



# Behavioural Activation (BA) for Young People with Low Mood: Guided Self-Help Manual

(Age 11+)

## Written by:

Dr. Zoe Maiden (Senior Clinical Psychologist) at the N&S CAMHS Trauma, Anxiety and Depression (TAD) Clinic, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

## With thanks to:

N&S CAMHS TAD team members (past and present) particularly Dr Sarah Miles, Dr Jessica Richardson, Dr Eleanor Leigh and Dr Patrick Smith.  
The CYP-IAPT team at Kings College London, particularly Dr Vanessa Buckley.

Graphic design / Jelena Crnokrak

# Contents page



<b>Session 0</b> – Introductions and Understanding the Problem .....	3
<b>Session 1</b> – What is low mood and how does it affect me? .....	12
<b>Session 2</b> – Behavioural Activation .....	26
<b>Session 3</b> – The Importance of Routines and Values .....	37
<b>Session 4</b> – Turning Values into Activities .....	44
<b>Session 5</b> - Continuing with Valued Activities and Introduction to Rumination ..	50
<b>Session 6</b> – Reducing Rumination .....	60
<b>Session 7</b> – Problem Solving .....	71
<b>Session 8</b> – Keeping Things Going .....	77

OPTIONAL Extra Session – Focusing on Sleep

Additional worksheets and resources

- Understanding a Recent Example of Low or Better Mood
- Blank Activity Diaries
- BA In Session Worksheet
- Values to Activities Worksheet
- Planning a Valued Activity Worksheet
- Problem Solving Worksheet
- 'I tried an activity and it didn't help my mood' Worksheet

# Session 0

## Introductions and Understanding the problem

### Introductions

Name of your practitioner: \_\_\_\_\_

Their role: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details if you need to cancel or rearrange a session: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your practitioner is going to answer some of the following questions for you. You can summarise the answers in the space provided.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What is going to happen in today's session?**

**What is guided selfhelp?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

**What is confidentiality and how does it work?**

**How much will my parents/carers be involved?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What are Routine Outcome Measures (ROMs) and why are they important?**

**Why do I need to complete tasks in between sessions?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Why are you asking for our sessions to be recorded and what happens to them?**

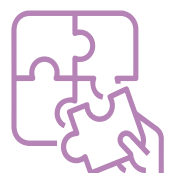
## Getting to know you better

Your practitioner would really like to get to know you a bit better. Tell us about you!

What does a typical day look like at the moment? For example, what time do you wake up? What's the first thing you do? What do you do in your spare time?




Who is important in your life? Who do you live with? Who are your friends? If things are difficult for you, is there anyone you would discuss this with?



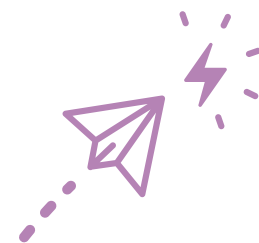
Do you have any spiritual or religious beliefs that are important to you or your family? Tell us about some the celebrations and traditions your culture/family participates in. Does your culture/family have a perspective on mental health and talking about your difficulties?

Tell us a bit about school/college. How are things going?




Anything else important for us to know about you that we have not asked?

## Understanding the Problem



What brought you to today's session? Whose idea was it to come?  
Is there a particular problem you're hoping for some help with?  
How would we know that today's session has been helpful?

How have you been feeling? How often have you been feeling like this?  
What has your sleep been like? How has your mood been?  
How have you been feeling about yourself? What have you been doing with your time?

A purple line-art icon of a human head in profile, facing right. Inside the head, there are two smaller faces: one with a wide smile and one with a sad, downturned mouth.


How long have you been experiencing these difficulties?  
What else was going on at that time?

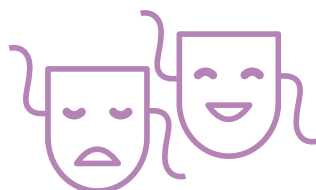
What have you already tried to help your difficulties?

Is there anything that has been useful? Are there any times when your mood is better?

Lots of young people can go through periods of time where they feel unsafe.

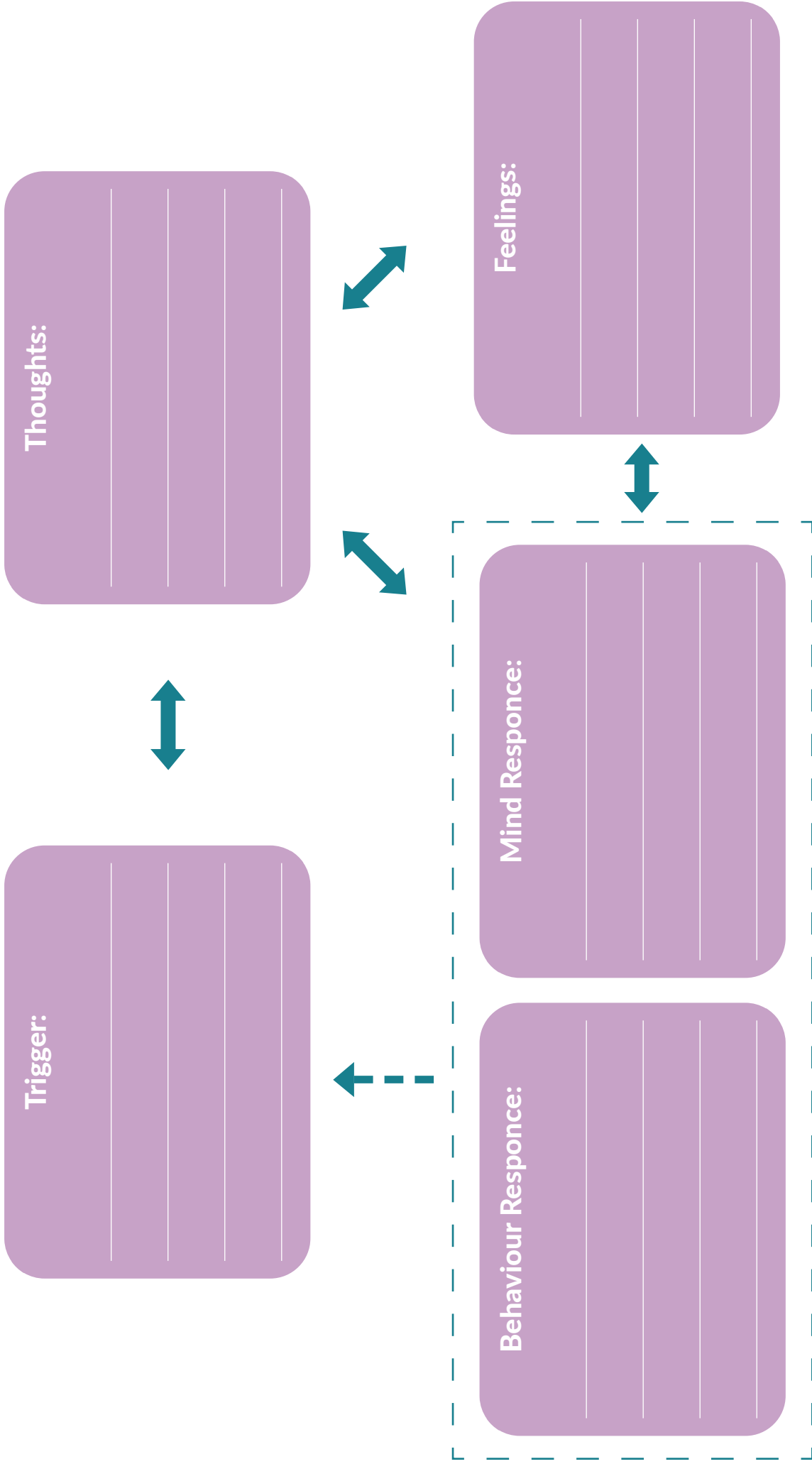
This can be because they have thoughts of hurting themselves or because they feel under threat from something or someone in their environment. Please let your practitioner know about any concerns that you may have.







To help us understand what is going on for you at the moment, it can be helpful to think through a recent example of when your problem or difficulty bothered you. With your practitioner, complete the diagram below.



## How are your difficulties impacting your life?

When we experience difficulties, they can have an impact on lots of different areas of our life. Some areas might not be affected at all, whereas others may be affected a lot! Are your difficulties currently impacting any of the following areas of your life?

Life area	Impact of difficulties?
Home/your relationships with your family	
At school	
Your friendships	
Hobbies and how you spend your spare ime?	

Are there any areas of your life that your difficulties are not affecting?  
What is going well for you at the moment?




## What is going to happen next?

---

---

---

---

 Summary of this session:



# Session 1

## What is low mood and how does it affect me?

### About Low Mood and Depression

#### What is Low Mood?

We all feel a wide range of different emotions, including happy, sad, angry and scared, at different times. Feeling sad can be a natural and appropriate response to what is happening in our lives. Sadness can also let us know that there is something in our life that we are finding difficult. For example, if a close friend moves away or we don't do as well in a school exam as we wanted to. Usually, these feelings go away after a few hours, a few days or a few weeks and we get back to being ourselves.

Low mood is different. It means young people feel sad or irritable, for most days of the week, for at least a few weeks (or often longer!). Their low mood also stops them from doing some of the things that they normally enjoy doing. For example, spending time with friends.

#### Frequently asked questions about low mood

There is no such thing as a stupid question about low mood! Below, we have listed some of the questions that young people have asked us in the past. You and your practitioner can talk through them together and write the answers in the space provided.



**What is the difference between low mood and depression?**

---

---

---

---

**How common is low mood and depression?**

---

---

---

---

**What causes low mood?**

---

---

---

---

**Can Social Media cause low mood?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Can negative experiences related to my ethnicity and culture impact my low mood?

Will I always feel like this?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What helps people with low mood?

What does the intervention involve?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What will happen if my mood doesn't improve?

Are there any other questions you have?

---

---

---

---

If you would like to find out more about low mood, and other young people's experiences of low mood, there are some YouTube videos that talk about depression that can be useful to watch:



- How do you know if you have depression? (Life Noggin)
- The Science of Depression (Life Noggin)
- What is Depression? (Therapist Aid)
- Low Mood Video for ThinkNinja (Healios Healthcare)
- TEDEd: What is depression? (Helen M. Farrell)
- TEDTalks: This could be why you're depressed or anxious (Johann Hari)
- TEDxYouth: Conquering depression: how I became my own hero (Hunter Kent)

There are also some good websites to have a look at if you would like more information:



**Youngminds** <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/conditions/depression/>

**Mind** <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>

### Introducing Kamil

*Kamil is a 15 year old male who lives with his mother and older brother in South London. For the last few weeks, Kamil has been feeling really annoyed with everyone. He also feels tired all the time, is struggling to get to sleep at night and finds it hard to get out of bed in the morning. He generally feels grumpy and hopeless, as things seem to be getting worse. Kamil is arguing with his brother a lot more than usual and has stopped meeting up with friends after school. He is also spending more time in his room, on his phone or occasionally gaming.*

*Kamil has started getting in a lot of trouble at school for turning up late, not completing his homework and missing lessons. His grades are falling, he is struggling to concentrate and he has started getting detentions. Kamil used to play football regularly for both his school and local team. Recently he has lost interest in this and has been going to training and matches less and less. Kamil's teachers have noticed that he is not feeling himself at the moment. They have suggested that he meets with someone to discuss how he feels. Kamil is unsure if talking will be helpful and worries about what his friends will think of him.*





## Understanding more about your own Low Mood

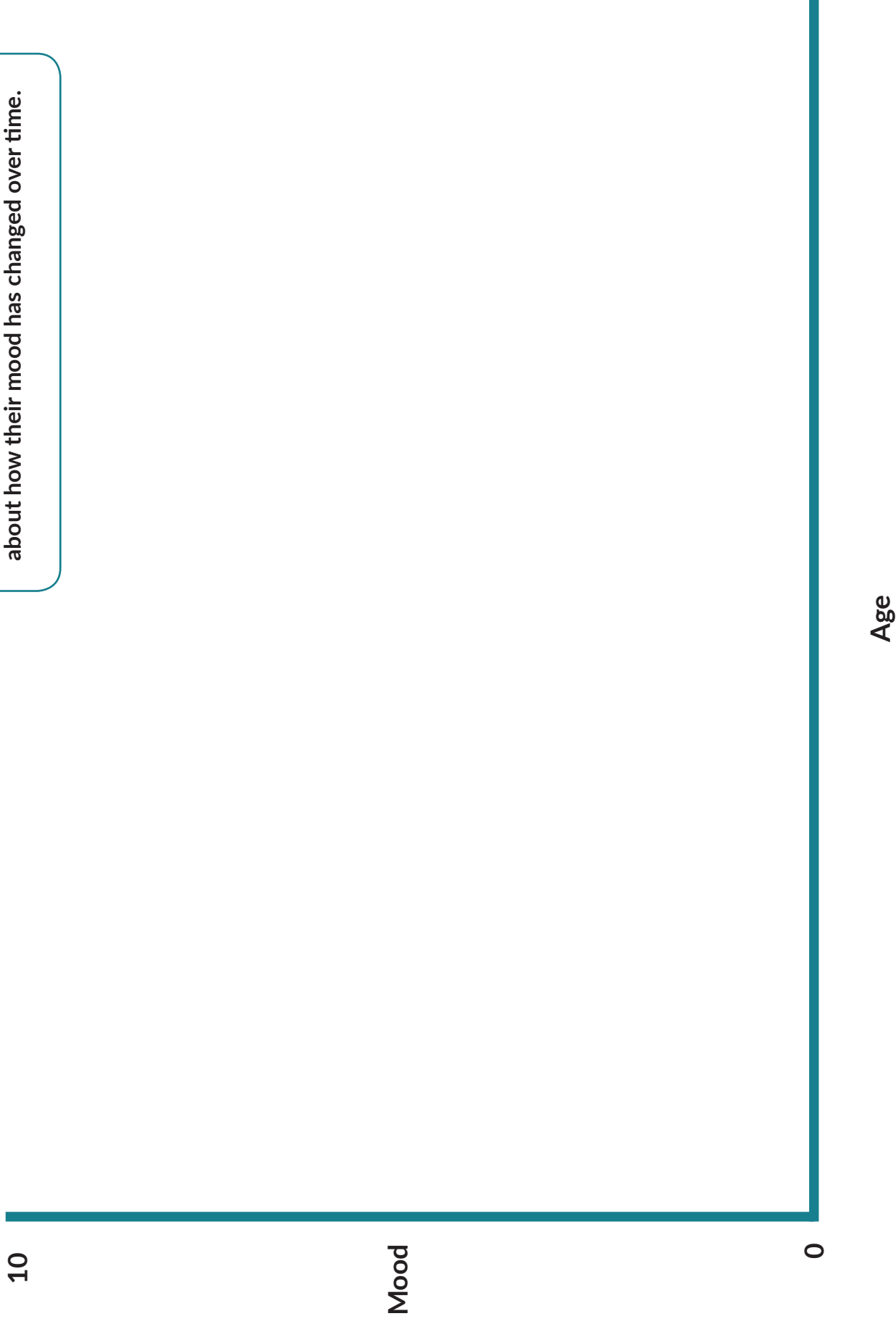
Low mood is different for everyone! Society usually suggests that people with low mood are often crying for most of the day. What we know is that this may be true for some young people with low mood but not all! In fact, most young people will feel irritable (grumpy, snapping at others easily), rather than upset. Low mood can also affect young people in lots of different ways. With your practitioner, think about which of the following apply to you:

