Pathways to Recovery from Mental Disorders: from caring to curing

a guidebook for consumers

by
Ian R.H. Falloon
and the Optimal Treatment Project

Produced by Ballarat Health Services, Psychiatric Services
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A Guidebook for Consumers and their Families and Friends

By Ian RH Falloon and the international Optimal Treatment Project

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INTRODUCTION

The Guidebook has been developed over 25 years. During this time thousands of people with mental disorders and their friends and families have participated in educational programmes. These programmes have aimed to teach them to be able to learn how to assist in the process of recovery from the impairment, disability and handicap of mental disorders. Consumers have developed specific strategies in partnership with clinicians and researchers to enable them to understand the nature of these disorders and to minimise the long-term clinical, social and family morbidity through optimal integration of biomedical and psychosocial strategies. A collaborative teamwork model based upon a shared understanding of all aspects of assessment and treatment has facilitated the recognition of Integrated Mental Health Care as the premier approach for the delivery of high quality mental health services throughout the world.

The success of Integrated Mental Health Care has been achieved through the careful application of strategies that have been shown to work under the most rigorous controlled research conditions. Clinicians, patients and caregivers have all been trained to use the strategies that have proven most beneficial in all areas of clinical treatment and with a wide range of mental disorders. In order to do this it has been necessary to use clearly written guidelines that every person can read and apply to deal with their personal problems and to achieve their personal life goals. The Guidebook is a compilation of these guidelines.

How to Use the Guidebook
The Guidebook is designed to be used as an educational course book for people with mental disorders and the people who help them solve their problems of everyday living. People read through the modules and discuss the points that are highlighted. This can be done with a trained Instructor in a) individual tutorials; b) Resource Groups of friends and families; or c) groups of residents in residential homes; d) groups of people in hospitals. Instructors may include all mental health professionals, schoolteachers, mental health volunteers, who have been trained in the use of Integrated Mental Health Care in the 100-hour certificate courses. In some places we have trained recovered patients and Resource Group members who have experienced the course as consumers.

Acknowledgements
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& the OTP Collaborators

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CONTENTS

Part I: Integrated Mental Health Care: Basic Course

Background: Instructions for Use
Integrating Patients And Resource Groups Into The Mental Health Team
Finding Somebody To Help Me Recover And Stay Well
Assessment Of The Problems And Goals Of People And Their Resource Groups

Assessment of Progress (completed every session)
- Assessment of Progress - session by session
- Goal Achievement Record
- Life Chart: Key Problem Severity; Impairment of Mental Functions; Disability Index; Resource Group Stress
- Medication Record
- Record of Integrated Mental Health Care
- Checklist of Competence in Clinical Strategies

Understanding More About Mental Disorders & Their Treatments
- Nature of Disorders
- Biomedical Strategies
- Developing Adherence To Treatments
- Psychosocial Strategies
- Prevention Of Recurrences: Early Warning Signs, Managing Stress, Specific Strategies

A Problem Shared Is A Problem Spared: How Talking About The Things We Find Stressful May Help Us Solve Our Problems And Achieve Our Goals

How To Encourage People To Do More Things That Please Us
Making A Positive Request For Help With A Problem
Telling People Exactly What We Are Feeling Unhappy About: Identifying Problems
Solving Problems And Achieving Goals: Introduction
Deciding Exactly What The Problem Or Goal Is With Active Listening

PART II: Integrated Mental Health Care: Advanced Course

Crisis Management
- I: Early Detection & Crisis Prevention
- II: Intensive Treatment
- III: Coping With Those Times When Life Does Not Seem Worth Living

What Is A Bipolar Affective Disorder? Coping With Manic Symptoms
- I: What is A Bipolar Affective Disorder: An Overview
- II: Biomedical Treatment
- III: How To Get The Best Results From Medicines
- IV: Early Warning Signs
- V: Psychological: Strategies
- VI: Preventing Further Episodes

1 The specific education provided will depend on the patterns of symptoms, diagnoses and medications of the participants
What Is Depression?
- I The Main Features And Medical Treatment Strategies
- II Developing The Habit Of Taking Medicines Every Day
- III Psychological Strategies
- IV Learning to Cope Better with Unpleasant Thoughts and Low Self Esteem
- V Preventing Recurrences

What is Schizophrenia?
- I: An Overview
- II: Medication For Schizophrenic And Other Psychotic Disorders: How To Maximise The Benefits And Minimise The Unwanted Effects
- III: How To Recognise The Earliest Signs Of A Major Psychotic Episode And Prevent Severe Crises
- IV: Developing The Habit Of Taking Medicines Every Day
- V: Coping With Psychotic Disorders: Psychological Strategies

What is Anxiety?
- Developing Strategies To Cope With Anxiety?
- I: Reducing The Sensitivity Of Our Nervous System
- II: Reducing Frightening Thoughts
- III: Getting Used To The Situations That Set Off Our Anxiety

How To Find Better Alternatives To Using Drugs And Alcohol To Solve Our Problems
- I: The good, the bad and the ugly
- II: Ready, Steady, Go!
- III: Minimising Harm for Happy Users
- IV: Stopping Using Without Distress

Eating Problems
- I: Understanding The Problems
- II: Reaching A Healthy Weight By Eating A Balanced Diet
- III: Special Strategies
- IV: Learning To Live With Our Body
- V: Continuing To Eat In A Healthy Way

What Is Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?
- I: Understanding The Problem
- II: Effective Treatment Strategies
- III: Getting Used To The Situations That Set Off Our Worrying Thoughts
- IV: Reducing Worrying Thoughts
- V: Maintaining Progress And Coping With Setbacks

Learning To Cope Better With Unpleasant Thoughts And Voices
- I: An Analysis Of The Problem
- II: Enhancing Coping Strategies
- III: Specific Strategies For Persistent Voices
- IV: Specific Strategies For Persistent Unpleasant Thoughts

Getting A Good Night’s Sleep
- I: Understanding The Problem
- II: Special Strategies
Making Friends
- I: The First Steps
- II: Developing Close Friendships
- III: Giving and Receiving Sexual Pleasure (not yet completed section on sexual dysfunction)

Increasing Rewarding Daily Activities:
- I: Making A Record Of Our Daily Activities
- II: Scheduling Enjoyable Activities
- III: Satisfying Constructive Work Activity
- IV: Developing Hobbies

Coping With Anger And Frustration:
- I: What Things Make Us More Likely To Lose Control Of Our Feelings
- II: Things We Can Do To Keep Our Strong Bad Feelings Under Control
- III: Finding Alternatives To Aggression Or Violence When We Something Triggers Our Bad Feelings
- IV: Strategies For Friends And Families To Cope With Aggression Or Violence
- V: Putting It All Together

Coping With Difficult Emotional Problems:
- I: What is a Borderline Personality Disorder?
- II: Dealing with Triggers
- III: Specific Strategies
INTEGRATING PATIENTS AND THEIR RESOURCE GROUPS INTO THE MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

This module outlines the team biomedical and psychosocial approach that develops close teamwork between patients, the people that care for them and the health professionals who are employed to assist them to achieve a full and lasting recovery from all impairments, disabilities and handicaps associated with their mental disorders.

It is essential that this module is discussed together to clarify the specific efforts that are required to achieve these goals. It is preferred that this module precedes the assessment of goals and problems of patients and their carers. However, the medical and psychiatric assessment of patients will usually be completed earlier, as well as some preliminary education about the patient’s illness and immediate treatment. More than one session may be needed when patients and carers have many questions and concerns.

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The Resource Group

Recent research studies have shown that the best results for the treatment of most serious health problems are achieved when the patients and their close friends or family are all part of the treatment team.

First let’s make a list of the things we can do ourselves that help us recover from any type of illness. (for example resting, eating good food, not doing things that make the problems worse, going to our doctor, taking the pills: or other advice we might be given, etc.):

1.______________________________________________________________
2.______________________________________________________________
3.______________________________________________________________
4.______________________________________________________________
5.______________________________________________________________

There are also many ways that close friend or our family may help us with our treatment. We can make a list of these:

1.______________________________________________________________
2.______________________________________________________________
3.______________________________________________________________
4.______________________________________________________________
5.______________________________________________________________

Research has shown that by learning more about our health problems, working out how to get the best results from medications and other treatments, and coping with stresses in our lives helps many of us recover and be able to lead full and active lives again.

This program is called Integrated Care. It has six main parts:

(1) finding out about each person’s problems and goals
(2) helping people make sense of their mental disorders and the treatment
(3) improving communication about all our problems and personal goals
(4) teaching ways to solve our problems and reach our goals with less stress
(5) specific strategies for very difficult problems
(6) preventing and coping with crises

Each part will be explained in detail in the program.
DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT THIS POINT?

Although we will try to make this program as enjoyable as possible we realise that this will be a big effort for all of us. At times we may be tempted to ask "What am I getting out of all this hard work?" We hope that each of us will find the benefits that we get will be worth the efforts that we will make.

The main aim of Integrated Care is to assist us all to reach the goals that we consider the most important in our lives. Friends and family can help us do the things we want to do in our lives, and to cope with all the stresses that we may have along the way. The big problems we all have at times always upset our close friends and family, and so we usually try to work together to help one another. But the program is not only about solving big problems, but also about coping with the smaller stresses of everyday life, such as eating, sleeping, working, and having fun. Each problem issue is dealt with in the same straightforward way and practical solutions worked out and planned with the assistance of the entire group. Special solutions may be worked out together with our Instructor or Doctor for very difficult problems.

