



LIVING MOTIONS

Emotional education through
visual storyliving

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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ABOUT LIVING E-MOTIONS ▶





WELCOME TO LIVING E-MOTIONS

Living e-Motions is a project funded through the Erasmus+ programme. It brings partners from Spain (Fundacion INTRAS), Estonia (Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre), Slovenia (University of Maribor) UK (Scottish Recovery Network) to develop a training course which uses storyliving to assist people living with mental health challenges to understand and manage their emotions and take charge of their recovery.

The goals of the Living e-Motions project are for the students to:

- Experience an improvement in key competencies and abilities needed in daily life – such as communication, empathy, self-management, organisational skills, problem solving and self confidence
- Learn to verbalise their emotions and gain benefit from this
- Increase social contact, inclusion and a sense of belonging
- Have a greater sense of self-control, personal safety and wellbeing
- Discuss and think about their mental health experiences from a different/positive perspective
- A deeper understanding of their skills and strengths and a commitment to the recovery process

The curriculum developed is focused on emotional education but uses story living as a practical way for students to explore their emotions and how they manage them. The curriculum is designed to be used by people experiencing any type of mental health challenge and who want to improve their quality of life.

This resource has been designed to help you plan and deliver courses and/or workshops. The resource is just that. A resource for you. It is not a step-by-step instruction manual. The resource provides information and guidance on the type of learning experience envisaged and the role of the trainer and facilitator. It then suggests a series of sessions which will take learners through a process of increasing understanding, developing and sharing their story and using their story to drive their recovery and inspire others.

The sessions, exercises and discussions provided can be adapted by you to ensure that the learning experience meets your needs and expectations as well as that of the people you will work with.

We encourage you to share your experiences of delivering Living e-Motions and any new exercises or discussions developed. This way we can all support each other to ensure a great, impactful learning experience for all.

WHAT IS LIVING E-MOTIONS?

We all have mental health. Good mental health is as important to living a full life as good physical health. Anyone can experience mental health challenges at some time in their lives. Therefore, we all need to learn to live with and manage our emotions. People living with mental health issues tell us how their experiences can result in them losing control of their feelings and losing confidence in social skills when interacting with other people. This adversely affects their wellbeing and quality of life.

The idea of emotional education is, therefore, at once deeply relevant and widely neglected. The challenge is to create a programme which takes people on a journey where they better understand and manage their emotions and as a result lead more fulfilling and satisfying lives. Living e-Motions seeks to do this by using storyliving to enable people to explore their experiences and emotions and develop the tools and confidence to use them in a positive way.

WHAT IS STORYLIVING?

Putting feelings into words has therapeutic effects. Story sharing is a powerful recovery tool for people living with mental health challenges. It is a way for us to explore our experiences and inner worlds. To talk about our emotions, recognise their complexities and learn to live with and manage them. It also provides an opportunity for people to show that we can all experience mental health issues and breakdown some of the attitudes and discrimination that hinders recovery and excludes people from society.

Storyliving takes this a step further. Learners will develop and share their story but will also learn to 'live' their story by using their experiences and learning to support their own recovery journey and inspire others. In this way they will recognise that they are 'experts by experience' and that they are the protagonist of their own story. Through storyliving learners will share their reflections on their own emotions and recovery experiences on camera; opening up their story to themselves and the rest of the world.

WHAT IS RECOVERY?

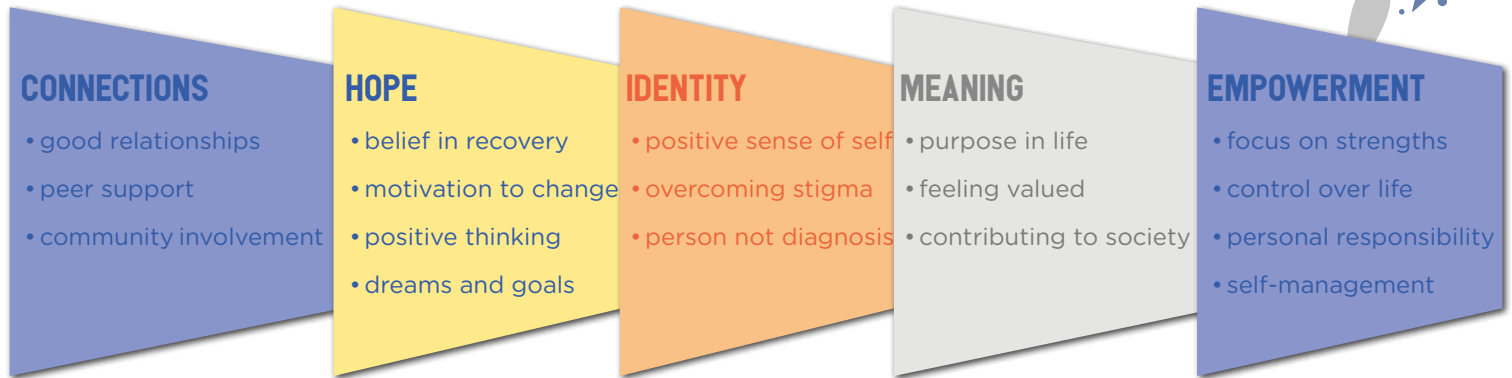
In Living e-Motions we have adopted a recovery approach which emphasises and supports the person's potential for recovery, even where some difficulties might persist.

Anyone can experience mental health problems but with the right support people can and do recover. Recovery means being able to live a good life, as defined by you, with or without symptoms (Scottish Recovery Network).

We have adopted the CHIME framework which sets out five components of recovery or what helps people recover.

Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: systematic review and narrative synthesis. M Leamy et al, BJP 2011, 199:445-452

Full details at the end of this section.



“Conceptual framework for personal recovery in mental health: systematic review and narrative synthesis.
M Leamy et al, BJP 2011, 199:445-452. Full details at the end of this section

We have adopted this framework not only because it is a very useful way to explore personal recovery but also because it is based on an analysis of people’s narratives about their own recovery. This means that it is rooted in the ‘lived experience’ of people living with mental health challenges and is particularly relevant to the Living e-Motions course which uses storyliving.


THE LIVING E-MOTION LEARNING EXPERIENCE

The Living e-Motions course has been designed as a participative, group learning experience. Key to the course is our belief that:

- All learners will have lots of bring to and well as learn from the course
- The learners will learn from each other
- The role of the trainer is to facilitate this group learning experience
- The trainer will lead the process but does not have to be ‘the expert’

ROLE OF THE TRAINER

This requires an approach which is more about facilitating a group learning process than delivering a set course. While the trainer does not need to be an expert

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in the topic matter, we do recommend that they have experience of delivering group work or using participative training approaches. If there are any concerns this could be addressed by having two trainers who co-facilitate and can support each other. Working with two facilitators also provides an opportunity for people to develop their group work and participative training skills. The Living e-Motions trainer (or facilitator!) plays a key role in creating the environment where people feel safe and supported to explore their lived experiences and emotions, and to share with others. In doing this the trainer (facilitator) should model the behaviour that create a positive and safe environment. This will involve:

- Recognising that different learners are at different stages in their recovery journey and some will be more confident than others in sharing their story
- Making intentional use of your own lived experience/story to show that change is possible, that recovery is a process and that sharing stories can promote and instil hope
- Encouraging and supporting all learners to empower themselves and participate in the group and its discussions
- Inviting, respecting and validating the experiences shared and highlighting strengths and skills identified during the process
- Reacting to difficult feelings and behaviours with compassion and curiosity rather than irritation or defensiveness
- Avoid making judgements
- Being aware of your own needs and how you can maintain your wellbeing

CREATING A LEARNING GROUP

The role of the trainer (facilitator) is to plan the sessions and to ensure that the learning environment supports the full participation of all.

There can be a temptation to go straight into learning material and into sharing stories when a new group comes together. However, it is essential to take some



time to manage how the group gets established; even where learners already know each other. This will allow you to explore how learners would like the group to run and to clearly articulate your role as facilitator rather than expert. The first session suggested contains a series of discussions and exercises which will support the group to get to know each other, discuss hopes and fears, create a safe and positive environment and consider how they will support themselves and others during the learning experience.

When establishing the group, it will be important to ensure that learners understand the purpose of the Living e-Motions course and the group learning process. You may want to emphasise:

- During the course members of the group will explore and share their recovery stories to benefit them and others. This means we focus on people and their lives not just on medical diagnosis and symptoms
- During this process people will be encouraged to draw on and share of themselves. It is important that they should only share what they are comfortable with and that their wellbeing is at the centre of considerations
- The primary purpose of the course/group is to learn through the exploration and sharing of stories. This is an empowering process and also one which is joyful and fun but it can also be challenging and emotional at times. The group can support each other but it cannot provide therapy. Learners are to be encouraged to think about how they can support their own wellbeing and contribute to the peer support provided by the group.

MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

The ethos Living e-Motions is that learners have lots to contribute to the group learning experience – probably more than they imagined possible. The storyliving method is also about self-exploration, responsibility, control and self-advocacy.



Therefore, the group learning experience is a key factor in the success of the course.

The trainer (facilitator) will guide the group in the learning process but should not feel that they are responsible for all that happens in the group. They do not have to deal with any issues that arise or decisions that need to be taken on their own. Instead the trainer's (facilitator) role will be to encourage and support the learning group to take responsibility for the group and deal with any issues that arise as a group. For this to happen it needs to be embedded into any group from the start and the trainer (facilitator) can make this happen by:

- Taking time at the beginning of the course for people to get to know each other as fellow learners and share what they are looking for from the course and as part of a learning group (Group Agreement)
- Making sure there is an open conversation about how people want the course to run and the behaviours they expect of each other. We suggest developing a group agreement. When doing this it may be helpful to consider the values underpinning story sharing in Session 4.
- Checking in with the group agreement regularly to make sure that is still relevant and that people are happy with the way things are running
- Resisting the pressure (or the urge) to resolve any issues or conflicts that emerge and encouraging and supporting the group to work things through and take collective decisions
- Noticing when the discussion is losing focus or the group dynamic feels challenging and using gentle questions to encourage and support the group to get back on track with the topic and/or exercise
- Not assuming the role of the expert. As a trainer (facilitator) you have expertise but you and learners are also all experts in their own experience. Avoid taking decisions that can be taken by others and the group and model that it's okay to say "I don't know"

The experience of a Living e-Motions group should be empowering and fun as well as hard work at times. As trainer you will know your group best and are well placed to make informed judgements about content, tone and pace.

THE LEARNING PASSPORT

One of the goals of Living e-Motions is that students gain a deeper understanding of their skills and strengths and that this will help them to move on in their life and recovery. This may be onto further education and learning, into volunteering and community activities or into work. It also may be that the person decides to pursue an interest. What is important is that by the end of the course the student has identified and developed a good understanding of themselves and what they have to offer others and society.

In Session 7 students will be asked to reflect on their learning during the course and produce a Learning Passport. Many of the exercises and activities will provide them with material which they can use in drafting their Learning Passport. This short document will capture their qualities, learning and skills and their ambitions for the future. Even where students are not sure what they will be moving onto it is important that they take some time to complete their Learning Passport. This will provide them with a record that they can use and adapt over time and will ensure that they are reminded of their skills, strengths and qualities, even when they are feeling under pressure or unsure of themselves. In Sessions 7 there is more information about the Learning Passport, a suggested template to use and a completed Learning passport for reference.

RECORDING RECOVERY STORIES

During the Living e-Motions course students will be supported to develop their own recovery story and to identify the strengths and skills they have gained through their lived experiences of mental health problems. Towards the end of the course they will also spend some time considering what they would like to share about their story, why they want to share this information and who they would like to share it with. This process is an important part of students being

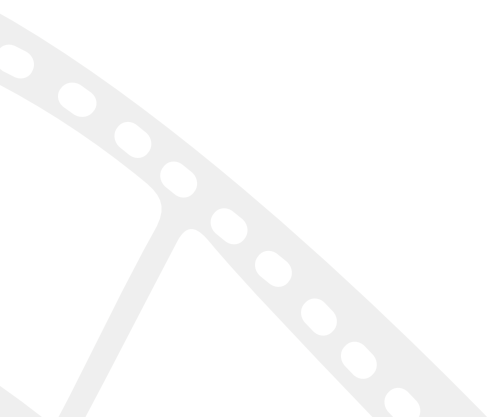


able to reframe their experiences of mental health problems as something which adversely affected their life but also led to learning and discovery.

The final session of the course includes time for the students to share the short story they have developed with the group. One of the interesting aspects of the Living e-Motions course is that it suggests that students' stories are recorded and, if they consent, their stories shared more widely. We believe that the person sharing their personal story of recovery can gain a great deal from this as they are being open about their lived experience and sharing their learning with others. These stories when shared more widely can inform attitudes and beliefs about the experience mental health problems and challenge stigma and discrimination. They also inspire others to see that recovery and living a good life is possible and a reality.

We suggest that you introduce the recording of stories as a possibility in Session 3 'My recovery story' but emphasise that students do not need to make a decision on this until the end of the course. It is likely that some students will need a little time to think this through. However, the experience of the course and their learning during it should encourage them to record their story. There will be a number of example of videos on the Living e-Motions website for you to use as a reference and to share with students.