### Can you tick which ones you think apply to you?

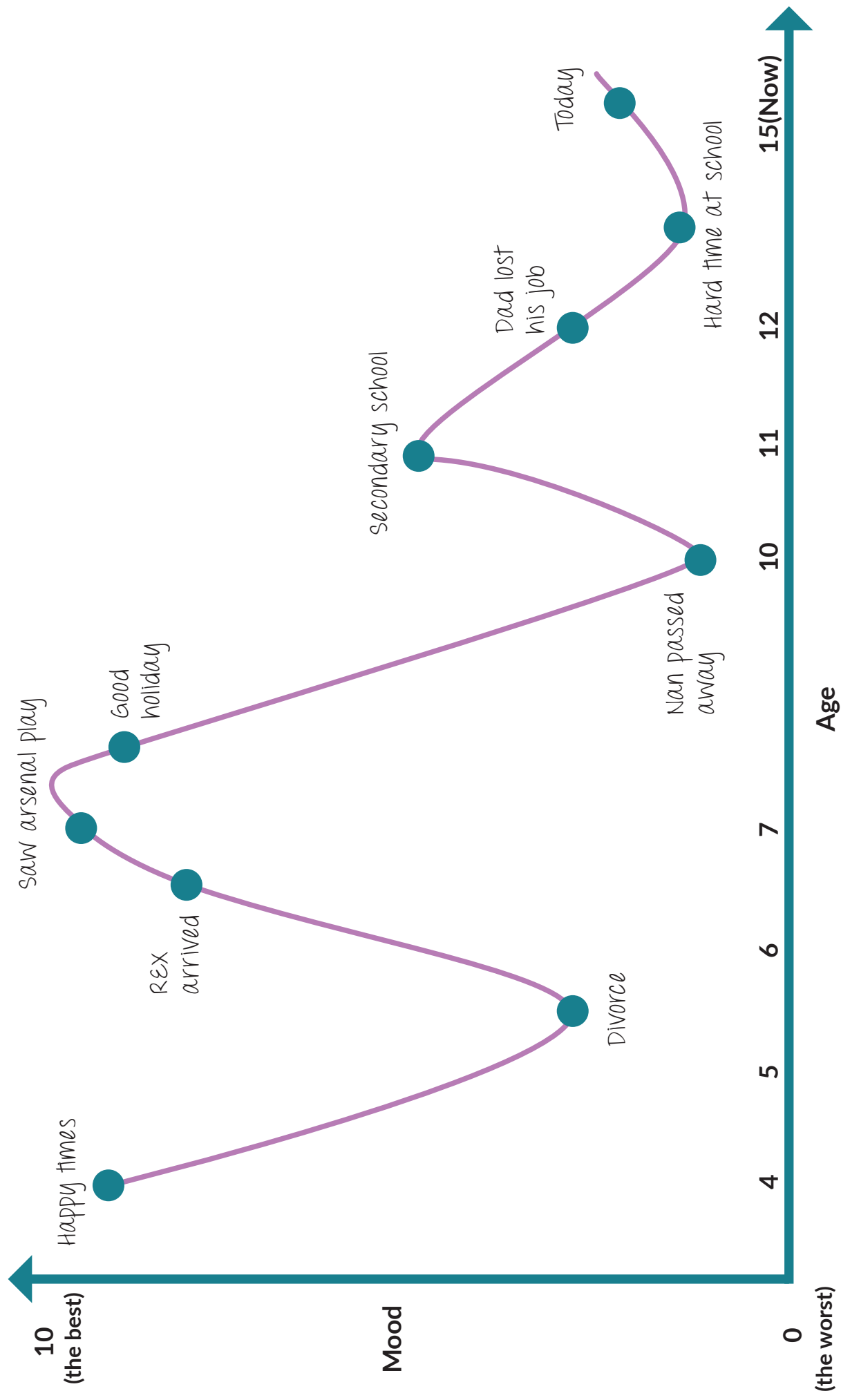
<b>Feeling really sad or miserable a lot of the time</b>	
<b>Feeling irritable and/or snapping at people more often</b>	
<b>Not wanting to do things that you previously enjoyed</b>	
<b>Not wanting to be around people</b>	
<b>Sleeping more OR less than usual</b>	
<b>Eating more OR less than usual</b>	
<b>Having self-critical thoughts</b>	
<b>Feeling hopeless about the future</b>	
<b>Extreme tiredness and not having any energy</b>	
<b>Difficulties concentrating</b>	
<b>Crying a lot</b>	
<b>Repetitive thoughts of hurting yourself</b>	
<b>Thinking about death and dying</b>	
<b>Feeling worthless or guilty</b>	
<b>Being physically agitated OR unusually slow</b>	
<b>Experiencing headaches or tummy aches that are not explained by a physical illness</b>	



**Low-Mood Timeline:**  
Some young people find it helpful to think about how their mood has changed over time.



**Example: Kamil's Timeline:**

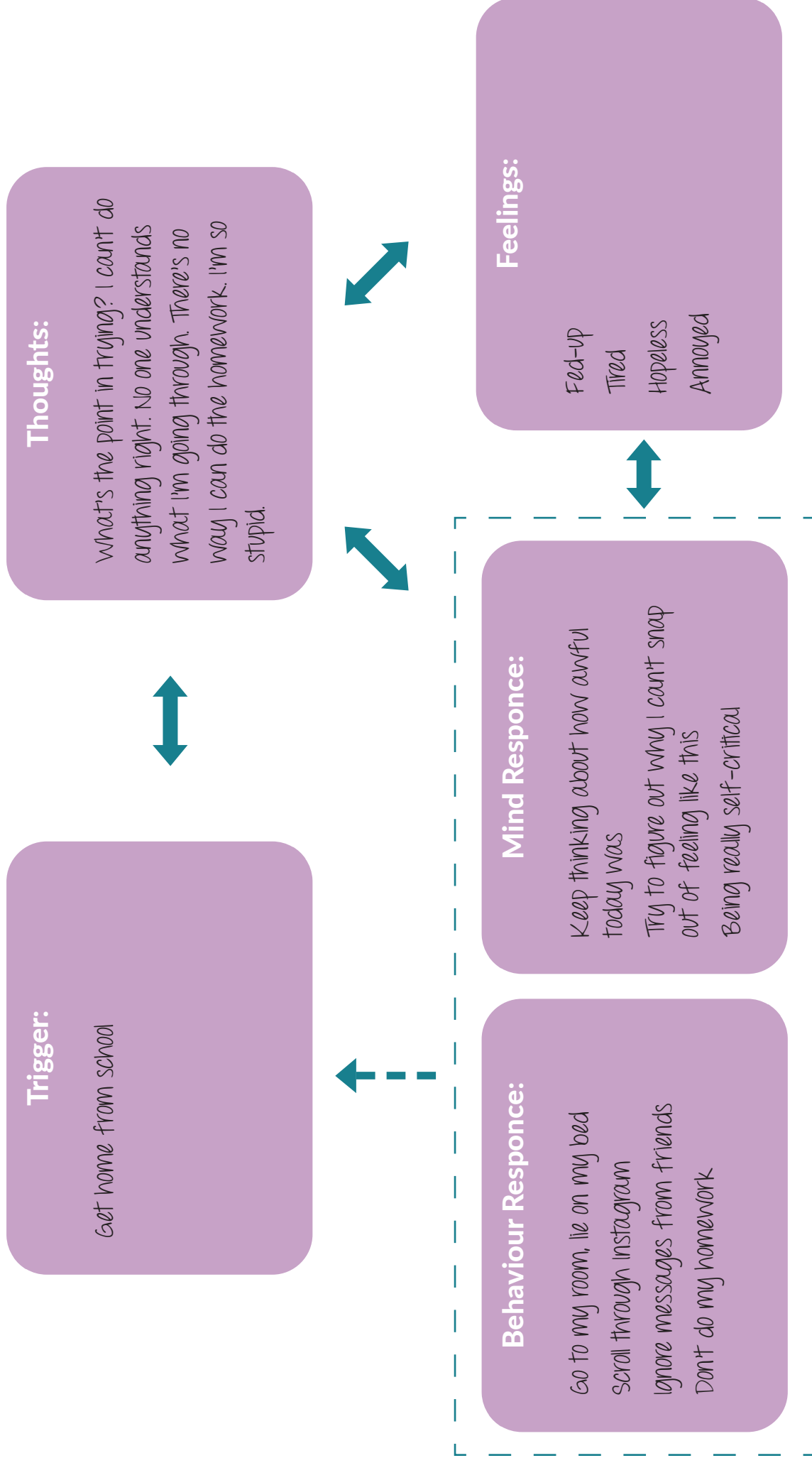


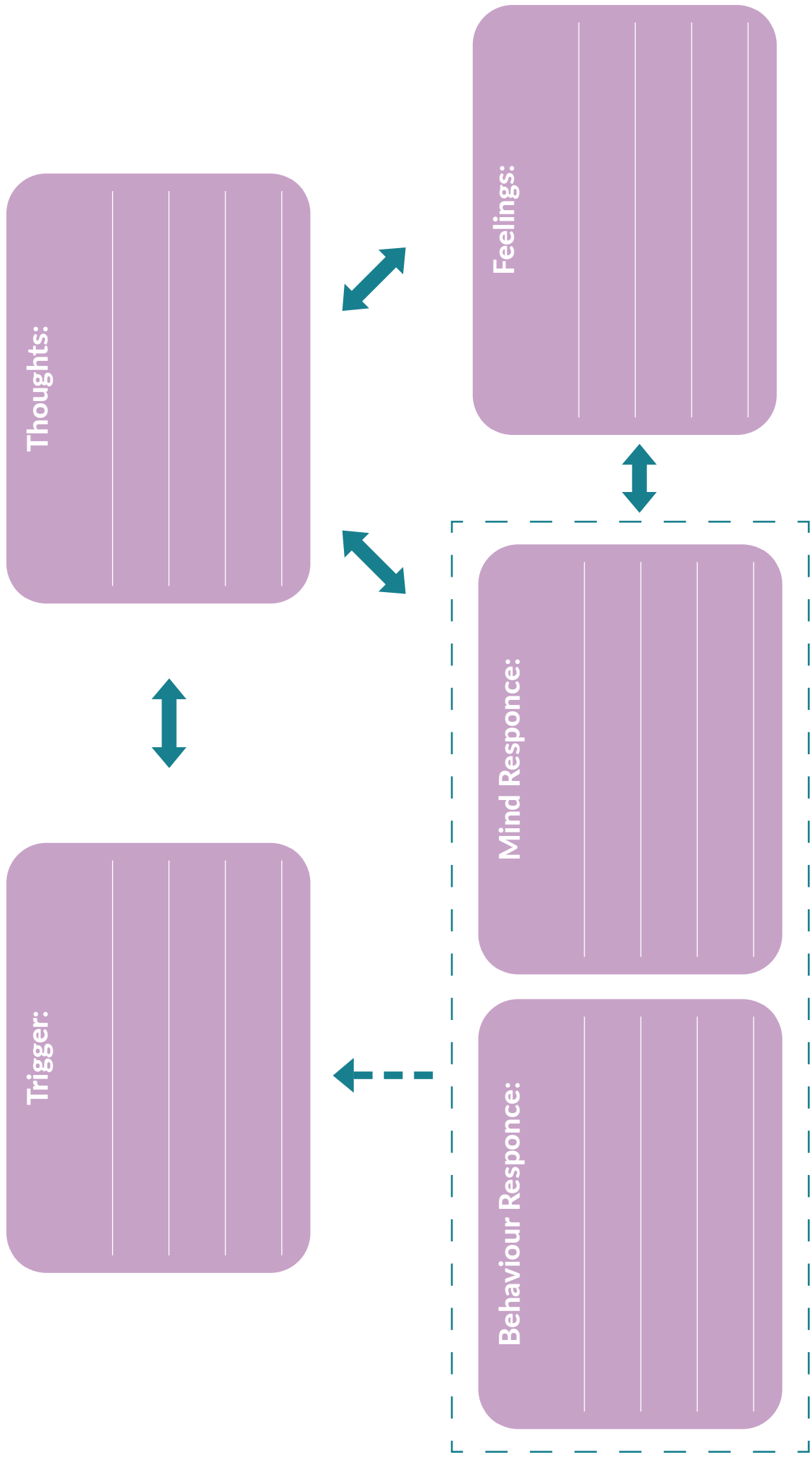
For some young people, their low mood is triggered by one or a number of 'life events'. You and your practitioner may have been able to identify some of these on your timeline. However, don't worry if you do not know what 'triggered' your low mood in the first place. The key to feeling better is knowing what is keeping your low mood going, rather than what caused it to be low in the first place.

To help figure out what is maintaining your low mood, it can be helpful to think through a recent example of when your mood was particularly low with your practitioner.



**Example: Understanding Kamil's difficulties:**





This is known as a **VICIOUS CYCLE**, which means it is a pattern that is difficult to get out of.

Do you have any ideas of how this cycle could be broken?



What we know is that **RESPONDING TO YOUR LOW MOOD IN A DIFFERENT WAY** can help young people to **THINK AND FEEL DIFFERENTLY**. This approach is called Behavioural Activation.

We know that this can be very hard to believe, especially when you feel low! We also know that doing things differently is not easy, which is why you and your practitioner will work together as a **TEAM**.



## Goal Setting

It can be helpful to set some goals about what you would like to work towards during your sessions. Lots of young people with low mood find it really difficult to set goals. The symptoms of low mood can make it hard even think about how things could be different in the future. Try to ask yourself, if you did not feel low, how would your life be different? What kinds of things would you be doing if you felt a bit better?

Discuss the ideas you have with your practitioner and write them below. It can also be useful to rate out of 10 where you are at the moment with reaching these goals (0 = not reached at all, 10 = goal reached):

### Example: Kamil's Goals

1. To argue less with my brother (currently 2/10)
2. See friends more often; once after school and once on the weekend each week (currently 2/10)
3. Improve my sleep (currently 1/10)

POSSIBLE GOAL	RATING (/10)
1:	
2:	
3:	

If you can't think of any goals right now, that's okay. You can always come back to this page at a later date.



Summary of this session:



Before next time:

- Draw out another example over the next week of a time when your mood feels particularly low, using the diagram.
- Re-read the information from today
- Have a look at one or two videos on YouTube

# Session 2

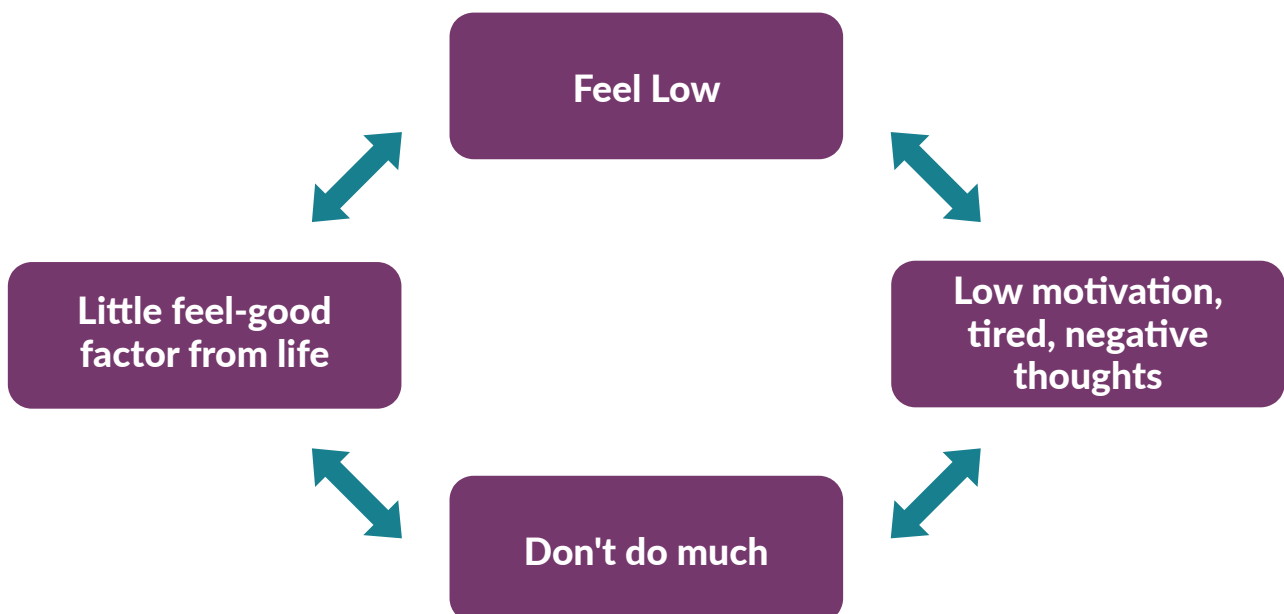
## Introducing Behavioural Activation

What do you remember from last session?

