



SESSION 1



EXERCISES

Connecting up: keeping well exercise

Ask students to take a couple of minutes to think of something they do regularly to keep themselves feeling mentally well.

Then ask each student to introduce themselves by their first name and what they do to keep themselves mentally well.

As a group discuss what we share and what we have learned about our fellow students.



TUTOR NOTES

To introduce this session, it is good to place mental health in a wider context. Remind the students that we all have mental health. Mental health is often seen as a negative term but mental health like physical health is something we need to look after. We all know what we should do to look after our physical health (eat well, exercise etc) but do we think as much about what we can do to keep ourselves feeling mentally well.

This connecting up exercise starts the course on a positive note focusing on wellbeing and highlighting that the students know more that they maybe realise. It should also start to build their confidence as experts in their own experience.



Hopes and fears for the course

This is a whole group exercise. If students are reluctant to share or quiet at first you could put them into pairs to discuss hopes and fears and then bring the whole group back together.

Ask the students to share their hopes for the course. Validate the response and record in a way that is visible to the whole group such as a flipchart. As the trainer you should also contribute as a means of establishing a mutual learning environment.

Ask the students for comments on how they feel to see the positivity and hopes people have for the course.

Follow this by asking students to share what some of their fears (anxieties, worries, apprehensions) may be and record them separately.

Again validate responses as they are shared and, as a group, acknowledge the fears people have. Refer back to the hopes and ask how individually and as a group they can work with the fears that people have expressed.



TUTOR NOTES

Participating in this exercise provides an opportunity for students to begin to share some of their more vulnerable sides within a group setting.

This exercise should provide the foundation for developing the 'Learning Together Agreement' and creating a learning environment that works for everyone, including the trainer.



Creating a Learning Together Agreement

The Learning Together Agreement can be developed through a whole group discussion led by the trainer. The discussion should be recorded on flipchart and the agreement kept in sight at all times during the delivery of the course.



TUTOR NOTES

When introducing and developing the Learning Together Agreement emphasise that this is a mutual agreement and as a result it is the responsibility of everyone, including the trainer. As trainer be clear about what you will offer and bring to the learning environment.

Discuss with the group how the Learning Together Agreement will support individuals and the group during the course. This will include a discussion of how mutual support can be facilitated and supported during the course. To assist this discussion you could introduce the values underpinning story sharing included in Section 3 Recovery story sharing (control, support, respect, wellbeing, responsibility) to ensure that students consider how they will support themselves and the group whilst sharing lived experience.



Supporting myself

This is an individual exercise building on the Learning Together Agreement. Ask students to take some personal time to reflect on what they will need to do to ensure they maintain their commitment to the course and stay well. This includes identifying where they will access support if and when required. The 'My positive learning environment' sheet provides a template for students to use if needed.



TRAINER NOTES

This exercise encourages students to take personal responsibility for how they will support themselves through the course. It also highlights their existing level of self-awareness and the self-management strategies and tools they already use or are aware of.



Reflection

We would encourage trainers to include a short reflection period at the end of each session and for this to start from the beginning.

Ask students to take a few minutes to think about the following questions and encourage them to jot down notes in their Living e-Motions folder:

- How did today feel for me?
- What one thing will I take away from today?
- What strengths, skills or interests do I have that will be useful to me on this course?



TUTOR NOTES

This reflection reinforces a positive learning environment and also provides an opportunity for students to focus on personal responsibility for their own wellbeing. It is an opportunity for students to get into the habit of thinking about what they are learning and reflecting on how this relates to their experience.

It is also an opportunity to introduce the concept of a personal or reflective journal and the role this plays in encouraging reflection and learning. Emphasise that keeping notes or a journal will also help students to recognise their learning and provide material that they can use later in the course.



MY POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

What am I looking forward to during the Living e-Motions course?

What am I worried or concerned about?

How can I support my own learning experience and stay well?

What other support may I need and how can I access this?



MY REFLECTIONS

How did today feel for me?

What one thing will I take away from today?

What strengths, skills or interests do I have that will be useful to me on this course?

