

Facilitator Version

# START

Strategies for Relatives

Session 4:

*Behaviour strategies and unhelpful thoughts*



## Facilitator Key

Numbers in blue boxes let you know how long each section should take.

Information in yellow boxes give instructions on how to facilitate tasks, as well as prompts for feedback and discussion.

Quotations in orange boxes should be said as written.



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## Plan for today's session

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"This is the contents page for you to refer back to"

Read the statement but do not read the full list

Recap on making a behaviour plan

p. 4

Cho

### For each session:

- Encourage the carer to write down **what works** or key strategies or plans to refer back to.
- If content is clearly irrelevant or does not fit, **miss it out**.
- When setting exercises at the end, check that they remember what is in the plan if not explicitly covered in the content.

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Stress reduction: Meadow and stream

p. 15

Summary

p.18

5mins

## Recap on session 3: Making a behaviour plan

### We talked about:

- Developing behavioural strategies
- Changing behaviours by changing reactions
- Managing stress 3: Physical grounding

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How did it go?</li><li>• What went well?</li><li>• Did you notice any patterns?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you think got in the way?</li><li>• What would make it easier in the future?</li></ul>
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**Q!** Did you have a chance to complete the behaviour record?

- Discuss their experience completing the Behavioural Record.

If they have completed it:

- Look at each trigger, behaviour and reaction in turn and allow carer to discuss and reflect on what happened.
- Look at the strategies they were trying out to prevent the problem behaviour from occurring or reduce the behaviour and ask them how this went.
- Would they like to revise the plan or strategy in any way?
- If some parts are clearly irrelevant ignore them

If they did not complete it, help the carer to complete it now. Ask them to think back on the week. Problem-solve any difficulties that might have occurred e.g

- “My relative did not have any behaviour problems this week.”
- “There was no time to record in the log. I was too busy.”

20mins

## Choosing a new behaviour to change

- As well as the behaviours we have already discussed, there may be others that you would like to consider, ones you would like to be different in your relative or yourself.

<b>Step one</b>	<b>Choose the behaviour</b>
<b>The new behaviour I want to change is...</b>	
<b>Do I want to increase or decrease it?</b>	
<b>Step two</b>	<b>What are the triggers and reactions?</b>
<b>Possible triggers...</b>	
<b>Possible reactions...</b>	
<b>Potential strategies to try...</b>	

“Let’s follow the same steps as last session and make a plan. Keep track over the next week by using the behaviour record. You may already have some ideas which we can discuss now.”

“We are now going to talk about the different ways that we can react to behaviours and the effects that this can have.”

## Managing thoughts and feelings

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- Looking after someone with thinking and memory problems may make you feel overwhelmed and stressed.
- It can be helpful to pay attention to our thoughts and how they link to our feelings.
- **The way you think about something directly affects the way you feel.** Some thoughts may make you feel worse.

The first step to changing this cycle is to **stop** and **focus on your thoughts and feelings when you are in a difficult situation.**

**Talking point:** To better understand the relationship between thoughts and feelings, let's discuss what you think about this example:

### **Example: Lydia and David**

Lydia is providing care for her husband David, who has Lewy-body disease. David finds it hard to follow Lydia's instructions when she is trying to help him.

In this situation, Lydia's thoughts are:

*“David refuses to listen to me, even though he can. He ignores me on purpose.”*

Lydia then feels frustrated and sad.

“What do you think about this example?”

### **Key Point:**

**Learning how to change the unhelpful thoughts we have in stressful situations can help us to feel less sad and frustrated**



“Another bit is feeling relief. I find that it’s okay to feel stressed at times. I never realised that was part of caring”.

### Steps to changing unhelpful thoughts

- There are three steps to changing your unhelpful thoughts:
  1. **Stop and identify** your current thoughts.
  2. **Challenge and replace** your unhelpful thoughts with more helpful ones.
  3. **Pay attention** to how you feel now.
- Let’s start with step 1: **To stop and identify** the thoughts that make you feel bad.
- Often this happens so quickly that we don’t even notice a link between our thoughts, feelings and what is happening.
- A good way to stop and identify your thoughts is by keeping track of *what* you are thinking in a stressful situation.
- To do this we will use a **Thought Record**.

