

# BOOKLET EIGHT

## Next Steps



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## Reviewing progress

It is now probably several weeks since you started the BA course.

We hope that you are feeling less depressed. However, this won't yet be the case for everyone, and therefore this booklet includes identifying sticking points, with suggestions for other types of help that may be needed, as well as looking at building resilience for the future and preventing relapse.

The aims of this booklet are to

- Recap the main things you have learnt
- Help you continue to use the strategies that are working to reduce your depression and increase your wellbeing
- Identify sticking points in your recovery from depression and suggest ways of addressing them
- Help you strengthen your resilience against the possible return of depression in the future
- Develop a plan to recognise warning signs of depression and take steps to stop it coming back

## When you started the course

**What were the main problems that you brought to the BA course?** Look back at what you wrote in booklet 1 and booklet 6.

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**What is your understanding of how these problems began?**

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**What is your understanding now of what was keeping you stuck in depression?**

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**What were your goals when you started the course?**

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**What did you learn from the course and what changes have you made?**

**What are the most important things that you have learnt from the BA course?**

About the links between activity and mood?

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About activity scheduling and overcoming procrastination?

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About values and flow?

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About avoidance and the depression TRAPs?

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About problem-solving?

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About thinking habits?

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Other?

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## **Moving Forward**

**What changes have you made during the BA course? How did they work out?**

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**How far have you come towards meeting your goals?**

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**What changes do you want to continue?**

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**What are your goals for yourself now?**

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## Problems that remain

Behavioural activation is a powerful approach to recovering from depression, but it is not unusual for sticking points to remain after following a short course.

The evidence suggests that quite often what is needed is to continue with the same approach for a longer period of time. This is because activation works by moving forward in small do-able steps. If your depression has been quite severe or if it has been going on for a long time, the first steps will be small and it will take patience and perseverance before your life is back on track. It takes time to change the habits of depression. There will likely be setbacks, ups and downs along the road.

**What is your sense now about the problems that remain?** (You might want to think about this for yourself before looking at our list of possible sticking points on the next page.)

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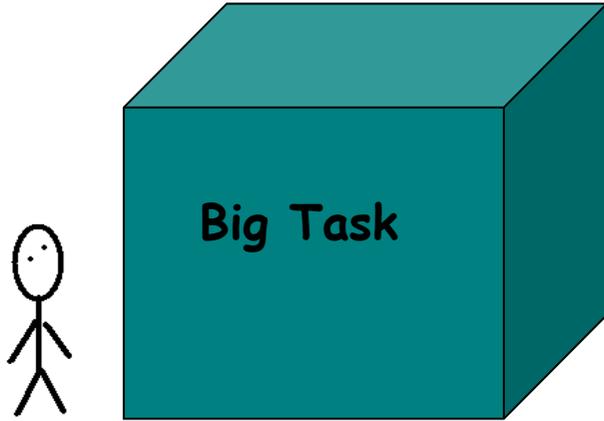
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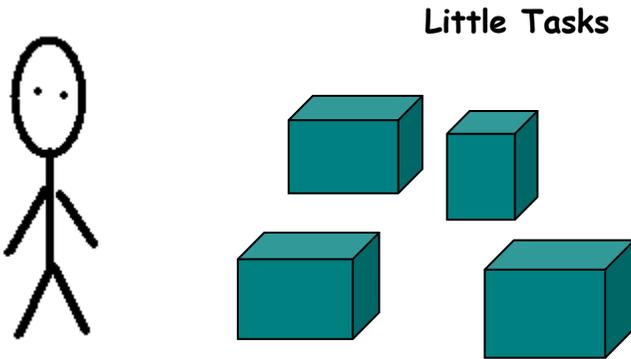
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What seems like a really big task...



Is actually lots of smaller tasks, each of which are much more manageable alone:



Even these can be broken down smaller...

