

## **RESTORE Online Intervention Manual**

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This manual sets out the intervention content for the RESTORE Online project. It is a blend of live online sessions, pre-recorded material and homework tasks, that aim to enhance Psychological Flexibility in Palliative Care Professionals. The intervention consists of 8 sessions, 3 live and 5 pre-recorded. The live sessions occur at the beginning, middle and end of the intervention. Asynchronous digital chat or email ring will support participants between live sessions.

### **Intervention aims**

The intervention is based on Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT). It has a here and now, skills-based coaching focus. It aims to help palliative care professionals to develop enhanced Psychological Flexibility to be able to deal effectively with their work, maintain their wellbeing and enhance their resilience.

Psychological flexibility refers to our capacity to be open and non-defensive about our thoughts, feelings and the situations we find ourselves in, aware of how these influence us, and engaged in actions that are consistent with what we most deeply care about and the kind of person we most wish to be. These three broad skill areas are referred to as Open, Aware and Engaged skills.

### **Facilitators**

The pre-recorded material was recorded by Dr David Gillanders, University of Edinburgh. David is a Peer Reviewed ACT Trainer, which is a quality standard from the Association of Contextual Behavioural Science (ACBS) that verifies a person's ability to deliver ACT training competently and with high fidelity. David is also a Fellow of ACBS, which is a membership category bestowed by the ACBS board, in recognition of valuable contribution to the science and practice of ACT. David is an experienced practitioner and researcher in the field of ACT for persistent health problems, staff wellbeing, oncology and palliative care.

Dr Anne Finucane is The Marie Curie Research Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, School of Health in Social Science, and Research Lead for Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh. She has significant expertise in psychological aspects of palliative care and end of life, as well as staff wellbeing and organisational issues in this sector. She is an experienced psychologist with a strong track record in research design and implementation. She has undertaken ACT training and has experience in facilitating groups.

For future users of this manual, facilitators should be able to demonstrate knowledge and competencies in: group facilitation, skills-based coaching, and staff wellbeing, stress management and burn out. In addition, they should have completed introductory level training in Acceptance and Commitment Training or Therapy. For facilitators less experienced in ACT work, supervision from a person with established competency and experience in ACT will be essential.

## Intervention Summary

<i>Week</i>	<i>Module</i>	<i>Time required (approx.)</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Delivery mode</i>
<b>1</b>	<b><i>Introduction to ACT</i></b>	<b>90 minutes</b>	<b>Introduction:</b> what is it like to work in palliative care; how to you respond stress; what ways are helpful/unhelpful; what gets in the way... Aim to help identify what works/what is less effective. Mention of organisational context/ perceived organisational flexibility, implications of organisational change. Introduce the ACT approach	Virtual classroom.  Led by DG, facilitated by AF.
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Values</i></b>	<b>30 minutes</b>	Identifying and acting in line with your values	<i>e-learning</i>  <i>Homework</i>
<b>3</b>	<b><i>Awareness</i></b>	<b>30 minutes</b>	Present moment awareness; mindfulness; grounding	<i>e-learning</i>  <i>Homework</i>
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Review of materials</i></b>	<b>90 minutes</b>	Review, troubleshooting, clarifying materials. Discussion.	Virtual classroom.  Led by DG, facilitated by AF.
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Openness</i></b>	<b>30 minutes</b>	Developing willingness, becoming more open, making room.	<i>e-learning</i>  <i>Homework</i>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Defusion</i></b>	<b>30 minutes</b>	Unhooking from difficult thoughts and feelings	<i>e-learning</i>  <i>Homework</i>
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Compassion</i></b>	<b>30 minutes</b>	Kindness to self and others	<i>e-learning</i>  <i>Homework</i>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Review and trouble shooting</i></b>	<b>90 minutes</b>	Review, troubleshooting, clarifying materials. Discussion.	Virtual classroom.  Led by DG, facilitated by AF.

## **Intervention Detail**

### **Session 1: LIVE ONLINE: Getting started**

Session aims:

1. Introduce the facilitators
2. Create a trusting online community by encouraging talking and openness
3. Outline our understanding and experience of working as a palliative care professional, based on our collective previous research studies and work experience. Use worksheet 1 as a discussion tool (see Appendix):
4. Worksheet One: Participants have this in advance, read and tick aspects they feel sound familiar, and also begin to add their own. We begin the conversation around this – what particular statements did they resonate the most with.

