

LIGHTBULB SESSION 4

COURSE WORKBOOK





TRAUMA AND AVOIDANCE

RECAP FROM SESSION 4...

- ✓ Some of the lifestyle factors that can impact our mood, wellbeing and functioning including caffeine, alcohol and recreational drugs
- ✓ How trauma can impact our sleep and trigger nightmares – we identified unhelpful habits and looked at replacing them with more helpful techniques
- ✓ Techniques to manage feelings of anger
- ✓ Progressive muscular relaxation

HOMEWORK REVIEW



Were you able to reduce caffeine / alcohol / recreational drug use?



Were you able to reduce some of your unhelpful sleeping habits and start introducing some of the helpful sleep techniques?



Were you able to identify signs & symptoms of anger?



How did you find the techniques to manage feelings of anger?



Did you manage to exercise this week?



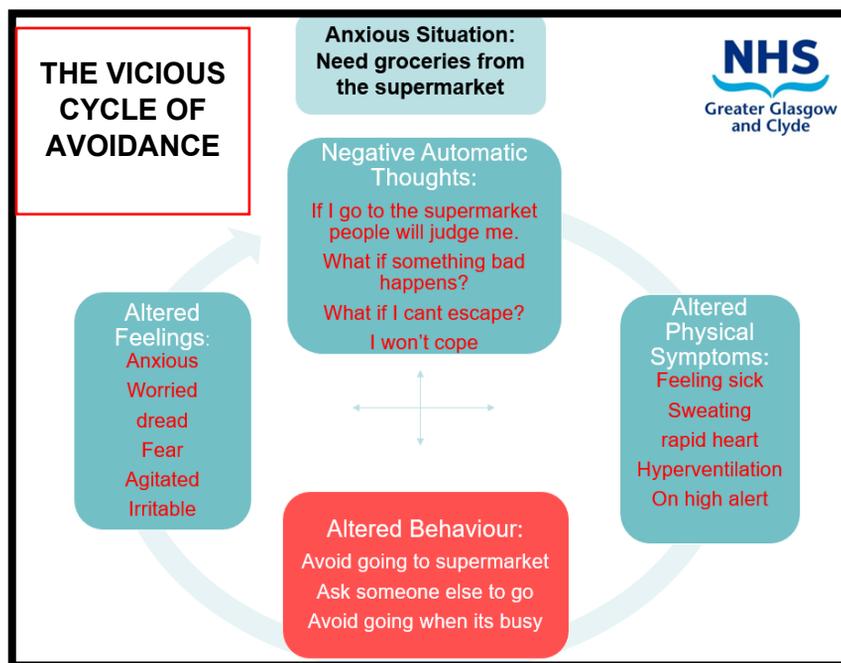
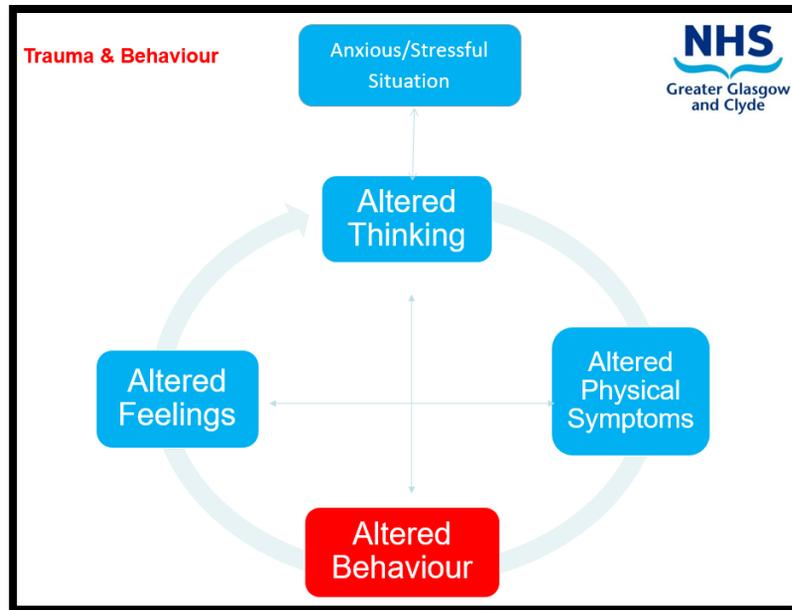
How did you find Progressive Muscular Relaxation as a technique of relaxation?

TODAY'S PLAN

- What is avoidance and how does it maintain PTSD?
- Look at techniques and strategies to overcome avoidance.
- How else can a trauma impact our behavior?



Trauma and Behaviour...