**Tiny tasks**



## Identifying the sticking points

If your depression is not starting to shift, or not shifting as much as you think it should have by now, consider whether any of the following might be sticking points

| Possible sticking point  | NO, or only a little | MAYBE | YES, definitely |
|--|----------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Anxiety or panic getting in the way of putting activation plan into practice |                      |       |                 |
| Difficulty breaking rumination habit   |                      |       |                 |
| Difficulties in your relationship with your partner                          |                      |       |                 |
| Upsetting memories or images from the past                                   |                      |       |                 |
| Difficulty adjusting to changed circumstances such as chronic health problem |                      |       |                 |
| Sleep problem  |                      |       |                 |
| Over-eating or other eating problem  |                      |       |                 |
| Drinking too much  |                      |       |                 |
| Other addiction problem (e.g. gambling, drugs, internet)                     |                      |       |                 |
| Anger problem affecting relationships with others (work or home)             |                      |       |                 |
| Finding it hard to get along with other people in other ways                 |                      |       |                 |
| Other  |                      |       |                 |

If you have identified one or more possible sticking points, see if you can describe the problem here in a little more detail.

**Problem description** (you might find it helpful look back at the section on describing problems in Booklet 6)

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**In what way(s) is the problem blocking your recovery?**

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**Can you apply any of the ideas and strategies you have learnt through the course?**

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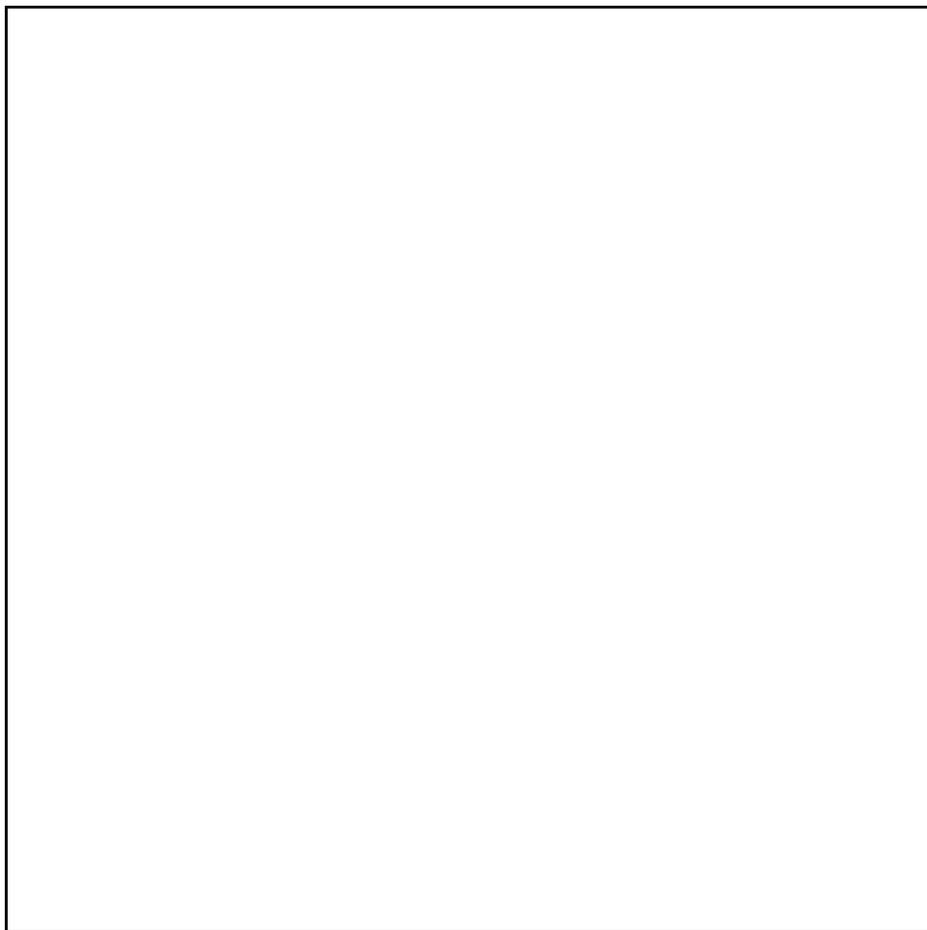
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| Possible sticking point   | Possible solutions  |
|---|---|
| <b>Anxiety or panic getting in the way of activation plan</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help books on anxiety and panic</li> <li>• Individual or group CBT for anxiety or panic</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Difficulty breaking rumination habit</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue using the exercises in Booklet 7</li> <li>• Self-help book <i>The Mindful Way Through Depression</i></li> <li>• Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy course</li> <li>• Individual CBT</li> </ul> |
| <b>Difficulties in your relationship with your partner</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help book e.g. <i>Overcoming relationship problems</i></li> <li>• Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)</li> <li>• Couples therapy for depression</li> <li>• Individual counselling</li> </ul>          |
| <b>Upsetting memories or images from the past</b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual therapy using counselling or EMDR or CBT</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Difficulty adjusting to changed circumstances such as chronic health problem</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help guides for specific health problems</li> <li>• Counselling or Interpersonal Psychotherapy</li> <li>• Support group</li> <li>• Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy course</li> </ul>            |
| <b>Sleep problem</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help book <i>Overcoming Sleep Problems</i></li> <li>• Wellbeing workshop on sleep</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Over-eating or other eating problem</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help book <i>Bite by Bite</i></li> <li>• Referral for specialist therapy</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Drinking too much</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help online <a href="http://www.downyourdrink.org.uk">www.downyourdrink.org.uk</a></li> <li>• Referral to addiction service</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Other addiction problem (e.g. gambling, drugs, internet)</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help book overcoming compulsive gambling</li> <li>• Referral to addiction service</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Anger problem affecting relationships with others</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-help book <i>Overcoming Anger &amp; Irritability</i></li> <li>• Southwark Wellbeing video Anger on the Talking Therapies website</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Finding it hard to get along with other people in other ways</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal Psychotherapy, counselling or brief psychodynamic therapy</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Other</b>  |   |