Then try to synthesise these into the kinds of factors that we know:

- Organisational aspects (scarce resources, team dynamics, complexity)
  - Aspects of the work (exposure to other's suffering, emotional labour)
  - Interpersonal aspects (communication, expectation, effect of being in a hurry)
  - Internal aspects (Building a strong connection with meaning and purpose vs shoulds, rules etc), (Building awareness of what's influencing us versus autopilot), (Getting hooked into thoughts and feelings, self-stories etc.)
  - Response aspects (avoiding what is hard – short term versus long term consequences)
5. Introduce the ACT approach: Responding to this with Psychological Flexibility, (Skills of Open, Aware and Engaged), doing what matters, doing what is right, having clear boundaries, leaving work at work, doing fun things outside of work and reconnecting with personal meaning in being a palliative care professional.
  6. Describe the broad aspects of the intervention – format (online and live, pre-recorded, email / digital chat, homework practice), commitment needed in session and between session, expectations for daily practice, some of the homework tasks, importance of measurement and feedback. Be explicit about quantitative and qualitative aspects, link to future developments of the intervention and future users.
  7. Troubleshoot any difficulties with tech aspects, acknowledge doubts, bring them with you and give it a try.
  8. Overview the next two pre-recorded sessions and a flavour of the homework and build a bridge to the next session. Remind people to post on the discussion board.

## SESSION 2:

### VIDEO 1: Core concepts of VALUES (approximately 10 minutes)

- Values are what we care about, the things that most matter to us
- Introduce the compass metaphor (Directions as values, destinations as goals)
- Make the compass metaphor concrete to actual values – particularly focussed on the meaning and purpose in being a palliative care professional. Begin gently naming ideas around values.

### VIDEO 2: VALUES EXERCISE (Approximately 10 minutes)

- Deliver a version of the Sweet Spot Exercise – focussed on a particular time / moment / interaction when work was good. What qualities were in that moment? What would it be like to be more like that, to bring that quality into work more? Move that into a future focus – imagine it's your retirement. What would you most want your colleagues to say about you at work? About the kind of colleague you had been? Imagine you could hear from some of the families that you had supported? What do you most wish that they would say? Because its imagination you can imagine that you could hear video messages from particular patients you had worked with.

### VIDEO 3: Getting Balance in Values and turning intention into ACTION – (10 minutes)

- Introduce the Jar of Rocks metaphor
- Introduce the values worksheet
- Introduce the notion of yourself as the tool – staying present, being with distress, being open, balanced, calm, reflective. Learning how to switch off, so that you can be present. If these are the tools of your trade, how does a craftsperson look after their tools?

### HOMEWORK TASK:

1. Complete the values and actions worksheet
2. Post once on the discussion board about your actions – make a public commitment to a particular action.

### SESSION 3:

#### VIDEO 4: Core concepts of Awareness (approximately 10 minutes)

- Awareness is about being present, noticing what our situation is (both the situation around us and the world inside of us – in our bodies and in our minds)
- Wanting to move away or hide when we are experiencing something difficult is very natural, and yet it's something we can master and overcome. We can learn to stay present and act according to our values even in difficult times, our skills at being aware help us to do that.
- We can train those skills using techniques such as mindfulness meditation. Link to video 5.
- Other activities that help us to ground are a simple statement to slow down, noticing five things exercise.
- Introduce the idea of switching off so that you can get present.
- Deliberately planning 'down time' for your mindful awareness – doing things that are absorbing that are not work.

#### VIDEO 5: A brief mindfulness / grounding type exercise ( 5 – 10 minutes)

- Do this to introduce the core practice
- Highlight the MP3's as supports for home practice

#### HOMEWORK TASK:

- Plan a time for 5 to ten minutes of mindfulness practice each day
- Awareness in everyday life worksheet
- Post about your experiences of that, including difficulties or struggles with it, at least once on the discussion board / email ring. Reflect and comment supportively on at least one other person's post as well.

#### **SESSION 4: Live Online (around 90 minutes)**

- Begin with a mindful settling in practice – 10 minutes
- Gentle enquiry – first about the exercise specifically, then about practice of mindfulness in daily life, the informal mindfulness practice worksheet, switching off to be able to be present.
- Enquiry about values and actions – troubleshoot, celebrate
- Introduce active self-care planning: Self Care Worksheet
- Get feedback and commitment around that
- Introduce the focus on the next few sessions: unhooking from thoughts, the notion of minds getting in our way, of our own stories limiting us. Introduce that we will be doing some unusual things to try to make changes in that area of our lives.
- Renew commitment to active self-care, practicing awareness skills, persisting with valued actions both inside and outside of work.