It might seem that the recommendation to get involved in a program such as this means that there is something wrong with the way that we talk to one another and try to solve our problems. Let us be quite clear that this is not true. We know from the experience of other people who have mental disorders that life can become very stressful unless we know how to deal with these problems in the way that works best. This program aims to teach everyone to become a professional at solving problems and achieving goals so that we can all lead the sort of lives that we enjoy. It is very similar to programs for people who develop diabetes or heart disease or asthma, where patients and their friends and families learn how to help with all aspects of those health problems, such as the right diet and exercise, finding things that seem to trigger bad episodes, and dealing with all the life stresses more efficiently.

What will our Instructor do to help us?
This program is an educational one that teaches practical everyday skills. We will have one main instructor, who will be supported by a team of experts in nursing, psychology, occupational therapy, social work and psychiatry. All members of the team have been trained in the same teaching methods, so that they can always help even if our main instructor is not available or on holiday. The instructor will do the following things:

1. **Assess** the way we all cope with our stresses and achieve our goals. We will all have the opportunity to talk with the instructor on our own to work out how the program can be of special help in our life. We will be asked about any health problems of our own, as well as about our understanding and stress associated with mental disorder. We will have the opportunity to review our life style and to clarify ways to improve the quality of our life. As well as this discussion before we start the program each session, we will talk about how we are getting on at the beginning of each meeting, and review progress every three months.

2. **Teach** us about mental disorders and their most successful treatment methods.

3. **Teach** us skills that make it easier to cope with everyday life stresses and to reach the goals that are important to us. These may include ways to tell people how we are feeling, to ask them for help and advice, and to discuss problems in a calm and supportive way.
4. To encourage us to find new ways of handling difficult problems and to try them out.

5. Wherever possible, to encourage us to find our own solutions to the problems that we think are important.

6. To be available to discuss any major problems or crises at all times. Here are the arrangements for contacting our service at all times of the day and night (hand sheets with phone numbers and specific guidelines to each person).

7. To help us give each other rewards for all our efforts rather than only for our achievements. Even when somebody's performance seems far from optimal it is never simply a matter of "not trying", or deliberately behaving in an "inappropriate" manner.

With further training and encouragement from friends and family we may achieve better results from our "best efforts" in the future.

These educational methods may be quite different from treatment we may have had in the past. A few people have told us they have had some unpleasant experiences of various mental health programs in the past and may be worried about getting involved in this programme.

WHAT WorRIES DO WE HAVE ABOUT BECOMING INVOLVED IN THIS PROGRAMME?
1._______________________________________________________________
2._______________________________________________________________

Special issues for the Instructors
Here are some things that we expect from our Instructors:

1. To respect each person's needs to keep special information private. While at the same time, making sure that all criminal activities, such as child abuse or physical violence are reported to the appropriate authorities.

2. On occasions our Instructor may ask permission to make a tape-recording of our educational sessions when these are needed for professional training and supervision. We will discuss this before any session that we would like to record, and no recordings will be made unless we all agree to do this.
What we would like each person to do?

1. **To be involved in deciding which issues will be dealt with** throughout the program. Each of us may be an expert on the problems and stresses that we experience, and may be the best person to decide the solutions that are most likely to help. The instructor can coach us to improve our problem-solving skills, but cannot solve our problems for us.

2. The success of the program depends entirely on our **application of problem-solving skills** in our everyday lives. To assist us in this we will be asked to practice these skills after the training sessions.

3. We will be asked to convene a **Resource Group Meeting** every week. This meeting is to be used to organise our goal achievement and problem-solving efforts without the presence of the instructor.

4. **Attendance** of all people at the instructor-led training as well as the Resource Group Meetings is essential to the program. When absences cannot be avoided the instructor or group may reschedule the occasional session.

5. Taking **drugs or alcohol, physical violence, or other major disruptive behaviour is not permitted** during sessions. Sessions will be stopped immediately.

6. When meetings are held in our home, plans may need to be made to **minimise disruptions** from telephone calls, visitors, meal preparation, etc.

**WHAT DIFFICULTIES WILL WE NEED TO OVERCOME TO BECOME FULLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROGRAM?**

1. _________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________

**The structure of the sessions**

1. The **duration** of sessions is expected to be no more than 1 hour. This may vary according to need. For example, where a major crisis is being resolved the session may be extended, and once people have learned good problem solving skills sessions may be completed in 30 to 40 minutes.

2. Each session has four parts:
   i) **review of progress** and difficulties with personal goals, review of our Resource Group Meeting, and review of specific disorders or problems.
   ii) **review of practice** after the previous sessions.
   iii) **teaching specific skills** to help us achieve our personal goals more easily.
   iv) **preparing practice** to use skills in our everyday lives.

3. The **number of sessions** likely to be needed will be agreed after we have all met with the instructor to discuss our problems and goals. This may vary from 4-5 teaching sessions to a program extending over several years. The usual programme involves around 10-12
sessions at weekly intervals during a three-month period, followed by several booster sessions at monthly intervals. The first course is arranged for three months. After that we will review progress and then work out our plans for the next three months.

4. Integrated Care is usually a long-term commitment to help us solve problems and cope with stresses until all signs of mental disorder have been absent for at least two years. However, the instructor aims to give the minimal amount of teaching and encouragement to develop and then maintain efficient problem-solving activity. Once taking medication and problem solving skills have become part of our lifestyle regular teaching sessions may stop. However, continued checks by our instructor are needed, with plans for revision sessions made when needed. In many ways the program is never "complete", and the instructor and colleagues may continue to keep in contact with us to ensure that all is well.

Who can come to teaching sessions: our Personal Resource Group?
This program may help many people who are close friends or live together with a person who has a mental disorder or other major health problem. It is especially helpful to include all those who may contribute to the stress of the Resource Group, or who may be helpful in reducing that stress. Here is a list of people we might like to invite to the training sessions:

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN OUR RESOURCE GROUP?

- all people living with the person with the disorder
- all those involved in major caregiving roles for that person
- close friends and family members not living in the same house
- psychological or social therapists and instructors
- anyone else that we think could help us

What about Children?
Children may be included if they are able to understand the training process. Most children who are 10 years old will have little difficulty. Some even younger children can make very valuable contributions.

The optimal size of the training group is no more than 6 participants. Thus in larger Resource Groups, especially those with more than one person with a mental disorder, it may be more effective to have several smaller training groups. The same guidelines are used to decide the members of these groups.

Who may find teaching sessions difficult?
If our concentration is being disrupted by symptoms of our disorder we may find it difficult to participate in the educational sessions we have described. When a person is experiencing an exacerbation of schizophrenia, a manic episode, or is severely slowed with depression he or she may find it difficult to learn new skills. The same may be true for people with persistent learning difficulties or continuous psychotic symptoms. Training sessions are best delayed until all the main participants are able to attend to the best of their ability. Special strategies may help those people who remain persistently disabled. These may include having briefer, more frequent training sessions. However, the clearly structured nature of the sessions allows many people with
learning difficulties, who would not be considered for other teaching programs, to participate in Integrated Care.

Practising new skills in everyday life
In order to gain the most benefits from the teaching program it is necessary to use the skills learned in the sessions in everyday life. Special strategies are used to make sure that this happens. These include:

* **Home-based sessions.** Learning skills in the same place that they will be used in makes it more likely that they will be used. For this reason teaching is done in our home, whenever possible. It has been estimated that this "on-the-job" training enables skills to be incorporated into our lifestyle in half the time it would take if sessions were held in another place.

* **Re-playing Real-Life situations:** In addition to doing training in the home or other real life locations (eg. job centres, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, shops), we can practice dealing with the stressful situations that concern us by re-playing the situations in precisely the way they occurred. This is a little like watching a replay of an important part of a game on sports programs on television. However, the difference here is that we can then try better ways of dealing with these difficult situations.

* **Real-Life Practice:** At the end of each session, the instructor and participants agree to practice the skills they have learned in the sessions in their everyday lives. These practice assignments are carefully explained and we will be given examples before the end of each session. Special worksheets are provided to keep a record of our practice so that we can discuss our successes as well as our difficulties with the instructor at the beginning of the next session.

* **The Resource Group Meeting:** In order to help us practice having our own problem solving discussions a meeting of all Resource Group members is held each week in addition to the training session with the instructor. The meeting lasts 30 - 60 minutes, and is arranged at a regular time and place. We recommend using a business-like structure to the meeting. Choose a Chairperson and a Secretary from among our Resource Group. Reports are given at the beginning of each session with the instructor. This is our meeting to deal with the goals and problems that we choose. We hope that these sessions will be soon become a valuable part of our lives' together and will continue long after the training has finished.

These meetings may not seem necessary when we are having instructor-led sessions every week or so. However, they enable the instructor to focus on teaching general strategies rather than on focussing only on current hot issues. As training progresses the instructor will hand over more and more of the structuring of the teaching sessions to the Chairperson and Secretary, so that the sessions become similar to Resource Group Meetings. Eventually our instructor is only a spectator, ready to give encouragement and coaching, but not actively involved in our discussions unless a major crisis arises.