## **Action plan for overcoming sticking points**

Sometimes a different sort of help may be needed.

Look at the suggestions on the previous page and make some notes below about any you think might be helpful for you, and questions you might want to ask your therapist or other mental health worker. Look at the 'useful resources' section in the back of this booklet for further tips and information.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write notes or questions based on the instructions above.

## Relapse Prevention 1: Building resilience

Research on the effects of stress suggests a number of things that can help people cope better with stress, and therefore reduce the chance of getting depressed.

Six of these are listed below, with a space after each for you to make notes on any steps you want to take to build your depression resilience.

### **1. Friendship, companionship**

Having a circle of friends, or even just one or two people that you can confide in, seems to help protect against depression. During a bout of depression it is easy to neglect friendships. Re-establishing old friendships or developing new ones can be an important part of protecting yourself from future depression. And of course, by being a friend to others you are also helping them cope with the stresses in their lives.

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### **2. Physical activity**

Physical activity appears to have a protective effect. If you do not see yourself as a sporty person, then it may be even more important to find ways of bringing some (fun, enjoyable, not too strenuous) exercise into your daily or weekly routine.

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### **3. A variety of interests and activities**

Putting all our time and energy into just one or two areas of life seems to make us more vulnerable to stress and depression, especially when problems arise. For example, if someone devotes all their time to their work, it is harder to get a sense of perspective or find other things to think about or enjoy if for some reason they are no longer able to work. If everything is invested in one relationship, it is harder to get over it if it ends.

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### **4. Doing the things that matter to you**

One of the best protective factors against depression is having a sense of meaning and purpose in life. And losing it is of course one of the symptoms of depression. By getting involved in things that we at least feel some connection with, or that we cared about in the past, we can give that sense of purpose the best chance of recovery.

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### **5. Self-acceptance**

In depression people often take a harsh, critical approach to themselves. Resilience to depression, on the other hand, is associated with having a kinder, more accepting attitude. It is important to know that it is OK to make mistakes, that we are not expected to be perfect. If this is a particular issue for you, you might like the self-help books *Overcoming Perfectionism* and *The Compassionate Mind*.

p.t.o...

...self acceptance is also about appreciating our **strengths**, and recognising that we have been able to solve problems and overcome adversity in the past, using qualities such as determination, patience, or even being able to ask for help when you most need it. Looking back at booklet 4 may help you here.

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## **6. Seeing difficulties and obstacles as challenges**

There is evidence that people who have learnt to see difficulties as challenges cope better with stress. Although it takes some effort to apply this way of thinking, it can make a big difference to how you feel. When faced with a challenge, you might ask yourself, “What skill or ability is needed here?” It might be the skill of staying calm, of not getting rattled, or the skill of expressing your view or opinion, or the skill of taking on board the views of others without becoming defensive, etc. If you wish, you can use the spaces below to describe two situations you find difficult as challenges.