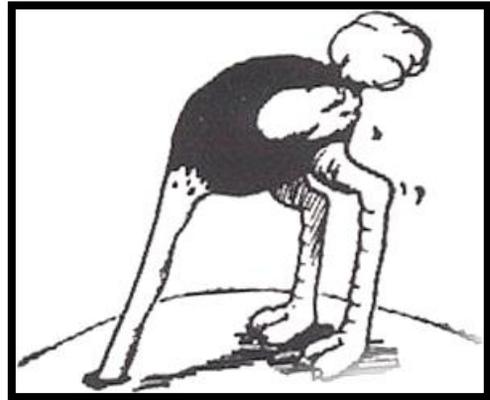


ARE YOU AN EXPERT AVOIDER?

Do you block out memories?

Distract yourself and keep busy?

Isolate yourself from other people?



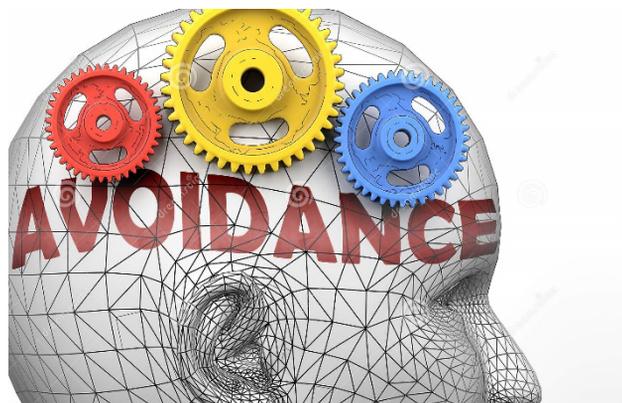
Avoidance Behaviours...

Avoidance is a way of reducing our fears and anxieties by:

- Not facing up to the situations we fear
- Escaping the situations we fear
- It's natural to avoid the things that makes us anxious
- It's a quick fix!

Common examples of avoidance...

- Supermarkets
- Speaking on the phone
- Busy places
- Public transport
- Public speaking





Disadvantages of avoidance...



It's a short-term solution that doesn't work in the long term



It decreases the chances of us overcoming our fears



It prevents us from learning that thoughts are not true



It can become a habit



It can affect many areas of life



It can affect your confidence – “I can't do that”

Avoidance Maintains PTSD!



Task 1

What are the situations you avoid when you are fearful and anxious?

Make a list:

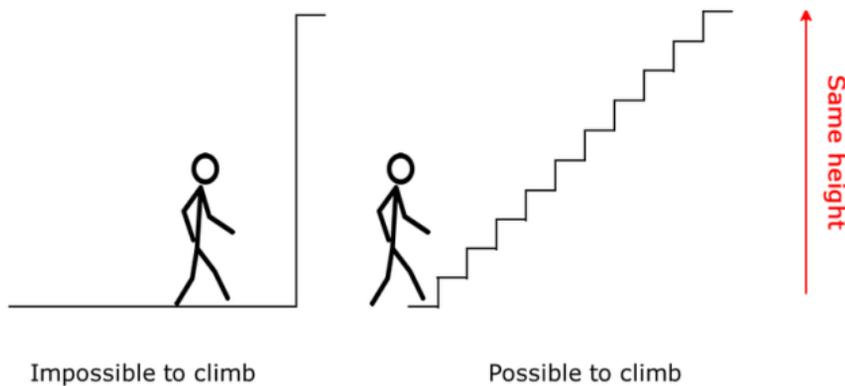


HOW TO TACKLE AVOIDANCE?

Graded Exposure...

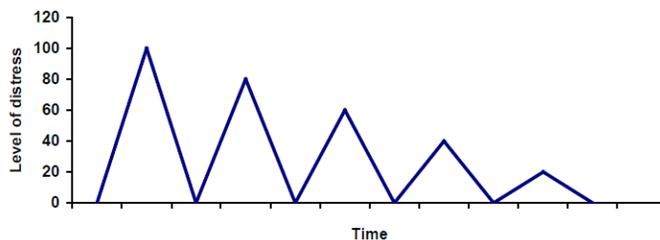
Graded means adopting a step-by-step approach to a situation, tackling the easiest step first and moving to the more difficult when ready

Exposure means exposing yourself to the situation/ facing the situation that induces anxiety or fear



It needs to be...

Gradual – step by step, repeated and prolonged (stay in the situation). This allows us to habituate (our distress will decrease the more we do something and the longer we stay in the situation).



We approach graded exposure in a step-by-step way, and if we need to put in extra steps, we can do that. The group will talk about Sally, her fear of going to busy places, and how she can develop a graded exposure hierarchy – from 1 being the easiest step to 10 being hardest).



HOW DO WE DO IT?

At each step:

1. Rate your anxiety / fear at the start
2. Remain in the situation until your anxiety have halved (ie falls from 90% to 45%)
3. **DO NOT** leave the situation until your anxiety reduces
4. Reflect on how it went

Step one should be the easiest building up to final step which is the hardest.