## SESSION 5:

### Video 6: How we respond to barriers (about 10 minutes)

- Now that participants are clearer about values, goals and actions, and have been practicing awareness, they will probably have noticed the barriers to action
- Barriers can be outside of ourselves or inside ourselves
- If the barrier is outside – these skills will help you persist in taking effective action
- If the barrier is inside – these skills can help recognise and respond more effectively
- Internal barriers – thoughts, feelings, physical sensations
- How we respond: Guide watcher through worksheet: How we respond to barriers
- Give an example – short term versus long term and ask the question: is it effective?
- Label the process of avoidance, outline when it might be effective and when it won't be

### Video 7: Developing Openness (about 10 minutes)

- Openness is about allowing things to be as they are, letting go of unproductive struggle or fighting. You don't need to like it or approve of it; it is simply allowing things to be as they are.
- Metaphor of thoughts and feelings like a stream. Sometimes the stream is less full, its gentle and manageable. Other times the stream is in flood, its rushing and full. Sometimes the flow of emotions is so strong that we are tempted to build a dam on the stream, to stop the water for a while. This might work OK for short periods of time, particularly if we know that later on we have a mechanism for letting some of the water out, reducing the pressure behind the dam. If we don't do that, or if we over use that strategy, the water builds up behind the dam and becomes greater and greater, with more and more pressure. When that happens small cracks can lead to a gushing out of water. Little things upset us more than they should. Our job is to learn how to be open to the flow of our emotions and thoughts. Letting them come and flow. Occasionally we may need to temporarily shut the dam, but we do so out of choice and later we come back to allow the water to flow again. This video and homework is all about that openness skill – of just allowing things to flow, when it is a good time to do so.
- Short eyes closed practice of 'softening, leaning in, opening up to feelings'. Practice with a recent difficult event at work. Perhaps not a 100 KG problem, think of a thing at work that was a little bit upsetting, more like a 10 KG problem. Could be patient focussed or team focussed. Any time there was a thought or feeling that you found harder to have. See if you can allow yourself to feel the feelings that were there. Notice how you were responding then. Notice how you have been responding to it since. Just practice being as open to that feeling as you can. Is there anything about how you handled it then or how you have been dealing with it since that you think didn't serve your values well? Is there anything you would change about that? What might you do differently if that kind of thing comes up again?

## HOMEWORK:

- Continue mindful awareness daily meditation
- Complete How we respond to barriers worksheet
- Practice 'softening' and openness stance towards difficult situations and feelings at work.

## SESSION 6:

### Video 8: Your mind isn't always your friend (about 10 minutes)

- Sometimes the things that get in the way are our own minds. Thoughts that we have about ourselves our abilities, skills and qualities. Our own judgements. Sometimes they are thoughts about other people's intentions, attitudes, motivations. But there is a big difference between having a thought and buying a thought.
- Demonstrate Hands as thoughts in front of face metaphor. Invite participants to walk through it with me. Focus on the clarity and perspective of opening up, seeing things as they are.
- In this video we will be learning skills at stepping back from thinking. Seeing thoughts as thoughts, even ones that are hard to have or appear to be true. Even thoughts we may have had about ourselves for a long time. We can learn how to unhook from them, see them for what they are, and choose to keep moving towards what is important to us.
- Many of these kinds of exercises can feel silly or can be a bit confusing at first. This is natural, and we invite you to give them a try and simply allow your experience to be your guide. Sometimes the silliest ones can actually be the most powerful. Even though some might be unusual or seem daft, we are never belittling your experience. We are simply trying to reduce the power that thoughts have over you. We can think about it as 'popping the bubble of language'. Our minds can be like a conjurer doing a magic trick. We are often taken in by the trick – we believe what our minds show us. However, if your mind is anything like my mind, there will be plenty of times when your mind has shown you something that didn't quite fit the facts, didn't add up, was an illusion. When we begin to see that more clearly – it's like we have seen how the conjurer does the trick, and once that happens, we can never quite go back to not seeing it. We start to really see the mind as simply a series of judgements, comparisons, predictions.
- Now – your mind is not your enemy. Sometimes the judgements, comparisons, predictions, and plans that your mind gives you are in fact helpful and help us to live effectively in the world. However, it's probably fair to say that a great deal of the mind's activity is not as helpful or effective. We need to use our awareness, openness and values skills to determine which thoughts are going to be helpful to us and which are just mind chatter. These skills at unhooking help us to see that and to make choices.