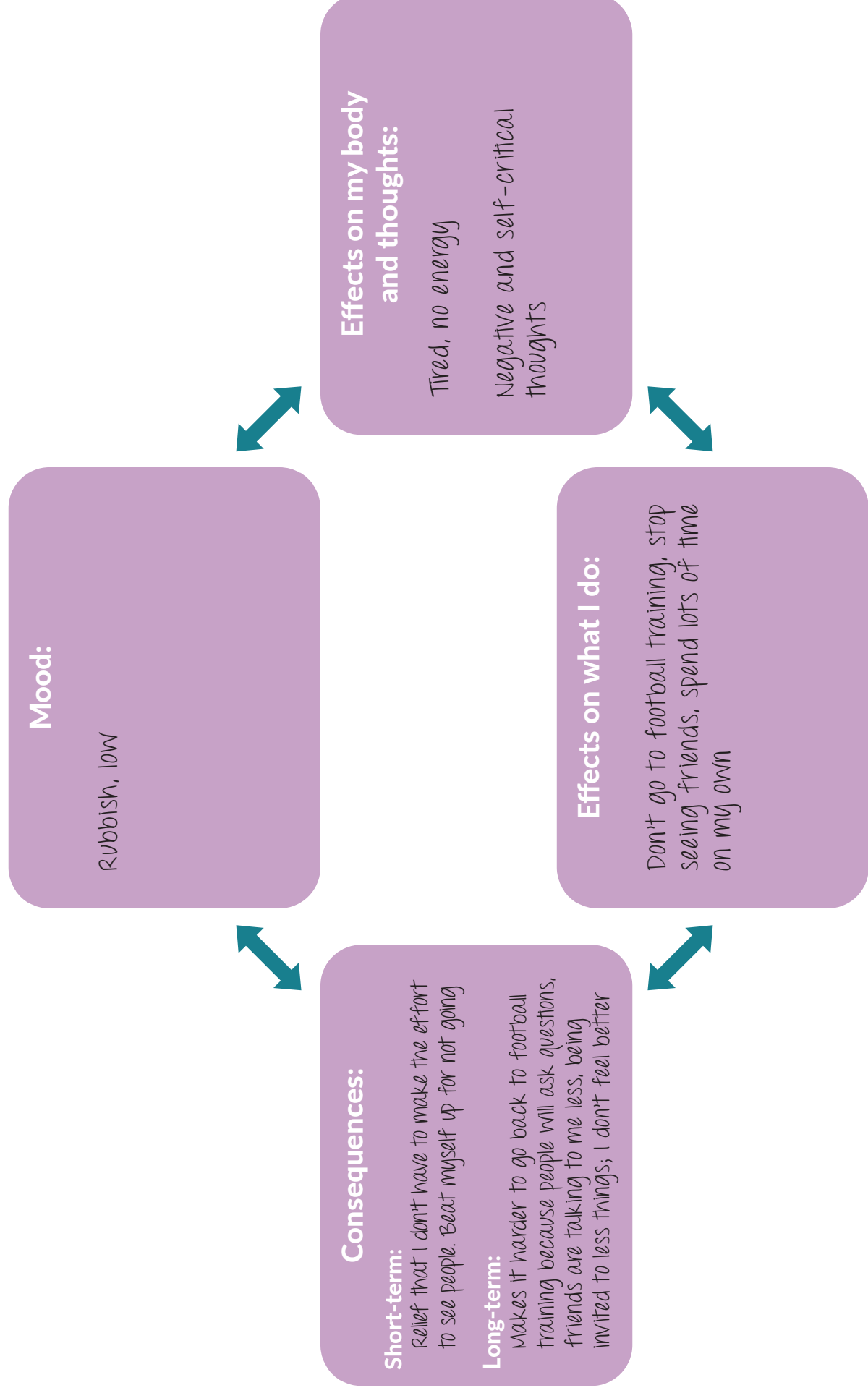


### How Behavioural Activation can break the Vicious Cycle of Low Mood

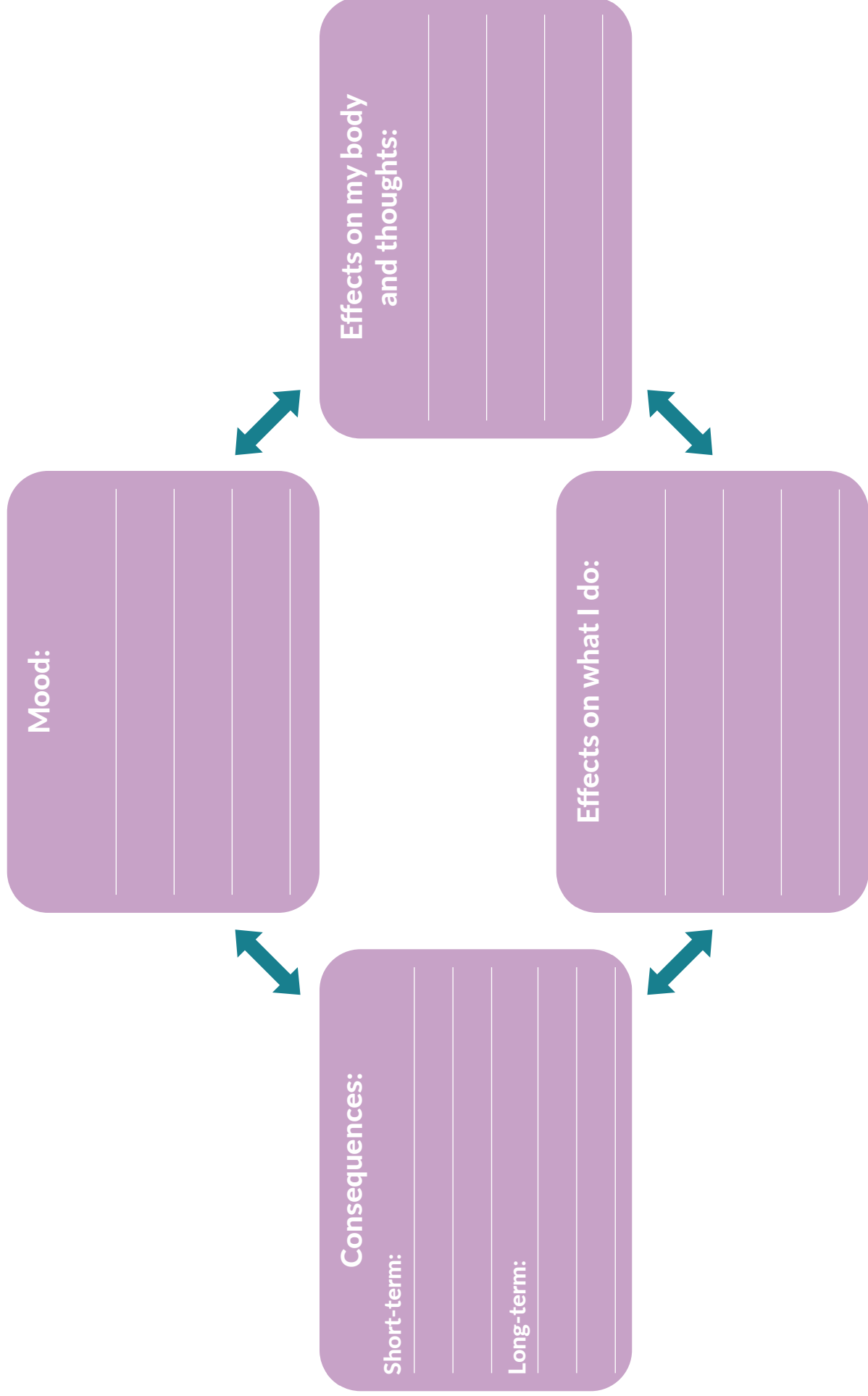
As we talked about last week, when we're feeling low, we tend to do less and less activities. This is totally understandable because when we feel low, we feel tired, have less energy and less motivation to do things. We stop doing the things we used to enjoy, often wanting to stay in bed and do nothing. Feeling low can make getting to school difficult or stop us from seeing our friends.



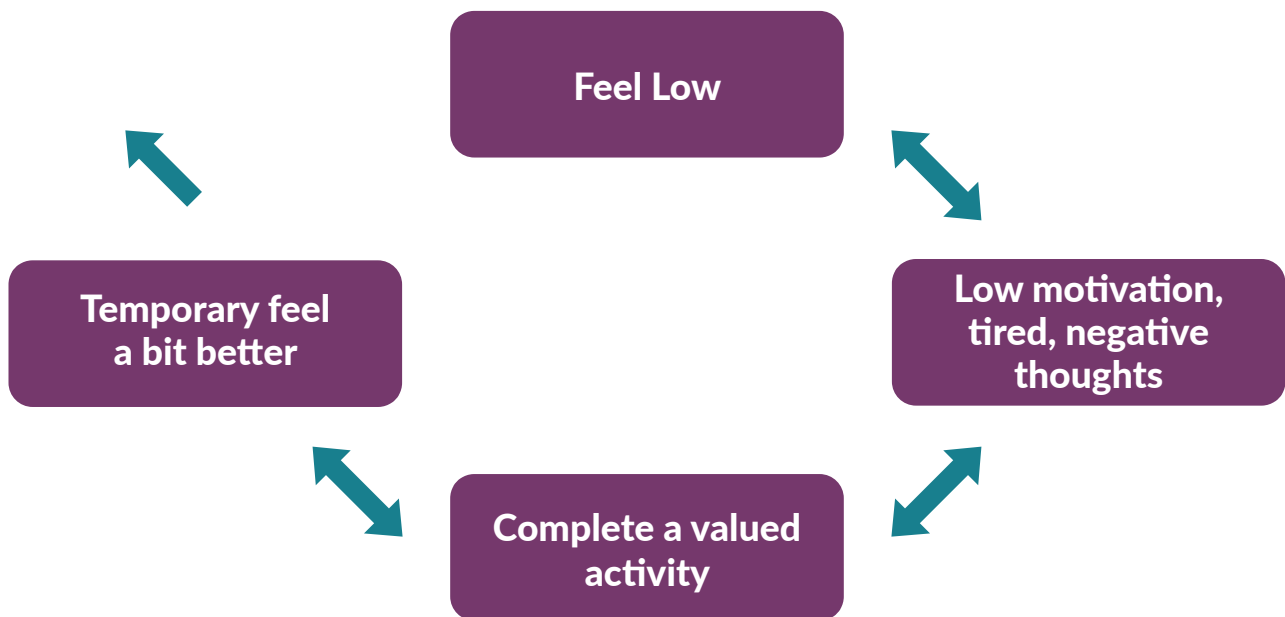
**Example: Kamil's vicious cycle of low mood**



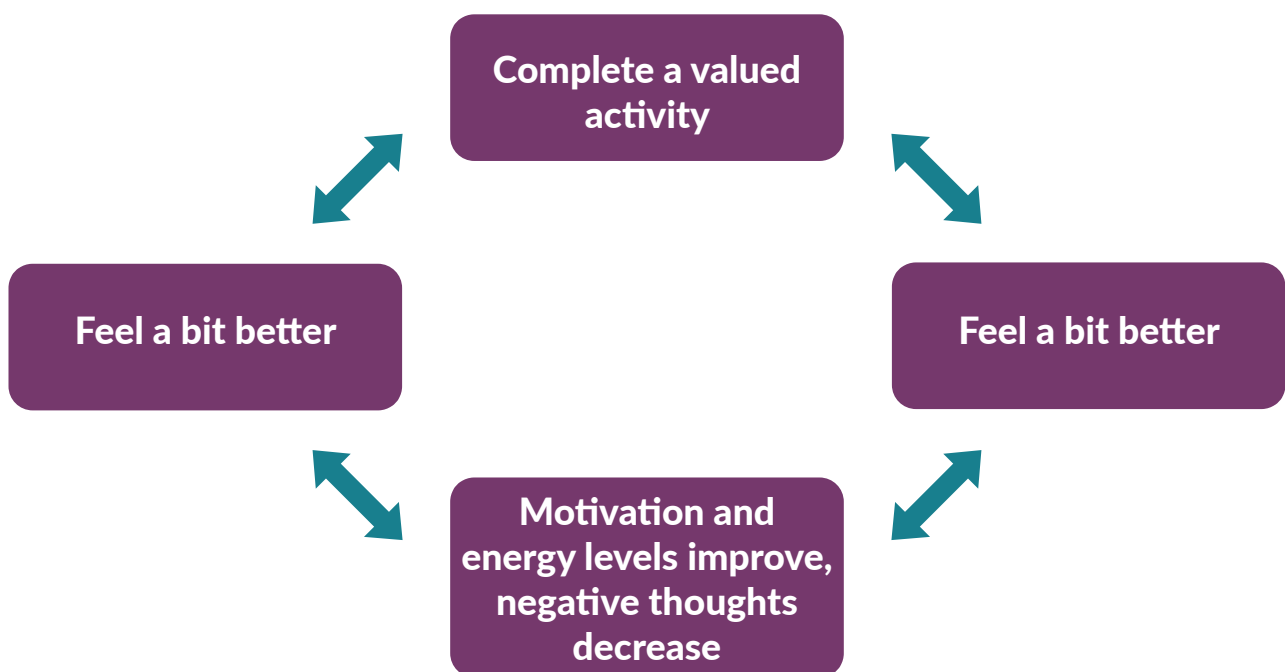
Think with your practitioner how this applies to you:



By doing activities that are important to you, you can start to break the vicious cycle of low mood. This is called **Behavioural Activation**.



