

Skills for Well-Being Group

Week 4: Behaviour

Review from Last Session

- How have people been getting on with their Thought records?
- How have people been getting on with their Activity Diaries?
- How have people been getting on with their Relaxation Practices?
- Any barriers/issues?
- Any questions from last week?

Aims of Session 4

Why is Behaviour so Important?

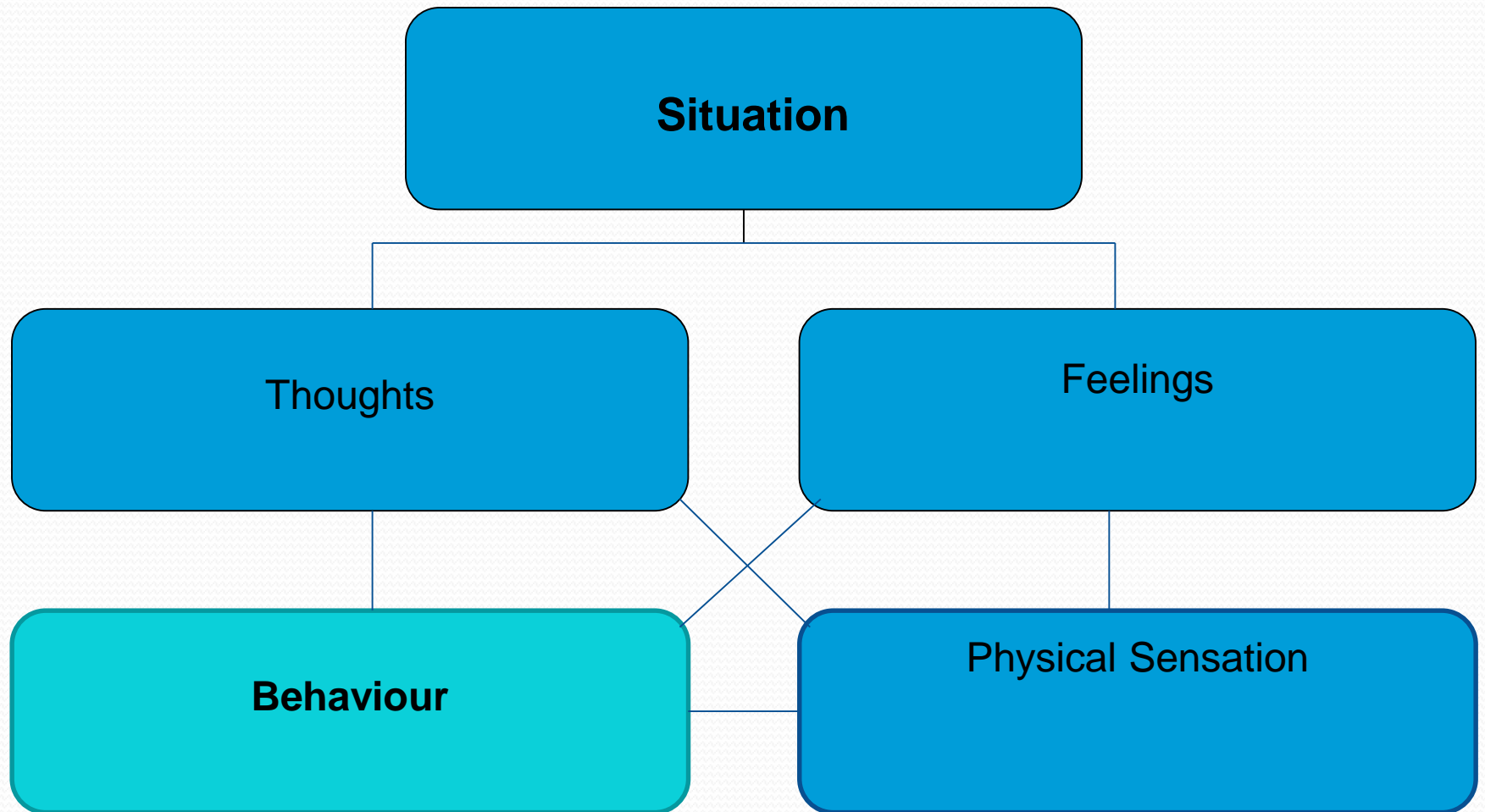
Behaviour and Anxiety

- Avoidance & Safety Behaviours
- Exposure Rationale
- Creating a Hierarchy

Behaviour and Mood

- Importance of Variety and Pleasure
- Charging our Battery
- Activity Schedule

Five Factor Model



Why is Behaviour so Important?

- Our behaviour, or lack of, can influence:
 - Our feelings (*e.g. Sense of achievement vs failure*)
 - Our physical sensations (*e.g. Low energy, fight or flight*)
 - Our thoughts about: ourselves, events and the world we live in (*e.g. “I am improving” vs “I am beyond help”*)
 - How others experience us and respond to us (*e.g. approachable vs unpredictable*)

Example...

Situation

*(wanting to face fear of crowds
but avoiding opportunity
at the last moment)*

Thoughts

*I've let fear get the best of me again,
I'll never be 'normal'*