Where students do not want to record their story on video you could explore using audio, writing, art and music as a way for them to share their story with others that feels more comfortable with them.





CHIME FRAMEWORK

CONNECTEDNESS

- Peer support and support groups
- Relationships
- Support from others
- Being part of the community

HOPE AND OPTIMISM ABOUT THE FUTURE

- Belief in possibility of recovery
- Motivation to change
- Hope-inspiring relationships
- Positive thinking and valuing success
- Having dreams and aspirations

IDENTITY


- Dimensions of identity
- Rebuilding/redefining positive sense of identity
- Overcoming stigma

MEANING IN LIFE

- Meaning of mental health experiences
- Spirituality
- Quality of life
- Meaning life and social roles
- Meaning life and social goals
- Rebuilding life

EMPOWERMENT

- Personal responsibility
- Control over life
- Focusing on strengths



USING LIVING E- MOTIONS ► LEARNING RESOURCE





USING THE LIVING E-MOTIONS LEARNING RESOURCE

The Living e-Motions learning resource has been developed to enable you to deliver courses using story living to assist people living with mental health problems to understand and manage their emotions and take control of their recovery.

This section provides some guidance on how to use the Learning Resource to design and deliver training that meets the needs and aspirations of your potential students.

STRUCTURE OF THE LIVING E-MOTIONS COURSE

The resource sets out a series of eight sessions covering the following topics.

	About Living e-Motions
	Using the Living e-Motions Learning Resource
SESSION 1	Establishing the learning group
SESSION 2	My recovery
SESSION 3	My recovery story



SESSION 4	Understanding my emotions
SESSION 5	Self-management and self-care
SESSION 6	Connections
SESSION 7	Sharing my story
SESSION 8	Celebrating my journey

The aim of the course is to take students on a journey. The first session is focused on establishing the learning group. After that there are three sessions where the students will think about what recovery means to them, start to explore their own recovery story. After this there are two sessions exploring key elements in both managing emotions and recovery – self-management and self-care and our connections or social interactions and relationships.

After this in Session 7, students will return to their recovery story and focus on the turning points, what has helped their recovery and what they want to share. The final session is focused on bringing the learning together by providing a space for students to share their story and also capture their learning in a Living e-Motions Learning Passport.

Each session contains:

- Learning outcomes
- Suggested learning plan
- Information on the topic
- A series of exercises



- Worksheets and handouts

It is also suggested that each session end with a short period for students to reflect on their learning during the session and note down any key points. These notes will help them to develop their story for sharing and also their learning passport.

USING THE LEARNING RESOURCE

This learning resource has been developed to be a resource not an instruction manual. The lesson plans are suggested and the exercises can be adapted or changed if required. Indeed, you may have exercises that would work better with your students. If so, please share that with us so more people can try out different approaches.

Each student group is different so you may need to spend more time on some themes and less on others. What is important in Living e-Motions is that the students are able to put their learning into practice by developing and sharing their story and creating their personal learning passport.

PRACTICALITIES

It is recommended that the learning group comprise no more than eight to 12 people. A certain number of students is needed to ensure a good group learning experience but more than 10 to 12 students will mean that some may not participate in the way this course is designed to encourage.

The sessions have been designed to last for around two-and-a-half hours with a short break. However, it would be possible for them to last longer. If the sessions are shorter it may be appropriate to select certain exercises rather than trying to compress them. This way students will get the opportunities they need to reflect and discuss.

The course has eight sessions and it is recommended that the sessions run regularly; no less than once a week. This helps to maintain momentum and attendance.



It may be that a taster or introduction session before the course starts would encourage participation. In addition, we suggest that you consider scheduling a follow up celebration event around two to three weeks after the final session.

FINAL WORDS

Remember that as a trainer or facilitator you know your students best. This resource is designed to help you to deliver a high quality and empowering learning experience. Enjoy the experience and share what you have learnt with others.



SESSION 1





SESSION 1

ESTABLISHING THE LEARNING GROUP

INTRODUCTION

This first session will introduce students to the course and to each other and create a positive group learning environment.

As a key aspect of this course will focus on storyliving it will be important to discuss how people will share personal information and consider what works for them.

At the end of the session students will have:

- A good understanding of the course and the learning approach being taken
- Developed a group agreement about how they will work together as learners
- Explored how they will support their wellbeing during the course
- Developed a group and/or personal guide to sharing lived experiences

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students should be able to:

- Articulate how they can support their own wellbeing during the course
- Understand how they will share lived experience in a way that is safe for them and the group
- Understand how the group can support a positive learning environment



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome and introductions	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: keeping well	
Overview of the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics • Learning approach • Outcomes 	Trainer led	Course folder Overview of course handout (still to be completed)
Hopes and fears	Group exercise	
Creating our positive learning environment	Group exercise: creating a Learning Together agreement	
Supporting myself	Individual exercise: My positive learning environment	Worksheet
Reflection	Individual and group exercise	Worksheet



INFORMATION

This may be the first time that all the students will be meeting together with the trainer. Even if some or all of the students know each other and/or the trainer it is still the first time that they will be coming together for the Living e-Motions course.

The session is an opportunity for:

- you and the students to introduce yourselves
- students to learn more about the course
- students to work together with you to agree what will make for a positive and supportive learning environment

The Living e-Motions project highlighted the social stigma attached to mental health conditions and challenges and that this stigma can be a barrier to social interaction, social inclusion and recovery. Training activities such as Living e-Motions intending to provide an empowering learning experience for people living with mental health challenges need to take social interactions from the context of interpersonal relations to broader, societal perspective into account.

The Living e-Motions course has been designed to encourage and support social interactions by adopting a facilitated group learning approach where group processes and dynamics are part of the learning process. This group learning process is underpinned by two interconnected objectives:

- establishing an atmosphere of social support and trust (social context)
- enhancing strategies and activities of sharing emotions in social settings (socially orientated procedures)

By participating in the course students should see an improvement in their social skills and competencies in areas such as communication, self-definition, self-esteem, network of support and collaboration.



For some students the Living e-Motions course may be a new or different learning experience. When providing an overview of the course you may want to emphasise:

- The Living e-Motions course focuses on emotional learning and how our lived experience can be harnessed to support ours and others wellbeing and recovery. This means taking a whole person approach rather than focusing on diagnosis and symptoms
- The way the course will be delivered will be facilitative and participative. The course provides an active learning experience where the role of the trainer is not only to share information and introduce concepts but also to encourage and support students to share with each other and learn through discussion and reflection
- It is important that the group take responsibility along with the trainer for managing the learning process and creating a positive and supportive learning environment. The Learning Together agreement is central to this and it is essential that developing it is a mutual process. This agreement can then be referred to, reflected upon and built on as the course progresses
- During the course students will be encouraged to draw on and share their lived experiences. Students should be reminded that they should only share what they are comfortable with and it is their responsibility to keep themselves safe. It is important to reiterate that the Living e-Motions course is a learning rather than a therapeutic experience. You should discuss with students how they can ensure that the group remains a learning experience and doesn't slip into being a support group only



- Living e-Motions is a learning experience and one where the students will build on their own experiences and learning throughout the course to produce a storyliving video at the end and create a learning passport. We suggest that each student is provided with a folder to keep any handouts and exercises they complete as well as any reflections they record at the end of each session.



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?





SESSION 2



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SESSION 2

MY RECOVERY

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is to explore the recovery approach in mental health; examine key concepts in recovery and identify what recovery means personally.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students will have:

- A good understanding of recovery and the concepts underpinning it
- A good understanding of the factors that support recovery
- An opportunity to explore their personal experiences of recovery



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Introduction	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: What makes me hopeful?	
What is mental health recovery?	Group exercise	Post-it notes Flipchart
What helps recovery?	Individual and group exercise: CHIME and my recovery	Handout Film: Rona's story
What does recovery mean to me?	Small group exercise	handout
My recovery journey	Individual exercise	Handout
Reflection	Individual exercise	

INFORMATION

Supporting the recovery process is one of the primary outcomes in the Living e-Motions project.

WHAT IS RECOVERY?

“Recovery is being able to live a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by the person, in the presence or absence of symptoms. It is about having control over



and input to your own life. Each person's recovery is a unique and deeply personal process."

(Scottish Recovery Network)

Before we look in more detail at recovery we should consider two core elements of the recovery approach:

- A fundamental belief that everyone has the potential for recovery – no matter how long-term or serious their mental health problem.
- The recovery approach is based on learning directly from people who are in recovery or who have recovered from mental health problems.

Living e-Motions embeds these core elements by providing a learning opportunity for people to take control of their own recovery and to do so by exploring, understanding and sharing their story – not just of mental health problems but of recovery.

WORLDVIEW AND DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY

It is likely that in any discussions about mental health recovery there will be some differences of opinion about the characteristics of recovery. This should come as no surprise both because recovery is a unique and personal experience and also because we all have slightly different world views. Our world view relates to how we see and understand the world around us. It is influenced by our past experiences, our personal values and our culture. Being aware that we all have slightly different world views on many things including mental health, and being open to this, is important when exploring our and other people's experiences of recovery.

There are a number of different ways to view mental health.

A **biologically** based understanding of mental health means that we see our biology as determining our behaviour – our genes and instinct drive us. From this



perspective mental health problems develop from physical/biological causes like defects in the functioning of the brain or genetic factors. The methods of dealing with these defects are usually through drug treatment such as the prescribing of anti-depressants to alter the chemical activity of the brain.

A **psychological** perspective suggests the way we behave is as a result of psychological (emotional) problems acquired through learning experiences in our lives. There are two key approaches to understanding these experiences. Psychodynamic perspectives seek to understand by focusing on the individual's feelings and emotions. Behaviourist perspectives argue that behaviour is learnt by observing and modelling others with influence on our lives. For both the preferred treatment is based on talking therapies.

The **social** perspective focuses on our social environment and how this affects our development. It suggests that mental health issues are determined by the social context in which we live and the things that have happened to us in that environment. This includes family, community, school, workplace as well as wider social factors like socioeconomic status, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic identity.

In reality there is a complex interplay between the different perspectives. This coincides with continued debate between those with different worldviews. One of the strengths of the recovery approach is that it can rise above these debates as it is more concerned with the process and outcome of recovery than the underlying causes of mental health problems.

Another way to look at mental health recovery is to consider the different perspectives of clinical and personal recovery.

The **personal recovery** perspective encompasses an individual and nonlinear view on recovery where individuals go through various stages of being stuck, rebuilding and growth (van Weeghel et al., 2019). In the forefront of attention are the many “back and forths” of a person being in recovery (Davidson, O’Connell, Tondora, Staeheli & Evans, 2005). The personal recovery perspective emphasises



that recovery is when the person has a fulfilling, contributing life whether or not they experience symptoms (see Scottish Recovery Network definition).

From a **clinical recovery** viewpoint, recovery is defined “as amelioration of symptoms and other deficits associated with the disorder to a sufficient degree that they no longer interfere with daily functioning, allowing the person to resume personal, social, and vocational activities within what is considered a normal range” (Davidson et al., 2005, p. 481). In this sense, recovery is a final outcome which for some may be reached and for others not.

From a clinical viewpoint, recovery from mental health problems very much resembles the recovery from a medical condition (Davidson et al., 2005; Davidson & Roe, 2007). However, an eradication of symptoms does not necessary lead to a meaningful life and better integration into the community. From a process perspective (which is also adopted in the Living e-Motions project), recovery does not necessary require a person to be symptom free. The recovery process is rather aimed at helping the individual to live well with their mental health problems. This aspect often includes a redefinition on one’s identity and roles and preserving one’s positive view of self, others and life despite the problems.

The sharing of personal recovery stories or narratives has been identified as an approach which supports individuals in their recovery journey. This will be expanded on in Session 4 My story.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RECOVERY

It is impossible to develop a complete list of recovery characteristics but some of the more commonly identified themes are listed below. Remember that recovery is unique and individual so you may not agree with all these points and that is fine.

Recovery is a deeply personal process

One of the most commonly cited definitions of recovery in academic literature views recovery as “deeply personal, unique process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even within the limitations caused by illness. Recovery



involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness" (Anthony, 1993) There is no one way to recover. While we can be inspired by and learn from other peoples' recovery journeys we are all different and so what helps our recovery and the path taken will differ.

Recovery is self-defined

It is important to remember that the person in recovery who has recovered defines what a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life means for them. We need to be aware of the danger of defining recovery for people rather than listening to them and supporting their recovery.

Recovery is an active process

This means that people need to feel ready and able to play a part in their recovery. Other people can certainly support and encourage that process but it needs to be led by the person themselves.

Recovery is a journey

Recovery is commonly described as a journey which can have ups and downs. For some people recovery is less about a destination and more about the process or journey. For this reason, some people prefer to describe themselves as being in recovery rather than recovered.

Recovery is about small steps

Recovery should not be portrayed or seen as something big or a 'miracle'. Our recovery journeys are comprised of lots of small steps as well as some leaps. What is important is that each person's recovery happens at a pace that feels right for them at the time. However, while it may be about small steps that doesn't mean we should not celebrate each small step and achievement in our recovery journeys.