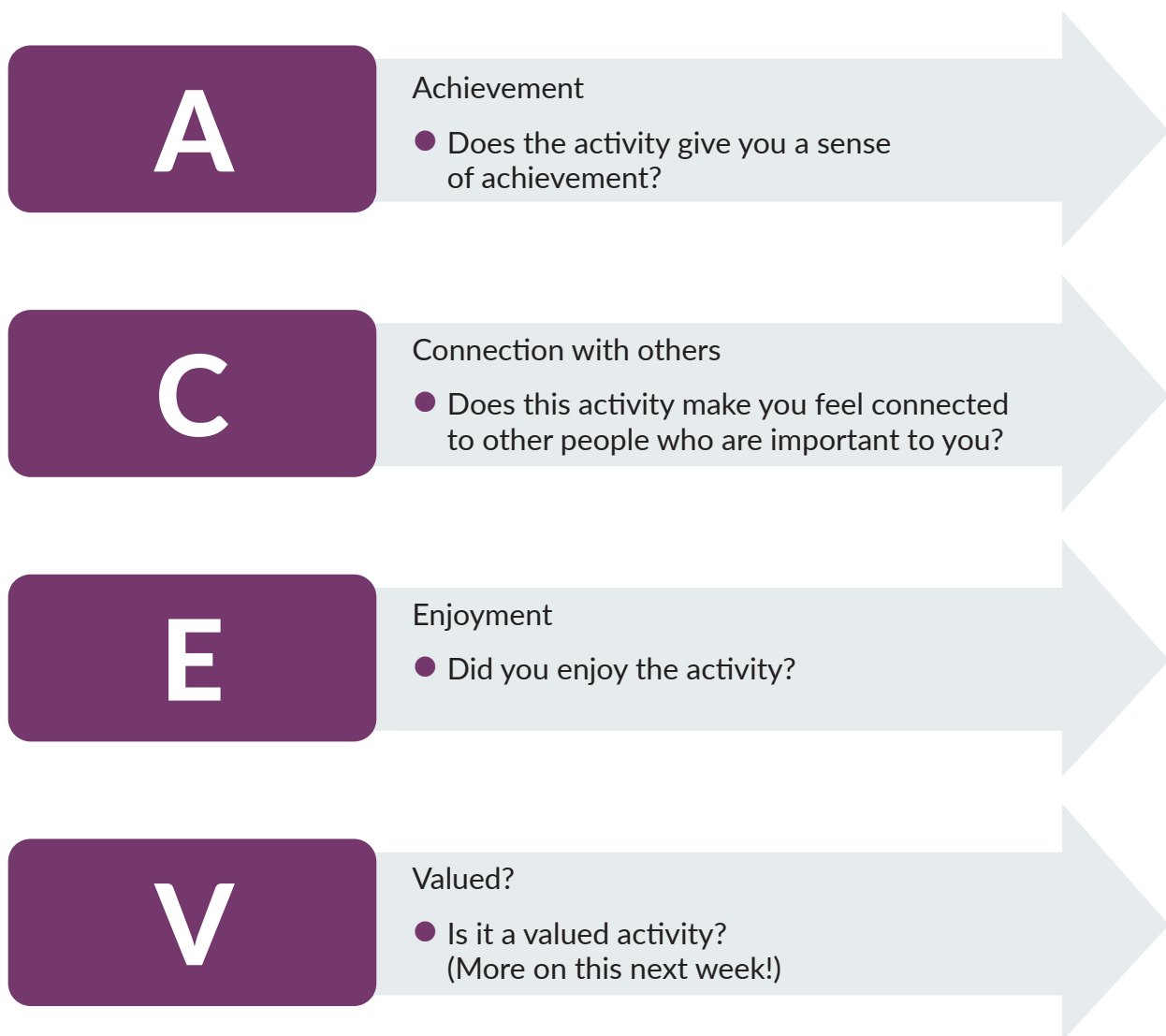
Repeating this cycle over-time can mean that:



## Behavioural Activation Step 1:

The first step to behavioural activation is to identify how you are spending your time at the moment. The best way to do this is by completing an activity diary every day. Research shows that people who write things down do better than those who try to do everything in their heads.

What we also know is that not all activities will benefit or reward us in the same way. For example, a lot of young people do not enjoy doing homework but they may get a sense of achievement from completing it. Similarly, playing a game with a younger sibling might not give you a sense of achievement, but your mood may benefit because you feel a sense connection with them. Research shows that it's important to get a balance of different activities that provide different benefits:



## Introducing THE ACTIVITY DIARY!!!!

Activity diaries are a really, really, REALLY important part of the intervention. So we're going to spend some time today going through how to complete one.

There are a few options of different activity diaries you can complete. You can find them at the end of this session handout. There are also some examples for you to have a look at, to help you decide which one you would like to try this week. Some young people decide that they would prefer to make their own activity diary on their phone or try an app. These are great idea also! Once you have decided which one you would like to try, we will complete one together, using yesterday as an example.

What might make it difficult for you to complete the activity diary for homework this week?

*Kamil's Example: I'm quite forgetful*

Is there anything we can do to address some of these difficulties?

*Kamil's Example: Set an alarm on my phone*



We know that completing an activity diary is really hard work for most people (your practitioner was asked to complete one as part of their training so they understand!). Completing it can be even harder when your mood is low. If there was an easier way to do this, we would definitely be up for it and be recommending that instead. But right now, this is the best way that we can help you.

### Let's Try Something...



■ The activity we are going to complete in today's session is...

Right now, my mood is: /10

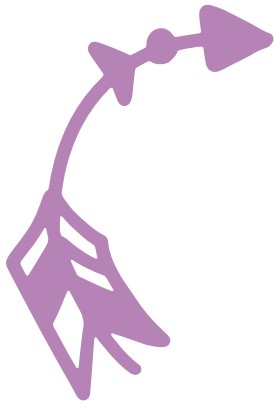
I predict the activity will have the following impact on my:

Sense of **ACHIEVMENT**: /10

**CLOSENESS** to others: /10

**ENJOYMENT**: /10





Now give the activity a go




Sense of ACHIEVMENT: /10

CLOSENESS to others: /10

ENJOYMENT: /10

Right now, my mood is: /10

 Summary of this session:

Before next time:

Complete your activity diary for the week

Example: Kamil's Activity Diary/Log

**A - Achievement (0-10) C = Connection with others (0-10) E = Enjoyment (0-10) V = Valued activity? (Yes or No)**

Time /Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am - 9am	sleep Mood: - A: C: E: V:	Got up got ready for school Mood: 2 A: 4 C: 2 E: 0 V:	showered Mood: 3 A: 5 C: 0 E: 1 V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:
9am - 12pm	Argue with mum Late for school Mood: 2 A: 0 C: 0 E: 0 V:	Registration PE Mood: 5 A: 4 C: 4 E: 4 V:	Double maths Mood: 2 A: 3 C: 3 E: 1 V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:
12pm - 3pm	Lunch History Mood: 2 A: 1 C: 4 E: 2 V:	Mood: 5 A: 4 C: 4 E: 4 V:	Got shouted at by teacher for not paying attention Mood: 2 A: 0 C: 0 E: 0 V:	Late for school Physics Mood: 2 A: 0 C: 3 E: 2 V:	Late for school Physics Mood: 2 A: 0 C: 3 E: 2 V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:	sleep Mood: A: C: E: V:
3pm - 6pm	Detention Get Home Mood: 1 A: C: E: V:	Mood: 4 A: 1 C: 3 E: 5 V:	supposed to have football but go home Mood: 1 A: 0 C: 0 E: 0 V:	went to park with B Mood: 6 A: 3 C: 7 E: 5 V:	went to park with B Mood: 6 A: 3 C: 7 E: 5 V:	Kick about in the garden with J Mood: 5 A: 3 C: 4 E: 4 V:	watched Netflix in bed Mood: 2 A: 0 C: 0 E: 2 V:
6pm - 9pm	Nap Mood: A: C: E: V:	watched arsenal game Mood: 4 A: 1 C: 3 E: 5 V:	Homework Mood: 3 A: 6 C: 0 E: 0 V:	Had dinner with mum Mood: 4 A: 2 C: 4 E: 4 V:	Had dinner with mum Mood: 4 A: 2 C: 4 E: 4 V:	watched a film with J Mood: 5 A: 2 C: 3 E: 4 V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
9pm - 12am	Netflix can't sleep Mood: 2 A: 1 C: 1 E: 3 V:	Facetimed Dad Mood: 4 A: 3 C: 5 E: 4 V:	Argue with mum Mood: 1 A: 0 C: 0 E: 0 V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	PS4 Mood: 5 A: 4 C: 4 E: 6 V:	Tried to do homework Mood: 1 A: 1 C: 0 E: 0 V:
Average Mood Rating (Scale from 0 -10)	2	4	1	2	2	5	

## Activity Diary/Log

**A – Achievement (0-10) C = Connection with others (0-10) E= Enjoyment (0-10) V=Value activity? (Yes or No)**

Time /Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am – 9am	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
9am – 12pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
12pm – 3pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
3pm – 6pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
6pm – 9pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
9pm – 12am	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
Average Mood Rating (Scale from 0 -10)							



# Session 3

## The Importance of Routine and Values

Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

### The Importance of Routines

As we found out in Session 1, feeling low can have an impact on our sleep and our appetite; we can sleep more or less than we usually do and we can feel like eating more or less.

Lots of research has shown that the relationship between mood and sleep is *bi-directional*. This means that whilst feeling low can make sleeping more difficult, *sleeping well* can also improve our mood. The same has been found with eating; feeling low can negatively affect our appetite, but *eating well* (regular meals that are nutritionally balanced) can have a positive effect on our mood.

This is why it's important to try to keep to a routine as much as possible with sleeping and eating. We know this is a lot easier said than done! Have another look at your activity diary with your practitioner, paying attention to your sleeping and eating habits over the last week. What can you notice? Have a think with your practitioner if there are any changes you could try in either of these areas over the next week.



**My Sleeping Habits:**

**Changes I could try:**

--	--

**My Eating Habits:**

**Changes I could try:**

--	--

For lots of young people who feel low, sleep can be a huge problem! That's why we've included an optional extra session on sleep as part of this intervention. You and your practitioner can decide together if it could be useful for you to spend some extra time thinking about sleep.



## The Importance of Values

### What is a value?

- A value is something that is important to you.
- Everyone's values are different!
- There are no 'right' or 'wrong' values to have
- No-one else can tell you what your values are, although sometimes young people can feel under pressure to live by the other people's values (for example, their parents, their friends or even society as a whole!)
- Adolescence is a really important time for developing our values; it is completely normal to not know who you are or what is important to you!
- Our values are constantly changing! And they change a lot more than we think they do (even when we are adults!) (There is an interesting Ted-Talk on this called 'The psychology of your future self' if you're interested in finding out more about this).

### Why are values important?

- Values can help guide us through life, like a compass
- They help us to make decisions
- Values often guide our behaviour and can be linked to specific activities
- Research shows that if people consistently engage in activities that are linked to their values, this can improve their mood

#### **Example: Kamil's Values and Interests**

**Kamil and his practitioner identify his top three values and top three interests:**

##### Values:

1. Justice/fairness
2. Friendship
3. Challenging myself

##### Interests:

1. Sport
2. Gaming
3. Social Media

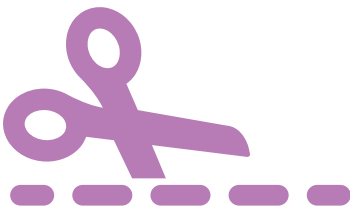
Okay, so values are important, what now?

**Step 1: Identifying your values**

Cut out these Value Cards and sort them into piles of 'very important to me' 'a little bit important to me' and 'not important to me'.

Are there any values that you are important to you that are missing? Can you single out your top 3 to 5 values?

Once you've finished, take a picture with your phone so that you can look back at this when you need to.



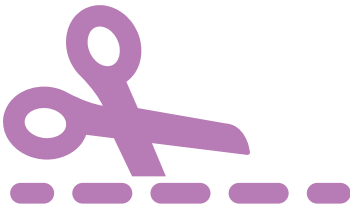
	Education/Qualifications
	Learning/Knowledge
	Religion/Spirituality/Faith
	Challenging myself
	Organisation
	Fun
	Physical fitness
	Independence
	Justice/fairness
	Friendship
	Wealth/money
	Success
	Health
	Contributing to the community
	Cultural traditions/identity
	Creativity
	Family relationships
	Trying new things
	Kindness
	Romantic relationships
	Adventure
	Travel
	Humour
	Fame
	Looking after myself
	The Environment



### Identifying your interests

Often linked to our values, are our interests. Just like you did with values, cut out these interest cards and sort them into piles of most interesting to least interesting.

Again, have a think if there are any of your interests that are missing from this list. Can you single out your top 3 to 5 interests? Once you've finished take a picture with your phone.



	History
	Sport
	Literature/Reading
	Art
	Maths
	Science
	Fashion
	Religion
	Astronomy
	Photography
	Music (playing/listening)
	Politics/current events
	Environment
	Animals/pets
	Fitness
	Food/cooking
	Celebrities
	Outdoors/nature
	Making things
	Gaming
	Blogging/vlogging
	Social media
	Drama
	Collecting things
	Volunteering
	Films/media

**Step 2: Exploring your values and interests in more detail:**

Now you have identified at least three values and three interests, write them below and expand a bit on why they are important to you. Next, think about how much you're living inline with this value at the moment. It may be helpful to have a look at the activity diary you completed this week for homework and look for some examples.

Value/Interest	Why it's important to me	How much am I living in-line with this value/interest currently? (0 – 10; 0 not at all, 10 all the time)	Examples of activities I did this week in-line with this value
<p><i>Kamil's Example:</i> sport</p> <p>Justice/fairness</p>	<p>I like my team mates and it helps keep me healthy</p> <p>I've experienced things that have been unfair in the past</p>	<p>3</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Thought about going to training watched a bit of a football game</p> <p>As fair as I can be to others Re-posted a Black Lives Matter post</p>

Summary of this session:



Before next time:


- Complete your activity diary for the week
- Try to alter sleep and/or eating routine if needed
- Have another look at your values and interests, make sure they are YOUR values and write down anything you think might be missing

# Session 4

## Turning Values into Activities

■ Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

■ How did you get on making some changes to your sleeping and eating routines?



Firstly, finish exploring your values with your practitioner that you started in your last session! Once you're happy with them, come back here.

### Turning values and interests into activities:

Values and interests are great as they can guide what we do on a day-to-day basis. As we mentioned last week, research shows that doing activities that are important to us can help to break the cycle of low mood. Using the 'exploring your values' worksheet, think about which values you would like to be living more in-line with. Start to brainstorm some possible activities that may be linked with these values or interests on the next page.

**Value/Interest**

- Potential activities

Example from  
Kamil: Friendship

- Reply to messages from B
- Send J a message
- Suggest walking home from school together with P
- Play football with the boys at lunch time

Now that you've identified your values and interests and linked them to valued activities, it's time to try to do something a little bit differently.

Think about which value or interest you would like to focus on over the next week. Looking at the list above, choose one or two activities to try out this week as an experiment: Let's try and find out what impact doing that activity has on your ACE ratings and on your overall mood.

**Example: Kamil's Value/Interest he wants to focus on this week:**

Friendship

**Activity:** Play football at lunch time with the boys

**When:** Lunchtime, Wednesday

**Where:** Top field at school

**How:** Take my own lunch to school, go to the top field, join in

**Help I will need from other people:** Mum to make my lunch

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?** Not having the energy or motivation to do it

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?** Remember to act according to my plan not my mood. Remember if I wait to feel better I will be waiting a long time. As Nike say; Just do it.



Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**



Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**

Once you've planned which valued activities you're going to try this week, write them into your activity diary. Good luck with trying them out! **REMEMBER**, it's important to act according to your plan, despite how low you might feel at the time.



Summary of this session:



Before next time:

- Complete your activity diary for the week
- Keep trying to make those changes to your sleeping and eating habits
- Complete the activity/activities you've planned

# Session 5

## Continuing with Valued Activities and Introduction to Rumination

Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

Reviewing your planned valued activities: How did they go?

\*if they did not have any positive effect on your mood or ACE ratings, complete the 'I tried an activity and it didn't help my mood' worksheet

Thinking about the activities you have completed this week and looking back at your values to activities worksheet if you need to, what two or three activities can you plan for this week?

---

---

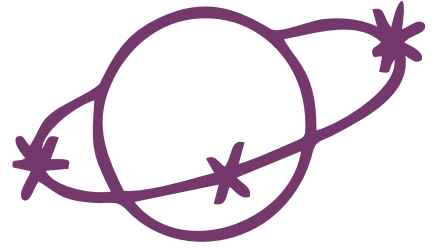
---

Use the 'Planning Valued Activities Worksheet' to think through in more detail.

## Planning Valued Activities Work-Sheet



Don't forget to plan them into your activity diary!



■ Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**

Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

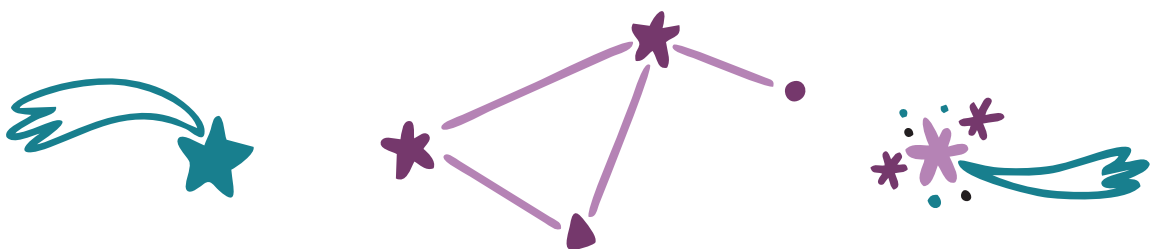
**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**



Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**

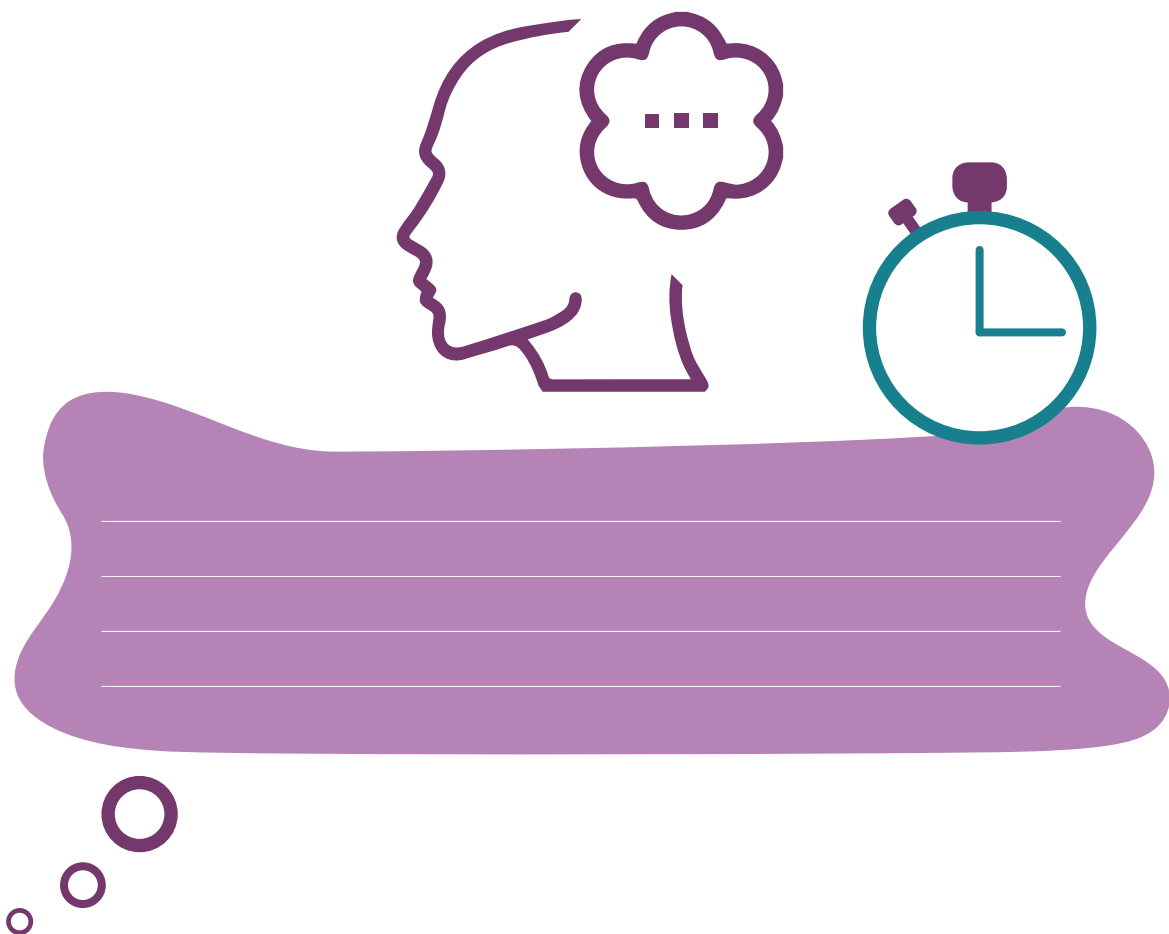


## Types of Thinking and Rumination

So far, you and your practitioner have spent most of the sessions focusing on what you are doing and whether it's helpful for your mood and introducing new activities to test out what effect these have on your mood.

**Thinking** is also an activity; it takes time and effort and it can be done in more or less useful and effective ways.

With your practitioner, spend the next two minutes thinking. When the buzzer goes off after 2 minutes, write down everything that went through your mind, as best as you can remember.



As human beings, we cannot turn off our thoughts (although people often try!). Usually, when we try really hard not to think about something, we think about it MORE. Has this ever happened to you? Test this out with your practitioner right now.

So instead of trying not to think about things, what we can do instead, is choose **how we respond** to our thoughts and different types of thinking.

There are lots of different types of thinking; for example, planning, worrying, fantasizing, problem solving, and ruminating.

### What is rumination?

Rumination is a type of thinking. The word rumination originally comes from cows. When cows eat, they regurgitate (bring back up) previously eaten food and chew it again! This is known as ruminating.

One way that young people can respond to low mood is by ruminating. Ruminating is a **thinking activity** and:

- Involves going over and over things in your mind (just like cows re-chewing food!)
- Often focusses on things that have already happened i.e. the past
- Can involve replaying situations over and over in your head
- Thoughts are often self-critical/angry “You shouldn’t have done that” “You’re so stupid”
- Can involve asking yourself “why questions” e.g. ‘Why has this happened to me?’

Ruminating is a **really understandable** thinking style, that lots of people do to try to solve problems. For most people, ruminating ends when a problem has been solved. However, ruminating becomes a problem when we do it too often or when our mood is low.

Does it ever feel like your thoughts are ‘stuck on a loop’?

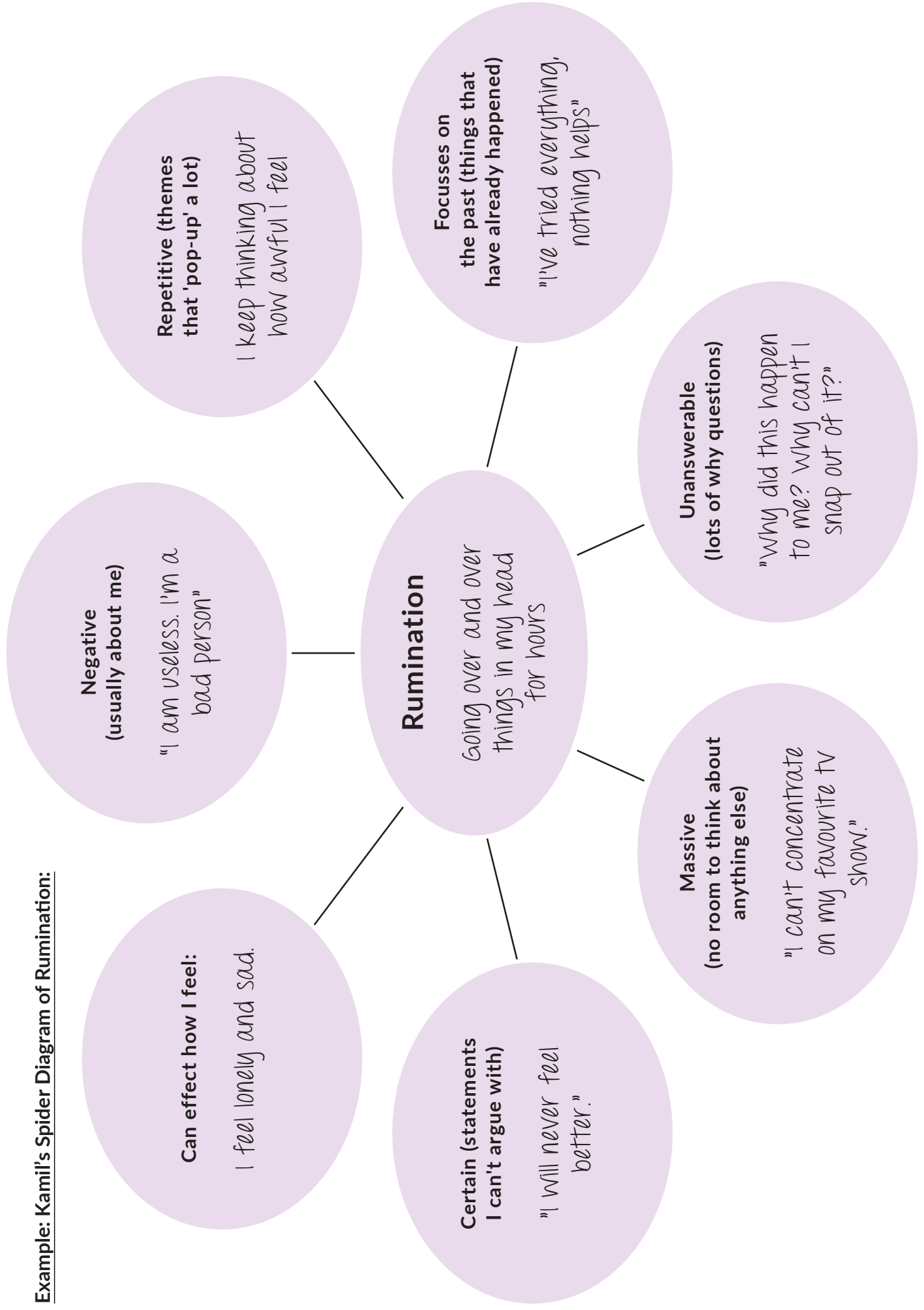
Do you find yourself thinking a lot about bad things that have happened in the past?

Do you sometimes sit there trying to work out why you are feeling so down?

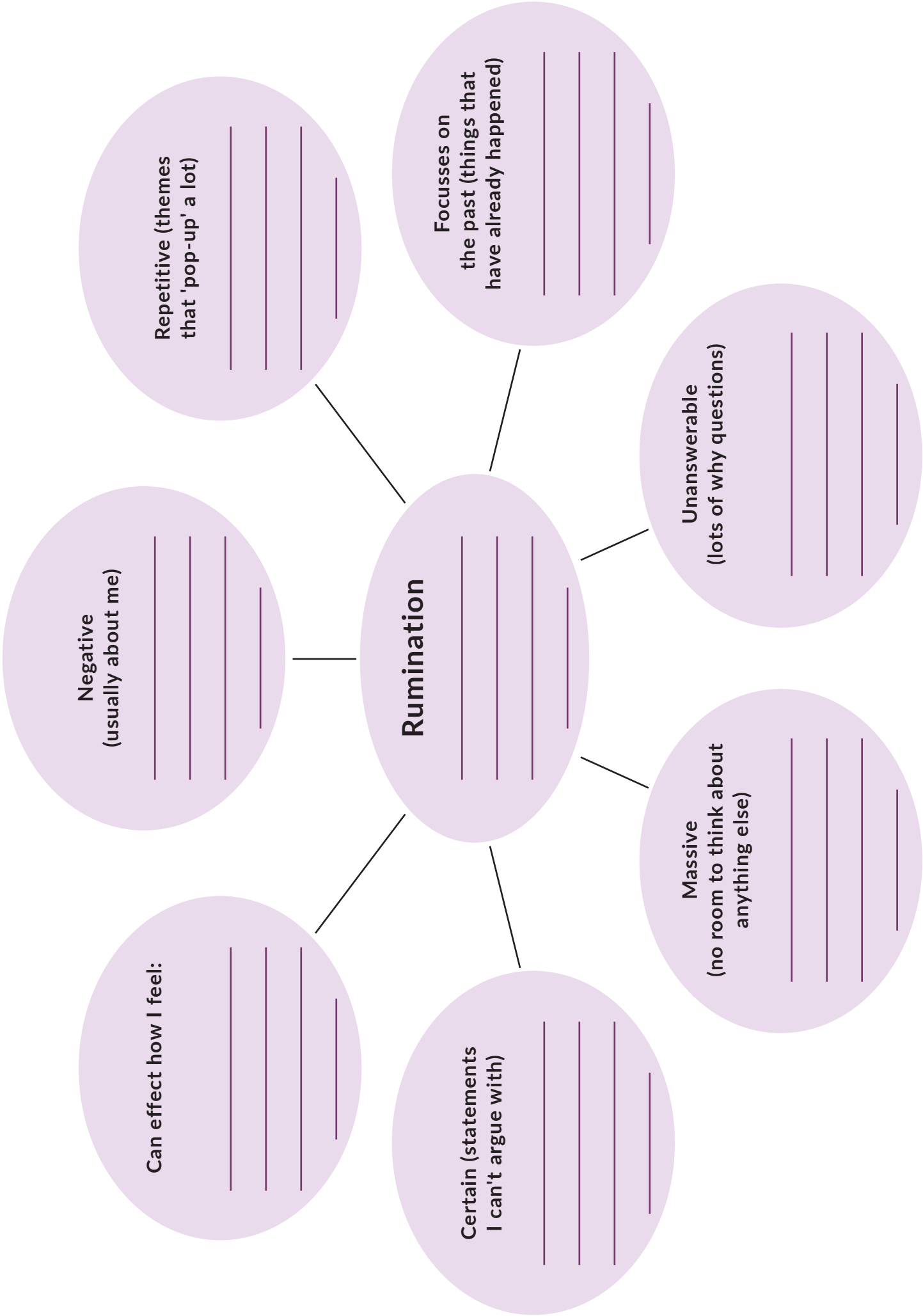
With your practitioner, complete the rumination spider diagram on the next page, to explore what rumination looks like for you. Write some examples of thoughts you have in each ‘leg’



Example: Kamil's Spider Diagram of Rumination:








Noticing when we are ruminating is the first step to making a change.

With your practitioner, have a look through some of your previous activity diaries. Are there any times you can identify together where you may have been ruminating? (are there any gaps/times when it felt like you were not doing anything but might have been ruminating? Or were there any times you when you did an activity that you usually value but your ACE ratings were not very high?)

With your practitioner, think about your sessions together; have there ever been times where you've ruminated in the session? (have there been pauses where you weren't concentrating because you were ruminating/times where you asked a lot of 'why' questions?)



**Example: Kamil's Rumination: When looking back at his activity diaries with his practitioner, Kamil notices that:**

- There are some times where his activity diary is blank and he doesn't feel like he is doing anything; it is possible he is ruminating
- When he is trying to sleep at night, he tends to ruminate about what happened that day
- He used to really enjoy some series on Netflix but now he finds that he can't remember what happened in the previous episode and he doesn't enjoy it as much as he used to
- After he got shouted at by the teacher, he thought about it a lot.

Okay, so rumination might be contributing to my low mood...what now?

Ruminating can be a habit and habits can be tricky to change. The first step is to be able to notice when you are ruminating. This is usually easier said than done! When you're so used to ruminating, it can be difficult to even notice that you're doing it. Sometimes, minutes or even hours might pass without young people realising that they are ruminating.

So, the first step is practicing trying to notice when you are ruminating. Over the next week, try to record on your activity diary when you have ruminated. Remember, this is a really difficult thing to do! Try to be kind to yourself; it may take you a few minutes or even hours to notice/realise you were ruminating. That's okay!

Summary of this session:



**Before next time:**

- Complete your activity diary and highlight times you were ruminating
- Practice spotting when you are ruminating in the moment
- Keep working on making changes to your sleeping and eating habits

# Session 6

## Reducing Rumination

Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

Reviewing your planned valued activities: How did they go?

\*if they did not have any positive effect on your mood or ACE ratings, complete the 'I tried an activity and it didn't help my mood' worksheet

### Rumination: Part II

How did you get on with monitoring the amount of ruminating you did this week? Have you learned anything about your ruminating activity?

## Pros and Cons of Ruminating:

Now that you're more familiar with ruminating and have started tracking how much you do it, it can be helpful to think about the pros and cons. Fill in the table below with your practitioner.

Pros of Ruminating	Cons of Ruminating

Now think about the following questions together, in relation to something that you often ruminate about (you can choose one of the topics you've already identified in our last session or something you've been thinking about a lot this week). Add your answers to either the 'pros' or 'cons' column above:

1. What progress has rumination helped me make towards solving a problem?
2. What do I now understand about a problem (or my feelings about it) as a result of ruminating that I haven't understood before?
3. How has ruminating about this topic affected my mood? Do I feel more or less self-critical now? Do I feel more or less helpless or hopeless now?