Feelings

*Sad, Embarrassed, Ashamed,
Hopeless, Angry, Frustrated.*

Behaviour

*Talking negatively about self,
further avoidance of crowds*

Physical Sensation

*Low energy, aches and pains,
poor concentration*

Our Role in Behaviour

Automatic vs Conscious Behaviour

- Automatic:
 - Behaviours can feel automatic
 - Especially as they can be developed gradually over time
 - BUT they are the result of our choices
- Conscious:
 - When we bring awareness to our choices, we have the power to choose more helpful behaviours
 - Change is more likely if we take ownership of our choices
 - What is the function of the behaviour? (*self-care vs avoidance*)

Anxiety or Low Mood?

Anxious Behaviours

- Avoidance
- Safety Behaviours
- Worry

Low-mood Behaviours

- Isolation/Withdrawal
- Rumination
- Disengaging from activities

Challenging anxious behaviours

Behaviour

- Avoidance
- Safety Behaviours
- Worry

Strategy

- Hierarchy
- Approach Behaviours
- Problem Solving



Avoidance

- a defence mechanism by which a person avoids or removes themselves from unpleasant situations.
- Thoughts
 - I can't do this...
 - I can't cope...
 - I need to escape...
- Physical/Emotions
 - Anxiety
 - Fight or Flight