We can now spend a few minutes reading the Guidelines to Resource Group Meetings and planning our first meeting.
GUIDELINES FOR RESOURCE GROUP MEETINGS

1. Select a day and a time for a weekly Resource Group Meeting 30 minutes long.

   Day_______________________________   Time: _____ to ______

2. Elect a SECRETARY to organise the Resource Group Meetings.

   Tasks include:
   * collecting items for discussion
   * getting people to come to meetings on time
   * keeping notes on items discussed
   * giving brief report of meetings to the instructor

   Secretary ______________________________

3. Elect a CHAIRPERSON to structure the discussions during the Meeting.

   Tasks include:
   * making sure that meetings begin and end on time
   * prompting people to keep discussions to the point
   * making sure that every person has his/her say
   * making sure that people behave appropriately

   Chairperson ____________________________

4. The Secretary will give a brief report of each meeting to our instructor at the beginning of the next training session.
FINDING SOMEBODY TO HELP ME RECOVER AND STAY WELL

This module has been developed to help those patients who cannot easily identify the key people in their personal support group who would be able and willing to assist them in their efforts to recover from their mental disorders.

However, at times patients who are living with family members or friends may prefer instead to invite those other close friends or associates they find more helpful with their day to day problems. For this reason most patients may find it useful to read this brief guide and discuss who would be the best people for them to invite to help them with in this course.
Many research studies have shown that people who have major health problems recover more rapidly and then stay well longer when they have one or more friends or family members who are around to help them solve problems and deal with the stress in their lives. In other words, if we can find somebody to help us with the everyday hassles as well as the bigger crises in our life, we can double our chances of staying well and enjoying the sort of life that we would like to have. This can be a very powerful medicine.

For this reason we would like to help find one or two people who can assist us in this programme so that we can get the best results.

**What sort of people should I choose?**

The choice is ours. People have chosen old friends, people they have met when they were in hospital, family members, previous therapists and social workers, work mates, priests, teachers and lecturers, neighbours, even people at the village store.

To make this choice a little easier here is a list of things that would make an *ideal* helper:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“ideal” helpers are</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• available at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• you feel relaxed when you tell them your problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• can meet with you at least twice a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have no big problems of their own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• have other people to help them with their problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• know about your mental disorder, but are not very upset about it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don’t worry if we cannot think of anyone who has *all* these features! These are some of the points to consider when choosing our helpers.

**Make a list of all the people who might make good helpers:**

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Go down the list quickly and say what we think would be the main good points and main bad points about each person as a helper. Then decide whom we will ask first.

**How can I ask somebody to help me?**

Asking someone to help us in a programme like this is extremely difficult. But as we have discussed, it is extremely important. So we need to make a very careful plan of how to do it.
Here is a plan Robert B. made:

Step 1:  Tell Jim that I would like him to help me with my programme when I see him at the club on Tuesday
Step 2:  Give him the “Invitation to Help Me to Recover from A Mental Disorder” and tell him about it
Step 3:  Get him to write his name, address and phone number on the form that is attached
Step 4:  Take the form back to my teacher on Friday 2pm and she will arrange a meeting with Jim and me.
Step 5:  Tell Jim how pleased I am that he has agreed to the meeting
Step 6:  If he doesn’t agree I will tell him how disappointed I feel

This plan worked well for Robert. He was very surprised when Jim said he would really enjoy helping in this way, especially if he could learn to do this better. Unfortunately, because Jim did shift work, it meant that he was seldom able to come to the teaching sessions and Robert had to find another helper as well as Jim.

Our plan may be similar, or quite different. It is important to say exactly what we plan to do, and to prepare ourselves for any special problems that we think are likely to arise.

Coping with the difficult steps

Some of the steps that we have listed may be a little difficult for us and for most people. Asking people to help in this way is something very few of us have done before. Some steps that many people have found difficult are listed here:

DIFFICULT STEPS

• making phone call
• arranging meeting
• bringing up the issue
• explaining what it is about
• getting person to write their name & phone number
• what to do when the answer is “no”

WHAT ARE THE DIFFICULT STEPS IN OUR PLAN?
A written invitation
On the next sheet is an “invitation” that we might find useful in explaining what the programme is about. At the bottom there is a place to write the name, address and phone number of our helper so that we can contact them and make a time to meet together. But maybe our helper cannot read or write very well. Then this may not be very useful. Of course that may be another reason for choosing somebody else, because quite a lot of our teaching will involve reading and writing. We can manage without people being able to read or write, but it is much easier if they can.

Practising difficult steps?
An excellent idea is to actually practise any of the steps that we might find difficult. Let us go through each step that we think might be difficult and practise what we will do and say. We can try to find the best ways to handle such situations. This will help us become more confident to carry through this very difficult task.
An Invitation to Help Me to Recover from a Mental Disorder

I would be very pleased if you could help me with my mental health treatment programme. To get the best results from this programme I need to take some medicine regularly. But, as well, I have been told that I can double the benefits that the best medicine can achieve if I can find a person to help me with the stress I have in my life. This is not just the big problems, but all the little things that make life difficult. Apparently my disorder is likely to get worse when I have high stress that is not sorted out quite quickly.

If you are so kind as to agree to help me with my programme for recovery from my mental disorder it would be best if you and I could meet at regular times at least once or twice a week. At these times we would talk about problems and plans, as well as other things. Some of these meetings would be with people from the mental health service. They will teach us both to become experts at dealing with stress in our lives. Although this will help me recover from my illness and get on with my life, I have been told that it might help you in some ways as well.

Here is the name and phone number of my teacher at the mental health service:

_______________________________________________________________

He/she would like to arrange to meet with us both to talk more about this, and to answer any questions that you might have.
HELPER’S CONTACT NUMBERS

Dear _____________________________

My name is _______________________

I am working with __________________________to develop a programme to help him/her recover from a mental disorder.

I am extremely happy that you are interested in helping us with this programme.

I would be very grateful if you would write your name, address and phone number so that we can arrange to meet together to talk about how we might all work together.

Name:______________________________________________________

Address:_____________________________________________________

Telephone: __________________________________________________

What times would be best for our meeting? ________________________

I am looking forward to meeting you soon. _________________________
Understanding More About Mental Disorders & Their Treatments

Our Instructor will choose the education modules that help us understand more clearly the nature and treatment of the health problems that we have had. They may be inserted in our Guidebooks at this point.

Some people will have more than one diagnosis. In these cases our Instructor will help us decide which disorder to start with. This will usually be the one that is giving us the most problems at this point. But it may be necessary to follow this with education about our other disorders as well.
A Problem Shared is a Problem Spared:
How talking about the things we find stressful may help us solve our problems and achieve our goals

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Psychiatric Services

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We have discussed the importance of dealing with all sorts of stresses if we are to recover from major health problems, and then remain well. There are many ways of dealing with stress:

### THINGS THAT MAY HELP US COPE WITH STRESS

- **AVOIDING STRESSFUL THINGS:** work, study, living with others, sports, hobbies, parties, shopping, holidays, taking drugs, breaking the law
- **AVOIDING STRESSFUL PEOPLE:** close friends, love relationships, family, children, bosses, police, public officials, criminals, crowds
  - **SETTING CLEAR, REALISTIC PERSONAL GOALS**
  - **SOLVING PROBLEMS EFFICIENTLY**
  - **TALKING ABOUT GOALS AND PROBLEMS WITH FRIENDS**
  - **RECEIVING ENCOURAGEMENT FROM FRIENDS**
  - **RELAXING DOING HOBBIES**
  - **RELAXING DOING NOTHING SPECIAL**
  - **SLEEPING WELL**

At times of crisis it may be helpful to reduce stress by taking time off work and avoiding particularly stressful things. However, many of the things that are stressful are also very enjoyable. Before we developed modern treatments the usual method of treating most major health problems was to help people to rest and relax either at home, in hospitals, sanatoria, or asylums. Reduction of stress is still the basis of all medical crisis treatment. But once the crisis is over most of us want to have an exciting and satisfying life. This usually involves having friends, lovers, children, a good job and interesting hobbies. All of these can help us with our stresses, but all these things can also be the cause of our stresses.

### WHAT THINGS HAVE WE FOUND HELP US TO COPE WITH STRESS?

For those of us who have the good fortune not to be prone to any major health problems we need not be too concerned about the occasional period of high stress. When stress becomes too high our bodies give us warning signals, such as headaches, stomach upsets, sleep problems, or feeling exhausted. These signals go away once the stress is reduced. We have seen that the same warning signals occur for people with major health problems, such as the risk of episodes of major mental disorders. In these cases it is important to make sure that we can act quickly to deal with the stress, otherwise it may trigger another episode of our disorder. Our research has shown that there are two very useful ways to deal with stress of all kinds. They are:

- to talk with a close friend or family member
- make a plan to solve the stressful problem
These two key strategies are very simple in theory, but much more difficult to put into practice. We have often been told that we should solve our own problems and not burden others with them. This is particularly true of men. Parents and close friends often think that to be helpful means having instant solutions to all problems. As a result, most of us muddle through our every day personal problems in a very inefficient way, and are reluctant to get our friends or families to help us. However, if we have a major health problem that is made worse by stress, we need to develop a more professional approach to managing our stresses. We need to become experts at talking about our problems and solving our stress. This requires extra training and extra practice. It is a little like becoming a professional football player. Everyone can kick a football. But if they are going to play for a professional team they must practice for hours every day, so that when they need to score the vital goal, or stop the other team scoring, they know exactly what to do. Like football, the skills that we will learn are very simple, but with practice we will be able to help ourselves, or our friend or family members, recover from their mental and physical health problems, and remain well for much of the time. In addition, the skills of speaking clearly about our problems and goals, and working out effective plans for dealing with our stresses, will be helpful in improving many things in our lives.