Recovery is not always easy or straight forward

Recovery can be a long-term process which takes strength and commitment. Sometimes our recovery gets stuck and we experience mental health problems. This may have traditionally be seen as relapse or evidence that recovery has



ended. However, our new understanding suggests that, while difficult, periods of mental health problems can lead to learning and the growth and development of strengths that contribute to the longer term aim of recovery.

Recovery as a process of discovery

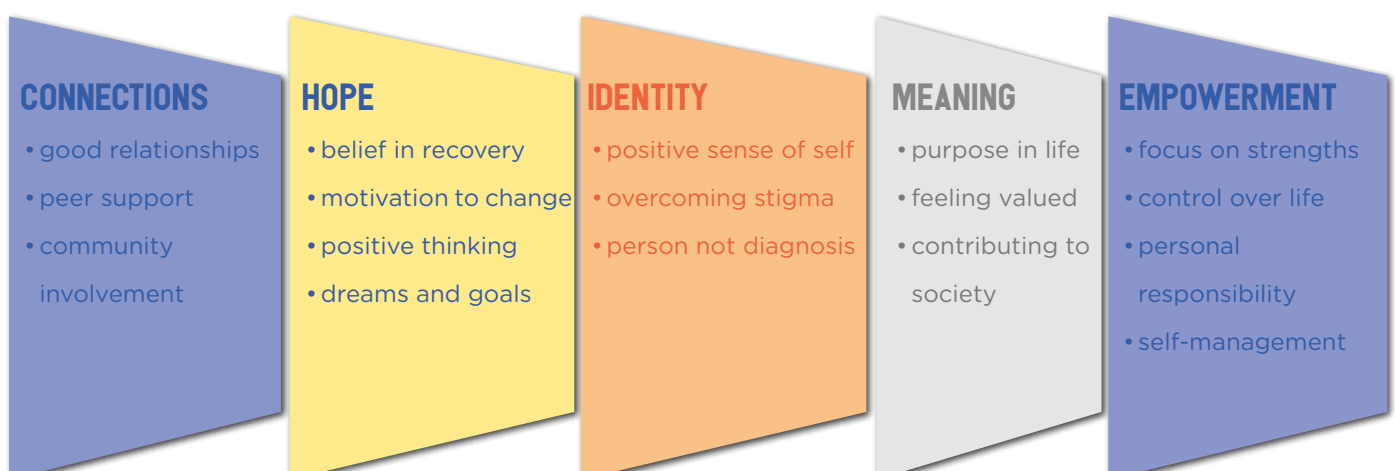
For some people recovery can be a process of personal discovery. This means it might be as much about overcoming the losses experienced as a result of coming unwell as about discovering a new and different life. This is different from getting back to the way things were before becoming unwell which is not always possible or desirable.

Recovery is not something you do on your own

While recovery is a deeply personal and unique journey it is not a journey that has to be undertaken alone. We know that other people can provide encouragement and support. Also sharing experiences of recovery with others can help us to feel less isolated and hearing from others can be informative and inspirational.

WHAT HELPS RECOVERY?

Recently the literature on recovery has shifted from exploring what recovery is to understanding how recovery comes about. This has resulted in more emphasis on the evidence provided by the stories or narratives of people in recovery. A key study looked at a range of narratives studies of recovery and identified CHIME - five key factors which support recovery (Leamy et al., 2011).





CHIME can also be understood a framework of domains of recovery and can be used for facilitating recovery.

Connections can, for instance, be fostered by organized activities where the participants engage in social sharing of emotions, and experiences related to their mental health problems (e.g., storytelling exercise; Nurser, Rushworth, Shakespeare, & Williams, 2018). It can also be fostered by involvement in social and recreational activities.

Hope can be instilled by exercises aimed at thinking about one's life situation in a positive way. The "best possible self" activities where individuals are asked to image that everything has gone as well as it possibly could and write it down can be utilized in that regard (King, 2001). Additionally, systematically thinking about one's life goals and writing down the steps that they can take in order to achieve these goals was found to be efficient (Feldman & Dreher, 2012).

Identity

When rebuilding a positive sense of self reflection of the wide range of a person's role and activities, particularly those which can still be pursued, is extremely helpful. This helps individuals to broaden their thought repertoire by challenging the impression that they are "just their illness". An exercise involving the 20 statement test where individuals simply answer the questions "Who I am" in 20 blank rows starting with "I am..." can be useful in that regard (Kuhn & McPartland, 1954).

Meaning

The same exercise may help to foster meaning in life by turning the participants' attention the meaningful life roles. Finding meaning in different life roles and activities as well as greater quality of life in general can also be encouraged by the classical positive psychology exercise "counting one's blessings" where individuals are encouraged to think about things in their lives that you can be grateful for and how much they appreciate people, events, and situations that have been part of your life story (e.g., Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Empowerment



Empowerment needs to be secured throughout the whole process as individuals recovering from mental health problems need to experience control over their personal journey. One way to achieve this is by involving participants in decision making regarding their recovery process and allowing/encouraging them to participate in activities which they personally consider as helpful.

Scottish Recovery Network have developed a short animation which looks at what helps recovery using the CHIME Framework. You can find it here

[Scottish Recovery Network - YouTube](#)

Talking about recovery

Some students may already be familiar with the concept of mental health recovery but others may not be. If students are not familiar with the concept and need some more guidance to inform their discussion you could suggest they think about what living a good life means to them. This would allow them to explore the concept of recovery and will emphasise that this is something they are likely to know more about than they may think.

It may also be that some students have concerns about the concepts and/or the use of recovery. The appropriation of the term recovery by the mental health system may have resulted in students being given definitions of recovery by some professionals and services which they do not agree with. This is a useful and interesting discussion and one where you can emphasise that mental health recovery is defined by the person and not by family, friends, professionals and services.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: what gives me hope?

Ask each student to think of something that makes them feel hopeful for the future and then share as a group.



TUTOR NOTES

This short connecting exercise starts the session on a positive note and uses a key component of recovery to introduce the topic.



What is mental health recovery?

Give each student some post-it notes and ask them to jot down words or phrases that sum up mental health recovery to them. Collect the post-its on the flipchart and, with the student's help. Group them into themes.

Once you have completed this ask the students to comment on the themes identified and also to think about anything that may be missed.



TUTOR NOTES

It is suggested that you complete this exercise early in the session and before giving much information about recovery. The reason for this is to encourage the students to share and discover what they already know and understand about recovery. After this exercise you can use the information provided to validate their views and discussion and also add to it. If questions about definition and different world views or perspective arise this can be a good time to introduce some of the different perspectives outlined in the information.



What helps recovery?

In small groups of 2 to 3 people ask students to pick one of the components that supports recovery (connection, hope, identity, meaning, empowerment) and share:

- What this means to them
- What supports them on their recovery journey
- How they support others

Then ask them to choose another component and repeat the same process. This can be repeated a number of times depending on time available and interest of the students.

Ask the students to record their discussions on the feedback sheets.

To end the exercise, use a whole group discussion to collect key points for each of the components.



TUTOR NOTES

You may want to show the Scottish Recovery Network short animation before beginning this exercise. It can be found at [Scottish Recovery Network - YouTube](#). This exercise is worth spending some time on as it is central to the understanding of recovery and will underpin work in the next session on story sharing. You may find that the students tend to focus on certain components. I have found that they tend not to choose identity. Encourage them to choose components that they are less sure of as the exercise progresses.



What helps recovery?

If desired, you could precede or follow the exercise using CHIME by viewing a short film where someone describes what supported them in the early part of their journey. Rona's story can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kGMazsGDJw_

To play this film, and others contained in the Living e-Motions resource, with subtitles click on the 'CC' option in the film toolbar at the bottom of the screen.

Ask the students what they thought of the film:

- Did Rona's story resonate with them?
- Did anything surprise them?
- Has it changed their view of recovery and what helps recovery in any way?



TUTOR NOTES

This short film is an opportunity to introduce someone talking about their own recovery in a very practical way. It helps to highlight the many small things that can help us on our recovery journeys.



What does recovery mean to me?

Using the handout provided share the pictures with the students. Ask them to discuss the different pictures and what they think they say about recovery in small groups and then as a whole group.



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise is a way to get students talking more about recovery and some different perspectives and characteristics. This exercise can be undertaken before the previous one, but sometimes it is good for students to explore their personal recovery before coming back to look at different aspects of recovery. The four pictures highlight:

Recovery expectation and reality

- recovery is a journey and is not always easy or straightforward
- there is no simple answer or one way to recover

Hope

- that it is important to have hope and personal belief in recovery
- that having people with you who have hope and believe in you is important to recovery

Which step

- recovery is an active process and not something that happens to us
- recovery is about taking control over your life
- recovery involves informed positive risk taking – doing new and different things

Recovery happens

- everyone can recover – even those with serious and long term mental health problems



My recovery journey

One of the characteristics of recovery is that it is commonly described as a journey. Ask the students to think about their recovery journey and what the key turning points have been so far. If possible also ask them to think about what the next part of their journey could be. This can be recorded on flipchart sheet or using the handout provided.



TUTOR NOTES

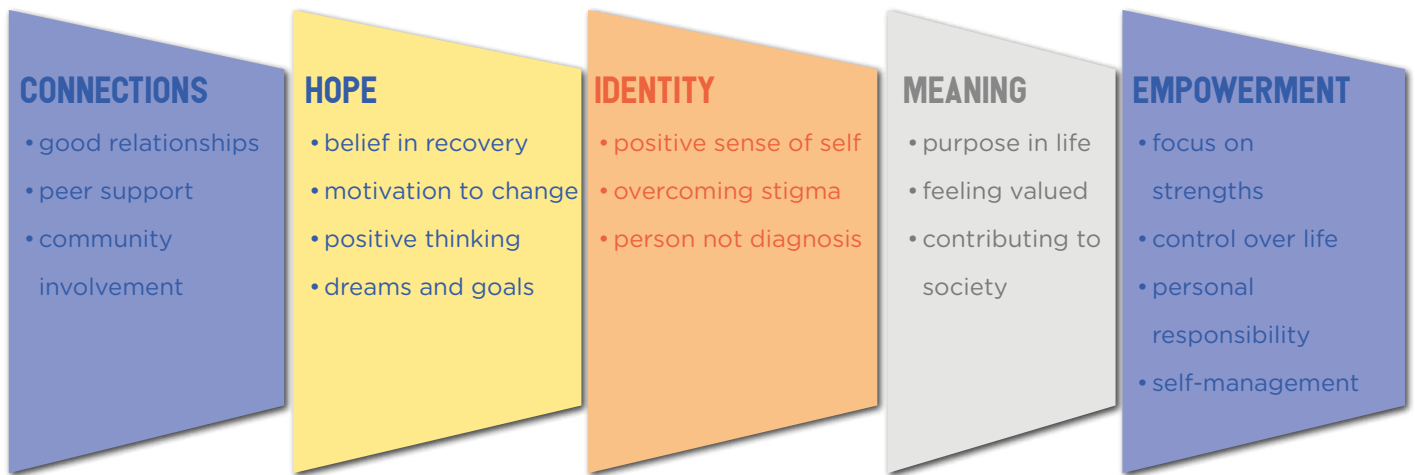
This is a good exercise to encourage and support students to think about changes/movement in their life. It is important that they focus on recovery i.e. turning points that have been important to them not just on problems or ill-health. Introducing the idea of mapping the next stage of their journey encourages them to think about empowerment and how they can play a more active part in deciding the next stage in their life.



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE



WHAT HELPS RECOVERY?



WHAT SUPPORTS YOU IN YOUR RECOVERY JOURNEY?

HOW DO YOU SUPPORT OTHERS?



WHAT DOES RECOVERY MEAN TO ME?

THINK ABOUT THE FOUR PICTURES BELOW.
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY TELL US ABOUT RECOVERY?





MY RECOVERY JOURNEY

THINK ABOUT YOUR JOURNEY.
WHAT ARE THE KEY MOMENTS, PEOPLE OR TURNING
POINTS?



WHATS THE NEXT PART OF YOUR JOURNEY?





SESSION 3





SESSION 3

MY RECOVERY STORY

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is to introduce recovery story sharing and story living and begin the process of developing a personal recovery story.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students will:

- Understand the concept of story sharing and story living and the difference between illness and recovery stories
- Understand the values underpinning story sharing and what that means for them
- Start the process of authoring their own recovery story



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: My day/week in feelings	Feedback sheet
Why share our recovery stories?	Group exercise	Flipchart
What is a recovery story?	Small and/or whole group exercise	Film: Shona's story
My recovery story	Individual exercise with small or whole group discussion	Handouts
Reflection		

INFORMATION

The sharing of personal experiences; also commonly known as sharing recovery stories has been closely linked to the development of the recovery approach. It is also an approach which is increasingly being seen as beneficial (Llewellyn-Beardsley, in press; Nurser, Rushworth, Shakespeare & Williams, 2018; Rennick-Egglestone, in press).

Sharing our stories allows us to visualise our experiences over time and to reflect on the long-term journey of recovery with its ups and downs. Sharing your story and hearing others promotes recovery, especially for people with weaker social



ties. Stories can also inform and inspire people with experience of mental health issues, their carers and supporters and service providers.