## Thought record

The thought record has three columns for:

- a.) What was happening
- b.) What you were thinking at the time
- c.) How did you feel at the time

“Let’s work through the example for Lydia and David below”

<i>Lydia's Thought Record</i>		
<b>Situation</b>	<b>Current thoughts</b>	<b>Feelings</b>
<b>David is not doing as I ask</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. David refuses to listen to me, even though he can.</li><li>2. He is ignoring me on purpose</li></ol>	Frustrated and sad



“Now let’s try this with a situation that has happened to you.  
Let’s complete a thought record based on your example”

**Talking point:** Tell me about a recent stressful situation where you would have liked to react differently.

What was happening?	What were you thinking?	How did you feel?
	<p data-bbox="613 951 976 1108">Prompt the carer to identify their thoughts about the person, the action and themselves</p>	<p data-bbox="1024 919 1386 1171">Encourage them to give detail about their feelings and emotions “Can you tell me a bit more?” and summarise to them to check you have understood.</p>

**Key Point:** It is natural to find it difficult when someone you care for has thinking and memory problems, and lots of things are outside your control, but there are some things that you can

Having identified unhelpful thoughts and feelings the next steps are to:

1. **Challenge and replace** these thoughts with more helpful thoughts.
2. **Pay attention** to any new feelings.

# Changing unhelpful thoughts

"We are now going to talk about techniques for changing unhelpful thoughts".

Challenging and replacing your thoughts can be difficult, but with practice it gets easier. There are common thinking patterns called "automatic thought patterns". Here are some techniques for changing unhelpful thoughts:

1. Look at it from someone else's point of view.
2. Ask other people what they think or get more information.
3. Change how you talk to yourself.
4. Try not to jump to conclusions.
5. Decide to think about something pleasant.

Let's go through an example of these thought challenging techniques:

## Example:

Sarah is 64 years old and cares for her 90 year old mother with Parkinson's. She thinks that she is not a good daughter. She feels guilty about leaving her mum to visit friends. Sarah thinks, "I need to stay with my mother because something might happen to her if I go. My mum took care of me when I was younger and it is my duty to take care of her now. If something happens to her, I will never forgive myself."

- 1. Look at it from a different point of view:** Talk to yourself as if someone who cares about you is talking to you.

In our example, as Sarah blames herself for wanting to spend time away from home, she could ask herself: "How would my good friend Maria view this - and what would she say?" Sarah could also imagine what her friend (who cares about her) would think about her leaving her mother for short periods.

## Talking point:



- What do you think Sarah's friend Maria would say?
- If your friend was here what would they say to you?
- What if your friend was in your situation, what would you say to them?

**2. Take action/ Ask others:** Some people find it helpful to get additional information to challenge their unhelpful thoughts.

Sarah could challenge her thoughts about "not being a good daughter" by talking to other people about how they handle similar situations. Sarah could also plan to leave her mother with someone she trusts for a short period, to test out her concerns that her mother will have a crisis when she is gone.



*Talking point:*

- Is there anyone you can talk to about your caring role?
- What do you believe you need to do, to be dependable?
- Do you have any concerns? What could you do to test out your concerns?

### 3. Change how you talk to yourself:

We often create negative labels for ourselves or others without realising, for example by thinking “If I can’t be there all the time, I am not good enough, I am not giving my relative what they deserve”.

We also may believe that we must behave, think, or feel a certain way. This might often include us saying things to ourselves like “I must/ I should do ...”

#### *Key Point:*

**Allowing yourself to think “It’s OK not to be perfect” and “It’s also important I look after myself” can help you see the situation from a different point of view.**

If Sarah tried to think about what her label of "not being a good daughter" really

meant, she would see that she was expecting the impossible and this expectation would set herself up to fail.

She could also change, "I should always stay with mother" to, "My mother likes me being there, but she could enjoy being with others too, and it would be good for both of us if I get a break and feel a bit better".

