat and shoulders

Slow breathing or Controlled Breathing Exercise

Focus on your breathing pattern. Notice if you breathe mainly through the chest or through the stomach.

The goal is to breathe deeply and slowly through the nose, feeling more movement in the stomach than the chest as you inhale and exhale.

Place your hand on your diaphragm, just below your ribs.

Release any tension by blowing out the air in your lungs with a big sigh. You should notice your shoulders relax and lower.

Take a deep breath in for three to five seconds notice your hand should move.

Hold the breath for one second and then release for three seconds feeling your hand sink back in.

The time for breathing in and out can vary so breathe at the rate you feel comfortable. Stop if you feel dizzy or light headed.

Isometric Exercise

- Take a small breath and hold it for up to 7 seconds.
- At the same time slowly tense your leg muscles by crossing your feet at the ankles, pressing down with the upper leg while trying to lift the lower leg.
- After 7 seconds breathe out and slowly say the word "relax" to yourself.
- Let all the tension go from your muscles.



RESOURCE SHEET

Stress Management

A technique to cope with overwhelming emotions

1) Self-monitoring

Recognising the early signs of emotion so you can cope. Being aware when feelings of anxiety or sadness are developing and initiating coping techniques.

2) Self-instruction

Talk yourself through the anxiety.

You need to develop a list of coping statements that help you deal with the overwhelming emotions.

- a) Firstly, start by relaxing and breathing to remove any tension. Use coping statements dealing with the tension such as "Breathe deeply and exhale while saying relax".
- b) Use statements to cope with the feeling itself such as "I have got through this feeling before and it will pass in a while".
- c) Use statements to step back and put the feeling in perspective. You may feel bad for a while but it will subside. Such statements could be "I'm doing my best to cope and I will be through it in a while."

3) Talking yourself through

Use reminders to cope when you experience stressful feelings. Using positive statements while in a relaxed state will help you to take control over the emotions.

Make a list of your own coping statements that work for you. Carry these with you so you can cope in any situation. When you no longer focus on the overwhelming sensation you will begin to feel better.



RESOURCE SHEET

Activity Scheduling

Sometimes we notice when we feel a bit sad, lack a bit of motivation, have a case of the 'couldn't be bothered' then we need to actually structure pleasant activities.

To do this, write out a list of all the activities you enjoy. Some examples are listed as follows:

- Go for a walk
- Watch a funny movie
- Call a friend
- Meet a friend for coffee
- Play with the dog
- Sit in the sun
- Read a magazine or book
- Take a hot bath
- Go to the hairdresser
- Go for a drive
- Go out for lunch
- Do a crossword or Sudoku
- Buy yourself something you have wanted for a long time
- Wear something that makes you feel good
- Go to the gym

Sit down and then plan your week, make sure you schedule in a fun activity or something you enjoy doing every day. Make a commitment to undertake the activity by telling someone else about your plans or pinning it up somewhere obvious like the fridge door.

When you are feeling depressed even the smallest tasks can seem overwhelming. Break down your tasks into smaller parts to make them more manageable.

Find someone to be your activity buddy, everything is always easier if you do it with someone else.



RESOURCE SHEET

How to Cope with Depression

One way to cope with depression is by changing the environment to give you more pleasant experiences while reducing not so good experiences. This can be achieved by addressing the following issues.

Learning to like yourself better – Many people focus on the negative aspects of themselves to the exclusion of any thought about their positive assets. This can lead to pessimism, which may result in further depression. You need to instead focus on the positive aspects of yourself and stop dwelling on any problems or self-criticisms you may have.

Reducing unpleasant experiences – By not only reducing the amount of unpleasant experiences but also reducing the importance of them, and not taking on other people's problems can result in helping to fight off depression.

Increasing pleasant experiences – In addition to doing more enjoyable activities there is a need to also focus more on the enjoyment of the activity (before, during, and after). Pleasant activities need to be scheduled in as well as being used as a reward for achieving goals.

Increasing mastery over the environment – achieving mastery of activities results in feelings of accomplishment. Mastery is best achieved through the use of realistic goals, which can be worked on a little bit at a time successfully with positive rewards.



RESOURCE SHEET

Mindfulness Exercise

Next time you drink a cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate...

Hold the cup in both hands.
Focus your attention on the warmth you feel.
Bring your face close to the cup take a really deep breath.
Notice any warmth, steam or aroma.
Notice the sensation of what is happening inside your nose.

Place your lip on the edge of the cup but don't take a sip.
Stay there for about 5-10 seconds.
Notice what is happening inside your mouth.
Notice the feel of the cup against your lip.

Take a small sip, **don't swallow**.
Hold the liquid in your mouth for at least 30 seconds
focus on the sensations:
The taste, sweetness, bitterness, smooth, creamy, hot and
then cooling to the temperature of your mouth.
What part of the tongue is being affected?
Notice how the liquid moves around your mouth.
Swallow.
Feel the liquid moving down your oesophagus.

