

- > Changing Unhelpful Behaviours (1) and (2)
- > Completing Your Own 5 Areas Review
- > Recognising / Challenging Unhelpful Thinking (several leaflets)

## Recognising Helpful & Unhelpful Behaviours

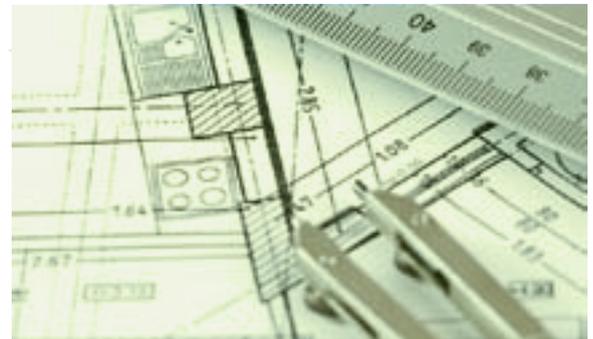
When somebody experiences symptoms, it is normal to try to do things to feel better. This altered behaviour may be helpful or unhelpful.

*Helpful behaviours* may include things you can do yourself, and things you can do with others, for example:

- > Talking to and receiving support from friends or relatives.
- > Keeping a structure and routine in your life
- > Finding time to relax and unwind
- > Reading or using self-help materials so that you can find out more about the causes and treatment of the problems.
- > Maintaining activities that provide pleasure or support such as meeting friends, attending a group or class, exercise or sport etc.
- > Challenging unhelpful thoughts by stopping, thinking and reflecting rather than accepting them as true.
- > Going to see your doctor or health care practitioner, or attending a self-help support group.

*Unhelpful behaviours* can make us feel better in the short term but in the long term they can act to keep the problem going and even make it worse, for example:

- > Drinking too much to block how you feel,
- > Avoiding things
- > Becoming too reliant on others or constantly seeking reassurance
- > Pushing people away and isolating yourself



Your *guide* can help you work out which of your behaviours may be helpful or unhelpful, perhaps by keeping a diary of your behaviours for a week or two and recording which behaviours made you feel better and which made you feel worse.

You can then go on to try increasing your helpful behaviours and/or changing or stopping your unhelpful behaviours.

Research shows that changing your own behaviour can lift your mood whether or not you change other things such as your thinking or your practical problems. These self-help leaflets can help you understand your unhelpful behaviours and replace them with helpful ones. This will help lift your mood, calm your fears, boost your self confidence and give you feelings of pleasure and achievement. You can learn to look at the effect of what you do on how you think and feel, try out new behaviours and make choices about what to do. This helps break the same old habits that often lead to a 'vicious cycle' of anxiety, depression or stress. The changes you make to your behaviour do not have to be big or dramatic - even small changes can make a big difference to how you feel.