### Talking point:

- Do you ever have these kinds of thoughts?
- How else could you think about your situation? Is there any other way you could think about your situation?



#### 4. Try not to think of things as all or nothing:

Remind yourself to think of different options. Don't assume that if you can't do something perfectly; it is not worth doing at all.

Could Sarah consider other alternatives to never going out? Must she think she is either a good daughter **OR** *not* a good daughter?

#### 5. Decide to think about something pleasant

It is important Sarah recognises all the good things she is doing and how much she is coping with.



## Talking point:

- Do you ever have these kinds of thoughts?
- Tell me some of the good things about caring for your relative
- Now we are now going to add two more columns to the Thought Record to add in some of **challenging and replacing** unhelpful thoughts and **paying attention** to new feelings:

“Now let’s try out the thought challenging with your own example”

- Talk the carer through the form and check that they have understood each heading
- Check that they have an example to work with.
- Encourage them to fill in the boxes with a hypothetical example and tell them that we would like them to fill out the thought record over the next week.

What was happening?	What were you thinking?	How did you feel?	An alternative response would be...	How do you feel now?

10mins

## Managing Stress 4:

### *Guided Imagery - Meadow and Stream*

- Guided Imagery is a stress reduction technique that allows you to have “time out” from daily worries.

“Now we are going to try a new stress reduction technique, last week we learnt physical grounding. This week we will practise a guided imagery- meadow and stream exercise.

First, let’s think about the physical grounding. Did you get a chance to try it out this week?

If you gave it a go, how did you find it? When did you use it? What effect did it have on how you felt?

If you did not get a chance to try it, what got in the way?

Please try and carry on practising the physical grounding exercise.”

- It should be done in a quiet setting where you will not be disturbed.
- Some people find use this type of exercise before they go to bed in the evening. It is best to get used to it at other times of day first.
- The more you practise, the more useful it will be.

#### Stress Rating Before Exercise

First, please rate your level of stress or tension right now, before we practise the **Guided Imagery** exercise.



**5 = Terribly tense**  
**4 = Really tense**  
**3 = Moderately tense**  
**2 = Slightly tense**  
**1 = Not at all tense**

**Q!** On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your tension? \_\_\_\_\_

### Guided Imagery: Practice Session

This is a guided relaxation imagery exercise. First of all, get yourself into a comfortable position. Just settle back into your chair. Close your eyes and take in a deep signal breath, holding the breath for a few moments, and then let it out slowly, feeling relaxation as you do so.

And now take in another deep breath... hold it ... until you feel a little tension in your chest and then let go... relax... allow all the muscles in your body to become loose, limp, soft like a rag doll. Just allow pleasant waves of relaxation to flow through you, soothing and relaxing each and every part of your body... including your arms and hands... your neck and shoulders... your scalp and all the muscles in your face...

And as you rest there quietly, breathing freely and evenly, allow the muscles of your chest to become loose and relaxed... and then your stomach and your back... both your upper back and lower back... your hips and legs... allow the relaxation to flow through your legs all the way down your feet and ankles...

And as I continue talking to you, these waves of relaxation can continue to spread throughout your body... penetrating deeply into every cell... but no matter how relaxed you feel right now, it is possible to become even more deeply relaxed and yet awake and aware of my voice. Now, ... even though your attention may wander from time to time, simply bring it back to the images that I am going to describe.

Imagine yourself about to open a very large door... as the door opens, you find yourself transported to another place. You step out into a grassy meadow ...a peaceful, quiet meadow. And flowing through the meadow is a small winding stream and on each side of the stream are tall, shady trees...