The 4 key strategies that we will practice are:

- getting people to work together
- making requests for help with a problem
- saying exactly what the problem is
- working out a clear plan of action

In summary, we have found that where people who are at risk of having episodes of major health problems that are known to get worse with high stress, are able to talk with close friends or family members about their every day stresses, and that discussion leads to clear plans to solve the problems, then they are more likely to recover fully from their disorders and to remain well for most of the time. When they are not able to get this help, they tend to have a many more difficulties coping with their disorders. Let us look at the diagram and see if it makes sense to us:
Introduction to Communication about Problems and Goals: page 35

stressful problem

stress reaction: early warning signs

able to talk about stress with a close friend

able to develop a clear plan to solve problems

chance of recovery HIGH
risk of major episodes LOW

not able to talk about stress with anyone

not able to develop a clear plan to solve problems

chance of recovery LOW
risk of severe episodes HIGH
HOW TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DO MORE THINGS THAT PLEASE US

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Expressing Pleasant Feelings: page 37

Telling somebody that they are doing something that pleases us is one of the simplest and most successful ways of encouraging that person to do more of that particular activity. It is also a great way to deal with everyday stress. Each day people do hundreds of things that make our lives more satisfying and enjoyable. They may buy and cook food, help us with our chores, clean the house, wash themselves and dress themselves tidily, talk to us, show interest in what we are doing, wash dishes, phone us, take their medicine, or care for the pets. Many of these things are so routine that we forget to tell the person that they please us. After a time, we may even forget to feel any pleasure from these little things. We start to expect that people will do these things to make our lives easier without even giving them the small, but important reward of appreciation. When they stop doing these things we protest and get angry with them. Or if they do some little thing wrong, we make sure to remind them about that. They then start to think that we do not care about them anymore. This lack of support for the everyday efforts of our friends and families increases when we are under stress. Then we only notice those things that add to our stress and may forget entirely to encourage people to keep doing the little things we like and appreciate. At those times only heroic achievements are likely to get noticed and rewarded.

The first step in becoming expert at managing everyday stress is to begin to notice all the little efforts that people make and to reward them with a few words of praise and encouragement.

**HOW DO WE FEEL WHEN SOMEBODY TELLS US THAT THEY ARE PLEASED WITH SOMETHING WE HAVE DONE?**

**WHAT THINGS HAVE WE NOTICED THAT PEOPLE HAVE DONE THAT HAVE PLEASED US A LITTLE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS?**

The steps of telling somebody that we are pleased about something are very simple, and almost everyone knows how to do them. But often we have got out of the habit of using this simple skill. Let us look at this example, and try and say what the main steps are:

When Kay arrived home from work she took her muddy shoes off and put them on the mat outside the door to dry. Tom noticed this. A little later when they were both sitting at the kitchen table chatting Tom smiled at her and said in a friendly way:

“I was pleased that you put your muddy shoes on the mat outside.”

**WHAT WERE THE MAIN STEPS TOM USED TO TELL KAY ABOUT SOMETHING THAT PLEASED HIM IN THIS EXAMPLE**
The Steps We Can Use To Tell People About Something They Have Done To Please Us

Let's look at the guide sheet that outlines the steps of expressing a pleasant feeling. They are:

- Look at the person, and speak in a friendly way. 
  *We may smile, shake hands, kiss or hug them, or make some other warm gesture if that seems right for us in that situation.*
- Tell the person exactly what they did that pleased us.
- Tell the person exactly how it made us feel when they did that.
  *“I was pleased.... I was happy...... I enjoyed......
  “I was delighted.... I was excited.....I liked....” etc.*

Practising the Steps

Now each of us can think of something that another person has done that has pleased us that we would like to tell them about.

**WHO DID SOMETHING TO PLEASE US? WHERE DID THIS HAPPEN?**

**HOW DID WE FEEL ABOUT IT AT THE TIME?**

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

**WHAT DID WE SAY TO THE PERSON WHEN THEY DID THE THING THAT PLEASED US? WHAT STEPS OF EXPRESSING A PLEASANT FEELING DID WE USE?**

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

**HOW COULD WE HAVE EXPRESSED OUR PLEASANT FEELINGS BETTER?**

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Re-playing the Scene

If we did not use all the steps of *Expressing a Pleasant Feeling* we can re-play the situation.

1. We will go to the place where it happened, or a similar place, if that is not possible.
2. Then, if possible, the person will re-play doing that thing that pleased us.
3. We can now tell them how we felt when they did that.
4. Those of us who are not taking part in the re-play can watch closely and notice what we specially like about the way X________________ expresses his/her pleasant feelings.
   We can look at the steps on the guidesheet and see how well he/she uses them.
Feedback and Coaching after the practice

WHAT STEPS DID X________ USE?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

WERE THERE ANY IMPORTANT STEPS THAT X_________ DID NOT USE?
_____________________________________________________________________

IT MAY HELP TO PRACTICE AGAIN, UNTIL WE ARE ALL SATISFIED WITH THE WAY X_________ EXPRESSED HIS/HER FEELINGS.

Now each of us can take turns to re-play a situation where we could have expressed our pleasant feelings in a better way. We will follow the same steps to re-play the situation. We will make sure we tell each other the little things we like about the way they express their pleasant feelings, as well as suggest any major improvements they could make.

Real-Life Practice
Now that we have all had an opportunity to practice expressing our pleasant feelings more effectively it will be helpful to practice this in our everyday lives. In order to discuss how we get on with this practice at our next lesson we can make notes on a simple worksheet called Expressing Pleasant Feelings. (SEE OVER THE PAGE)

This allows us to make a note of one time every day that we have noticed some small thing that pleased us and how we told the person about this. We will discuss our worksheets at the beginning of each session. They will not be marked or scored in any way, and nobody else needs to see them, so we do not need to worry about our spelling or writing, as long as it helps us to recall the situations more clearly.

We can start by noting the things we have just done in our practice session today. We can each write down who pleased us, what they did, and then what we said to them. (Stop and write down the examples in the spaces for today).

DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORKSHEET?

DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT EXPRESSING OUR PLEASANT FEELINGS
SUMMARY

• telling people about the everyday things that they do that please us encourages people to do more of those things

• at times of stress, this helps people to keep making efforts, even when progress is very slow

• the steps include telling the person exactly what they did to please us, and how we felt about that, using good non-verbal expression, such as a friendly tone of voice, smile, pat on the back, or whatever seems right to you at the time

• to get into the habit of using this simple strategy we may need to practice every day, make a note of our successes and difficulties to discuss at the beginning of the next teaching session
EXPRESSING PLEASANT FEELINGS

- Look at the person, and speak in a friendly way
  - we may smile, shake hands, kiss or hug them, or make other warm gestures that seems right for us

- Tell the person exactly what they did that pleased us.

- Tell the person exactly how it made us feel when they did that

  - "I was pleased...."
  - "I was happy......"
  - "I enjoyed......"
  - "I was delighted...."
  - "I was excited...
  - "I liked....” etc.
expressing pleasant feelings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>person who pleased me</th>
<th>what exactly did they do that pleased me?</th>
<th>what did I say to them?</th>
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MAKING A POSITIVE REQUEST FOR HELP WITH A PROBLEM

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How do we usually ask somebody to help us with something? Do we nag them, make threats or demands? Or do we ask them in a more friendly way that encourages them to help us? Of course there are no guarantees that people will do the things we would like them to do just because we ask them in a pleasant way. But at least we may find that we are able to avoid a few arguments and bad feelings if our requests are more positive and seem less threatening.

LIST SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WE WOULD LIKE SOMEBODY TO HELP US WITH AT THE MOMENT

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

HAVE WE ASKED SOMEBODY FOR HELP WITH THESE PROBLEMS?
WHOM DID WE ASK? AND HOW DID WE ASK THEM?

<table>
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<th>person asked</th>
<th>how we made request</th>
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WHAT POINTS DID WE LIKE ABOUT THE WAY WE EACH MADE REQUESTS FOR HELP WITH PROBLEMS?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

There is no research to tell us the best way to make a request for help. But common sense tells us that it is likely to be most effective if we make it clear what we want the person to do, and ask them in a way that encourages them to cooperate. One way we have found works well for many people is to follow these steps:

**Making a Positive Request for Help**

1. Look at person and use friendly expression (approach them, look at them, smile, and speak with a friendly tone of voice).

2. Say exactly what we would like the person to do to help us.

3. Tell them how we expect to feel when they do it for us..
Examples

“John, I would like you to help me decide what sort of things I should wear to the party tonight.”

“Sally, I would be very grateful if you could spare a couple of minutes to help me put up that shelf in the bedroom.”

“Bob, I have had a terrible day at work today. I would be so pleased if you could talk to me about the difficulties I am having with my boss.”

We will notice that these requests are clear and direct. The people use expressions like:

“I would like....” “I would be grateful....” or “I would be pleased....”

These expressions say how the person thinks they will feel if they get the help that they request. Sometimes we shorten these expressions to just “please”. Unfortunately, very often this is only a polite way of making a request, not a way of saying that we really expect to feel pleased or happy when we get the help we need.

IS IT CLEAR WHAT WE MEAN BY A POSITIVE REQUEST FOR HELP?
HOW MIGHT THIS HELP US TO SOLVE SOME EVERYDAY PROBLEMS?

Practise Making Positive Requests
Now each of us can think of something that we would like another person to help us with, so that we can practise making Positive Requests.

WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ASK SOMEBODY TO HELP US WITH?

Practising Making A Request
To make this seem more natural we will try to practise it as if it is happening in everyday life. Let’s each try to make a Positive Request for somebody in our group to help us with something.

WHO WILL PRACTISE THIS FIRST?

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?

WHERE WOULD BE THE BEST PLACE FOR YOU TO MAKE YOUR REQUEST?
1. Now we will go to that place.
2. Make sure we take our Guidesheets with us.
3. Then X_________ can practice making a Positive Request using the steps from the Guidesheet.
4. Those of us who are not taking part can watch closely and notice what we specially like about the way X____________ makes the request. We can look at the steps on the guidesheet and see how well he/she uses them.

Feedback and Coaching after each Person’s Practice

WHAT STEPS FROM THE GUIDESHEET DID X________ USE?
_________________________________________________________________

LET’S EACH TELL X__________ WHAT WE LIKED ABOUT THE WAY HE/SHE MADE THE REQUEST?
_________________________________________________________________

WERE THERE ANY IMPORTANT STEPS THAT X__________ DID NOT USE?
_________________________________________________________________

IT MAY HELP TO PRACTICE AGAIN, UNTIL WE ARE ALL SATISFIED WITH THE WAY X____________ MADE HIS/HER REQUEST.

Now each of us can take turns to practice making a Positive Request. We will follow the same steps to practise and get feedback. We will make sure we tell each other the things we like about the steps we use to make our requests, as well as suggest any major improvements we could make.

Real-Life Practice
Now that we have all had an opportunity to practice making a Positive Request for help, we need to practice doing this in our everyday lives. It will help us if we keep a record of our efforts to make positive requests on the worksheet called Making Positive Requests (SEE OVER THE PAGE).

This allows us to note one time every day when we make a request for somebody to help us with a problem. We will review these worksheets at the beginning of our next session. Remember, they will not be marked or scored in any way, and nobody else needs to see them, so we do not need to worry about our spelling or writing, as long as it helps us recall the situations more easily.

Once again we can start by writing down the things we have just done in our practice session today. Write down whom we asked to help, and how we asked them. (Stop and write down the examples in the spaces for today).

DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORKSHEET?

DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT MAKING POSITIVE REQUESTS?
SUMMARY

• getting people to help us with everyday problems helps us to manage stress in our lives

• the most effective way to ask for help is to make a request that makes it very clear what we would like them to do to help us, and tells them how we will feel when they have helped us in this way

• one way to do this is to make a Positive Request with words such as:
  
  "I would like you to......”
  "I would be grateful if you.....”
  "I would be pleased.....”

• as well as using encouraging words, it is important to say those words in a friendly way

• there is no guarantee that making requests in this way will enable us to get all the help that we ask for; but it is much less likely to lead to arguments and bad feelings.

• to get into the habit of using this simple strategy we may need to practice every day, and make brief notes of our successes and difficulties so we can talk about them at the beginning of the next teaching session
MAKING A POSITIVE REQUEST FOR HELP

1. Look at person and use friendly expression (approach them, look at them, smile, and speak with a friendly tone of voice).

2. Say exactly what we would like the person to do to help us.

3. Tell them how we expect to feel when they do it for us.
TELLING PEOPLE EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE FEELING UNHAPPY ABOUT:

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

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The first step in solving a stressful problem involves knowing exactly what the problem is. To have a discussion about a problem we need to be able to tell people what it is that is causing us stress.

We usually recognise that something is a stressful problem because we have some unpleasant feelings about it. We may feel anxious, angry, sad, disappointed, frustrated, or worried about it. These are warning signs that we are stressed by the problem and need to do something about it.

The easiest way to get rid of the unpleasant feelings and stress is to solve the problem. To do this we may need others to help us, especially when the problem may be things that they are doing that we find stressful. Blaming, threatening and nagging people will tend to produce bad feelings in them, and may produce arguments. Making clear, direct statements of how we feel about a specific situation tends to clear the way for effective problem solving. Sometimes we can solve a stressful problem merely by telling a person about it and making a Positive Request for them to help us. But often the problem is more complicated and may need several Problem Solving discussions to find ways to manage the stress.

**Examples**

Let us look at two examples of telling people about our problems, and decide which one might most easily lead to solving the problem:

A. John was ready to start work again after 6 weeks off sick. He telephoned his boss and was told that his job had been given to a colleague while he had been away. He was shocked and disappointed. When his friend Susan came home and sat down to chat in the living room he told her in a sad tone of voice:

   “I am very disappointed that my boss has given my job to someone else. I would like you to help me decide what I can do now.”

B. Another time Susan was worried about her relationship with her boyfriend and she spoke to John when he was watching his favourite programme on television in a very loud and angry tone of voice:

   “I’ve had enough of you sitting around watching television and feeling sorry for yourself. Other people have problems too. Why don’t you think about other people more? It’s about time you did something to help.”

Q: WHICH OF THE TWO EXAMPLES:

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<td>1. MAKES THE PROBLEM MOST CLEAR?</td>
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<td>2. SHOWS CLEARLY HOW THE PERSON FEELS ABOUT IT?</td>
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<td>3. SEEMS MOST LIKELY TO GET THE PROBLEM SOLVED?</td>
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</table>
WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO TELL SOMEBODY WE HAVE A PROBLEM THAT IS CAUSING US TO FEEL STRESSED?

Steps of Expressing an Unpleasant Feeling about a Problem
Here is one way that many people have found helpful to say exactly what they are feeling stressed about:

GETTING SOMEBODY TO HELP US SOLVE A STRESSFUL PROBLEM

1. Look at the person(s). Speak and look in a serious way that matches the way we feel.
2. Say exactly what stressful problem triggered our unpleasant feeling.
3. Tell the person(s) how we felt about it.
4. Make a suggestion about how this problem might be solved.
   This may be done by making a Positive Request, or arranging a Problem Solving discussion.

WHAT ARE SOME PROBLEMS THAT ARE STRESSFUL IN OUR LIFE AT PRESENT THAT MIGHT BE ABLE TO BE SOLVED QUITE EASILY IF WE COULD GET OTHER PEOPLE TO HELP US?

Practise Getting a Person to Help Solve a Stressful Problem
Each of us can choose one of these stressful problems that could be solved if we discussed it with the other people here. Try to choose something that is not too upsetting or too complicated to start with, so that we can practise the steps.

To make this seem more natural we will try to practise as if it is happening in everyday life.

1) We will go to the place where we would be likely to have this discussion, or a similar place, if that is not possible.
2) Then we can try to use some of the steps we have discussed, and see how useful they are.
3) At this point we will only practice starting the discussion about the issue. After, we can use the 6-step Problem Solving worksheets to discuss it more fully, if that seems a good idea.
4) Before we start let’s read over the steps again to remind ourselves of the best way to tell somebody about our problem.

5) Those of us who are not taking part in the practice can watch closely and notice what we specially like about the way X___________ tries to get help with his or her problem. We can look at the steps on the guidesheet and see how well he/she uses them. (make sure that everyone takes their guidebooks or sheets to the place where the practice is done)

DOES ANYONE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO?

OK, LET’S GO! WHO WILL GO FIRST?

WHAT IS THE SITUATION THAT IS STRESSFUL?
WHERE WOULD IT BE BEST TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM?
WHICH PEOPLE WOULD IT BE BEST TO DISCUSS THIS PROBLEM WITH?

LET’S PRACTICE USING THE STEPS ON THE GUIDESHEETS

Getting Somebody to Help us Solve a Problem

WE CAN ALL WATCH CLOSELY AND NOTICE WHAT WE SPECIALLY LIKE ABOUT THE WAY X___________ USES THE STEPS

After each person practises we answer the following questions:

WHAT STEPS DID X (Name of Person Practising) USE THAT WE SPECIALLY LIKED?

_____________________________________________________________________

WERE THERE ANY IMPORTANT STEPS THAT X___________ DID NOT USE?

_____________________________________________________________________

IT MAY HELP TO PRACTISE AGAIN, UNTIL WE ARE ALL SATISFIED WITH THE WAY X___________ EXPRESSED HIS/HER FEELINGS.

Now each of us can take turns to Getting Somebody to Help us Solve a Problem. We will all praise the things we like about the way each person does this, as well as suggest any major improvements; and then continue to practise until we are satisfied with the way we express ourselves.

Real-Life Practice

Now that we have all had an opportunity to practice how to get help with our problems telling other people about our problems and the unpleasant feelings we feel about them it will be helpful for us to continue practicing this in our everyday lives. In order to keep a record for us to discuss next session we can use the worksheet called Getting a Person To Help Me Solve a Stressful Problem (see over the page).
This allows us to make a note of the times that we have noticed a stressful problem that we have tried to get a person to help us solve. We will discuss our worksheets at the beginning of the next session. As before, they will not be marked or scored in any way, and nobody else needs to see them, so we do not need to worry about our spelling or writing, as long as it helps us to recall the situations clearly.

We can start by noting the things we have just done in our practice session today. We can each write down what the problem was; our unpleasant feelings about it; and then what we agreed to do to start to solve it.

**DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT TALKING ABOUT UNPLEASANT FEELINGS AS THE FIRST STEP TO GETTING PEOPLE TO HELP US WITH STRESSFUL PROBLEMS?**

**SUMMARY**

- in order to get people to help us with a stressful problem we must first tell them clearly what the problem is, and how we feel about that problem

- after we have told them exactly what the problem is and the unpleasant feelings that we have, we can then make a Positive Request for help, or if the problem is more complicated, to arrange to have a Problem Solving discussion about it.