Safety Behaviours

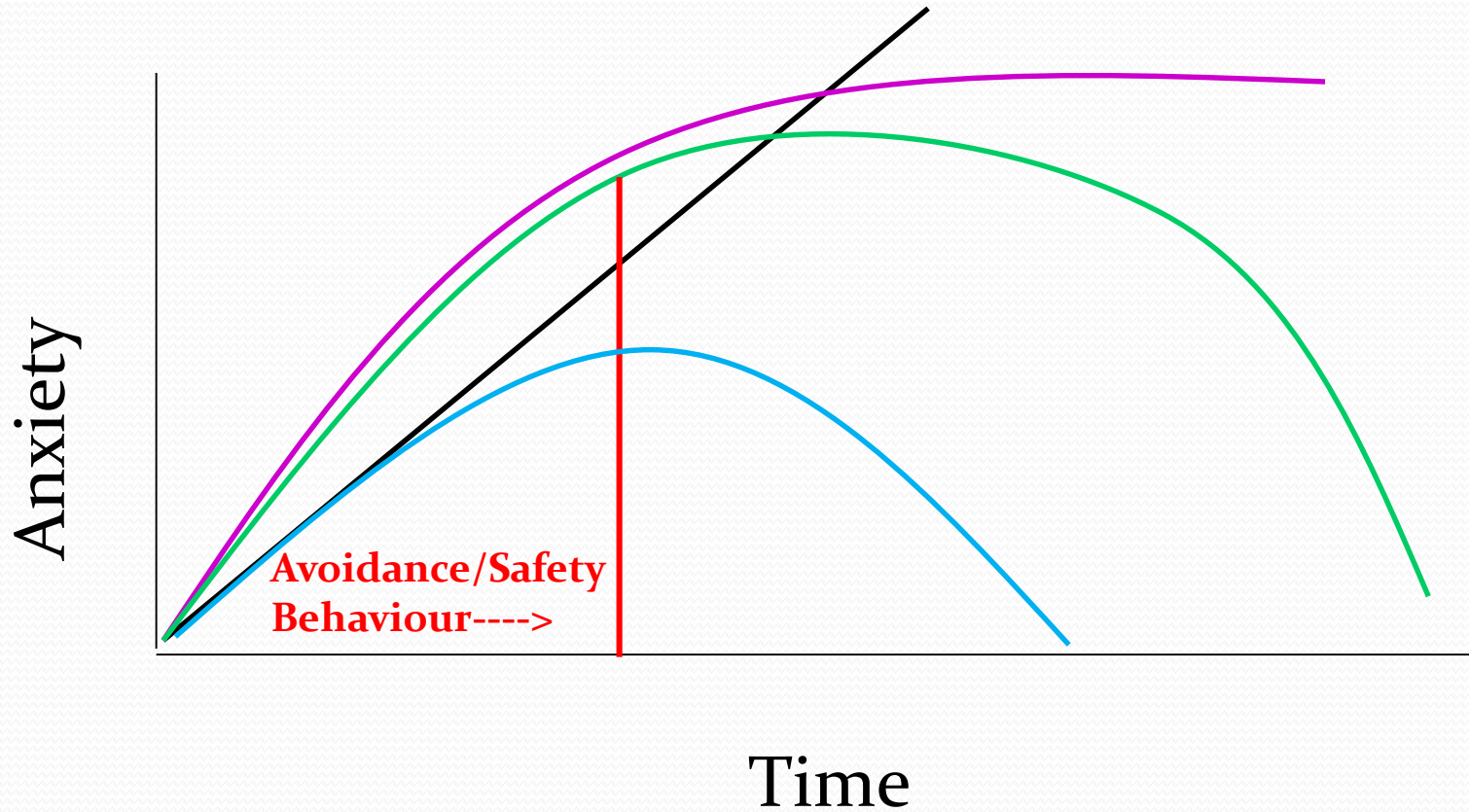
- are coping behaviours used to reduce anxiety when we feel threatened or overwhelmed. It is an attempt to gain a sense of safety. However we begin to rely upon these and attribute any successes to the safety behaviour rather than our efforts.
- Thoughts
 - I will go if...
 - I only coped because...
- Physical/Emotions
 - Anxiety managed but maintained

Examples of Safety Behaviours

- Always carrying a Diazepam just in case
- Carrying a paper bag in case a panic attack occurs
- Over-preparing (travel plans/conversations/tasks)
- Pretending to be doing something on your phone to manage anxiety waiting on a bus/train/friend/etc.
- Seeking reassurance frequently to avoid any uncertainty
- Avoiding all eye contact when going out of the house

More examples exist, can you think of any you do?

Anxiety Response



Facing Our Fears

By going through this process you learn:

- That you can cope more with difficult situations than previously assumed
- That the stress does not increase to the point where you lose control or something terrible happens.
- That we often overestimate danger

Facing our Fears

- Short-term is difficult **but** long-term gains:
 - Increased confidence and self-esteem
 - Increased freedom
 - Less anxiety in the long run
- Uncomfortable process but larger goals can be made easier by creating a hierarchy of smaller more achievable goals or steps.