Now picture yourself, right now, sitting down... along the bank of this stream. You sit and rest against the trunk of one of the trees...notice the pale blue sky and the white clouds,....feel the warmth of the sun with pleasant rays shining down, ... sparkling as it reflects on the flowing water... it is a beautiful, pleasant, peaceful day...not too warm or too cold... the air is fresh and clean and you are aware of sounds of birds chirping...of the sound of the water, as it flows along the stream... It is so peaceful here... so calm and tranquil... just look around you... taking it all in... enjoy the simple beauty of this place...”  
*[Long pause]*

And now look more closely at the stream... notice the clear, cool water as it flows by... wondering where the water comes from and where it goes...Then, as you look upstream you notice a very large leaf, floating on the water and your eyes observe this leaf as it is getting closer, closer and closer to the place where you are sitting... and then, the leaf is in front of you...Now you find yourself transferring to this leaf all of your concerns, and all of your discomfort ...

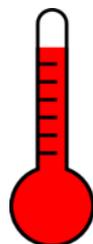
All of your cares, all of your worries are transferred to the leaf....and so the leaf continues, floating down the stream, floating away, the leaf carries away all of your discomfort,... all of your cares and worries...just watch it float along... Watch it getting further, and further away from you... until it finally disappears completely and you are left feeling even more relaxed, more comfortable, and more at ease than you have felt for a long time..." *[Longer pause]*

For in this state of deep relaxation all parts of your body are working together harmoniously, smoothly, and healthily... a deep sense of well-being fills your mind... a feeling of healthy energy and vitality fills your body... and as you prepare to eventually leave this special place of relaxation, you can carry back with you many of these pleasant feelings and sensations, knowing that as you practise this exercise and similar exercises, it will become easier... to use the powers of your mind...to experience these positive effects...

And now I will bring you back slowly from this relaxation by counting backwards from 3 to 1. When I get to 1, you will be alert, refreshed, and comfortable. Okay: "3," much more alert; "2," feeling refreshed and comfortable; and "1," as you open your eyes and return your awareness to the room you are in.

### Tension Rating After Exercise

How would you rate your tension level now, after practising the **Guided Imagery** exercise?



**5 = Terribly tense**  
**4 = Really tense**  
**3 = Moderately tense**  
**2 = Slightly tense**  
**1 = Not at all tense**

**Q!** Now, please rate your tension or stress level from 1 to 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Discuss:

- Did your level of tension change?
- What was this experience like for you?
- Can you think of specific times when this might have helped?

Encourage carers to practise the guided imagery at least one time each day this week. Check that they have been able to make use of the CD or MP3 files?

## Summary

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### Today, we have talked about:

- Making and changing a plan for managing behaviour
- How unhelpful thoughts contribute to how we feel
- How to identify and record unhelpful thoughts
- Strategies for challenging unhelpful thoughts and feelings
- Stress reduction technique: *Guided imagery – meadow and stream*

“Thinking about what we have discussed, is there any information from today’s session that you would want to share with someone else (e.g. a family member, a friend or a neighbour) ”.

# FOR NEXT WEEK: Putting it into practice

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## Guided imagery – Meadow and stream:

- Try to practise this at least once a day and notice how it feels.



## Thought record:

- Try to complete the thought record on page 20 for three separate situations over the next week, remember to try and challenge any unhelpful thoughts.



## Behaviour record:

- Try to complete the behavior record on page 22 for three separate episodes of your relative's behaviour and try out the new or revised strategy that we discussed on page 5.

### **START: *Putting it into Practice***

- When will you have an opportunity to do this?
- What might get in the way?
- What might make it easier?

Give people time to consider what might work. Ask open questions and think about the possible causes. If people are struggling make tentative suggestions but check that these fit for them. The strategies may be things that they are already doing that they can do more of.

# Thought Record

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What was happening?	What were you thinking?	How did you feel?	An alternative response would be...	How do you feel now?

# Extra Thought Record

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What was happening?	What were you thinking?	How did you feel?	An alternative response would be...	How do you feel now?

# Behaviour Record

Please use these pages to write down the things your relative does (or that you do) and the strategies that you try out.

Day	Morning/Afternoon/ Night	Who was there?	Trigger	Behaviour	Reaction	What strategy did you try?	What happened?



# Extra Behaviour Record

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Day	Morning/Afternoon/ Night	Who was there?	Trigger	Behaviour	Reaction	What strategy did you try?	What happened?