- when we have had some practice doing this, it may be possible to use this strategy to solve difficult emotional problems, such as having unpleasant feelings that are triggered by the things that other people do.

- to get into the habit of using this strategy we may need to practice it, and make brief notes of our successes and difficulties so we can talk about them at the beginning of the next teaching session
GETTING HELP WITH A STRESSFUL PROBLEM

- Look at the person(s). Speak and look in a serious way that matches the way we feel.

- Say exactly what stressful problem triggered our unpleasant feeling.

- Tell the person(s) how we felt about it.

- Make a suggestion about how this problem might be solved. This may be done by making a Positive Request, or arranging a Problem Solving discussion.
getting a person to help me solve a stressful problem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>what problem triggered my unpleasant feelings?</th>
<th>what exactly were those feelings? (e.g. worry, anxiety, sadness, anger?)</th>
<th>what did I suggest might help me start to solve my problem?</th>
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<td>Sunday</td>
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SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING OUR GOALS

INTRODUCTION

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Learning to become more professional in the way we solve our problems is the key to improving our mental, and possibly physical health, and staying well once we have got over a major episode. If we use a well-organised problem solving approach we may be able to manage more problems in our lives with less stress -- and hopefully with more enjoyment as well! In this way our efforts to achieve our Personal Goals may seem much less difficult.

We have already experienced some benefits from being able to ask people to help us with our problems. Now we will learn a way to organise a discussion about a problem or a goal using a simple structured approach. We will learn to sit down together, and discuss a stressful issue openly and clearly, so that we can make a careful plan that we easily put into practice. In the hectic rush of modern life few of us manage to have such discussions regularly with our family or friends. This is why it is necessary for most of us to use a structured problem solving approach to help.

**WHAT DO WE THINK ARE THE MAIN STEPS NEEDED TO SOLVE A STRESSFUL PROBLEM?**

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

The method that many people have found helpful has 6 steps:

1. pinpointing the problem or goal
2. listing all possible solutions
3. evaluating all the suggestions
4. choosing the most practical solution
5. careful planning
6. review of progress with the plan

The first step is to discuss the problem or goal and to pinpoint an exact definition of the issue. This involves the use of good communication skills to clarify the problem or the goal that is stressful. Next, we make a list of all possible solutions. Then we quickly look at the main advantages and disadvantages of each idea. In the fourth step we choose the solution that best fits our needs and resources. The fifth step involves making specific plans on how to implement the solution. The final step happens after we have had a chance to put the plan into practice and allows us to review our efforts to make the plan work and makes sure that the problem solving continues.

To help us remember these steps we use a standard form that lists the six steps and has space to jot down notes while we are problem solving (see the SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING GOALS sheet). These notes are also a record of the plans we have agreed and help us to remember important points.
Now we can read through the **SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING GOALS** sheet.

**ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THESE STEPS?**

---

**CHOOSE A PROBLEM OR GOAL FOR PRACTISING THE 6-STEP METHOD**

We can all choose a problem or a goal that we would like to discuss with our Resource Group to practice these steps. We should try to choose something that is not too stressful that we think we could discuss and make a plan in 15 to 20 minutes. For example, this could involve helping someone with one of their goals, or planning to do something together at the weekend.

**WHAT IS A PROBLEM OR GOAL THAT WE CAN DISCUSS THAT IS NOT TOO STRESSFUL?**

---

For the moment we will focus on learning how to use the 6-step method, and not worry too much whether we are solving important problems. Later when we have had more practice we will find that we are able to tackle all sorts of very difficult issues without too much stress if we follow the steps.

**Practice Problem Solving Discussion**

To practice using structured **Problem Solving** in a realistic way we can organise ourselves as if we are having a **Resource Group Meeting**. We can sit in the places that we usually sit if possible. Our usual Chairperson and Secretary will do their usual jobs. (see **Guidelines for Resource Group Meetings** page X)

Our Chairperson will make sure that everyone follows the steps, and keeps to the rules. Our Secretary keeps notes on the **Problem Solving and Goal Achievement** worksheets.

We can spend the next 15-20 minutes discussing the problem of _________________ (our Instructor will help us choose one of our problems that will be good for learning the steps).

Our Instructor will leave us to do this ourselves, just as we would in our Resource Group Meeting. He/she will sit in a corner and look at the way we use the six steps to solve our problem. At the end he/she will praise us for all the good things we do and give us some coaching only if necessary.

**DO WE HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE EXPECTED TO DO?**

**Feedback after we have Completed our Problem Solving**

**WHAT STEPS DID WE FIND HELPFUL IN OUR PROBLEM SOLVING DISCUSSION?**
WHAT STEPS DID WE HAVE SOME DIFFICULTY USING?

WHAT MIGHT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR US TO USE THIS STRUCTURED PROBLEM SOLVING METHOD IN OUR RESOURCE GROUP MEETINGS?

Real-Life Practice

We will practice using this 6-step way of solving problems in our next Resource Group Meeting. Once again it will be best to choose a straightforward problem that is not too stressful to discuss. Remember that this is only practice, and that later we can tackle more stressful problems. Of course we can use this approach to solve problems or work on goals on our own as well as with other people.

Our Secretary to give a very brief report of our efforts to use the Problem Solving method at the beginning of our next teaching session. We can note any steps we find difficult so that we can do some more work on them. Is that clear to everyone?
SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING GOALS

Step 1. What exactly is the problem or goal?  
Talk about the problem or goal until we can write down exactly what it is. Ask questions to make the issue clearer. Break a big problem or goal into smaller parts.

Step 2. List all possible solutions -- brainstorming  
Make a list of all ideas, even “bad” or “silly” suggestions. Get everyone to suggest something. Do NOT talk about whether ideas are good or bad at this stage.

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  

Step 3. Briefly highlight the main advantages & disadvantages  
Get our group to say quickly what we think are the main advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion. Do NOT write anything. Do NOT compare the possible solutions at this point.

Step 4. Choose the most practical suggestion  
Choose the solution that can be carried out most easily with the resources (time, skills, materials, money) that we have at present.

Step 5. Plan exactly how to carry out the solution  
Organise the resources we need. Consider how to cope with likely hitches. Practice all difficult steps -- rehearse or role play.

Step 6. Review progress in carrying out plan  
Praise all the efforts we have made. Review progress on each step. Change the plan. Try another solution. Continue problem solving until our problem is resolved or our goal is achieved.

Date and time to review progress with plan _______________________
DECIDING EXACTLY WHAT THE PROBLEM OR GOAL IS WITH ACTIVE LISTENING

Produced by Ballarat Health Services, Psychiatric Services

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Clarifying Problems and Goals

It is not always easy to say exactly what is troubling us or what goals we would like to achieve. Often if we are able to sit down and talk these things over with some good friends or our family they can help us see the problem or goal more clearly. This ability to talk things over so they become clearer is called Active Listening. Once we have a clearer idea of our problems or goals we can focus our efforts on those important areas, using the 6-Step Problem Solving approach.

HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO TALK SOMETHING OVER WITH SOMEONE RECENTLY? DID THAT HELP MAKE IT CLEARER EXACTLY WHAT OUR PROBLEM OR GOAL WAS?

In addition to helping everyone to focus their problem solving efforts on the same issue, Active Listening helps us make clear, realistic goals, rather than vague goals that are impossible to achieve.

An Example:

John wanted to make some friends. His parents thought he really wanted a girlfriend, so they kept suggesting he went to social clubs and discotheques where he might meet young women. They wondered why he didn’t seem very motivated to do what they suggested. So one Resource Group Meeting they talked about this. He told them that he was interested in having a girlfriend, but felt that at the moment he could not handle the stress of that kind of relationship. He thought a better idea was to develop a friendship with a man around his age, who enjoyed going to watch sports events, or to the pub. When he felt comfortable with that sort of friendship he could then move on to more emotional relationships. After a few minutes discussion, they clarified that his goal would be to “Start a friendship with a man of about the same age, who was not a heavy drinker, and to go with him to football games and other sports events once a week.”

Once a goal has been made clear in this way, we can see how much easier it is to get on with planning how to achieve it. Of course finding friends is never easy, so it may still take much work and many Problem Solving discussions to achieve that goal.
The Steps of Active Listening

The steps of Active Listening look more complicated than they really are. There are two key points. The first is quite obvious -- the need to listen carefully to what the person is trying to say to us and to let them know that we can make sense of it. The second is to ask questions that help them to be even clearer about the issue. Let us look at the steps listed on the next page.

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<tr>
<th>CLARIFYING PROBLEMS AND GOALS WITH ACTIVE LISTENING</th>
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<td>1. Look at speaker; look interested in what they are saying</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Listen carefully what they say; reduce distraction from noise, TV, young children, pets, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Nod our head; say &quot;uh-huh&quot; etc, to show that we are following what they are saying.</td>
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<td>3. Ask questions to make it clear exactly what is the main problem or goal.</td>
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<td>- &quot;Do you want to go to football or basketball games&quot;?</td>
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<td>- &quot;Would the person be the same age as you, or doesn't that matter&quot;?</td>
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<td>- &quot;What sort of person do you like&quot;?</td>
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<td>5. Check that we have got the point clearly by telling the person what we have thought he or she was saying and asking if that is correct</td>
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<td>- &quot;So you would like to make a friend with somebody who likes sports? Have I got that right&quot;?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- &quot;You are upset that you can't find a job at the moment? Is that the main problem&quot;?</td>
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</table>
Practice Active Listening to Clarify Problems and Goals:

Demonstration by our Instructor

Our Instructor will give us a brief demonstration of using Active Listening to clarify a problem. (Instructor will select an issue that he or she is not clear about that involves one of the people in the group. This will be a simple issue, perhaps about someone’s goals, or a problem that they have been experiencing with the teaching.)