## Strategies to Reduce Rumination

There are several strategies that can be used to help us to reduce the amount of time we spend ruminating. Some strategies are 'preventative'. In other words, you can use them to try to reduce the likelihood of you ruminating. Other strategies are 'reactive' and can be used when you notice that you are ruminating. Most strategies work best in combination with each other.

Before we even start thinking about each of the strategies, it's important to remember that making any changes to rumination is difficult. Unfortunately, none of these strategies are easy. They will all need time, practice and patience. There will also always be some days where it is harder to use these strategies than on others; usually on the days where we feel lowest, we will ruminate more and it will be harder to implement these strategies. Annoyingly, when we feel at our lowest is also when these strategies can be the most useful.

### **Preventative strategies**

- Planning in a valued activity at times you normally ruminate
- Rumination time
- Problem Solving

### **Reactive strategies**

- Choosing to do a valued activity instead
- Getting out of your head and into the world
- Using your body to change your attention
- Problem Solving

## Preventative Strategies:

### **1. Planning in a valued activity at times you normally ruminate**

Look at your activity diary from last week and the things you and your practitioner have already thought about today; are there any times where you are more likely to ruminate? Any patterns? For example, some young people spend a lot of time in bed in the morning ruminating, others notice ruminating more when trying to watch Netflix. Don't worry if there don't seem to be any patterns just yet; if you keep tracking when you're ruminating on your activity diary, patterns may start to appear over the next couple of weeks.

Times I am more likely to ruminate:

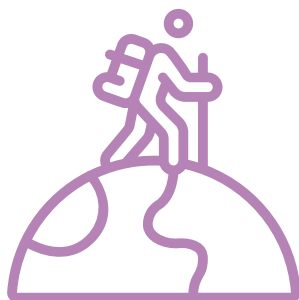
Thinking about the activities you have completed over the past few weeks and looking back at your Values to Activities worksheet if you need to, what three or four activities can you plan for this week? Using the 'Planning Valued Activities' worksheet, try to plan some at times when you are more likely to ruminate.

## 2. Rumination Time

This involves **postponing** rumination to a later, pre-decided, dedicated time in the day.

Throughout the rest of the day: try to notice when you are ruminating and tell yourself 'Oh look I'm ruminating again. I'm not going to ruminate about that right now, I will ruminate about it later', then return your attention to what you were doing (see reactive strategies below for help on how to do this!). Some young people find it helpful to write down what they're ruminating about throughout the day, either in a notebook or on their phone.

**During rumination time:** it's important to stick to the rumination time you agree with your practitioner. This is your time to ruminate about all the different things that have popped into your head throughout the day. Look back at what you wrote down if you need to. Think about them over and over again, as much as you need to. However, make sure you stop after the amount of time you have assigned runs out!



It's really important to *be kind to yourself* when trying to use this strategy. As we have spoken about before, noticing that you are ruminating is a hard thing to do. Most people struggle with this. Add in the extra task of diverting your attention to another activity and we're asking you to do something incredibly difficult.

#### Rumination Time Plan:

How often (e.g. once a week, every other day, once a day)?:

Where (try to avoid ruminating in or on your bed!)?:

For how long?:

How will you know when time is up? What valued activity can you do after rumination time?

### 3. Problem Solving

This is a really useful skill for lots of young people to learn. It's so important, we're going to come back to it next week and spend some more time thinking about it.

#### Reactive Strategies:

Reactive strategies are generally more difficult for young people to do. This is because we know once you start ruminating, it can be difficult to stop. But, the more young people practice these strategies, the more useful they tend to be. We have found that the most helpful thing to do, is to first practice using these strategies when you ARE NOT ruminating. Think of it like training a muscle in the gym; if you want to be able to lift a really heavy, difficult weight (in this case, reducing rumination), then it would be useful to train for this by lifting smaller, less difficult weights first (practicing these strategies when you're not ruminating).





## 1. Choosing a Valued Activity

We've talked about this a lot. It's much easier to control what we do (i.e. our behaviour) than the content of our thoughts. Once you have noticed that you are ruminating you can choose to keep ruminating or you can choose to do something else.

■ Think of some valued activities that you could do when you notice you are ruminating. It can be helpful for these to be easily available to you.

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

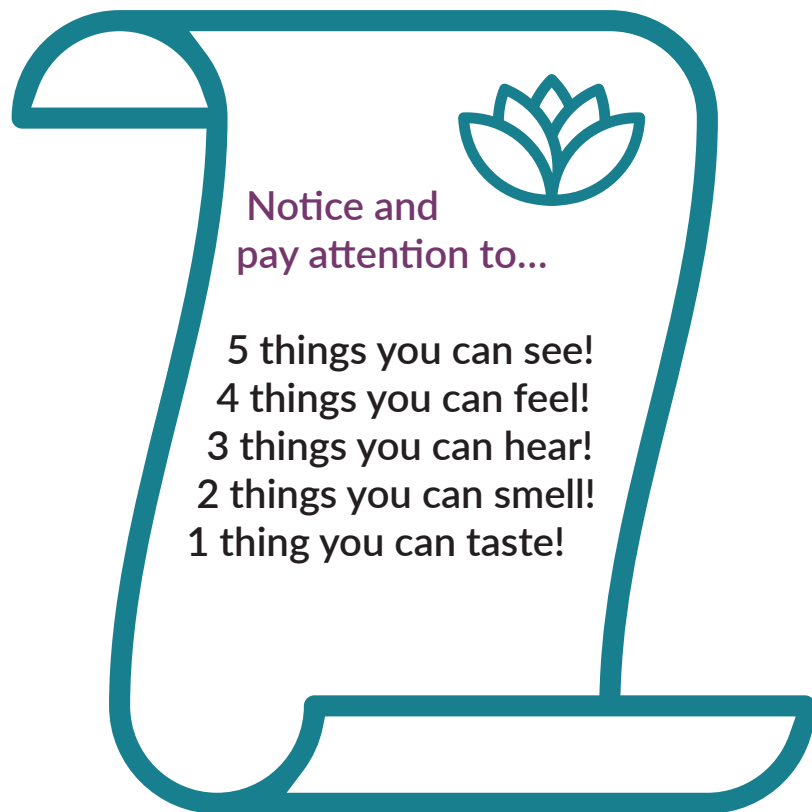
## 2. Getting out of your Head and into the World

These strategies are all about being more engaged with the world around you and less 'stuck in your head'. These strategies can be particularly useful when you find yourself in a situation where it is too difficult for you to engage in a valued activity right there and then. For example, whilst in a subject that you don't like at school. There are lots of different ways to get out of your head and into the world, but remember, they all need quite a lot of practice!



## a) 5, 4, 3, 2, 1






You and your practitioner can practice this together right now!



## b) Activity-focused attention (aka Mindfulness)

Our attention can be like a puppy; wondering around all over the place and sometimes getting us into difficulties. We know that when we feel low, our mind can often wonder off to ruminating thoughts. Rumination can sometimes get in the way of us enjoying the task we are currently doing, including activities that are important to us! Rumination can prevent a valued activity from having a positive impact on our mood.

In this situation, the opposite of rumination is '*being mindful*'. Mindfulness is a concept that you may have heard a lot about in the media or at school. All this means, is paying attention to what you are doing at that exact moment, whatever that may be. Whilst doing a task, each time you notice that your mind has wondered off, bring your attention back to the task by using your senses and focusing on the following:

-  - Touch: What can you feel?
-  - Sight: What can you see?
-  - Sound: What sounds can you notice?
-  - Smell: What smells can you notice?
-  - Taste: What tastes are there?

Some activities are more engaging for our attention than others. For example, having a conversation with a friend can be more engaging than watching Netflix (although it is possible to ruminate in both!).

Attention training and being mindful is hard! Lots of things that we do as human beings, we do on autopilot. We recommend starting by practicing attention training and being mindful with a really boring, mundane task that you do at least once a day. For example, making a cup of tea/coffee or brushing your teeth.

### 3. Using your Body to Train Your Attention

Helpfully, you carry your body with you wherever you go and so you can use it to help you to train your attention any-time, any-where!

#### a) Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This can be particularly useful if you are struggling with ruminating at night, whilst trying to get to sleep.

**In progressive muscle relaxation, you tense up particular muscles in your body for 5-10 seconds and then relax them. Some young people find it helpful to say the word 'relax' to themselves as they let go of the tension.**

**There is no 'right or wrong'** order to go through the muscle groups . Some young people like moving through each of the muscle groups in order from their head to their toes, whereas others prefer to start at their toes and work their way upwards. Try both (and any other format you can think of) and find out what works best for you. When you have moved through tensing and relaxing all of the muscle groups separately, you can try tensing and relaxing them all at the same time.

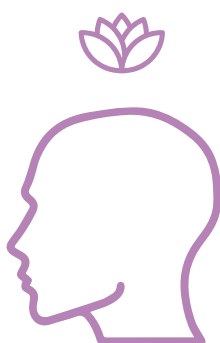
Tense your muscles enough so that you can feel tension but not pain!

**Practice this now with your practitioner, before coming back here to write down how it went...**

Notice how your body feels:

Where was your attention during your relaxation?

Most young people find that it's really difficult to ruminate during progressive muscle relaxation!

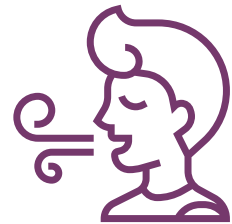


## b) Focus on your Breath (aka Mindfulness again!)

Our breath is something that is always there that we can pay attention to. There are different options on how to do this:

### Belly breathing

1. Place one hand on your abdomen, above your belly button and one hand on your upper chest
2. Breathe in through your nose and fill your lungs
3. Allow your lungs to expand and move the bottom hand outwards (your hand on your belly should be moving more than your hand on your chest!)
4. Exhale lowly, allowing your bottom hand to move inwards
5. This can take some practice to get used to; it can help to imagine a balloon in your stomach, expanding as you breathe in and deflating as you breathe out



### Hand breathing

1. Stretch your fingers on either your right or left hand.
2. Use your first finger on your other hand (index finger) as a 'pointer' or imagine it's a pencil
3. Start at the bottom of your thumb and slide your pointer finger upwards, pausing at the top and then slide your finger down on the other side. Now slide the pointer up your first finger, pause, and slide down the other side. Keep going!
4. Add in some breath awareness; breathe in through your nose as you slide up each finger and breathe out as you slide down.




There are so many different ways to use your breath to focus your attention and attending to your breath is a really key part of mindfulness practices. There are lots of YouTube videos you can look at if you're interested.



Which of these reactive strategies would you like to practice this week?



Summary of this session:



**Before next time:**

- Practice your chosen 'getting out of your head and into the world' or 'using your body to switch your attention' strategies at least 3 times per day (even when you're not ruminating!). It might be helpful to schedule them in on your activity diary.
- Complete your valued activities
- Keep working on making changes to your sleeping and eating habits
- Continue monitoring your daily activities and rumination with your activity diary.

# Session 7

## Problem Solving

Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

Reviewing your planned valued activities: How did they go?


\*if they did not have any positive effect on your mood or ACE ratings, complete the 'I tried an activity and it didn't help my mood' worksheet

Thinking about the activities you have completed this week and looking back at your values to activities worksheet if you need to, what four or five activities can you plan for this week? (Use the 'Planning Valued Activities' worksheet if you still find this helpful).

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

Reviewing rumination strategies: How did they go?

What rumination strategies can you practice before our next session?



### Problem Solving

As well as being a great skill to have generally, problem solving can be used as both a preventative and reactive strategy for helping to reduce rumination.

#### *Working out if there is a genuine problem to be solved*

Research has shown that people who ruminate a lot tend to think that they are problem solving, even when this is not the case! However, sometimes we ruminate about things that we could try to solve in a more active and constructive way. Some common examples of things that young people ruminate about that can instead be approached by problem solving are thoughts about having too much homework to do or an argument with a friend.



Ask yourself the following questions to help you identify if there is a problem to be solved:

1

- Is this something that I have to deal with right now? (i.e. it's not trying to solve something that has already happened in the past or that may or may not happen in the future)

2

- Is the problem something that I have control over?



*Problem solving vs rumination*

Problem Solving	Rumination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Actively looking for a practical solution</li><li>● 'How' questions</li><li>● Time-limited</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Dwelling on things that have already happened</li><li>● 'Why' questions</li><li>● Ongoing</li></ul>



## Example: Kamil's Problem Solving Worksheet

### Step 1

Identify the problem (it's important to make sure this is just one problem and break it down into smaller steps if needed):

Falling behind with maths at school

**Step 2** Think of all the possible solutions:

**Step 2** Weigh up the pros and cons of each possible solution:

Possible Solutions	Pros	Cons
Speak to my teacher	They might be able to help me; I value challenging myself	They might be able to help me; I value challenging myself
Stop going to school	Won't have to do math anymore	Not good for my future, not realistic, won't see my friends
Ask Mum to speak to school	They might listen to her more	Not standing up for myself, Mum might get angry at me

### Step 4

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

Speak to my teacher

### Step 5

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

**When:** At breaktime, before my lesson on Tuesday

**Where:** In the classroom

**How:** Arrive at the class 5 minutes before, knock on the door and ask if they're free. Explain that I am struggling with the content of the past couple of weeks and ask for help

**Steps to complete:** n/a

### Step 6

Execute the plan!

### Step 7

Review how the plan went (TBC next week!)

# Problem Solving Worksheet

## Step 1

Identify the problem (it's important to make sure this is just one problem and break it down into smaller steps if needed):

Step 2 Think of all the possible solutions:

Step 2 Weigh up the pros and cons of each possible solution:

Possible Solutions	Pros	Cons

## Step 4

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

## Step 5

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

When:  
Where:  
How:

Steps to complete:

## Step 6

Execute the plan!

## Step 7

Review how the plan went (TBC next week!)

Summary of this session:



**Before next time:**

- Complete the action plan for the problem you identified
- Keep an activity diary, remembering to also keep track of any times you ruminate
- Keep trying to make changes to your sleeping and eating habits
- Practice your chosen rumination strategies for this week
- Complete your valued activities

# Session 8

## Keeping things Going

Reviewing your activity diary: What have you noticed?

Reviewing your planned valued activities: How did they go?

\*if they did not have any positive effect on your mood or ACE ratings, complete the 'I tried an activity and it didn't help my mood' worksheet

Thinking about the activities you have completed this week and looking back at your values to activities worksheet if you need to, what four or five activities can you plan for this week? (Use the 'Planning Valued Activities' worksheet if you still find this helpful).

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

Reviewing rumination strategies: How did they go?

What rumination strategies can you practice before our next session?



Reviewing the chosen solution to your problem: How did it go?


Is there anything else you need to do to follow-up? Or do you need to try a different solution?

## Keeping Things Going

How did the problem develop? What things led to the problem?  
Can you remember when it started? What was happening at that time?  
Were there any later experiences that made your problem worse?

What kept the problem going? What thoughts or beliefs kept it going?  
What actions or behaviours kept it going? What safety behaviours were you using?

What are the most important things you learned in therapy?



How will you continue to build on what you have learned?  
What do you need to do to maintain the changes and improvements you have made?  
What is there still left to work on?

What might make it difficult for you to keep making progress?  
How will you overcome these obstacles?



How would you know if the problems/difficulties were getting worse again?

If you do have a setback, what will you do about it? What would help?

What are your goals for the future?