### Video 9: Playing with thoughts (about 15 minutes)

- In this video we introduce more detail on the 'popping the bubble of language' skills. Introduce Mary had a little... Do what are the numbers? Show how easily programmable the mind is. Do milk, milk, milk. Clarify what the exercise points at. Thoughts are powerful, but in essence they are thoughts and pictures in our heads. We can choose how we respond to them. How we can pop this bubble even more strongly is to do something unusual with the thought. Introduce repeating a more difficult thought. Introduce the idea of singing the thoughts. Give the example of me in the palliative care trial. Introduce 'I'm having the thought that', introduce 'What would I say to a friend that was having this thought?' Introduce the notion that we 'have' our thoughts rather than that we 'are' our thoughts.

### Video 10: Leaves on the stream (about 10 minutes)

- In this exercise we will begin with a pleasant image and a neutral focus on thoughts, learning the skills to step back from thoughts and experience them as if they are separate from us.



- After some practice with that, we will deliberately bring to mind thoughts related to a tricky work situation and practice the same with that.

#### HOMEWORK:

- Practice Leaves on a Stream (mp3 audio file to support practice)
- Use the playing with thoughts tools
- Monitor what you use and its effects with the practice tracking tool

## SESSION 7:

### Video 11: Learning to treat yourself as you do others (about 10 minutes)

- Given that you are a palliative care professional it probably come easy to you to care for other people. You have given a significant portion of your time to the practice of caring, of being patient, kindly, and supportive to other people. Think of a recent work episode where you feel you gave good care. Let yourself notice the qualities that you brought to that. See if you can also think of a situation where a colleague was upset or affected by something at work. Let yourself notice what qualities you brought to that moment. How did you speak to them, what did you do for them? Now – ask yourself this: How often do I bring those same qualities to myself, that way of speaking to myself, particularly in moments when I am finding things tough?
- Highlight that almost all of us find it easier to be compassionate and kind to other people than we do to ourselves.
- Introduce the idea of self-kindness, self-compassion, self-support, self-care. Introduce the two teachers metaphor. Ask which teacher they would want for their child? Which teacher are they being for themselves? Link this to the metaphor of a craftsperson looking after their tools. What would it be like if we thought of self-compassion as cleaning and sharpening our tools every day?
- Introduce the idea of two types of self-support: in the moment actions: how we are talking to ourselves, standing towards ourselves in moments of difficulty, being patient with ourselves, talking supportively in our minds, versus beating ourselves up for not knowing the answer, for having doubt etc. The second type of self-support is ongoing self-maintenance – the pattern of activity of how we care for ourselves and keep our qualities bright. Every health professional would agree that attending regular CPD events is important to stay in touch with the profession. We can even think of regular self-support as part of that. Its giving you what you need to be able to do this demanding job.

### Video 12: How you are talking to yourself in a moment of difficulty exercise (about 10 minutes)

- Do a grounding mindfulness type of introduction. Then after a few moments, bring in a visualisation. Imagine that you could see a recent moment when you were at work and you were in a moment of difficulty. Perhaps it was a moment when you didn't know what to do, perhaps you were stressed, it was complex, perhaps you doubted yourself, your abilities or skills. Imagine you could see it as if you were there in the room, watching yourself in action. As you watch that version of yourself in that room, a health professional in action, you also know what is happening inside his or her mind and body in that moment of difficulty. Imagine that in the heat of the action, time stops. Whatever is happening in that room stops for a moment, and there is only the you that is here now, and the you that was there then. What would you want to say to the you there then, in that moment of difficulty? What might you offer them or give them in that moment? Imagine doing or saying that.... something kind, supportive, patient.... Now see if you can imagine what it would be like in a moment of difficulty like that, to receive those kind, friendly words from yourself. Imagine how that might change how you are in that moment? And then let the images drop away and return to the room gradually.

### HOMEWORK:

- After the 'Talking to yourself in a moment of Difficulty Exercise' – spend some moments reflecting on what that was like for you. Write some paragraphs describing what the exercise was like for you, what you take from it. How you could use that in the future.
- Ongoing Self Care Plan – Re-examine the worksheet. Have you been using it, or had it gathered dust? If it isn't being used then connect it with this self-support activity and re-engage in it.
- Post on our discussion forum about your ideas for self-care activity, make a public commitment to whatever you are able to commit to.