Learning about other people's experiences can also help to challenge misconceptions. Stories offer hints and techniques on recovery. They recognise the fact that people in recovery are experts by experience, showing very clearly that people can and do recover.

Developing and taking control of your own story can be an empowering experience and is an essential part of the recovery process. By thinking about our experiences, we are able to look for things that have worked and gone well as well as the difficulties, distress and challenges. This is especially important and powerful as many people spend time being assessed and assisted by mental health professionals and social services. Naturally, the conversations are often focused on the negative effects of poor mental health.

As a result of repeating these conversations over time, the problems and difficulties begin to define who the person is. For example, the person's 'story' might become 'I have this diagnosis'; 'I am someone with a drug problem' or 'I am someone who has had a traumatic experience'. While these facts are true, they are not the whole story – or the whole person. The fact is that many people living with mental health issues have had to face severe hardships – yet they've survived. So it's clear they have exceptional resilience and strength. But for as long as they stay focused on the negative effects of mental ill health, it's unlikely they'll see these positive qualities. And that can hinder recovery.

Thinking through and sharing recovery stories has a lot to offer us at a personal level. It promotes and supports our recovery and wellbeing and helps to create positive identity and meaning in life as well as being an empowering experience. We also know that stories of lived experience and recovery are important in changing negative attitudes to people living with mental health issues and in demonstrating that recovery is real. Hearing stories of lived experience and recovery is inspiring to others living with mental health challenges and can help to connect them to others who can support them to take control of their own recovery.



WHAT IS A RECOVERY STORY?

There are many examples of recovery stories in print and more recently, in audio and video. The content of the stories varies but often includes coping with difficulties, future plans, resistance and the learning and new perspectives gained during the recovery process. Stories are told in many emotional tones ranging from confident and grateful to anxious and resigned. Individuals often talk about various turning points in life and how they dealt with these situations. These past findings can be used in developing further recovery stories as they can help to structure the stories and support others when they are sharing their experiences.

ILLNESS VS RECOVERY STORIES

It is important to distinguish between 'illness stories' and recovery stories. While most recovery stories will refer to difficult times and issues in people's lives the focus is on their learning or wisdom and what helped them recover and move on with their life. While hearing stories of recovery can be inspiring and motivating we know that some stories such as those with graphic details of trauma or where they are solely focused on difficult times are not necessarily helpful to others. (Rennick-Egglestone, in press) When working with Living e-Motions students it is important to help them to decide what and when they want to share and to consider why they would share with others.

Scottish Recovery Network has a number of publications based on narrative research undertaken and their website contains many recovery stories. You can find more information on the narrative research project as well as stories of recovery at [Stories and experiences « Scottish Recovery Network](#). There is also a Youtube channel with a range of recovery films and stories [Scottish Recovery Network - YouTube](#). The Making Recovery Real playlist contains a range of recovery stories shared by people in Dundee.

STORY LIVING

Story living is being used in Living e-Motions to distinguish between a process of telling a story and one where a story is not only shared but the person uses



their story or lived experience to support their own recovery journey and that of others. In this way story living recognises that people are not just telling a story but are 'experts by experience' and through the process of story sharing have developed insight and understanding that they can use to support recovery.

In story living we do not just tell our story but think about what we and others really are interested in and what we can learn from. A focus on illness and trauma tends to elicit sympathy rather than inspire hope and can be overwhelming for the people hearing the story. Sharing recovery experiences creates an opportunity for others to learn. It illuminates aspects of the challenge, shares what helped you to move beyond those challenges and what you do to continue your journey and elicits hope.

VALUES UNDERPINNING RECOVERY STORY SHARING

When people first start thinking through and sharing their story, it can be an emotional and challenging experience. They may start to question all or parts of their existing story and some may feel anger or frustration that they or others had lost sight of their strengths, skills and qualities. But most people find this passes quickly and report feeling better for having got their 'story' out – whether they choose to share it, or keep it to themselves.

It is important that the environment for thinking through and sharing stories is one where we can all feel safe, supported and in control. As a Living e-Motions course trainer you will play a central role in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment. When doing this it is important that everything about the story sharing process needs to be based on the following principles:

CONTROL

The person sharing their story is always in control of the process. It is their story and cannot be altered or adapted by others. They decide what is shared, how it is shared and when it is shared. Everyone sharing their story should have options as to how they share their story and the ways in which this is then used. This consent process is a discussion and is also one where people can change their mind at any time.



SUPPORT

The person sharing their story needs to be given the time and support they need to think through their story and to decide whether or not they want to share it. Through discussion people need to be supported to make the decisions that are right for them and ensure they take and maintain control of their own story.

RESPECT

Everyone's lived experience and recovery journey is different. When sharing stories, the point is to reflect on ours and listen to others. We do not need to identify or agree with other people's stories but we should respect their experiences and support them in the process of authoring and sharing their story.

WELLBEING

Sharing stories is an empowering experience but it can feel emotional and challenging at times. The wellbeing of the person sharing their story needs to be at the centre of our considerations at all times. People sharing their stories also need to be encouraged to think about the wellbeing of others.

RESPONSIBILITY

The person sharing their story is ultimately responsible for deciding what they want to share, when and with whom.

There are more information and suggestions on how to create a safe, positive learning experience in the section on delivering the Living e-Motions course and in Session 1 Establishing the Learning Group.

We have also provided a template consent form which you can use or adapt to meet your needs. It is important that people give informed consent to their story being shared with others in person or through writing or film.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: My day or week in feelings

Think about your day or week and how it has been for you. But don't think about what has happened or what you have done but how you have felt. Map out your day or week by drawing or writing the feelings you have experienced today or in the past week.

Remember to think about the full range of feelings we can have. Do not get stuck on why you had these feelings – just note the feelings and move onto the next.



TUTOR NOTES

When we ask people to tell us about their day or week, they tend to tell us what they have been doing or things that have happened. This exercise will ask the students to think about their day or week in terms of the feelings they have experienced.

The aim is to get people thinking about different feelings but not to get into the detail of them. To assist this, we are asking the students to identify the key or main feelings they have experienced and to draw them if possible.

Where a student feels that they cannot draw then writing is fine.

An alternative will be to write feelings on cards and ask people to choose one or two that have been part of their day or week. Another would be to print out and use pictures and ask the students to pick one or two that represent the feelings they have experienced that day or week.

This connecting up exercise builds on the work in the first session but also introduces the idea of openly talking about emotions or feelings.



Why share our recovery stories?

As a whole group facilitate a discussion around the questions:

- What benefits do we get from sharing our stories?
- What benefits do we get from hearing other people's recovery stories?

Note the key points on a flip chart.

Then ask the students what they feel needs to be considered or in place to make sure that they can share recovery stories in a way that is beneficial and safe for others.

Revisit the group agreement and add anything new to it.



TUTOR NOTES

It is helpful to use this exercise early in the session and then use the information about the benefits of and values underpinning story sharing to validate and inform. It may be useful to introduce the values underpinning story sharing - control, support, respect, wellbeing, responsibility - in the second part of the discussion.



What is a recovery story?

Share a short recovery story with the group. We suggest Shona's story which you can find at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcXndZ617iQ>

Facilitate a whole group discussion using the following questions:

- What was the focus of Shona's story?
- What did we learn about her?
- What helped her recovery?
- What challenges did she face?



TUTOR NOTES

The aim of this exercise is to demonstrate that recovery stories can be short. Indeed, they can be snippets or small parts of a person's story but have enough in them to help the person and share their learning and inspire others. Stories can also refer to challenges, problems and distress but do not need to go into great details for others to understand. Finally, lots of different things can help recovery. Shona's story shows how a positive, supportive relationship with a worker (hope); becoming part of a supportive group (connection and belonging) and pursuing her interests (meaning and identity) have helped her find herself and take control of her recovery (empowerment).



My recovery story

A set of recovery story themes are available. Ask the students to choose one of the following and use it to tell their story:

- Letter to my younger self
- My life my song
- Message from my best friend

If someone finishes quickly then they can choose another theme and use that to develop their story.

At the end of the exercise ask the students for comments on using the themes and how useful they found it.

TUTOR NOTES

These themes will support the students to look at their story so far but from the viewpoint of what they have learnt and their strengths, skills and qualities. Using the themes takes some of the anxieties out of story sharing and encourages students to think differently about their experiences rather than repeating a story of themselves that they may have previously formed or been told. This will help students to start reframing their story to make sure it is their own.

The My life my song theme provides an opportunity to look forward and imagine what would make the song (i.e. life) better. This is an introduction to another aspect of recovery – taking control of the future. More future focused themes are included in a later session.



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE



LETTER TO MY YOUNGER SELF

The wonder of hindsight is a great thing!
If you could write a letter to your 16-year-old
self what would you say?

- What words of guidance would you give?
- How would you comfort and encourage yourself?
- What wisdom can you pass on?
- What other messages would you want to share?





MY LIFE MY SONG

Imagining your life as a song can seem light-hearted but it can reveal truths

Do you have a song that tells your story?
What type of song is it and who sings it? Is it yours?



- What story does it tell?
- How do you feel when you sing it or hear it?
- What would make the song better?
- If you could write another verse what would it be?



MESSAGE FROM MY BEST FRIEND

It is so easy to be your own worst critic.
What would a good friend say about you?

- What do they value about you and your friendship?
- What strengths and qualities do they admire?
- What message do they have for you?



Other people can help us to see ourselves differently and this opens up new possibilities in life.



TEMPLATE CONSENT FORM

As are a learner on the Living e-Motions course you have been developing your recovery story and sharing it with other group learners. The intention of the course is to empower people living with mental health challenges to take control of their lives, recognising their emotions and developing ways to express them in a positive way. We also hope that by sharing and living our stories we will open the window to the experience of mental health challenges and the reality of recovery from a positive, inspiring and refreshing perspective.

During the course you will have the opportunity to record your story to share with a wider audience. This form is being used to ensure we have your permission to share your story.

You will have the opportunity to see any written, audio or video produced before it is shared. All information will be held on password-protected computers and stored securely. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of Living e-Motions and recovery story sharing and will not be used by [organisation name] for any other purpose.

Please read the following carefully and indicate your preferences in relation to your story as shared and any audio or film recording made. You will be asked for your preferences for how your story and any audio and film recordings are used in materials created and how you would like to be acknowledged.

I understand that:

- I can withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason by contacting [organisation name]
- The story will not be used for personal profit or commercial gain.
- If I decide that I no longer want my contribution to appear for any reason it will cease to be used by the [organisation name] and partners involved. However, I understand that it will not be possible to recover copies of materials, film and audio already in circulation.



Name of person sharing their story

Please consider the following options for sharing your story and agree to those that you consent to:

My story can be reproduced both as an individual story as well as being used in materials along with other people's stories	Yes/No
My story can only be used in materials along with other people's stories and not as an individual story	Yes/No
I am happy for my full name to be given when my story is reproduced or used	Yes/No
I would prefer to remain anonymous when my story is reproduced or used	Yes/No

I give consent for my story, any audio or film recordings made and any pictures taken during this project to be used in the following way(s).

Please delete as appropriate.

In printed publications	Yes/No
In video or audio publications	Yes/No
In press releases, which may subsequently appear in the local or national media	Yes/No
For staff/volunteer learning and development	Yes/No
On the websites of the Living e-Motions project and [organisation name]	Yes/No



Personal details:

Name:	
Signature:	
Telephone number:	
Email address:	
Postal address:	
Date:	
Witness name:	
Witness signature:	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Address (email or postal):	
Date:	





SESSION 4





SESSION 4

UNDERSTANDING MY EMOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is to provide an opportunity for students to explore the range of emotions we experience and how we experience them.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students should be able to:

- Explain the different emotions we experience and what causes them
- Understand how we respond to emotions
- Understand the interconnection between feeling, thinking and acting



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: My day/week in feelings	Feedback sheet
What are emotions?	Individual exercise: Think, feel, act	Feedback sheet
Different perspectives on emotional experiences	Group exercise: One emotion – different perspectives	Scenario and flipchart
Reflection	Individual exercise	Student notebook/folder

INFORMATION

Before reading this chapter, try and think of the last time you experienced an emotion. It could be any emotion. Now go ahead and try to explain what an emotion is. It is likely that doing so will not be as simple and straightforward as you might have expected.

Understanding emotions

Emotions are a big part of our lives. In any one day we will experience many different emotions. Some may be pleasant or easy to deal with while others may be more intense or difficult to manage. We all struggle with emotions at times



but if we find ourselves struggling a lot of the time it can have an impact on our daily lives.

People often talk of emotions as good/bad or positive/negative. However, others believe that emotions are just what they are and only become good or bad when we place judgements on them. It is important to think about this because emotions have a purpose. They are messages which bring attention to important things happening in our lives, whether it is a big event or something smaller and day-to-day. This means that while they may be pleasant or unpleasant to experience, emotions have an important role to play in our lives. Learning to acknowledge and develop a good understanding of our emotions can help us to manage them.

WHAT ARE EMOTIONS?

