SELF-HELP ACCESS IN ROUTINE PRIMARY CARE

Relaxed Breathing

Assertiveness & You

## Useful Questions for the Clinician Using Guided Self-Help

Sometimes patients struggle to write things about their thoughts, feelings and behaviour, especially early on when their habits of selfcriticism ("I will make a mess of things like I always do" or "I am no good at this kind of thing") or fear of being shown up ("They will think I am an idiot when they read this" or "my spelling is awful - I can't show them this") are still ruling the roost.



Asking open-ended questions invites people to open up and tells them that you are interested without wanting to take charge - responsibility for change lies with the patient, not you.

Here are some useful questions that we use - hopefully you already have some useful questions of your own that you can add:

- "What is your initial reaction to the idea of using self-help?"
- "Have you used any self-help materials before? (Eg for smoking, weight, diabetes etc) – If so, were they useful?"
- "Has anyone you know used this approach?"
- "Have you ever been in similar circumstances before? What did you do? How did that turn out?"
- "What do you know now that you didn't know then?"
- "What advice would you give to a friend in a similar situation?"
- "What have you got going for you at the moment?"
- "Is there anything you do that helps you feel better, even if it's only for a while?"
- "Who is helping you at the moment apart from me?"
- "Have you got the time / energy / inclination to work on this at home at present?"
- "What have you done in the past that might help you now?"
- "Is there anything that you can change right now? Something small to begin with?"

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Overleaf is a 5 areas diagram with some useful questions relating to each of the 5 areas boxes...



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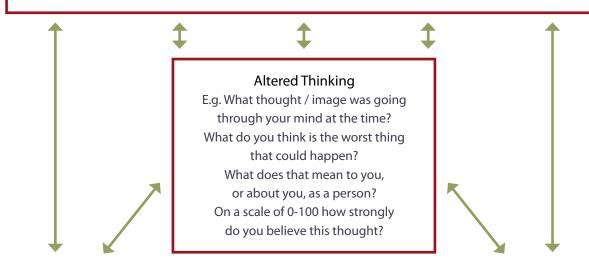
The Fight / Flight Response

Assertiveness & You

## Useful Questions for the Clinician Using Guided Self-Help

### Life Situations, Practical Problems & Relationships - The 'Outside World'

E.g. 'Tell me about the last time you felt very anxious/ depressed' (and then ask them to focus on it in terms of thoughts, feelings, behaviour and physiology). 'What particular worries / stresses do you have at the moment / did you have at that time?' 'How are your relationships with other people at the moment?'



#### Altered Feelings

How did that thought / image make you feel? How did you feel before / during / after the event? On a scale of 1-100 how bad was the feeling (where 1 is very little & 100 is the worst I've ever felt?)

# **Altered Physical Symptoms** How is it affecting you physically?

What symptoms do you have (if necessary give examples)? How are your energy levels / sleep patterns?



#### Altered Behaviour

How is this problem interfering with your life at work / home / socially? Are there things you can't do now that you have previously enjoyed? Are you actively avoiding people / places / situations? Are you eating more or less than before? Drinking more alcohol?



### The 'Five Areas' Assessment Model – Useful Ouestions

Mike Lucock and Mike Lawson