Hierarchy/Graded Exposure

Activity	Predicted Anxiety (0-100)
Walking to the front gate	20
Walking to the end of the street with a friend	30
Walking to the end of the street alone	40
Going to local shop with friend	45
Going to local shop alone	50
In the supermarket with husband when quiet	60
In the supermarket with husband when busy	75
In the supermarket alone when it is quiet	80
At the supermarket entrance alone when busy	95
In the supermarket alone when it is busy	100

Break



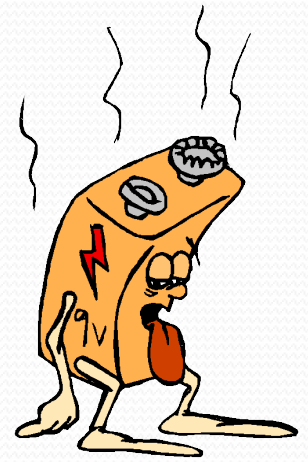
Part 2: Behaviour and Mood

Behaviours can influence our mood and energy levels. The following categories are important to consider when trying to improve or maintain your mood:

- Pleasure
- Variety
- A Sense of Achievement/Mastery
- Physical Activity
- Self-care/Comfort/Kindness
- Connection with Others

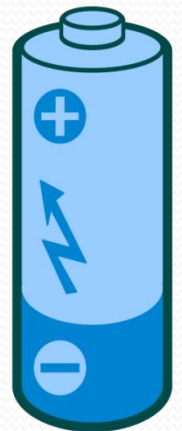
Charging Our Emotional Battery

- Behavioural patterns can be draining over time
(*e.g. people pleasing, task focus as avoidance, prolonged inactivity etc.*)



However

- Behaviours also have the potential to charge our emotional batteries
(*i.e. increase our mood and energy levels*)



Drain or Charge?

- Every activity can be assessed in terms of how much it drains you and how much it charges you (e.g. walking the dog).
- Some behaviours can be draining in the short term but give long term gain. (E.g. socialising with friends may be particularly draining in the short term, if you are socially anxious, but in the long-term it's rewarding when we maintain pleasurable relationships, minimise isolation and face our fears.)

Typical Behaviour Examples

- Do they charge or do they drain? If so, to what extent?
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Speaking to friends
- Going to the cinema
- Hobbies
- Exercising
- Commute to work
- Mindfulness
- Gardening
- Baking
- Washing the dishes
- Laundry
- Food shopping
- Personal Hygiene

Activity Scheduling

Day →							
Time ↓							
6 - 8 am							
8 - 10 am							
10am - 12noon							
12 - 2pm							
2 - 4pm							
4 - 6pm							
6 - 8pm							
8 - 10pm							
10pm - 12mn							

Activity Scheduling

- Sometimes we tell ourselves that we don't have the time or energy to do activities that charge our batteries
- However, often we can find the time for these activities if we prioritise these and plan ahead.
- In your activity diary, block out the time that is predetermined (i.e. work hours, picking up kids, sleep). Now look at the remaining time left.
- Now prioritise one (or a few) positive/charging activity to look forward to before deciding when to schedule 'have to' behaviours (i.e. laundry, cleaning, cooking).

Behaviour Summary

- Behaviours can maintain low mood and anxiety, however they can also be used to improve mood and reduce anxiety (*via methods such as activity scheduling and using a hierarchy for facing anxiety*).
- We're not saying it's easy to change behaviour. It takes: dedication, time, effort and prioritising your self-care.
- However it's extremely worthwhile and can have a profound impact upon your experience.
- Acknowledge and reward yourself for every effort you make when journeying towards your goal. Regardless of the outcome of your effort you are making positive choices. You're more likely to keep trying if you acknowledge and reward your hard work.

An Invitation for Next Week...

- Thought records
- Hierarchy?
- Activity scheduling - organise a plan for the week to come, try to include a new: goal/pleasurable activity/helpful behaviour
- Explore some of the bonus skills in the handout
(*i.e. SMART goals + Problem solving*)