

Completing Your Own 'Five Areas' Review

Now you have an opportunity to put into practice what you and your guide have started working on — by looking in detail at a specific time when you have felt worse and using the 5 Areas model overleaf to break the incident down.

First, try to really think yourself back into a situation in the last few days when your mood unhelpfully changed. To begin with don't choose a time when you have felt very distressed. If you do, you might find yourself feeling overwhelmed by the thoughts or feelings and unable even to write about what happened. Instead, pick an occasion when you have noticed some worsening upset, tension, symptoms, anger or guilt. Try to slow down as you think back through the situation so that you are as accurate as you can be. Try to stop, think and reflect as you consider the five different areas that can be affected. Then, when you are ready, try to put something in as many of the boxes as you can on the diagram. Don't worry if you can't put something in all of the boxes – you don't have to do it all at once and your guide may be able to help if you are stuck.

Try to write down:

1. The situation: (Write this into Box 1)
Where were you, what time of day was it, who else was there, what was said, what happened?
2. Altered thinking: (Write down any thoughts you notice into Box 2) Underline the most upsetting thought. What went through your mind at the time? How did you see yourself and how you were coping (bias against yourself)? What did you predict was the worst thing that could happen (catastrophic thinking)? How did you think others saw you (mind-reading)? What did you think about your own body, behaviour or performance? Were there any painful memories from the past? Did you notice any images or pictures in your mind? (Images can have a powerful impact on how you feel).



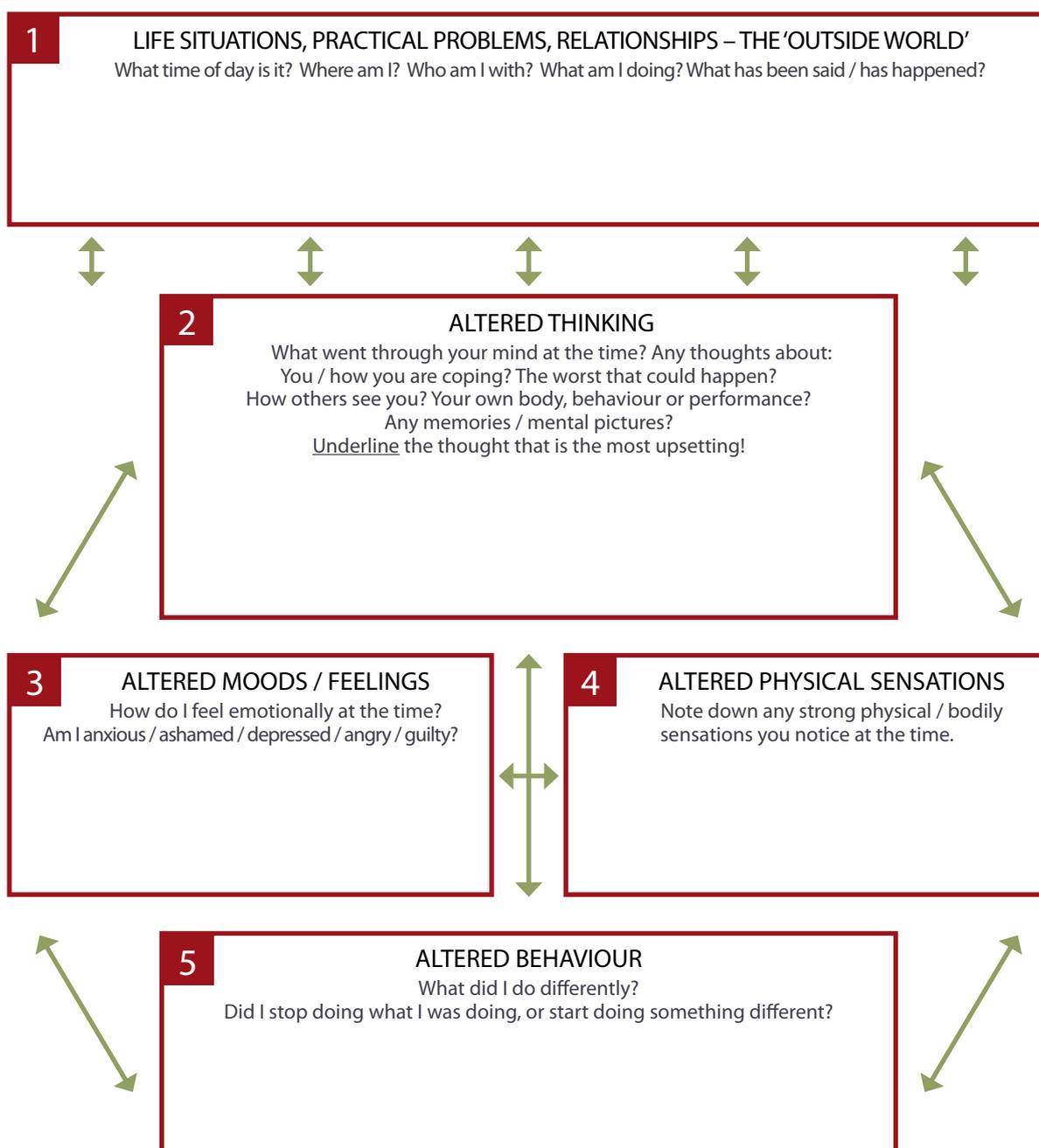
3. Altered feeling: (Write these into Box 3)
How did you feel emotionally at the time? Were you anxious, depressed, ashamed, angry or guilty? It is worth pointing out here that we often use the word 'feel' to describe a thought for example, the sentence 'I feel that nobody cares about me' is a thought, that may be associated with a feeling of sadness or guilt. Usually, single words describe feelings and sentences describe thoughts.
4. Altered physical symptoms: (Write these into Box 4) A wide range of physical reactions may occur, such as a rapid heartbeat and breathing, feeling hot, sweaty and clammy, feelings of muscle tension, jitteriness or pain. Feelings of low energy, pressure or pain may often be associated with low mood.
5. Altered behaviour (write these into Box 5)
Remember that this can include:
 - Helpful responses: that can improve how you and/or others feel.
 - Reduced activity: where you reduce or stop doing what you had planned to do.
 - Avoidance: where you suddenly feel anxious or depressed and avoid doing something or going somewhere.
 - Unhelpful behaviours: where you try to block how you feel by acting in ways that may make you feel better in the short-term, but worse in the longer-term.

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Contd.

Now that you have finished, re-read your answers. As you do this, try to apply what you know about the five areas assessment model to see how each of these areas might have played a part in affecting how you felt. The five areas model shows that what a person thinks about a situation or problem may affect how they feel physically and emotionally, and also may lead them to alter what they do.

At first, many people find it can be quite difficult to separate out their thoughts, mental and physical feelings and behaviours. Over time and with practice you will find that this process becomes easier. Your guide will try to help and support you, but remember that he or she cannot fill in the boxes, only you can do that.



> How Normal Stress, Depression & Anxiety can Develop into a Problem*

Related leaflets include:
> Anxiety – A Five Areas Model
> Depression – A Five Areas Model
> Stress – A Five Areas Model