When we think of emotions, we usually think of feelings; the way emotions make us feel a certain way, such as happy or sad. However, our emotions affect us in a number of different ways through:

- Our mind – how we think, our judgements and memories
- Our body – how we feel and how our body reacts
- Our behaviour – how we act or don't act

For example:

If we feel sadness about something ending or the loss of family or friends:

- We think about what we have lost and can become focused on the negative
- We can feel sluggish, empty, numb and tired
- We feel the urge to withdraw

If we feel surprised at good news for us or a loved one

- Our thoughts tend to be fast and focused on the positive



- We feel energised
- We feel the urge to approach and be with others

It is useful to think about our emotions in terms of mind, body, behaviours (or think, feel, act) as it helps us to be better aware of our emotions. It isn't always easy to do this, particularly if we feel an emotion intensely, but it is something we can learn to do and improve with practice.

HOW MANY EMOTIONS ARE THERE?

There is no consensus on the number of emotions, however, scientists agree that some emotions are more fundamental (i.e., experienced by the majority of individuals, regardless of where they grew up in) than other. We call these emotions *basic emotions*.

There is agreement, that at least six basic emotions exist (Ekman, 1992):

ANGER	FEAR	DISGUST
SADNESS	HAPPINESS	SURPRISE

You may think of other emotions or use different words for these emotions. Let us look at some examples of these basic emotions that we all experience.



Fear

Fear occurs when a person believe that the situation they are in is potentially dangerous or threatening to their wellbeing. It happens when we think that our coping abilities are not good enough to deal with the situation. The emotion of fear functions as a warning signal. It tells us to withdraw from the situation. If fleeing the situation is not possible, it can motivate us to use coping skills such as being still and quiet. It can also motivate us to learn new skills to avoid similar situations in the future.

Anger

Anger occurs when we belive that something or someone interfered with our goals. Anger energises our behaviour and motivates us to face the perceived barrier directly and try to overcome it. Anger can be productive when it energises our behaviour and endurance in order to cope productively with the situation.

Disgust

Disgust occurs when we encounter an object or situation we deem is contaminated in some way, such as bodily contamination (i.e., spoiled food), interpersonal contamination (i.e., proximity to undesirable people) or moral contaminations (i.e., child abuse). Disgust motivates us to reject the object or situation and motivates us to change personal habits and attributes in order to avoid this emotion.

Sadness

Sadness occurs as a result of experiences of separation or personal failure. Sadness is an emotion that motivates us to initiate behavioural change to avoid experiencing it in the first place and thus facilitates productive behaviors (such as maintaining social contacts). Not all situations that lead to sadness can be avoided, however. In situations that cannot be changed, people sometimes do not act in order to relieve their sadness but become inactive or lethargic and withdraw from other situations.

Happiness

Happiness occurs when we experience events that produce desirable outcomes. It provides us the evidence that things are going well and thus motivates us to



continue to behave in the same manner that led to the desirable outcomes in the first place.

Surprise

Surprise occurs when we experience something unexpected. The surprise can be a positive one or one we feel less comfortable with, depending on the situation. The function of surprise is to interrupt an ongoing action and direct our attention to a new event, that could be potentially significant for us.

WHAT CAUSES AN EMOTION?

Over time we as human beings have evolved to experience many emotions – each of which has a different message for us. Our emotions are designed to make us respond in particular ways. When we experience an emotion there are different things going on inside us. According to psychologists, we have two systems that activate and regulate our emotions. The first system is a spontaneous, physiological system that reacts in an involuntary way to things that trigger emotions. Another way to think about this is that the part of the brain dealing with emotions is the limbic system – a part of the brain that developed fairly early on in human history, making it quite primitive. This explains why an emotional response is rapid and often quite straightforward but very powerful – you want to cry, or run away, or shout.

The second system is cognitive (i.e., related to our thought processes) and depends on our social environment and the learning history of the individual. Emotions are strongly linked to our experiences and memories. If something bad has previously happened to you, your emotional response (mind, body, behaviour) to a similar situation is likely to be strong. This also explains why different people can have very different emotional responses to what appear to be similar events.

These two systems are complementary and work together in order to regulate our emotional responses. While we may experience strong reactions or emotions this is not just about the stimuli or trigger but also our interpretation of a situation. So even though emotions can occur automatically, our understanding of the situation plays a crucial role in the way we respond to events. In fact, some believe that it is



the interpretation of or meaning we give to an event, rather than the event itself that gives rise to the emotional response.

Example

Imagine, for example, that you have an important event coming up, where you have to give a speech in front of other people. If your answer to the question “am I capable of coping with the situation” is “yes”, then you will probably see the situation as challenging, but not impossible and thus experience positive emotions.

If, on the other hand, your answer would be “no”, you will more likely experience negative emotions, such as fear. In that sense, *our perceptions are the core of our emotional experiences.*

The idea that emotions are events that are not only biological, but also rely heavily on our thought processes, is very popular among psychologists and other mental health professionals. This is mainly because it sheds light on the active role that we all can have when dealing with negative emotions.

Example

Imagine that you are waiting in a café to meet a friend and that friend is already 15 minutes late. You try calling your friend, but they are not picking up. If you think to yourself “This is so rude, I bet my friend forgot about our meeting, because everything is more important to her/him than me” you will experience anger or perhaps sadness. However, if you think to yourself “this is very unlike her/him, something urgent must have come up and that’s why she/he is late. I’m sure she/he will let me know when she/he gets a chance” you will most likely not experience sadness or anger, but perhaps concern or feelings of empathy. From this example, it is clear that you can experience different emotions in the same situation. It is therefore not the situation that dictates your emotions, but your thoughts and appraisals of that situation. Of course, this process happens quickly and cannot always be controlled, but you can practice and improve your skills in identifying your appraisals in order to better control your emotions.



MANAGING OUR EMOTIONS

We are not born knowing how to manage our emotions. It is something we learn over time from our experiences and through our relationships with people. We all have very different experiences and relationships so what we learn will differ. Our temperament or the way we look at life and our environment will also shape how we manage our emotions. Sometimes we find an immediate way or a ‘quick fix’ to manage difficult emotions. This can work for some time, maybe years, but over time it can become less effective or bring its own issues, and we have to reassess and relearn.

One way to think about how we can manage our emotions is through what some people call the **window of tolerance**. This is a simple idea that believes we all have a comfort zone where we manage our emotions productively. It is based on seeing emotions in terms of how intense they are and how this affects us.

<p>TOO INTENSE</p> <p>too connected with the emotion</p> <p>Can't think, impulsive, reactive, feel out of control</p>
<p>FINE – THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE</p> <p>connected with the emotion</p> <p>Can think, remember, make choices about how to respond</p>
<p>NOT INTENSE ENOUGH</p> <p>not connected with the emotion</p> <p>slow, empty, numb, no motivation, want to withdraw</p>

Our emotion feels too intense – we are too connected with the emotions and it feels overwhelming. This can lead us to take the emotion as fact and just react to it. We don't think, are impulsive and can feel out of control.



Our emotion feels fine – we are connected with the emotion but are not overwhelmed by it. It feels tolerable. This means we can think about the emotion and make choices about how to respond. We can think, remember, make decisions and get on with our lives.

Our emotion feels not intense enough – we are not connecting with the emotion and may feel empty, numb or depressed. This means that we can get stuck in circular thinking or find it difficult to think about anything at all. We can feel slow, vacant, want to withdraw from the world and lack motivation.

Everyone comes out of their **window of tolerance** from time to time. For some people or for some of us at particular points in our lives this may happen more often. Thinking about the things that take you out of your window of tolerance can be very helpful. This way we can identify the emotional reactions that are not working for us, even if they did in the past.

Having a better awareness of our emotional reactions is the starting point for thinking about how we can change or manage them. Being able to take a step back and think about how we are feeling and why we believe we are responding in a certain way helps us to identify what is making the emotion challenging and what may help us to manage it. This means that we have to be open to experiencing difficult emotions and also staying with them even when our urge is to avoid or withdraw.

The exercises in this session and in Session 5 Self-management and self-care will provide students with ideas and examples of emotional coping strategies to try out.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: My day or week in feelings

Think about your day or week and how it has been for you. But don't think about what has happened or what you have done but how you have felt. Map out your day or week by drawing or writing the feelings you have experienced today or in the past week.

Remember to think about the full range of feelings we can have. Do not get stuck on why you had these feelings – just note the feelings and move onto the next.



TUTOR NOTES

When we ask people to tell us about their day or week, they tend to tell us what they have been doing or things that have happened. This exercise will ask the students to think about their day or week in terms of the feelings they have experienced.

The aim is to get people thinking about different feelings but not to get into the detail of them. To assist this, we are asking the students to identify the key or main feelings they have experienced and to draw them if possible.

Where a student feels that they cannot draw then writing is fine.

An alternative will be to write feelings on cards and ask people to choose one or two that have been part of their day or week. Another would be to print out and use pictures and ask the students to pick one or two that represent the feelings they have experienced that day or week.

This connecting up exercise builds on the work in the first session but also introduces the idea of openly talking about emotions or feelings.



What are emotions? - Think, feel, act

Ask the students to think of an emotion they experienced recently. The cartoon emotions are there to help students think through recent emotions and decide which one to work with. They will then use the think, feel, act approach to explore that emotion in more detail.

Once all the students have completed the exercise for at least one recent emotion ask them for feedback about:

- How they felt about this exercise; and
- Would they like to share anything they learned or were seeing differently after completing the exercise.



TUTOR NOTES

You can use the example in the information section to provide further explanation if students need it. There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise and all students should be encouraged to think it through and be open and honest with themselves. If students complete this quickly, they can be asked to choose another recent emotion and repeat the process. If a student is concerned about this topic suggest a positive emotion as that may be a good place for them to start to explore feelings. A handout is provided to help students record their reflections.

If the students find a whole group discussion unhelpful you can put them into pairs to discuss their feelings about the exercise and what they had learned.



Different perspectives on emotional experiences

As a whole group or in small groups ask the students to discuss a scenario and to think about the different ways that they could react to it. You can use the scenario on page 10/11 or use one from your own or the group's experiences.



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise will build on the previous one and encourage students to explore how they could react differently to the same experience and why different people react differently to similar experiences. It will encourage them to explore the difference between our physiological, immediate system and our cognitive system. If there is time you could ask them to consider what it is that makes some emotions tolerable or pleasant and to think about what helps them stay in their window of tolerance



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE



CONNECTING UP: MY DAY OR WEEK IN FEELINGS?

MY DAY OR WEEK IN FEELINGS.....

Think about the feelings you have experienced today or in the last week. Use this worksheet to draw or write this journey of feelings.



WHAT ARE EMOTIONS? THINK, FEEL, ACT

THINK OF AN EMOTION YOU EXPERIENCE OFTEN:

MY EMOTIONS...



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

(Your thoughts, memories, judgements)



HOW DO YOU FEEL?



HOW DO YOU ACT?

(Your behaviour, actions or inaction)



SESSION 5





SESSION 5

SELF-MANAGEMENT AND SELF-CARE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is to introduce the concept of self-management and self-care and to explore how individuals can manage their own wellbeing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students should have:

- Good understanding of the concepts of self-management and self-care
- Awareness of the ways in which they can manage their emotions and maintain good mental health and wellbeing
- Developed an outline personal self-management and self-care plan



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: My mind apple	
Scott's story	Group exercise	Film
What keeps me well	Individual and group exercise	Feedback sheet
Strategies to manage emotions	Whole group exercise	Handout
My keeping mentally well plan	Individual exercise	
Reflection	Individual exercise	Worksheet

INFORMATION

Self-management and self-care are central to recovery. In Session 3 we explored what helps recovery and looked at CHIME – connections, hope, identity, meaning and empowerment. A key part of recovery is moving towards an identity or sense of self that includes all aspects of our lives and us as people as well as mental health challenges and wellbeing. It is important to be able to make choices, take responsibility and therefore take ownership and be in control of our recovery and lives.



If we think back to Session 4 when we looked at how we experience a range of emotions. Emotions that make us feel agitated and worried can often feel very overwhelming and be overpowering. In many situations this can be disruptive to our lives and have an adverse impact on our mental health and wellbeing. Being able to influence what emotions we experience and when and how we experience them can help us to maintain good mental health and wellbeing. Self-management tools and approaches can help with this. This may also be called emotional regulation strategic and approaches.

The range of strategies, tools and approaches that people can use is very wide. Indeed, it is without limit. People are always looking for new ways to stay mentally well and developing their own ways to manage their mental health and wellbeing.

“Wellness is a conscious, deliberate process that requires a person to become aware of and make choices for a more satisfying lifestyle. A wellness lifestyle includes a self-defined balance of healthy habits such as adequate sleep and rest, productivity, exercise, participation in meaningful activity, nutrition, social contact and supportive relationships. It is important to note self-defined because everyone has individual needs and preferences, and the balance of activity, social contact, and sleep varies from person to person” (Swarbrick, 2011)

In her work Swarbrick identifies eight dimensions to wellbeing

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION
Emotional	Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships
Financial	Satisfaction with current and future financial situations
Social	Developing a sense of connection, belonging and a well-developed support system



Spiritual	Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life
Occupational	Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work
Physical	Recognising the need for physical activity, diet, sleep and nutrition
Intellectual	Recognising creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills
Environmental	Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support wellbeing

This provides some indication of the range of factors that can affect our mental health and wellbeing. For some people some factors may be more important or more relevant than others but it is important that we acknowledge that there are many aspects to consider when managing our emotional wellbeing and taking control of our recovery.