For the next month:

For the next 6 months:

For the next Year:

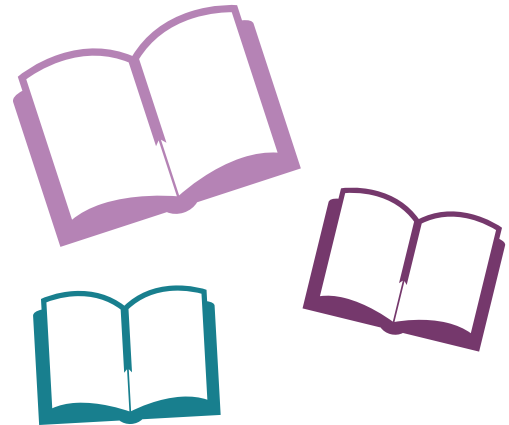


## What can I do now our sessions have finished?

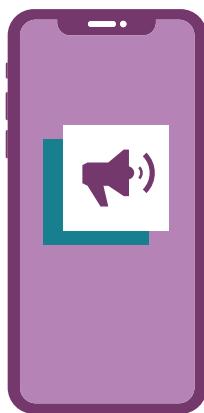
There are lots of ways you could get extra help now that your sessions are finished, including using some of the resources suggested below:

### Books

- Biegel, G.M. (2009). *The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens: Mindfulness Skills to Help You Deal with Stress*. California: New Harbinger
- Ciarrochi, J. Hayes, L. & Bailey, A. (2012). *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life for Teens: A Guide to Living an Extraordinary Life*. California: New Harbinger
- Stallard, P. (2002). *Think Good – Feel Good: A cognitive behaviour therapy workbook for children and young people*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. (plus, additional online resources after purchasing book)  
<http://www.wileyurope.com/go/thinkgoodfeelgood>



### Helplines



- Childline 0800 11 11 (free confidential 24hr helpline for young people who are aged up to 19 years old)
- Samaritans 08457 90 90 90 (free confidential 24-hour helpline)
- Papyrus HOPELineUK 0800 068 41 41 (free confidential helpline for anyone concerned about a young person at risk of harming themselves. Open weekdays 10am – 5pm, 7pm – 10pm; weekends 2pm – 5pm)

## Websites

- [www.livinglifetothefull.com](http://www.livinglifetothefull.com) (a useful website with a range of booklets, worksheets and computer-based self-help modules)
- <http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/> (a self-help site full of resources and booklets for dealing with depression, anxiety and other difficulties)
- <https://moodgym.anu.edu.au> (free web-based CBT programme, which includes modules on assertiveness and inter-personal skills)
- <http://www.thesite.org> The Site (online guide to life for young people 16 years and over)
- Childline [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) If you would prefer to speak to a counsellor online: <http://www.childline.org.uk/talk/chat/pages/onlinechat.aspx> (or you can exchange emails with a counsellor).
- <http://www.papyrus-uk.org/support/for-you> & <http://www.papyrus-uk.org/support/for-parents> (advice and support for young people dealing with self-harm and emotional distress and for those who are worried about them).
- Harmless [www.harmless.org.uk](http://www.harmless.org.uk) (user-led organisation that includes a range of information and support for people who self-harm)



## Support Groups



- Young Minds (Charity committed to improving the mental health of young people. Support for those worried about a young person's behaviour or mental health. Provides information leaflets) [www.youngminds.org.uk/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/)
- Rethink (Provides information and a helpline for anyone affected by mental health problems)  
Helpline 0300 500 0927 [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)
- Mind (Provides information on mental health problems and treatments): Helpline 0300 123 3393  
(Mon-Fri 9am – 5pm) [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

# Optional Extra Session

## Focussing on Sleep

### Why can focusing on sleep be helpful?

**Sleep problems are really common!**

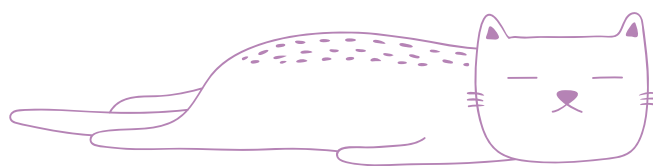
Just like we can all experience bad days and periods of low mood from time to time, we can all experience difficulties with sleep. Research shows that approximately 25% of young people in school experience sleep problems (although we think it is likely to be much more than this!).

**Sleep can have a wide range of effects on young people**

Poor sleep has been linked to poor physical health, for example reduced functioning of the immune system. Sleep problems can also lead to cognitive difficulties, such as finding it hard to remember things and/or pay attention. Poor sleep also affects how we feel; we can often be irritable or angry. And finally, poor sleep can affect our behavior, making us less likely to engage in meaningful activities.

**Mood problems affect sleep and sleep problems affect mood!**

We already know that when we feel low, our sleep can be affected. However, the relationship is bi-directional; this means that poor sleep can affect our mood too. In fact, there is research to suggest young people who sleep less hours than their peers are more likely to experience low mood or depression in the future.



## Why can focusing on sleep be helpful?

Very rarely does one thing cause sleep difficulties! It is likely a combination of factors that will be different for each and every young person struggling to sleep. Your practitioner will talk you through some of the causes. Make some notes in the boxes below and think about which ones may apply to you.

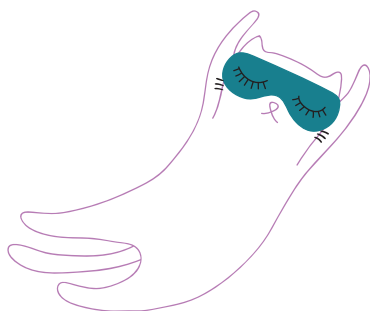
### Social

### Psychological

### Biological

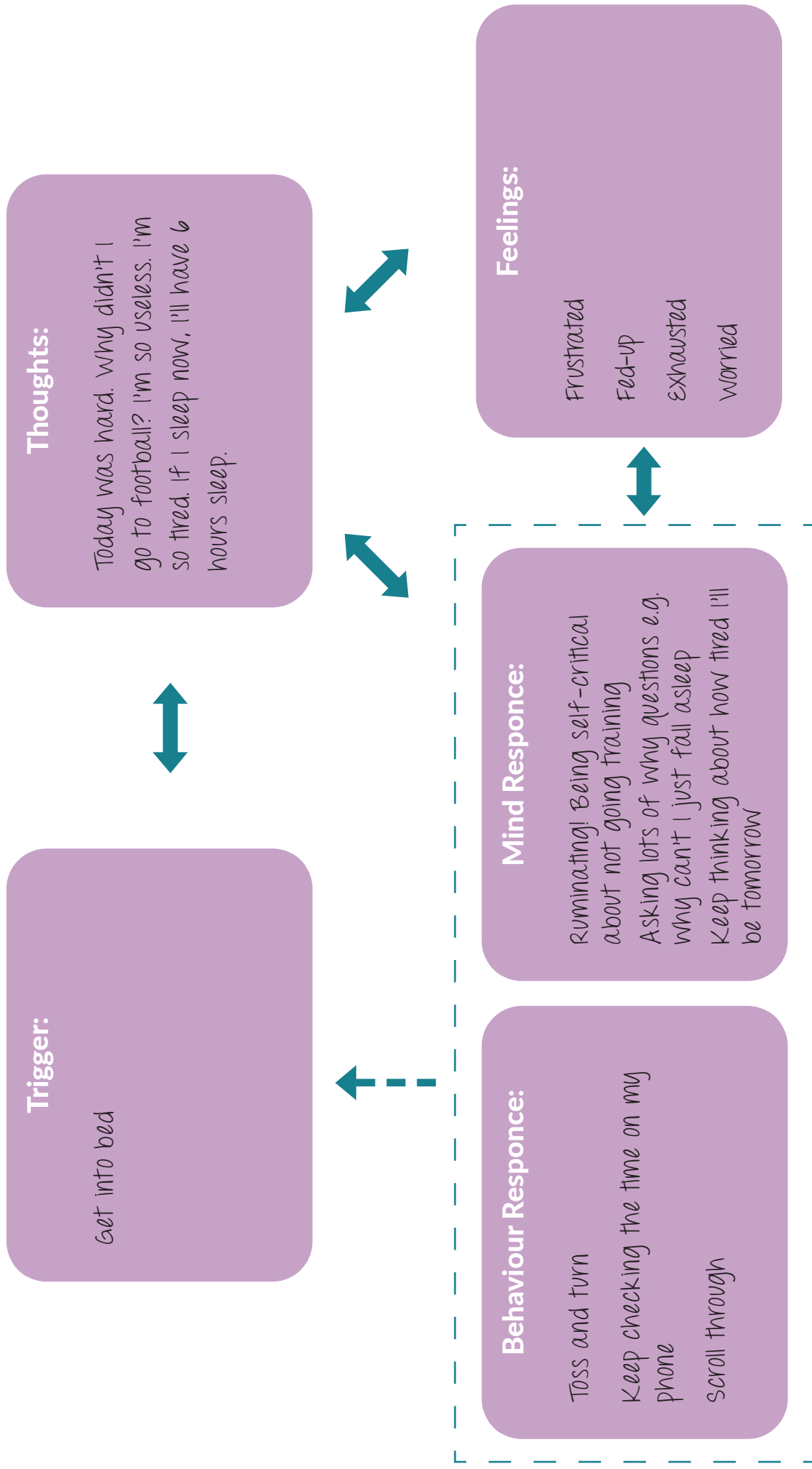
### Environmental

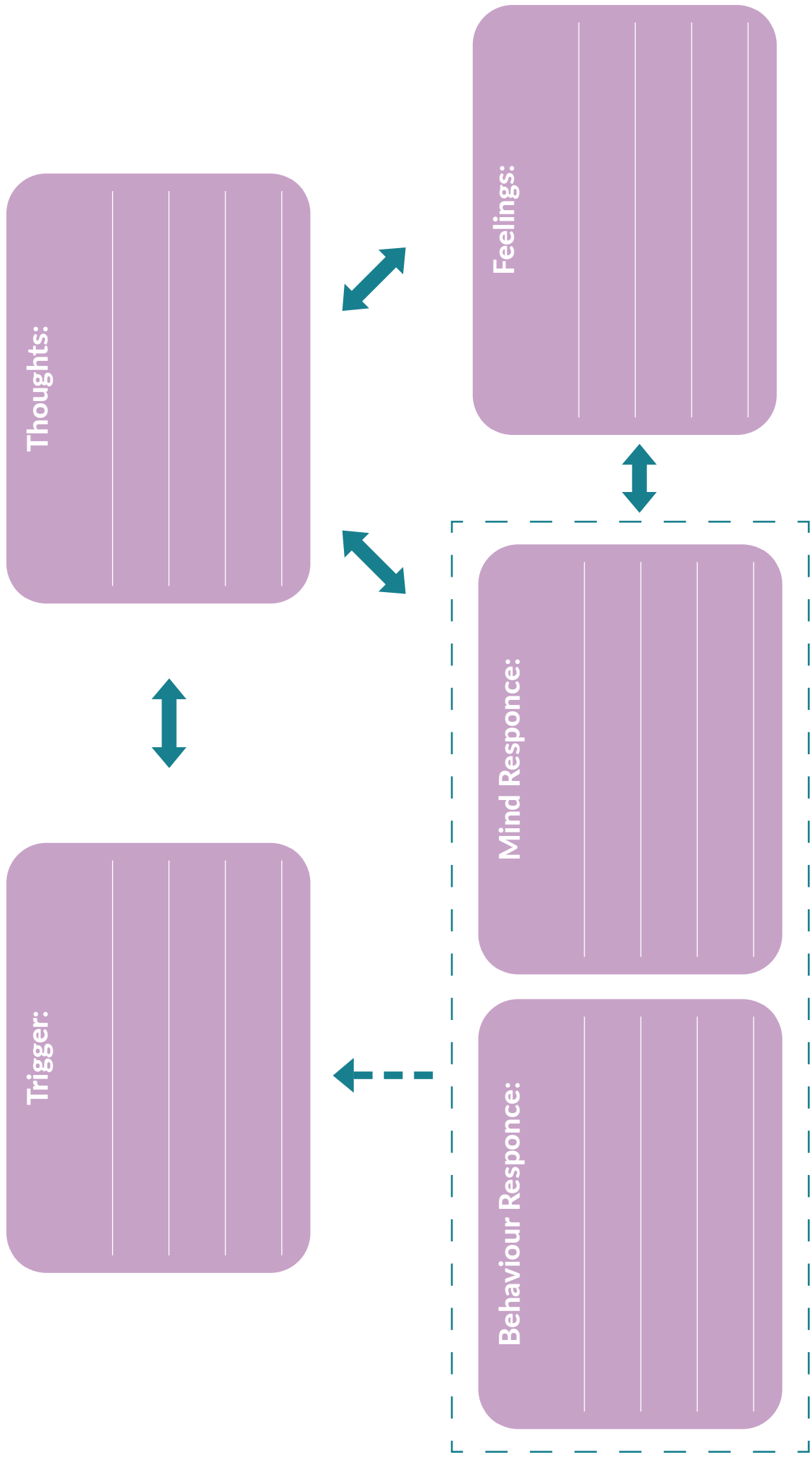
**It's important to remember, that just like there are lots of things that can contribute to poor sleep, there are lots of things you can do to try and improve it.**



## Understanding My Sleep Difficulties: Kamil's Example

Just like it can be helpful to understand what keeps our low mood going, it can be helpful to understand what maintains our difficulties sleeping. Complete the diagram with your practitioner, this time focusing on a recent example where it was difficult for you to sleep.





## Techniques to Improve Sleep:

### Sleep Hygiene

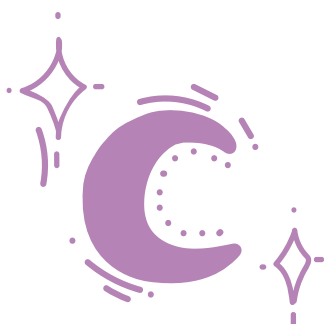
“Sleep hygiene” means habits that have been shown to be helpful for a good night’s sleep. Bad sleeping habits often contribute to sleeping difficulties. This is a good way of targeting some of the biological and environmental factors that contribute to poor sleep.

Sleep hygiene can be split into 4 different areas: Sleep schedule, pre-bed routine, daily routine and optimising your bedroom. Let’s look at each of these, think about how they apply to you and if there are any possible changes you could make.

### **Sleep Schedule:**

#### *The importance of routine*

We talked about this a bit in Session 3: The Importance of Routines. Waking up and going to bed at similar times each day is one the simplest (but hardest) things you can do to positively impact on your sleep. Unfortunately, one thing we cannot control is when we fall asleep. However, we can control what time we wake-up and choose to get out of bed. This means, that even if it takes you three hours to get to sleep one evening, you should keep your wake-up time the same the following day. This might mean being tired for a day or even several, but eventually your body will be so tired that it has to start falling asleep when you want it to.



Of course, we know that it’s difficult to find the motivation to get out of bed on days where you do not necessarily have to be somewhere. Some variation is okay, but try to keep bed and wake-up times within an hour of each other. Trying to catch-up on sleep you’ve missed at the weekend can disrupt your routine all over again! You could try to schedule in some valued activities on days where it’s difficult to get out of bed

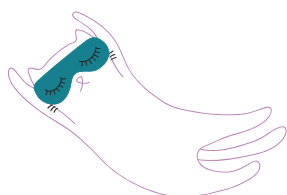


**Current Sleep Schedule:**

	<i>Wake-up time</i>	<i>Bed-time</i>
<i>School/college days</i>		
<i>Non-school/college days</i>		

**New Sleep Schedule:**

	<i>Wake-up time</i>	<i>Bed-time</i>
<i>School/college days</i>		
<i>Non-school/college days</i>		



**Gradual vs Drastic changes to Sleep Schedule**

Researchers disagree on how it is best to change to a sleep schedule; some people think that making small, gradual changes are best. For example, if your current bedtime is 1 am and you want it to be 10pm, they would suggest first aiming for 12:30 for a few nights and then 12:00 and so on. Similarly, they would suggest gradually altering your wake-up time (although with the demands of school or college this is not always possible!). This allows your body-clock time to gradually adapt.