We will all watch how our instructor uses the steps of Active Listening. When he/she finishes we will discuss which steps he/she used, and whether they helped to make the problem or goal clear. Try to count how many times our Instructor asks a question that helps make some point more clear.

WHAT ACTIVE LISTENING STEPS DID OUR INSTRUCTOR USE?
HOW MANY TIMES DID HE/SHE ASK A QUESTION TO MAKE IT MORE CLEAR
WHAT THE PROBLEM OR GOAL WAS?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

WHAT ARE SOME PROBLEMS OR GOALS IN OUR LIVES AT PRESENT THAT WE
WOULD LIKE TO BE CLEARER ABOUT?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Practice among the group

Now we can practice using Active Listening.

1. To make this realistic we can imagine that we are having a Resource Group Meeting and are about to work on some problems or goals using the 6-Step Problem Solving approach.
2. Each of us will have 5 minutes to talk about a problem or a goal that we would like help to clarify.
3. All the other members of our Resource Group will help us to say more clearly what our problem or goal by using the steps of Active Listening.
4. At the end of the 5 minutes our Secretary will write down our problem or goal on a blank Problem Solving worksheet. We can work on solving these problems later in this session or in our next Resource Group Meetings.
5. After each problem or goal is discussed we can tell the others which Active Listening steps that they used that we liked.
6. In addition we can suggest ways that we could made our Active Listening even better?

After we have finished clarifying one person’s problem or goal we can move onto the next person’s goal or problem. Our Instructor will not join in our discussion, but will sit away from our group and watch carefully how we use the Active Listening steps.

IS EVERYONE CLEAR ABOUT THIS PRACTICE PLAN?
Feedback after Practice:

WHAT ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS DID WE USE?

_____________________________________________________________________

DOES ANYONE HAVE SUGGESTIONS ABOUT HOW COULD WE IMPROVE OUR
ACTIVE LISTENING?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

We may like to practice again if we are not satisfied with our results and need to make the problems and goals we have discussed even more clear.

Real Life Practice

All skills improve with practice. Remember the first time we tried to ride a bicycle or to swim? Did we want to give up because it just seemed too complicated and unnatural? Learning to become an expert in solving problems in this way is much more complicated, so we are likely to need to practice a lot before we feel comfortable and natural talking to people in this way. During the next week we can repeat the practice we have done today in our Resource Group Meeting.

• Each person suggests a topic that they would like to become clearer about.
• For 5 minutes everyone else listens actively and asks many questions to help to uncover exactly what that problem or goal is.
• Then we tell each other what we liked about the way we all used the steps of Active Listening, before moving on to the next person’s issue.
• We may find it helpful if our Secretary makes a note of the number of questions asked on the Active Listening worksheet.
• Once we have done that we may still have time to use the 6-Step Problem Solving worksheets to solve one of the problems that we have specified very clearly.
• Our Secretary will make a very brief report on our Active Listening practice to our Instructor at the beginning of our next teaching session.
CLARIFYING PROBLEMS AND GOALS WITH ACTIVE LISTENING

- Look at speaker; look interested in what they are saying.
- Listen carefully what they say; reduce distraction from noise, TV, young children, pets, etc.
- Nod our head; say "uh-huh" etc, to show that we are following what they are saying.
- Ask questions to make it clear exactly what is the main problem or goal.
  "Do you want to go to football or basketball"?
  "Would the person be the same age as you, or doesn't that matter"?
  "What sort of person do you like"?

- Check that we have got the point clearly by telling the person what we have thought he or she was saying and asking if that is correct
  "So you would like to make a friend with somebody who likes sports? Have I got that right"?
  "You are upset that you can't find a job at the moment? Is that the main problem"?
**active listening**

*note the number of questions each person asks that help to clarify the exact problem or goal*

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<th>name of each listener</th>
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APPENDIX I

Assessment Charts
10 QUESTION SCREENING -- 10QS

1. How have you been sleeping in the past week? Any difficulties getting to sleep? Waking up early?  
2. Have you lost your appetite recently? Have you lost weight? Two or more kilograms? Have you been dieting?  
3. Have you experienced loss of energy or interests recently? .........................................................  
4. Have you been worrying a lot about everyday problems? ............................................................  
5. Have you had difficulty concentrating when reading or watching television? Have you been more forgetful than usual? ..............................................................  
6. How do you see your future? Do you ever feel that life is not worth living? Have you felt you might like to end it all? ...................................................................................................................  
7. Have you any special habits, like checking things or cleaning more than other people say is necessary? ……………………………………………………………………………………………..  
8. Do you ever have attacks of your heart beating fast, sweating, shaking or dizziness accompanied by feelings of intense fear? ..............................................................  
9. Has anybody commented that your speech has become odd or difficult to understand? .......  
10. Have you had the experience of hearing people’s voices speaking when nobody seems to be around at the time? ........................................................................................................
INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT SUMMARY
GENERAL AND MENTAL HEALTH PROFILE
Name of Person Interviewed: ___________________________ Sex: M/F Age: _______ Marital status: ____________
Relationship to Patient: ___________________________ Tel: ___________________________
Educational Background (highest level): ___________________________
Work Background: ___________________________
Medical/Mental Health Treatment:
Current: ___________________________________________
Past: ___________________________________________
Family Background of Mental Disorders:
Relevant Psychosocial Background/ Vulnerability and Stress Factors: ___________________________________________

MODULE B: UNDERSTANDING INDEX PERSON’S MENTAL DISORDER
What is the (patient’s) disorder called? ___________________________
What do you think has caused the disorder? ___________________________
What makes the disorder worse? ___________________________
What makes the disorder better? ___________________________
What do you think will happen to the disorder in the future? ___________________________
What treatment is (patient) having at present?
Medication? ___________________________
Psychosocial strategies? ___________________________
What benefits have you noticed? ___________________________
What unwanted effects have you noticed? ___________________________
How well does (patient) cooperate with all the treatment strategies? ___________________________
(0 = actively seeks treatment, willing and able to cooperate; 1 = wants to get help but is half-hearted and motivation is not strong; 2 = passively accepts intervention procedures; 3 = shows little interest in or comprehension of efforts to be made on his/her behalf; 4 = unable to cooperate or actively refuses intervention)
Overall how satisfied are you with (patient’s) present treatment? ___________________________
(0 = not at all satisfied; 1 = a little satisfied; 2 = moderately satisfied; 3 = very satisfied)
MODULE C: STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISORDER

What are the main difficulties that you have with (patient’s) disorder? _______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

What do you usually do to cope with these difficulties? (Note effective and ineffective strategies) _____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

In the last 3 months how much stress has there been in your life that has been caused by the (patient’s) disorder
0 = no stress associated with disorder   1 = mild stress     2 = moderate stress    3 = severe stress     4 = extreme stress .........

MODULE D: LIFE STYLE SURVEY

ACTIVITIES:
What activities do you spend most of your time doing?

Current: 1 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     5  ____________________________________
3 _____________________________________     6  ____________________________________

How would you rather spend your time?

Desired: 1 _____________________________________     3  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________

How satisfied are you with your current activities? (0 = not at all satisfied; 1 = a little satisfied; 2 = moderately satisfied; 3 = very satisfied)

LOCATIONS
Where do you spend most of your time?

Current: 1 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     5  ____________________________________
3 _____________________________________     6  ____________________________________

Where would you rather spend your time?

Desired: 1 _____________________________________     3  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________

How satisfied are you with where you spend time at present? (0 = not at all satisfied; 1 = a little satisfied; 2 = moderately; 3 = very satisfied)

PEOPLE
Who do you spend most of your time with?

Current: 1 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     5  ____________________________________
3 _____________________________________     6  ____________________________________

What people would you like to spend more time with?

Desired: 1 _____________________________________     3  ____________________________________
2 _____________________________________     4  ____________________________________

How satisfied are you with the people you spend time with? (0 = not at all satisfied; 1 = a little satisfied; 2 = moderately; 3 = very satisfied)

SUPPORTIVE CONFIDANTS (current & potential)
Who do you discuss your personal goals and problems with?

Who would you like to discuss your goals and problems with?

Rate Social Support Available: (0 = family, friends or others willing and able to cooperate; 1 = interested family, friends or others but may not be able to provide support needed; 2 = support potentially available, but significant difficulties in mobilising it; 3 = some support may be mobilised but effectiveness will be very limited; 4 = no social support available. Agencies must provide immediate support needed.) ..............................

AVERSIVE ACTIVITIES, PLACES AND PEOPLE
What activities, places and people do you find especially unpleasant and try to avoid?

QUALITY OF LIFE

Overall how would you rate your quality of life? (0 = very poor; 1 = poor; 2 = neither poor nor good; 3 = good; 4 = very good) ..............

How satisfied are you with your physical and mental health?