**Event/Situation:**

**This is a challenge because:**

**Event/Situation:**

**This is a challenge because:**

## 7. Taking control

One theory of depression says, that after experiencing a number of difficult events that were out of our control, we effectively give up. It is as if we have learnt that there is no point trying. We may even have lots of ‘no point’ thoughts. We can become passive, helpless and pessimistic. There is evidence that people who are depressed become less effective as problem solvers.

On the other hand, research has also shown that people who focus on what they can control in difficult situations, get less stressed than those who feel powerless. Developing the habit of problem-solving in response to difficult events is both one way of getting back on TRAC and a way of building resilience against future depression. This may be partly about changing the thinking pattern, stepping out of, “*If only*” and “*Why me*” thinking, and into, “*What can I do about it?*” thinking.

You can use the spaces below to identify two situations in which you tend to become passive and pessimistic, and consider if there are any ways you can take control.

**Event/Situation:**

**I can take control by:**

**Event/Situation:**

**I can take control by:**

## Relapse prevention 2: Action Plan

**What situations are most likely to trigger falling into a depression trap?**

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**What are the warning signs that your mood might be getting worse?**



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**What the actions or activities most likely to get you back on track?**

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## Action Plan

Many people who have felt depressed in the past worry about depression coming back. One of the best ways to stop this is to have a concrete plan in place to prevent difficult situations turning into depression TRAPs.

This is a space for your plan. Look back at page 16 and the signs your mood might be getting worse, and think of situations which tend to trigger low mood. Then think what can help; it might be something you've learnt in BA or an activity you have been scheduling.

### **Example:**

**Warning sign:**

*Wanting to spend more time alone, watching tv instead of going out.*

**Plan:**

*Monitor, to find out how I am feeling at the moment. Scheduling TV time as a reward for doing something I have been putting off, like calling my friends, so I still feel like I've achieved something*

**Trigger situation:**

*Seeing my family—this always leads to arguments and I end up feeling really down.*

**Plan:**

*Schedule in a pleasurable activity for when I get home so I have something to look forward to*

## Action plan

**Warning sign:**

**Plan:**

**Trigger situation:**

**Plan:**

**Warning sign:**

**Plan:**

**Trigger situation:**

**Plan:**

# In a challenging situation, remember ACTION



## Assess the situation

How will my behaviour affect my depression?

Am I avoiding?

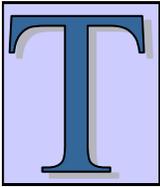
What are my goals in this situation?



## Choose

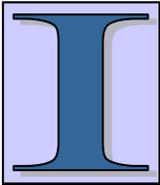
I know that activating myself will increase my chances of improving my life situation and mood. Therefore if I choose not to self-activate, I am choosing to take a break.

I choose:



## Try

I will try out the behaviour that I have chosen.

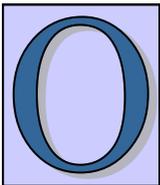


## Integrate

I will integrate the new activity into my daily routine.

When will I do it?

How will I do it?



## Observe

Do I feel better or worse?

Did this action allow me to take steps toward improving my situation?



## Never give up

When I feel like giving up, .....

will help me keep going.

## Relapse Prevention Plan: Example

Use this space to summarise what you have covered on relapse prevention

### 1. Staying Well:

I will continue with these activities to help me stay well:

Playing my guitar, seeing my brother & niece, walking, keeping my flat tidy and a nice place to live

To take care of myself I will:

Exercise at least once a week, even if it's just a walk around the park  
Make time to relax every day

### 2. My warning signs and trigger situations:



Not bothering to clear up

Isolating myself

Seeing friends who have got 'perfect' lives

Getting stressed at work

Getting upset/annoyed at little things

In difficult situations, remember:

- Use your strengths
- Take Control
- Approach it as a challenge

### 3. My Strengths:

Patience  
Determination  
Kindness

### 4. Action Plan

If I notice a warning sign or a trigger situation, I will:

Break things up into smaller bits e.g. tidying up one room at a time  
Invite one friend over if I think I am isolating—one is less daunting  
and it might help to talk

Give my boss regular updates about my work load and make it clear  
what I can manage each week

Focus on what I like about my friends rather than what makes me  
upset

### 5. Useful Numbers:

GP: .....

Other.....