SELF-MANAGEMENT TOOLS AND APPROACHES

'Recovery means I stay in the driver's seat of my life. I don't let my illness run me. Over the years I have worked hard to become an expert in my own self-care' (Pat Deegan 1993)

There are many different ways that people can manage their own mental health and wellbeing and get in the 'driver's seat'. This is often called self-help or self-management. The terms can be interchangeable but refer to a wide range of opportunities such as self-help groups, self-management tools and other approaches developed by people to manage their wellbeing and take control of their recovery.



There are many different types of self-help groups. Some are run by organisations and others run by the members of the group themselves. Self-help groups are an opportunity for people to share their experiences and knowledge and offer social support in a community of people who have mutual trust and understanding.

There is also increasing emphasis at governmental and practice levels on the development of self-management tools and approaches. This has come with the recognition that better self-management can not only reduce the strain on pressurised services but also promotes a greater degree of self-direction and control amongst people experiencing mental health challenges.

Sometimes people use self-management skills without realising it but the skills can also be learnt on courses. Many organisations run courses which introduce one or more self-management tools or approaches and help people to develop self-management skills and the confidence to use them. Sometimes these courses are run by people with direct experience of mental health problems who are able to share their own skills and support others to develop their own self-management skills and approaches. There are also many online tools and groups, and an increasing range of smart apps which can help us manage our mood.

Examples of tools and approaches include:

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Planning)

A structured approach to developing a wellbeing plan built around five key concepts of hope, personal responsibility, education, self-advocacy and support. WRAP is a planning process that involves assessing self-management tools and resources and then using them to develop your own plans for staying well. This includes developing a personal wellness toolbox; a daily maintenance list; identifying early signs that things are breaking down and a crisis plan. WRAP is best experienced in a group environment which support mutual learning and emphasises that the group members are experts in themselves.

Mental body scanning

Start in a comfortable position, eyes open or closed. Turn your focus to the different parts of your body and notice any sensation you feel while continuing



also focus on your breathing. Move from your toes on your feet, calves, knees, thighs, stomach, chest, shoulders, neck and your head. Take enough time for each body part and continue to breathe in a relaxed manner.

Journaling

Take a few minutes each day to think about what happened that day and how you felt. Reflect on any thoughts and feelings you have been having and write them down.

SMART goal setting

Set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. In other words, a goal that is very clear and easily understood.

Time management

Spend time planning and organizing your activities. Organize in a way that makes sense to you. Prioritize tasks that are important for you.

Visualisation

Create in your mind an ideal spot to relax. It can be real or imaginary. Imagine it in as much detail as you can – use your senses to make it as real as possible. Now close your eyes and take a slow breath in through your nose. Focus on your relaxation place in all its detail and breathe slowly.

STOP technique

When you are feeling overwhelmed, stop and step back. Don't act immediately and instead pause. Take a breath and notice as you breathe in and out. Observe your feelings and thoughts. Put the situation in some perspective – try to see the situation as an outside observer.

Cognitive coping cards

Try to identify some thoughts or actions that are helpful when you are feeling upset and write them on a card. It can be anything from reminders that the situation will pass, reminders of the skills that help you (e.g.: take a deep breath) or some calming thoughts. Use it when you are feeling overwhelmed.



Reattribution technique

When you are feeling upset, stop and try to identify the thoughts are crossing your mind. Try to come up with alternative explanations of the events.

Attention refocusing

When you notice yourself focusing on something that is unhelpful choose to refocus your attention elsewhere. Choose an activity that is interesting or challenging enough to engage your mind, such as reading or thinking about a pleasant memory. Many people get involved in activities such as gardening, art, crafts and sport as a way not only to enjoy themselves but also as a way of distracting themselves.

Take ten breaths

Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until your lungs are completely empty, and then allow them to refill by themselves.

Worry time

Schedule worry time each day for one week. Put it in your calendar. Start by setting aside 15-30 minutes during the morning or the afternoon. That will be your worry time. It is best not to schedule worry time right before you go to bed, for obvious reasons.

Observing your thoughts and letting go

This guided mindfulness exercise takes you through a practice of observing your thoughts, letting them come and go without engaging with their content. It uses the metaphor of “placing” your thoughts visually on the sides of buses as they pull in and out of a bus stop.

In order to achieve the best results possible, it is important to practice these strategies regularly.

Underpinning self-management is the acknowledgement that you need to know you – what nurtures you, what your vulnerabilities are, how to re-energise yourself when you feel overwhelmed or depleted, what supports your sense of wellbeing and what gets in the way of it. It is only by getting to know you that you understand



how to care for yourself and identify the self-management tools and approaches that will work for you. Recovery recognises that we are all experts in our own experience. Tuning into your own knowledge and expertise rather than looking to others to tell you what you need is what can make self-management a reality.



EXERCISES

Connecting up my mind apple

Ask each student to think of one thing they do regularly that keeps them feeling mentally well and share it with the group. Ask a couple of questions to follow up:

- What struck you about what we have all shared?
- Did anything surprise you?



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise starts the session on the basis that the students are more familiar with self-management and self-care than they may think. What the students share should highlight that there are similarities and differences - we all do things that are right for us - and that simple things can make a big difference.

We use the term 'mind apple' to emphasise that we all have mental health just like we all have physical health and that mental health is a positive thing. We know and talk a lot about what we should do to keep physically well such as eating fruit. Consequently, we need to think about what we can do to stay mentally well.



Hearing from others: Scott's story

Show the short video of Scott describing his journey and the role of self-help in his ongoing recovery.

<https://youtu.be/UGkvutZ6H5I>

This film was produced by Stigma Free Lanarkshire and Lanarkshire Links

Follow with a discussion around the following questions:

- What role did self-help and self-management have in Scott's recovery?
- What was important to him in the self-help he found?
- How has he used what he learned to manage his mood and wellbeing and continue his recovery?



TUTOR NOTES

Scott's story is one where after many years of feeling unsupported by mainstream services he started to attend a self-help group (Hope Café) where he found support and understanding. In his story he talks of not being judged, being understood and accepted for himself. Encourage the students to consider how this atmosphere could help Scott to get to know himself better and identify how he could play a greater role in managing his mental health and wellbeing. Towards the end of the video he mentions getting help from mainstream services. Encourage students to think about how his engagement in self-help and taking responsibility for managing his mental health and wellbeing could mean that he was better able to benefit from mainstream services.



What keeps me well

Ask the students to use the 'What keeps me well' worksheet and to think about five things they do regularly that keeps them feeling mentally well.

Then in small groups share with the others and discuss:

- Are there similarities between what I do and others do to stay mentally well?
- What can we learn from other people?



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise builds immediately from the Connecting Up exercise by encouraging the students to think about what they already do to keep well. Some may be very familiar with this but it may be a new experience to others. If people have difficulty with this part of the exercise you can:

- Ask them to think about things that they know or think that they should do to keep mentally well but maybe don't do them often or ever; or
- Ask them to think about what a good day feels and looks like to them and the things they do when they feel good. This could help them think of what they need to do to stay well.

The aim of the discussion is to highlight that while we are all different and on our personal recovery journeys some of what we do to stay well is similar. This could encourage mutual support such as getting a walking group together or going to an art class with others. It also emphasises that we can learn from what others do. This may not be a case of doing exactly what others do, but understanding how other people approach self-management and the range of tools and approaches they use can influence and inspire us.



Strategies to manage emotions

As a whole group start by asking the students to share some of the ways they manage their emotional wellbeing mental health. Record the answers on a flip chart.

Then ask the group to think of other tools or approaches that they could use if they were not feeling good and worried about their mental health and wellbeing.

Circulate the handout and ask the students if they are aware of and/or use any of the tools or approaches on it.



TUTOR NOTES

The aim of this exercise is to raise awareness and understanding of the wide range of tools and approaches they can use. Some may be individual tools and approaches like most of the examples on the list but others may be about being with other people or participation in groups.

There are no right or wrong answers and not everyone needs to like or agree with the tools and approaches discussed. If someone does express dislike or disagreement, then the group could explore the importance of personal preference and of choosing our own tools and approaches.

Finally, the exercise should highlight the benefits of sharing what we do and hearing from others. This can not only give us ideas of how to better manage our mental health but can validate what we are already doing.

As an alternative we have provided a second worksheet which can be used to support students to identify and articulate the pressures or stresses they experience and also the things in their life that support them or give them strength. This uses a bridge analogy to help students think creatively and with a bit of fun about the challenges they face while also focusing on the strengths and supports they can draw on to manage them.



My keeping mentally well plan

Ask the students to think about what they have discussed so far in this session and also to look back on what they have learned about themselves in the first four sessions. Using the worksheet provided the students will prepare a short plan which will outline the tools and approaches they use to keep mentally well.

The plan is very short and based around three areas:

- Understanding of what it is to feel well
- What needs to be done to stay as well as possible
- What needs to be done particularly during or after a bad day/time

The aim is for this to become a living document that they will add to and revise as they continue their recovery.



TUTOR NOTES

Most of what is in the plan has already been covered but students are also asked to think about what feeling well is like and to think about what they need to do if they are having or been through a bad day or time. This is important as we often forget or start to opt out of doing the things that make us feel good when we are not feeling well or are starting to feel unwell. An example of this could be staying up late and not getting enough sleep; not meeting up with friends and family and missing activities we enjoy.

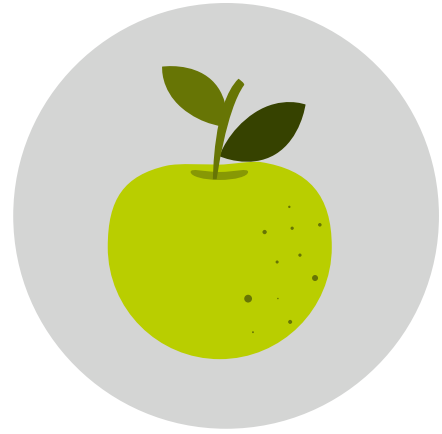
Emphasise to students that this is the start of a living plan that they can add to and revise as their journey continues. Over time our situation and preferences may change and we may discover new activities, tools and approaches that help us to stay mentally well.



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE

WHAT KEEPS ME WELL?

THINK ABOUT THINGS YOU DO THAT
GIVE YOU JOY; HELP YOU FEEL GOOD
AND IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING





STRATEGIES TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

WHAT DO YOU DO TO KEEP MENTALLY WELL?

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Planning)

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Mental body scanning

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Journaling

Take a few minutes each day to think about what happened that day and how you felt. Reflect on any thoughts and feelings you have been having and write them down.

SMART goal setting

Set goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound. In other words, a goal that is very clear and easily understood.

Time management

Spend time planning and organizing your activities. Organize in a way that makes sense to you. Prioritize tasks that are important for you.



Visualisation

Create in your mind an ideal spot to relax. It can be real or imaginary. Imagine it in as much detail as you can – use your senses to make it as real as possible. Now close your eyes and take a slow breath in through your nose. Focus on your relaxation place in all its detail and breathe slowly.

STOP technique

When you are feeling overwhelmed, stop and step back. Don't act immediately and instead pause. Take a breath and notice as you breathe in and out. Observe your feelings and thoughts. Put the situation in some perspective – try to see the situation as an outside observer.

Cognitive coping cards

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Reattribution technique

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Attention refocusing

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Take ten breaths

Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until your lungs are completely empty, and then allow them to refill by themselves.



Worry time

Schedule worry time each day for one week. Put it in your calendar. Start by setting aside 15-30 minutes during the morning or the afternoon. That will be your worry time. It is best not to schedule worry time right before you go to bed, for obvious reasons.

Strategies to manage emotions

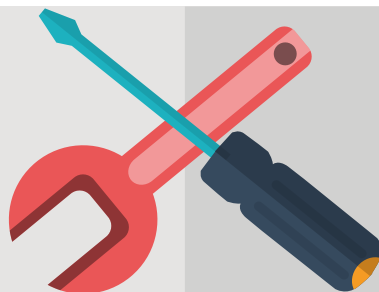
Imagine you are a bridge. What pressures or stresses does your bridge experience regularly? Write them below



Every bridge has foundations and structure that support it and help it to withstand pressures. What are your foundations and supports? Write them below



MY KEEPING MENTALLY WELL PLAN



When I am well, I am....

This about what you are doing, how you are feeling

What I do to keep myself as mentally well as possible...

List the main things you do and how regularly you need to do them

When I'm having a rough time I need to....

Make a short list of what you need to remember to do particularly when things aren't great



SESSION 6





SESSION 6

CONNECTIONS

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is for students to explore the role of social interactions or connections in our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students will:

- Understand the importance of social interactions or connections in recovery
- Have an awareness of the ways in which they can maintain positive social interactions or connections
- Have mapped the important social interactions or connections in their life



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise Who is important to me?	
I am.....	Individual and group exercise	Worksheet
My support network	Individual/ small group exercise	Worksheet
David's story	Group exercise	Film
Maintaining positive connections	Small group exercise	Handout
Reflection		

INFORMATION

The Living e-Motions project recognises that the social stigma attached to mental health problems remains a strong barrier to recovery. CHIME highlights the importance of connections or social interactions in supporting recovery but the experience of mental health problems and the impacts of self and societal stigma can mean that those connections are sometimes in danger when they are most needed.