However, others recommend a more drastic approach, where you go straight from a 1am bed-time to a 10pm bedtime. Similarly, you get-up at your new desired wake-up time, despite what time you fall asleep. This makes it more likely that you will be unable to sleep at your chosen time for a few nights, which can be more frustrating and make you more tired in the morning. But, it will mean reaching your desired new sleep-schedule quicker.

Which option do you think would work for you? Gradual or drastic? .....

If you chose gradual, make sure you and your practitioner plan this in detail.



## The 'No Napping' Rule

Another really important (but equally difficult) thing to do is to **BAN NAP-TIME!**

Napping can negatively affect our biological clock and throw off our sleep cycles completely.

Banning yourself from naps may mean being tired for a few days, but eventually it will help you to sleep at night and your tiredness will decrease.

Are you a napper? Is this something you need to work on? .....

## Pre-Bed Routine

Creating a consistent, pre-bed routine helps your body to relax and signals to your brain that it's nearly time to sleep. It tells your body that it's time to release melatonin; keep reading to find out why melatonin is so important.

■ What is your current bed-time routine?  
(what time do you start getting ready for bed, what order do you do things in, what activities do you do to let your brain know that it's nearly time for sleep?)





### Let's talk about screen-time...

There are many benefits to technology in today's world; it allows us to connect with friends, support causes that are important to us and we can access information quickly. We also know that lots of young people use technology to try to relax at night.

How much screen-time do you have in the evenings? How much time do you spend on your phone/tablet/laptop/games console the hour before you go to bed? Where is your phone when you're trying to sleep?

### How screen-time can negatively impact on sleep

There is lots of research evidence that the amount of time we spend looking at screens (especially in the evenings) impacts our sleep:

- More screen time = more difficult and takes longer to fall asleep
- More screen time = less amount of sleep (an insufficient amount)
  - More screen time = poor quality of sleep
- More screen time = increased daytime sleepiness



There are lots of different ways that screen-time can negatively impact sleep

### Screens emit artificial light

- Electronic devices emit an artificial blue light.
- This blue light (or any artificial light!) can stop our bodies from releasing melatonin.
- Melatonin is a sleep-inducing hormone.
- So, if our body does not release melatonin due to artificial light, we can a) feel really awake and b) it can make it really difficult to get to sleep.
- Annoyingly, the more time we spend on electronic devices, especially in the evening, the longer our bodies delay releasing melatonin.

### It stimulates your brain!

- Depending on what technology you're using and what activity you're doing, screen-time can be the opposite of relaxing for our brains and stimulate them instead.
- Video games, for example, are often exciting and/or stressful for those playing them, which keeps your brain alert!
- Similarly, seeing something on social media that is upsetting or triggers difficult thoughts for you, can stimulate your brain and keep you awake longer.

### Sometimes, using technology replaces time sleeping

- "I'll just watch one more episode..." we've all been there!
- Sometimes, we can get so caught up in our screens that we actively choose to go to bed later.



It is recommended to avoid screen time at-least  
30 - 60 minutes before bed (the longer the better!)

**We know that reducing screen-time is not easy! Some ideas that other young people have found helpful are:**

- Replace screen time with calming activities; for example, reading or relaxation strategies
- Keep your screens out of your bedroom
- If you're struggling to reduce your screen time, ask someone at home to help you or try turning your phone off whilst it's charging over-night

Thinking about what you have learned today, do you think screen-time could be impacting negatively on your sleep?

Could it be helpful for you to try to reduce your screen time?

How could we find out if reducing your screen time would improve your sleep?

What changes could you make to try to reduce your screen time?

### Other ways to help your brain and body know it is nearly time for sleep (and get that melatonin released!):

- Allow at least 30 minutes (ideally 60) to wind-down.
- Reduce your exposure to light if you can! Big lights off; lamps on.
- Create a drop in your body temperature; for example, by having a hot bath or shower 60-90 minutes before going to bed
- Some people find it helpful to write down their thoughts about the day.
- Others find it helpful to write down a plan for tomorrow.
- Engage in relaxing activities, such as reading, listening to a podcast, taking a hot bath.
- Try some relaxation strategies (some of these are covered in Session 6: Reducing Rumination and there's an extra one to try out on the next page!).

## Relaxation Exercise to try: Relaxed place imagery

- Start by getting comfortable in a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
- Focus on your breathing for a few moments and close your eyes.
- Imagine a place where you can feel calm, peaceful and relaxed. It may be a place you've been to before, somewhere you've seen a picture or somewhere entirely from your imagination.
- Look around you in your relaxing place, what can you see? Notice the colours and shapes.
- Listen and notice the sounds that are around you.
- Think about any smells you might notice.
- Focus on any physical sensations
- Notice how your body feels whilst you are in your safe place. Try to let go of any left-over tension in your muscles.
- You can stay in your safe place as long as you want to; you can leave at any time by opening your eyes and bringing yourself back to the here and now and you can return here any time you need to.



Putting all these things together, what could your new pre-bedtime routine look like?

Aim to be in bed, ready to fall asleep by:

Start 'winding down' for bed at:

New pre-bedtime routine to try:



**Don't forget to try to keep this the same every night!**

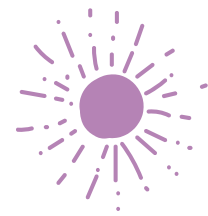
## Daily Routine

What you do during the day can also affect your quality of sleep. For example, if you spend most of the day sitting or lying down scrolling through social media, this will make your body and brain less tired than if you had exercised for 30 minutes or completed a difficult piece of homework.

The good news is, as you increase the valuable activities you do in the day as part of Behavioural Activation, the more of a positive affect your daily routine will have on your sleep. You could even think with your practitioner about adding in some valued activities that require high energy or effort, to try and maximise their benefit as much as possible.

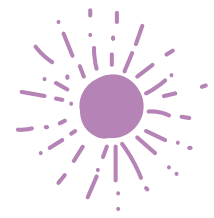


You can also have a look at these 'daily routine top-tips'; think about how they apply to you at the moment and any changes you could make.



Top Tip	Current status	Possible changes I could make
<p><b>Get daylight exposure (especially in the winter!)</b> This is linked to ensuring your body clock is working with you, rather than against you.</p>		
<p><b>Be physically active</b> This doesn't have to mean running a marathon every day, even a short 10-20 minutes brisk walk has been proven to improve sleep. However, it's important not to exercise too close to bedtime (within 3 hours before) or it can have the opposite effect!</p>		
<p><b>Reduce your 'stimulant' consumption during the day; this includes caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and other substances</b> Try not to drink caffeine after 3pm; remember there are lots of other caffeine-free alternatives</p>		
<p><b>Don't eat too late</b> Being full before bed can wake you up but you also don't want to go to bed hungry! Limit eating before bed to small snacks. A warm drink can also help.</p>		
<p><b>Restrict in-bed activity</b> Your brain needs to associate your bed with sleep. Avoid doing anything on your bed, even scrolling through your phone.</p>		

## Optimising your bedroom



Did you know that your bedroom can affect your quality of sleep?  
A few tweaks could help!

Top Tip	My Current Bedroom Environment	Changes I could make
<b>Cool temperature</b> Optimum temperature recommended is between 15.6 and 19.4 degrees Celsius		
<b>Comfortable bed</b> Includes your mattress and your pillows!		
<b>Block out light</b> (e.g. black out curtains or sleep mask)		
<b>Drown out noise</b> (e.g. headphones with white noise, ear plugs)		
<b>Try calming smells</b> (e.g. lavender, chamomile)		



## During the Night

Not being able to fall asleep or waking up in the middle of the night can be so frustrating! Try to follow these rules if this happens to you:

- Stop looking at the time (it will likely make you feel more stressed out about not being able to sleep!)
- Don't just toss and turn! If after 20 minutes you're not able to sleep, get up and do something RELAXING. This could be one of the relaxation exercises in this workbook, reading with a nightlight or listening to music. Remember to avoid screens.
- If you find that you're ruminating, try writing these things down for your rumination time tomorrow
- Distraction sequences: we know this is an old person thing, but counting sheep or thinking about a certain colour can be helpful.



## Summary

We've covered lots of different things you could try to help to improve your sleep. Some of them will apply to you and others will not. You're also not expected to try them all at once!

### Example: Kamil's Sleep

After working through the sleep worksheets with his practitioner, Kamil identifies the following areas that he could work on:

- He currently naps when he gets home from school. Sometimes this is planned and other times he just falls asleep when on his phone
- He does not have a consistent wake-up or bed-time. In the week it is similar because he has to get up for school. On the weekends, he tends to stay up later gaming and spends a lot of the day sleeping.
- He doesn't really have a bedtime routine and spends time on his phone before bed

### Kamil chooses to try to make the following changes to his sleep this week:

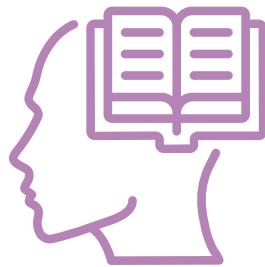
1. No napping! Instead, schedule in valued activities that will be difficult for me to fall asleep doing.
2. Try to be screen-free 30 minutes before bedtime. Listen to a podcast instead.
3. Start to have a regular wake-up and bedtime including on weekends. Aim to be in bed by midnight and up at 9am Saturday and Sunday.

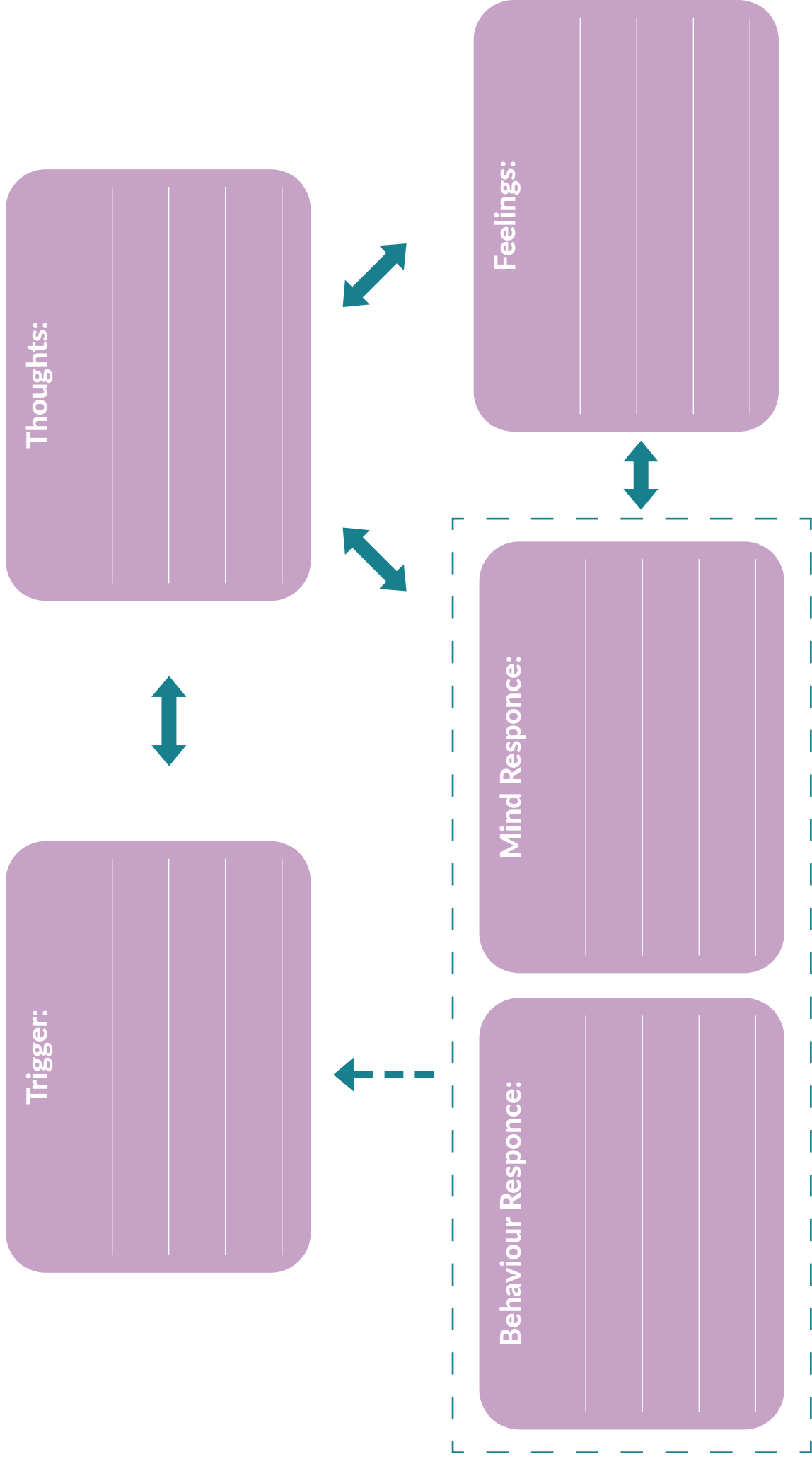
### What changes will you try to make this week to improve your sleep?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Additional Worksheets







## Activity Diary/Log

<b>Time /Day</b>												
6am – 9am	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
9am – 12pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
12pm – 3pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
3pm – 6pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
6pm – 9pm	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
9pm – 12am	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:	Mood: A: C: E: V:
<b>Average Mood Rating (Scale from 0 -10)</b>												

## In session BA Worksheet

The activity we are going to complete in today's session is...

Right now, my mood is: /10

I predict the activity will have the following impact on my:

Sense of **ACHIEVMENT**: /10

**CLOSENESS** to others: /10

**ENJOYMENT**: /10



Now give the activity a go



Actual sense of **ACHIEVMENT**: /10

Actual **CLOSENESS** to others: /10

Actual **ENJOYMENT**: /10

Right now, my mood is: /10

### Turning values and interests into activities:

Values and interests are great as they can guide what we do on a day-to-day basis. Research shows that doing activities that are important to us can help to break the cycle of low mood.

**Value/Interest**

- Potential activities

**e.g. Music**

- Creating a joint spotify playlist with my friends
- Researching gigs to go to in my area
- Finding new musicians on Instagram
- Listening to music in my room

Start to brainstorm some possible activities that may be linked with these values or interests.

## Planning Activities Worksheet

Value/Interest I want to focus on this week:

**Activity:**

**When:**

**Where:**

**How:**

**Help I will need from other people:**

**Anything that might make it difficult to do the activity?**

**What can we do to make it easier to complete?**



# Problem Solving Worksheet

## Step 1

Identify the problem (it's important to make sure this is just one problem and break it down into smaller steps if needed):

Step 2 Think of all the possible solutions:

Step 2 Weigh up the pros and cons of each possible solution:

Possible Solutions	Pros	Cons

## Step 4

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

## Step 5

Choose a solution based on the pros and cons of all available options:

When:  
Where:  
How:

Steps to complete:

## Step 6

Execute the plan!

## Step 7

Review how the plan went (TBC next week!)

## “I tried an activity and it didn’t help my mood” Worksheet

### 1. Was it in line with your values?

### 2. The importance of context and consequences

What is going on around the activity and what the consequences are of the activity are sometimes more important than the activity itself! Let’s break down what happened to think about this:

What was going on before the activity?	Details of the activity (Who, where, when, what)	Consequences: What happened after the activity (short-term and long-term)
Came home from school	Went to my room, sent a message to Nathan to try to arrange to meet up tomorrow. Scrolled on social media in between.	Mum shouted at me for being on my phone instead of doing my homework; I felt guilty for not doing my homework. I stopped messaging Nathan

Anything in the context or consequences that could explain why the activity did not have a positive impact on your mood?

### 3. Where was your attention during the task? Were you fully engaged in the activity or were you ‘stuck in your head?’ Were you ruminating?

If you’ve worked through 1-3 and there does not seem to be an explanation. Sometimes, annoyingly, it can take our mood some time to catch up with our change in activities. Was this the first time you have tried this activity?