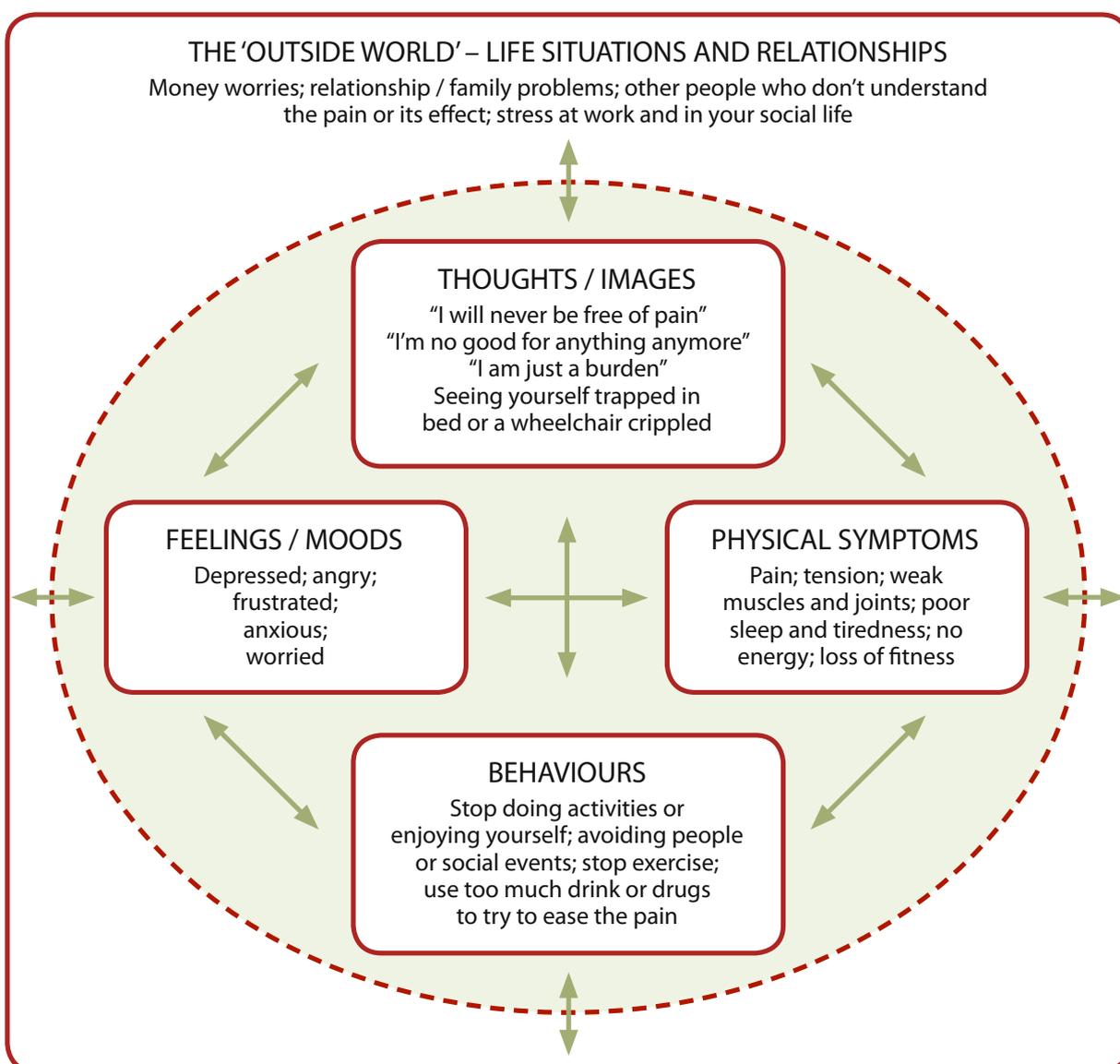


Coping with Chronic Pain

Chronic pain:

- Is a condition where pain lasts for three months or more.
- Affects one in seven people in the UK.
- Can be difficult to understand, treat and cope with every day.
- Can affect you in your everyday life, your moods, and your activities with family, friends and workmates.

Do you recognise yourself in the cycle below?



Coping with Chronic Pain

Continued...

Living with pain is possible but can be difficult.

Some of the tools and skills listed below could help you manage your pain:

- Ask your doctor or guide about putting together a Pain Management Programme (PMP). This could consist of a number of treatments, including drugs, talking therapies, or complementary therapies that will help you to feel more in control of your situation.
- If medication is part of your PMP, make sure you take the right dose at the right time.
- Accept that you have long-term pain. This can be difficult to do but it is an essential step in managing your pain.
- Set priorities and start with the things that are most important to you. Talk this over with your guide or someone else you trust if you wish.
- Pace yourself. Try to strike a balance between doing too much and doing too little. Include regular breaks in your daily activities and learn when to say no to others who ask you to do things.
- Set yourself realistic goals. You could try setting yourself a simple hourly, daily or weekly action plan. Be patient with yourself – take things one day at a time if need be.
- Learn to relax – tension could make your pain worse.
- Take gentle exercise. Unused stiff muscles will feel pain more than toned ones. Ask your guide about a safe exercise routine.
- Keep a diary and use it to set your priorities and goals, and make a note of your exercise and relaxation routine. The diary will help you to see how far you have come.
- Make a setback plan in case your pain flares up. It is unrealistic to think your pain will never flare up, so knowing how to cope with it is an important part of your PMP.
- Make use of self-help and support. Ask your guide for details of websites, books and support groups which could help you with pain management.

FOR MORE LEAFLETS IN THIS SERIES GO TO www.primarycare-selfhelp.co.uk