The Living e-Motions course has been designed to be delivered as a group learning experience where the students not only learn but contribute their knowledge



and expertise. In this way it is hoped that the course will provide students with the opportunity to meet new people, manage a range of social interactions and gain a better understanding of how they can manage positive interactions and relationships with others.

SOCIAL FACTORS AND RECOVERY

There are many studies into what helps recovery and some of them have also identified factors contributing to mental health problems. One study (Tew and colleagues, 2012) found that people with mental health problems have commonly experienced powerlessness, injustice, abuse or 'social defeat', often in combination with a lack of positive relationships. A study of participants experiencing depression, highlighted feelings of alienation and loneliness and fear of being stigmatised Brijnath (2015). Social factors are also important with stigma, low income, unemployment, and poor housing being found to be barriers to social inclusion (Van Weeghel and colleagues, 2019). Another study went further and highlighted that social factors such as stigma, social deprivation, lack of opportunity, substance abuse, and the negative effects of mental health services and medication affected people's inclusion (Wood and Alsawy, 2018).

Different studies highlight that stigma and stigmatisation are central in influencing the recovery process. According to previous studies (see review in Tew et al., 2012), where stigma is a vital part of someone's self-definition (identity) this influences their self-esteem, aspirations, self-efficacy and confidence in social interactions. According to Tew and colleagues (2012), three CHIME categories - connections, identity and empowerment - are particularly focused on our social interactions. From their review of social factors of recovery from mental health difficulties, each of these categories address special themes or processes in the recovery process:

- **Connections** is related to interpersonal relationships, family/systems approaches, social inclusion, occupation and employment, and community development;



- **Identity** is related to social identities, discrimination (race, gender, etc.), mental illness stigma, and anti-stigma/anti-discriminatory interventions;
- **Empowerment** is related to self-efficacy, power together with others, a strengths based approach, self-directed support, and peer-organised services.

Taken together, these various recovery processes provide us with an idea of the range of ways that we can address the need for both socially orientated and self-orientated strategies for self-management and recovery.

In the review of various interventions for recovery, Tew and colleagues (2012) highlighted promoting the development of peer relationships, self-run services, self-help and mutual support activities. These settings and consequent activities create more egalitarian and accepting climate, empowering clients with sense of solidarity and contributing to more positively oriented identities. As an extension of these activities is also training of clients for peer support workers.

Of special interest for our Living e-Motions is an example of a social intervention in relation to internalized stigma (Kondrat and Teater (2009). This combined all the above-mentioned CHIME categories and used a narrative approach to empower clients to re-construct their identity and relations with (important) others.

STAYING CONNECTED

Many studies have found that seeking support from others may be helpful when coping with adversities (Soundy et al., 2015). Due to fear of social stigma or due to the symptoms associated with some of the mental health problems, individuals may withdraw from social interactions. However, trusting relationship, tangible support and understanding are crucial during the recovery process. Individuals therefore need to be encouraged to think about their support pillars and actively ask for help and understanding.

For instance, the “hierarchical mapping technique” can be used in which individuals are encouraged to map the social support network (Antonucci, 1986). In turn,



they may become more aware of the people they can rely on. This requires not only identifying people who can support them but also thinking about the level and type of support they can expect. Furthermore, social relationships are often mutual – where both parties provide and receive support. This is particularly true of peer relationships.

Many of us are taught that helping another person means that you do everything for them. Ironically this is one of the barriers not only to self-care but also to positive, sustainable social relationships. Therefore, when identifying key people in our support network we need to pay attention to the relationship, not just the support we seek. In this way we discover that as well as seeking support we can also provide support but do this in a way that does not cause us or the other person undue stress or to feel overwhelmed or ‘burned out’.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: Who is important to me?

Ask each student to very briefly share one person who is important to them and why they are important



TUTOR NOTES

This should be a relatively quick exercise and start the session on a positive note but highlighting the range of important connections or relationships. Students do not need to name the person or even identify them by role in their life if they do not want to but it would be good to share what it is about the person they are thinking of that is important to their life.



I am....

Give each student a worksheet and ask them to write down answers to the question Who am I? on the worksheet. There are some prompts to help them think about all the different ways they can answer the question.

This exercise is a personal one but it can be done in small groups where the students can discuss the prompts and encourage and support each other.



TUTOR NOTES

This can be a challenging exercise for some students as they are used to seeing themselves in a specific way and having a singular identity. Encourage them to think about the personal relationships they have - son, daughter, brother, sister, parent, friend, peer, colleague and also about their skills and interests - artist, walker, footballer, reader etc. This should be a fun exercise and feel empowering as students discover that there is a lot to them and their lives.



My support network

Ask each student to take a worksheet (choice of two options) or blank paper and write or draw their support network. Use the prompts on the worksheet to remind students to think about the wide range of people who support them including:

- Friends and family
- People in groups, clubs or classes they attend
- Workers in services and at other activities

In small groups compare what each has written or drawn. It is likely that students will be prompted to think about other people and can add to their sheet.



TUTOR NOTES

You can use the worksheets provided or provide paper and pens for this exercise. The different worksheets provide a different way to guide students through this exercise. However, some may prefer the fun of drawing their network. Encourage the students to think about all the people who support them and how they support them. This includes others in groups, courses and other activities they are involved in as well as close family and friends.



David's story

Show the short video 'David's story' which can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhc7IMZd6Lk>

Ask the students to reflect on David's story and consider:

- The different ways that David answers the question Who am I?
- How connecting with others has helped his recovery?



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise can be useful for students who experience difficulties in identifying the different identities they can have and also the different ways that they can connect with others and support their recovery. David found that just connecting with others around a shared interest of music he got support from others; even if they did not realise that they were being supportive. He has also identified that support is complex and not a one-way transaction as by helping others he has found a way to support is recovery.



Maintaining positive relationships

In small groups or as whole group share the following scenario with the students.

You are waiting in a café to meet a friend and they are already 15 minutes late. You try calling your friend but they are not picking up. This is not a usual experience.

Ask them to consider and discuss:

- How do you feel?
- Think about it again – is there another explanation?
- If so what is it and how does that make you feel?
- What is the best way to deal with this situation if you want to maintain a good relationship with this person?



TUTOR NOTES

The purpose of this exercise is to encourage the students to think about the mutuality of relationships or connections, including those where they are seeking support. This scenario is taken from an earlier session but the trainer or students could come up with their own scenarios and explore them using the same questions.

In this example the immediate feelings may be of anger or sadness that the friend has forgotten the meeting or not got in touch to say they would be late. However, if you take into account that this is not the usual experience (some people are always late!) then you are likely to feel concerned or worried as this is not like your friend.

As a result, we can experience different emotions depending on how we choose to view the situation. This may mean challenging our initial feelings and re-appraising the situation.



HANDOUTS OVER THE PAGE

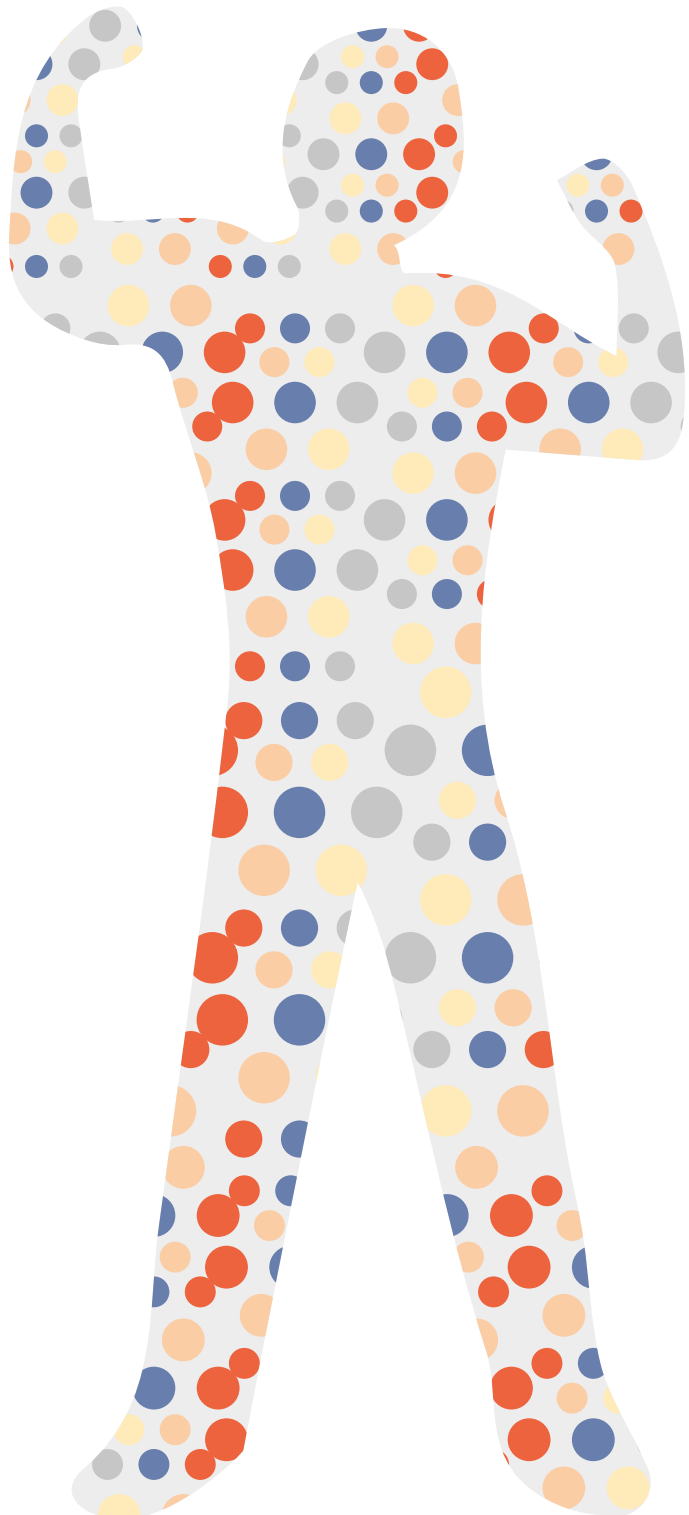


I AM

THINK ABOUT YOUR
RELATIONSHIPS
WITH OTHER PEOPLE

THINK ABOUT YOUR
KNOWLEDGE SKILLS,
TALENTS AND GIFTS

THINK ABOUT YOUR
HOBBIES, INTERESTS
AND PASSIONS





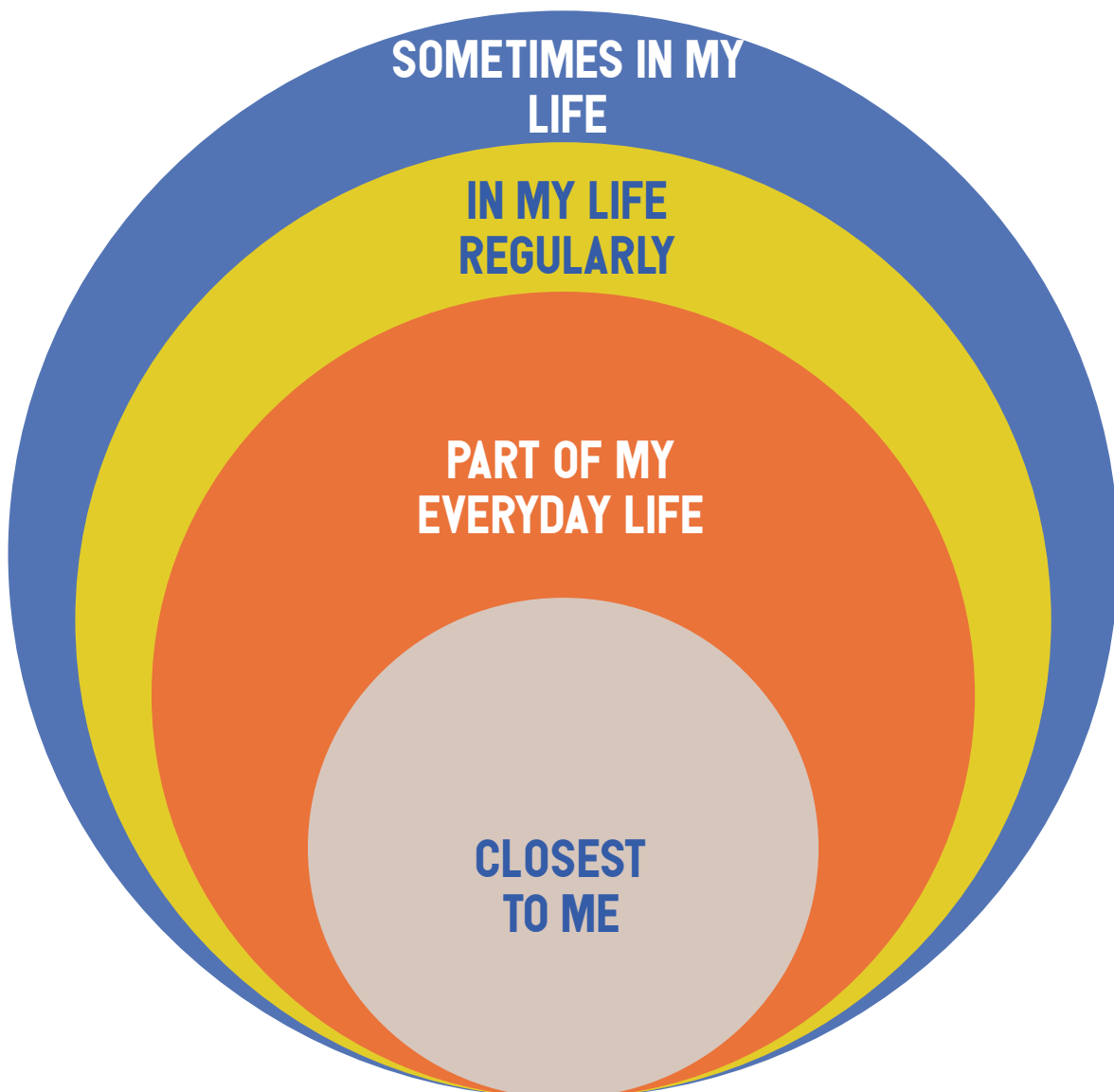
MY SUPPORT NETWORK



ANYONE ELSE?