In a crisis, always call **999** or go  
to **A&E**

**6. Don't Forget:**

**Never Give Up...**

## Relapse Prevention Plan:

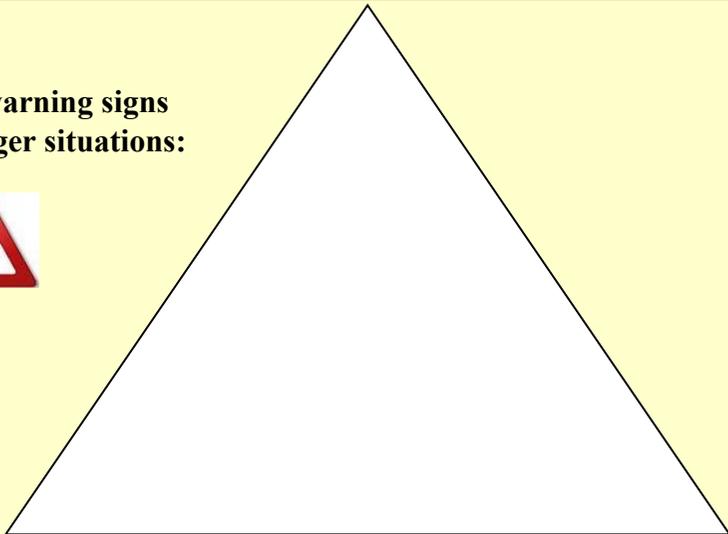
Use this space to summarise what you have covered on relapse prevention

### **1. Staying Well:**

I will continue with these activities to help me stay well:

To take care of myself I will:

### **2. My warning signs and trigger situations:**



In difficult situations, remember:

- Use your strengths
- Take Control
- Approach it as a challenge

### 3. My Strengths:

Blank space for writing strengths.

### 4. Action Plan

If I notice a warning sign or a trigger situation, I will:

Blank space for writing an action plan.

### 5. Useful Numbers:

GP: .....

Other.....

In a crisis, always call **999** or go to **A&E**

6. Don't Forget:

**Never Give Up...**

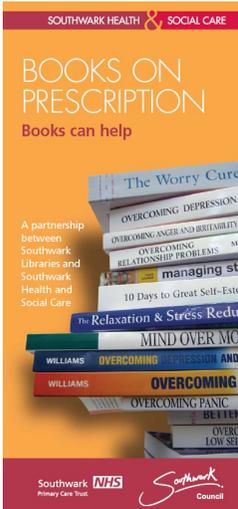


## Useful Resources



**Here are some websites with information about depression and self-help materials:**

- <https://slam-iapt.nhs.uk/southwark/welcome-to-southwark-psychological-therapies-service/resources/>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/coping-with-depression.htm>
- <https://www.icope.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/depression-and-low-mood-your-self-help-guide.pdf>
- <https://web.ntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/>
- <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Depression>



If you are interested in finding out more about anything you have learnt during your BA programme, there are a number of self help books available on the Southwark 'Books on prescription' scheme.

The books are available from any Southwark Library and you do not have to be a member or pay a fine for late return under this scheme.

Please ask your therapist for more details.

Books include:

**The Worry Cure** - Dr Robert R Leahy  
**Overcoming depression one step at a time** - Christopher Martell & Michael E Addis

**Never give up:**

It takes time and effort to succeed, and there are often many difficulties along the way. But the most important thing is to keep trying, and NEVER GIVE UP.

**Abraham Lincoln** - defeated 8 times on the way to becoming president

**Van Gogh** - Sold only 1 painting during his life time

**Edison** - Invented the lightbulb on his 250th attempt

**The Beatles** - rejected by the first two record companies they approached

Can you think of any more, either famous or from your own life?

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Adapted from Self directed Behaviour (Watson & Tharp, 2007)

## BEHAVIOURAL ACTIVATION FOR DEPRESSION

### *LIST OF BOOKLETS*

1. Introduction to BA for Depression
2. Monitoring activity and mood
3. Roadmap: The Activation Plan
4. Finding direction: values, flow and strengths
5. Avoidance and the depression TRAPs
6. Problem solving
7. Thinking habits
- 8. Next steps**

**We hope you have found this booklet helpful. We welcome your feedback.**

You can give comments to your therapist or by emailing us at [slm-tr.SPTS@nhs.net](mailto:slm-tr.SPTS@nhs.net) or writing to us at Talking Therapies Southwark, Middle House, Maudsley Hospital, London SE5 8AZ.

[www.slam-iapt.nhs.uk](http://www.slam-iapt.nhs.uk)