Then you can drink the rest in a mindful way.

Think about what the experience felt like, how much more
you were able to gain from drinking your coffee (or tea, or
hot chocolate)

You can use mindfulness in all parts of your life,

- when you shower,
- when you are engaged in talking to someone,
- going for a walk.

It allows you to bring your attention to the moment and
allows distracting thoughts to move away.

This is helpful if you feel worried or sad, when you may be
experiencing discomfort or pain.



RESOURCE SHEET

Goal Setting

In order to move forward we need to set goals which can be both short term and longer term. This is particularly useful if you are suffering from motivational problems, that is you can't seem to get started or you can't achieve anything. Also you can set yourself a reward once you achieve your goal.

Keep the goals simple, achievable and measurable.
Be specific.

The first stage of the process is getting your ideas on paper.

What goals do you want to achieve? Don't worry about being specific at this stage.

Now try to use the goals by defining them by time period and then by priority.

List them below by time period, either daily, weekly or monthly.

After each goal, number them in order of priority with '1' being the highest priority or most important goal for each time frame.

Identify a suitable reward for each time frame or goal

Daily Goals

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Reward



Weekly goals

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

Reward _____

Monthly goals

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

Reward _____

In six months I want to achieve...

In one year I want to achieve...

In five years I want to achieve...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

RESOURCE SHEET

Memory Tips

Ensuring information is put into your memory

- Information presented should be short, clear and concise.
- Simple language should be used when presenting information.
- Keep information organised – i.e. put things into categories.
- Repetition, say it over and over.
- Keep it short and simple – pick out what is most important and focus on that first.
- Understand what is said to you – ask questions if you don't and also ask questions so you become more interested as this helps to remember.
- Focus your attention – tell yourself to pay attention, don't do two things at once such as talking and watching TV.

Keeping the information in your memory

- Write things down – diary, notebook, memo-boards, calendars.
- Organise information – using headings or categories.
- Plan in advance as this helps you to remain organised.
- Repetition.
- Elaborate – put information into a context

Being able to pull the information back out of your memory.

Write things down

- Use a post-it note and stick it somewhere that's easy to see.
- Make a list (i.e. for shopping).
- When going to an appointment, if you have to remember the name of person you are going to see, write it down.

Put things in a special place

- Keep keys near the door you go out by.
- Put things you have to take with you in your bag, or by a door.
- Choose a special spot to leave things you have to take with you.
- Put a hook near the door to hang things on.
- Put a noticeboard on the back of the door where you can pin messages for yourself.
- It's easier to remember if you have routine, put things in the same place every time.

Make a reminder for yourself.

- Put things in an unusual place, which will make you think...why is that there?
- Use your mobile phone or watch with an alarm to set alarms to go off to act as reminders e.g. Set an alarm for one hour before an appointment so you will remember to get ready.
- Turn your watch face down. When you look at the time this is a reminder that there is something you had to remember.
- If you're interrupted, take something with you as a reminder, i.e., if you are cooking and the phone rings, take a bag of rice to the phone. This will remind you that you were cooking before the phone rang.



RESOURCE SHEET

Timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7.00am							
8.00am							
9.00am							
10.00am							
11.00am							
12.00am							
1.00pm							
2.00pm							
3.00pm							
4.00pm							
5.00pm							
6.00pm							
7.00pm							
8.00pm							



RESOURCE SHEET

Check List

Check List for Getting Ready	
Collect clothes, towel, toiletries	
Undress	
Turn taps on	
Regulate water temperature	
Wet body	
Wash face	
Wash upper body (right arm/ left arm/ right underarm/ left underarm/ chest/ stomach)	
Wash lower body (right upper leg/ right lower leg & foot/ left upper leg/ left lower leg and foot)	
Wash front groin area	
Wash bottom area	
Wash hair if required	
Apply shampoo, massage, rinse	
Apply conditioner, massage, rinse	
Dry yourself off	
Apply deodorant	
Comb Hair	
Clean Teeth	
Shave or Apply Make Up	
Put on underwear (underpants, bra, singlet)	
Dress upper body (t-shirt, jumper)	
Dress lower body (shorts, pants)	
Put on socks	
Put on shoes	



RESOURCE SHEET

Problem Solving

1. Identify the problem
2. Write it down as concisely as possible
3. Begin to break the problem down into steps
4. Refine the steps further so they are as simple as you can make them
5. Ensure the steps to solve the problem are listed in the order in which you will undertake them
6. Talk it through to yourself before you start
7. Work through the steps one at a time

What is the problem you need to solve or the activity you need to undertake? Write it down. If you are having difficulty, talk to someone about the problem.

Can you simplify the problem or break it down into smaller steps? What do you need to do first? write this down.