MY SUPPORT NETWORK



Think about the different people in your life – family, friends, group members, colleagues, acquaintances, workers

Where are they in your support network?





SESSION 7





SESSION 7

SHARING MY STORY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this session is to provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their learning so far; further develop their story and identify what they want to share with others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this session students will:

- Reviewed their learning over the first six sessions
- Used this learning to continue to develop their story
- Identified what they want to share with others



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise What I have learned about myself so far	
Laura's story	Group exercise	Film
My story so far	Individual/small group exercise	Worksheet
Sharing my story	Individual/small group exercise	Worksheet
Reflection		

INFORMATION

You may wish to refer back to the information provided in Session 3 'My recovery story' for reference.

At the beginning of this session you may want to remind the students of key aspects of recovery story sharing:

There is no one way to share your story.

It a personal story and the one you want to share with others.



It is important to distinguish between illness stories and recovery stories.

In recovery stories the focus is on the learning or wisdom that the person wants to share – what helped them recover and move on with their life. You can remind them of the videos they have seen and while people refer to their difficult times the focus is on turning points, what helped them recover or is helping their recovery and sharing their learning. Storyliving is about more than telling a story; it is about the person being able to use their story or lived experience to guide their own recovery and inspire and support others in their recovery journey.

A safe environment for recovery story sharing needs:

- The person to be in control of the process and their story
- Time and support given to help people think through their story and if and how they want to share it
- Respect – everyone's lived experience and recovery journey is different

During this session you may want to work with the students to try out some filming. This would be an opportunity for students to use the questions they identify in the 'Sharing my story' exercise to interview each other and record it.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: What I've learned about myself so far

Ask the students to think of one thing they have learnt about themselves so far in the course. The ask them to share this with the group.



TUTOR NOTES

Encourage the students to think of positive things they have learnt about themselves – be strengths-based and draw on the exercises in the sessions. They will have more time in this session and the next to think about all they have learned so there is no need to worry about it only being one thing.



Laura's story

Show the short film Laura's story which can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhAwU2OmySI&feature=youtu.be>

This film was produced by MIND

Ask the students to consider:

- What helped Laura to think about her situation or story differently?
- What difference do you think this could make to you or others?
- How is Laura using her story to help others?



TUTOR NOTES

This short film is another example of someone sharing their recovery story- or an aspect of it. What is central for this session is Laura's reframing or different understanding of her situation/story by moving from a narrative about what was wrong with her to what happened to her. This different approach helped her to make sense of a situation that she did not understand and where she felt little or no control. In addition, Laura's story highlights that she is not only sharing her story but using her story to help others by influencing how they are supported. This is an example of story living. Students may think of using your story to help others in a direct way but there are many other opportunities such as influencing policy and practice or getting involved in recovery education.



My story so far

Using the worksheet provided or asking students to record their thoughts in writing or using the video function on their smartphone pose the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What has been my recovery journey?
- What have the turning points been?
- What have I learnt about myself?
- What do I do to stay mentally well and keep on my recovery journey?

This is an individual exercise but students may find it helpful to talk things through with others in pairs or small groups.



TUTOR NOTES

This is an opportunity for the students to review what they have learnt so far on the course and to start to think about developing their story. Remind them that they have lots to review from the exercises, any notes and handouts. Students will need some time for this exercise and it may be that they start it in the session and are asked to work on it and bring it back to the next session.



Sharing my story

Ask the students to think about the story they have developed or are developing in the previous exercise. What are the two or three key things they would like to share with others?



TUTOR NOTES

This exercise is to help students think through what they want to share with people. Encourage them to think about self-care and their own wellbeing but also what they think would benefit and inspire other people in their recovery journey.

Remind them of the videos shown over the sessions and that what they share does not need to be new or 'rocket science'. Sometimes it's great to hear someone share something that you have learnt or are doing to stay well.



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE



My story so far

WHO AM I

MY RECOVERY JOURNEY

MY TURNING POINTS

**WHAT I HAVE LEARNT ABOUT
MYSELF**

WHAT I DO TO STAY WELL AND ON MY RECOVERY JOURNEY



Sharing my story

What do I want to share?

Think about two or three key things from your story that you most want to share with others.....

1.

2.

3.

Why is this important to me?



SESSION 8





SESSION 8

CELEBRATING MY JOURNEY

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this session is for students to share their stories with the group and record their learning. During this session the stories shared can be captured on video or arrangements made to do that afterwards.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this session students will have:

- Shared their story with the group
- Completed their learning passport
- Celebrated their achievement



SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

ACTIVITY	METHOD	MATERIALS
Welcome	Trainer led	
Connecting up	Group exercise: Three words	
Sharing our stories	Group exercise	
My learning passport	Individual exercise	Worksheet
My Living e-Motion journey	Individual exercise	Evaluation form
Reflections	Group exercise	

INFORMATION

This session should feel celebratory as students will not only share their stories but also draft the Living e-Motions Learning Passport.

SHARING STORIES

Students are likely to have to undertake some preparation for this session as they will be sharing their stories with the group. Some may feel apprehensive about this but hopefully their experience of the group and the work they have been doing will ensure that they feel some confidence in finalising and sharing their story.

It is recommended that stories should be no longer than 3 or 4 minutes in length.



This may seem short but will encourage the students to focus on the preparation in Session 7 where they reviewed their learning in the course so far and distilled:

- the key parts of and turning points in the journey to date
- their learning from this journey
- what they would like to share with others

Where a student has completed sessions 1 to 7 but still feels apprehensive about sharing their story remind them that they can choose what to share and it can be 30 seconds or 4 minutes.

While it is important not to lose momentum it may be that you scheduled individual time with each student over a short period and then deliver this final session two or three weeks after Session 7.

Another factor to consider is whether the stories are recorded on video before or after this session. Some students may prefer to record their story in advance and play it during Session 8 but others may want to deliver their story in person and then record it later. It may be that there is a combination of stories on video and in person delivery.

RECORDING STORIES ON VIDEO

The Living e-Motions online learning resource will include the short videos that students share, where they consent to this. We also know that short videos where people share what's helps their recovery are very popular on social media as they not only inform and inspire but they can also positively challenge stigma and discrimination.

The project is based on the premise that the short videos will be captured on smartphones. Most smartphones can produce a decent quality short video which can be shared on websites and social media platforms. It is likely that there will be students already familiar with creating short videos. However, if neither you nor



the students are you can find lots of how to guides and hints and tips online. Key factors to keep in mind are:

- Film landscape to get a decent sized picture and avoid dark lines down the sides
- Make sure the person sharing their story is centre or just slightly off centre in the frame and that the background is suitable
- Get in as close as you need to rather than use the zoom function. This will not only help get the colour balance and crispness of the image you want but will help the sound
- If you are recording at night or in a dull room use a light source rather than relying on the flash. Also avoid backlit settings.
- Make sure that the room is quiet so that there is no interference in the sound.
- Sometimes a short video needs a little editing. Most smartphones have access to apps to help with this.

It is important that the students consent to their videos being shared. A template form for discussing and getting consent is included in the handouts for Session 3. It may be appropriate to share this with students at this early stage so that they can think about consent and not just be presented with it at the end of the course.

LEARNING PASSPORT

The students will also be asked to complete a Living e-Motions Learning Passport during this session. Again this is something that could be shared in advance with the students with a reminder that some of their work during Session 7 provides a good start to create their own Learning Passport.

As a trainer you may decide to hold a short meeting with each student between the final two sessions to ensure they are ready to share their story and also to discuss their Learning Passport. This is an opportunity for you to provide strengths



based feedback on an individual basis which will assist students in drafting their Learning Passport. A template for the Learning Passport has been provided.

ENDINGS ARE JUST NEW BEGINNINGS

We know that completing a course of this type can be a significant experience for many people. The relationships formed in the group as well as the personal learning can change people's sense of self and open up new opportunities. One way to emphasise this is to have a celebratory follow up meeting shortly after the last session. At this follow-up celebration session, students can come together to share what has been happening and receive their course completion certificate. In some cases students may be invited to bring a friend or family member with them to share in their achievement and some cake is usually well received.



EXERCISES

Connecting up: Three words

Ask the students to think of three words that sum up their experience of being on the Living e-Motions course. It can be any three words – three single words or a three worded comment. They will then share these three words with the other students.



TUTOR NOTES

This is a quick and fun exercise to get the students in reflective mode and will also contribute to feedback on the course. You could provide each student with 3 post-it notes and ask them to come up one at a time and put them on flipchart. An alternative would be to either record the words as they are shared or ask the students if they would write them on the flipchart as they share.



Sharing our stories

During this exercise each student will be asked to share the story they have developed during the course. The story can be delivered in person or pre-recorded on smartphone and shown to the group.



TUTOR NOTES

Information on this exercise is provided in the information section. It is recommended that students are given time and support to prepare their short story and it may be helpful to have the option of delivering in person or recording it beforehand to be shown to the group. The stories should be no longer than 3 or 4 minutes long.

It is recommended that there is no discussion or questions at the end of each story to ensure that each person's story is listened to with respect. Each student should be applauded for sharing but not placed in a position of having their story discussed or questioned at that point.



My learning passport

Ask each student to use the Living e-Motions Learning Passport template to produce their own Learning Passport. There are two forms of the template - a blank one and one with some hints to aid completion.



TUTOR NOTES

Encourage students to refer back to the exercises in Session 7 and use that as a basis for their learning passport. You could also provide the template with some guidance on how to complete the template. Some students may need some individual support to complete their learning passport.



My Living e-Motions journey

Ask the students to complete the evaluation form provided.



TUTOR NOTES

It is important that the student complete the evaluation forms. If any students are struggling to do this, it may be appropriate to help them to complete it. Remind the students that this is a pilot course and that we really need to know what they thought of it – what worked for them and what needs changed or improved – so that the final course is as good as it can be.



HANDOUTS OVER PAGE



My Learning Passport

Name:

I am...

My qualities

My new learning and skills



How I want to use my new learning and skills

Commendation

Name:

This space is for your name and any contact details you want to include or maybe a photograph

I am...

This space is for a short statement about you – something like ‘I am a passionate and enthusiastic person who likes to work with others to achieve change’

My qualities

This space is for a list of your key qualities – skills, aptitudes, things you are good at. Lots of CVs have this as it is good for there to be a summary of you. It should be concise and include statements such as:

- Good communication skills in writing and in person
- Able to inspire and motivate people
- Good attention to detail



My new learning and skills

This is a space for you to list the key things you have learned and the skills you have gained during the Living e-Motions course. Look back at your thoughts during Session 7 as a basis.

How I want to use my new learning and skills

This space is for a short statement about how you want to use your new learning and skills. Examples could include:

- Use my lived experience to support others in their recovery journey
- Move into a job where I can support others to reach their goals
- Look for opportunities to continue my education by going to College to study...

Commendation

This space is for a short comment from a fellow student or trainer about you focusing in on your qualities, learning and skills. An example would be...

‘[name] is a motivated and enthusiastic learner who can also support others in their learning.’



COURSE EVALUATION

1. Your experience of the course

The following questions use a scale to 1 to 5 where 1 is agree very much and 5 is do not agree. Circle the number which most fits with your experience

The Living e-Motions course was enjoyable

1 2 3 4 5

I learnt a lot on the Living e-Motions course

1 2 3 4 5

The content of the sessions and the exercises were interesting

1 2 3 4 5

I feel more confident about my lived experience and future learning

1 2 3 4 5

2. What did you enjoy most about the course?



3. What do you think should be changed or improved?

Include any ideas you have for changes and improvements

4. How has completed the Living e-Motions course benefited you?

Tell us about anything about the course (contents, exercises, group) that has been of benefit to you

5. What do you plan to do next?

Tell us a little about your future plans and how you will use the earning from the course

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS EVALUATION FORM





REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING







REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READING

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Emotional education through
visual storyliving

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