Maybe have to repeat steps or add in new steps as you work through the ladder.



Task 2

Feared Situation	Graded Plan
	1 (easiest step)
	2
	3
	4
	5
	6
	7
	8
	9
	10 (hardest)

Look at the list of situations you find difficult or avoid from the last exercise.

Pick one type of situation from the list

Make a plan- what steps you need to take to tackle the anxiety.

Remember: Be realistic & plan your steps from the easiest to the most difficult.



Reflect on each practice...

What did you notice when you were carrying out the tasks you set yourself-how did you feel? what were you thinking?	
What did you do that helped it go well?	
How did you feel after you carried out your plan?	
Was there anything you would do differently next time?	

Tips for each practice...

- ✓ Daily practice
- ✓ May have to insert new steps
- ✓ Be creative
- ✓ Use controlled breathing and relaxation

HOW ELSE DO WE BEHAVE AFTER A TRAUMA?

We develop what we call safety behaviours. These are things we do which make it easier to face situations.



Are Safety Behaviours Helpful?

- Seem helpful...as they allow a person to get through difficult situation.

BUT.....

- work only **SHORT-TERM**
- can become unhelpful habit
- 'I can't do this unless...'



Task 3.

Can you think of any safety behaviours you do?

Which of your safety behaviours would you be ready to drop or reduce?

What do you think would happen if you dropped your safety behaviours?

Overactivity...

- Rushing around
- Trying to do too many things at once or doing or spending lots of time on one activity e.g., cleaning
- Difficulty saying 'no' or delegating
- Unable to sit still/unwind and relax
- Leads to feeling low, irritable & exhausted

How to Manage Overactivity

Make a plan and stick to it!

- ✓ Make a daily list of what you would like to do
- ✓ Focus on one task at a time



- ✓ Prioritise & be realistic
- ✓ Boundaries
- ✓ Focus on achievements
- ✓ Set aside time to do something you enjoy

Helpful Questions to Ask Yourself...

Who or what am I doing this for?	
What is the worst that can happen if I don't do this today?	
Do I have to be doing something every minute of everyday?	

Underactivity...

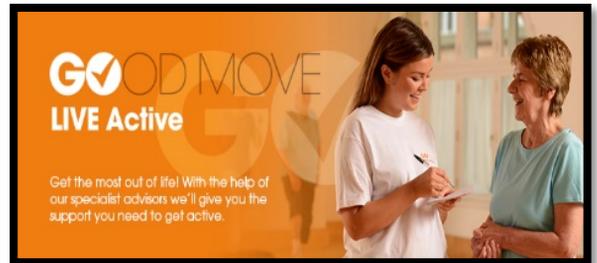
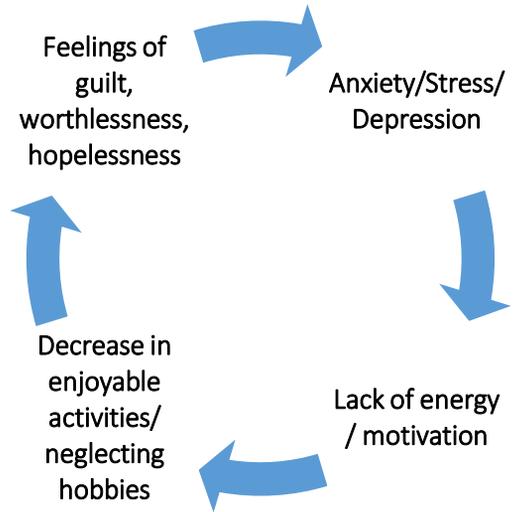
- Neglecting your hobbies
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of enjoyable activity
- 'I feel tired'
- 'I can't be bothered doing things'
- 'There is so much to do'
- Makes things worse, keeps stress going
- Feelings of worthlessness – confidence



BECOMES A VICIOUS CIRCLE...

Plan for underactivity...

- Pace yourself
- Increase your activity by a small amount every day
- Make a detailed plan, be specific
- Write it down
- Carry it out – can't wait for the day we have motivation otherwise won't do it





What have you learned today?

Write down 3 key points:

HOMEWORK

- ✓ Practice graded exposure in a situation you have been avoiding – rate your SUDS before, during and after.
- ✓ Reflect on your unhelpful behaviours and think about how you can tackle them using some of the strategies discussed today such as making to do lists, increasing activity, graded exposure and dropping safety behaviours.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S GROUP

Next week is the final session so we would ask you to go to the website and fill out a Core -10 questionnaire prior to the session. Remember you will have done these before.

This helps us to monitor the effectiveness of the groups and identify any risks.

We will not be able to admit you without it.

Please note that question 6 asked about making plans about suicide, not thoughts. If you are experiencing suicidal plans, then please immediately contact your GP or call 111.

<https://www.wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/core10>





MY NOTES