(0 = very dissatisfied; 1 = dissatisfied; 2 = neither satisfied or dissatisfied; 3 = satisfied; 4 = very satisfied).................................
MODULE E: PERSONAL GOALS

GOAL 1: (specify exactly what we will be doing when we have achieved the goal):
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED OR ANTICIPATED:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

SUPPORT OR CONFLICT FROM OTHERS:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

GOAL 2: (specify exactly what we will be doing when we have achieved the goal):
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED OR ANTICIPATED:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

SUPPORT OR CONFLICT FROM OTHERS:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

GOAL 3: (specify exactly what we will be doing when we have achieved the goal):
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED OR ANTICIPATED:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

SUPPORT OR CONFLICT FROM OTHERS:
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

MODULE F: OTHER PSYCHOSOCIAL PROBLEMS

What other problems do we have in our life at present? (Specify)
1. work: _____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
2. housing: _________________________________________________________________________________________________________
3. finances: _______________________________________________________________________________________________________
4. education: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
5. leisure and recreation: _____________________________________________________________________________________________
6. friends: _________________________________________________________________________________________________________
7. close relationships (including sexual problems): ______________________________________________________________________
8. family relationships: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
9. child care: ______________________________________________________________________________________________________
10. cultural conflicts: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
11. alcohol and drugs: _______________________________________________________________________________________________ 
12. caring for self: __________________________________________________________________________________________________
13. other: __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
14. other: __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
MODULE G:  
ASSESSMENT OF PROBLEM SOLVING AND GOAL ACHIEVEMENT  
OF PATIENTS AND THEIR RESOURCE GROUP

Reported Problem Solving/Goal Achievement: The aim of this part of the assessment is to get an idea of the way the Resource Group organises their problem solving. The Resource Group is asked to give several recent examples of their day-to-day problem solving/goal achievement discussions. The precise manner in which these everyday problems were discussed is noted.

WHAT IS A PROBLEM OR GOAL THAT OUR RESOURCE GROUP HAS BEEN WORKING ON RECENTLY?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

WHERE DID ANY DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THIS PROBLEM/GOAL OCCUR?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

HOW WAS THE DISCUSSION STRUCTURED?

Where exactly were people? Were they sitting down, calmly without too many distractions, so that everybody could concentrate on what was being discussed? Or was the discussion on the telephone, in the car, at the time most people were involved in other activities?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

HOW WAS PROBLEM SOLVING STRUCTURED?

Did somebody take charge of the discussion? Did somebody make notes? Was the problem/goal clearly described? Was there any “brainstorming” of possible solutions? Were the advantages and disadvantages of all the suggested alternatives considered? Did the group agree on the most practical solution and then making a detailed plan of how it would be put into practice?

________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________

RESOURCE GROUP MEETINGS: A weekly meeting of the Resource Group is the most important step in Integrated Care.

AT WHAT TIMES DOES OUR RESOURCE GROUP USUALLY MEET TO TALK ABOUT PROBLEMS AND GOALS?

________________________________________________________________________________________

WHAT WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR OUR RESOURCE TO HAVE A REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING?

________________________________________________________________________________________
Observed Problem-Solving/Goal Achievement

The assessor instructs the Resource Group in the following way:

"I would like you to spend the next 15 to 20 minutes discussing the issue of.....(give a brief description of the selected issue)...........

I would like you to try to decide exactly what the problem or goal is and then try to develop a plan of how you might deal with this as a group. There are no right or wrong ways to deal with this issue.

I would like to record this discussion so that I can review it later. I am going to leave the room so that you can discuss this issue among yourselves.

Do you understand what I'm asking you to do? Do you have any questions about it?
I'll switch the tape recorder on now and you can begin your discussion about ....(repeat a brief description of the issue)...... and come back in 20 minutes."
**PROBLEM ANALYSIS**

**PROBLEM:** What is the problem? How often does it happen? How long does it last? How distressing? (Use chart)

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**BRIEF BACKGROUND:**

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**ANTECEDENTS:** What happens immediately before the problem occurs? Do you find yourself in certain places or situations, or with certain types of people? Do you notice special thoughts or feelings? What exactly are you doing?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**CONSEQUENCES** What happens immediately after the problem occurs? What thoughts and feelings do you have? What things do you do? What do other people do?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**MODIFYING FACTORS:**

a) What seems to make the problem better? What makes it less likely to occur? (List all without discussion)

1 __________________________ 2 __________________________ 3 __________________________
4 __________________________ 5 __________________________ 6 __________________________

b) What seems to make the problem worse? What makes it more likely to occur?

1 __________________________ 2 __________________________ 3 __________________________
4 __________________________ 5 __________________________ 6 __________________________

**MOTIVATION TO CHANGE:**

a) What benefits will you get when the problem is solved?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

b) What disadvantages might there be for you when the problem is solved? e.g. loss of attention, pressure to work or become active, need to reassume old roles?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**CURRENT PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES:**
List all efforts to solve the problem, both effective and ineffective, including self, friends, professional treatment, etc.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

**SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE:** Who could help you with this problem?
### Checklist of Competence in Clinical Strategies: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Patient:</th>
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Note the date on which you see that each participant shows that they can perform each specific skill in a competent way, without any special prompting or assistance. This may be noted from reports and replays of activities outside the sessions.

The Checklist includes items that refer to the competence of the group as a whole (e.g., problem solving steps, household meetings), as well as items about specific medical or social needs of participants. Put “X” in the box, and the date the problem is resolved.
QUESTIONNAIRE
SATISFACTION WITH GUIDEBOOKS: PARTICIPANT

Name of Participant:__________________________ Age____  Sex____

Patient  [ ] Resource Group Member  [ ]

Main Disorder:_________________________________________

Name of Instructor: ________________________

Date of session: __________________

Guidebook session used:__________________________________________________

At the end of today’s session we would like you to circle the number that best fits how satisfied you are feeling with

a) The practical guidance you received
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

b) The way your Instructor presented the session
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

What did you especially like about today’s session?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What improvements could you suggest?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
QUESTIONNAIRE

SATISFACTION WITH GUIDEBOOKS: INSTRUCTOR

Date of session: ____________

Name of Instructor: ____________________________ Age ____ Sex ____

Professional Background
- psychiatrist
- psychologist
- social worker
- nurse
- occupational/rehabilitation therapist
- service user
- non-professional caregiver
- other (specify) ______________________

Years working with Mental Health Services: __________

Main Disorder of Group: _______________________________

Guidebook session used: _______________________________

At the end of today’s session we would like you to circle the number that best fits how satisfied you are feeling with:

a) The practical guidance you provided
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

b) The way you presented the session
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

c) The content of this Guidebook session
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

d) Your feelings about the Guidebook method
   0 = not at all satisfied
   1 = slightly satisfied
   2 = moderately satisfied
   3 = very satisfied

What did you especially like about today’s session?
________________________________________________________________________

What improvements could you suggest?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX: IV

Bibliography


Stein LI & Test MA (1976) Retraining hospital staff to work in a community program in Wisconsin. Hospital and Community Psychiatry, 27, 266-268.


PROBLEM ANALYSIS

PROBLEM: What is the problem? How often does it happen? How long does it last? How distressing? (Use chart)
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

BRIEF BACKGROUND:
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
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ANTECEDENTS: What happens in the moments just before the problem occurs? Do you find yourself in certain places, situations, or with certain types of people? Do you have any special thoughts or feelings? What exactly are you doing at that moment?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
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CONSEQUENCES: What happens immediately after the problem starts? What thoughts and feelings do you have? What things do you do? What do other people do? How do other people react?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
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MODIFYING FACTORS:

a) What seems to make the problem better? What makes it less likely to occur? (List all without discussion)

1_____________________________ 2_____________________________ 3_____________________________
4_____________________________ 5_____________________________ 6_____________________________

b) What seems to make the problem worse? What makes it more likely to occur?

1_____________________________ 2_____________________________ 3_____________________________
4_____________________________ 5_____________________________ 6_____________________________

BENEFITS AND DIFFICULTIES WHEN THIS PROBLEM IS SOLVED:

a) What benefits will you get when this problem is solved?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

b) What possible disadvantages might there be for you when the problem is solved? e.g. loss of attention, pressure to work or to become more active, and to be expected to immediately do all those things you used to do?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________

CURRENT PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES:
List all efforts to solve the problem, both effective and ineffective, including self, friends, professional treatment, etc
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
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SUPPORTIVE PEOPLE: Who could help you to work on this problem?
_______________________________________________________________________________________________
SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING GOALS

Step 1. What exactly is the problem or goal?
Talk about the problem or goal until we can write down exactly what it is. Ask questions to make the issue clearer. Break a big problem or goal into smaller parts.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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Step 2. List all possible solutions -- brain storming
Make a list of all ideas, even “bad” or “silly” suggestions. Get everyone to suggest something. Do NOT talk about whether ideas are good or bad at this stage.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 

Step 3. Briefly highlight the main advantages & disadvantages
Get our group to say quickly what we think are the main advantages and disadvantages of each suggestion. Do NOT write anything. Do NOT compare the possible solutions at this point.

Step 4. Choose the most practical suggestion
Choose the solution that can be carried out most easily with the resources (time, skills, materials, money) that we have at present.

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Step 5. Plan exactly how to carry out the solution
Organise the resources we need. Consider how to cope with likely hitches. Practise all difficult steps -- rehearse or role play.

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Date and time to review progress with plan____________________

Step 6. Review progress in carrying out plan
Praise all the efforts we have made. Review progress on each step. Change the plan. Try another solution. Continue problem solving until our problem is resolved or our goal is achieved.

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