## **SESSION 8: Live Online (about 90 minutes)**

- Begin with a mindful settling in practice – 10 minutes
- Gentle enquiry – first about the exercise specifically, then about how this whole programme is going for participants?
- Specific probes to enquire about unhooking from thoughts, self-compassion and self-care activity – troubleshoot, celebrate
- Introduce the ending and highlight the need for continued self-maintenance. Use the tending the garden metaphor. You can think about this work as if it were like creating a wonderful garden. You already had a good garden, this programme has helped you to add to it, to shape it in certain ways. We have created new paths with you and planted new seeds, and your efforts in cultivating and nurturing these new shoots has led to new growth. If you go forward with the intention to keep tending the garden, a little care each day will keep the paths well-trodden, the weeds down and nature will simply do what it does and allow this to blossom. By giving a little time to it each day, you will be able to enjoy the fruits of your labour, for the rest of your life. The garden of yourself will be a place of refuge, safety, support for ever, even if life hands you difficult challenges. If on the other hand you leave the garden behind, don't keep walking in its paths, if you allow the weeds to grow, then those paths may be harder to walk in the future, it may be harder to get back to your garden and you might find that in itself a barrier. So, keep tinkering, pottering, exploring, developing and keep on growing a little each day.
- Ask for suggestions of how the participants can ensure they keep this live and active for themselves?
- Celebrate participant's experiences, good and not so good. Recognise and validate their courage persistence, engagement and effort.

**APPENDICES:**  
**WORKSHEETS, HANDOUTS AND HOMEWORK EXERCISES**

## Worksheet One: What's it like to work in Palliative Care?

Based on our experience of working in this field, and our own and other's previous research studies in this area, here are some statements that palliative care health professionals might say about what it's like to work in this field, the kinds of stresses it brings and how people deal with this. Read the statements below and see what you think. Do these feel familiar to you? Tick any that you feel that you identify with, and feel free to add your own. We will use these to get us started talking in our first meeting together.

"It's really meaningful, a privilege to be able to help people at this time"	
"When you are helping someone to have a 'good death' it's very rewarding, humbling even"	
"You do need to give something of yourself to do this job well"	
"Initiating conversations about DNR Care Planning can be distressing, you don't want to upset the person, the timing has to be right"	
"Working with someone who is the same age as me, or has children the same age as mine can be very challenging, because it feels much closer to home. It's harder to keep work separate then."	
"I try to keep work and home separate as much as possible, the journey from work helps that separation"	
"When patients or families are keeping on fighting, wanting every last treatment, finding it difficult to be realistic about their situation, it's very hard"	
"It's so much harder when a patient has uncontrollable symptoms or are very distressed, compared to if we can get their symptoms more manageable or they have made some shift to accepting their situation"	
"Working at end of life really makes you reflect on what is important in your own life and you feel it's more precious somehow."	
"In complex situations you can be left thinking, 'Did I do the right thing there?'. A certain amount of reflecting is OK, but you can go too far into that and start to question yourself and judge yourself. That's not so helpful."	
"Dealing with the emotions and the challenges is something that you can become more skilled at with time and practice experience"	
"People talk about 'looking after yourself' or 'self-care' but sometimes I don't really know what it is that I do to look after myself"	
"Sometimes just being with someone, staying present when it's hard for them (and for me) is just the most important thing. Just to stay with them"	
"Sometimes a family member will be really angry with you, and it helps just to remember that they aren't really angry at you. It's that they can't stand the situation they find themselves in and they are taking it out on whoever is there."	
"Being able to switch between sometimes thinking about the work, and just being able to distract and have fun at times, is really an important thing to learn how to do."	

"Finding the time to talk to your team and discuss together, especially a really complex situation or a very emotional situation, can help you feel less alone, and it stops you over thinking it."	
"It is upsetting sometimes, and sad. Being with people who have big regrets, or families that are so overwhelmed with the loss."	
"Doing things that are really absorbing outside of work is really important. So planning for doing sports, or reading a really good book, or watching a TV show that you can get lost in..."	
"The other thing that is really demanding is around staffing shortages, budget cuts, having to do more and more with less and less. The organisational pressures are really tough..."	
"I think it's healthy that people find this work challenging, or that its very tiring. It's OK to feel that way and not have to pretend that it's not hard, or to beat yourself up for finding it hard at times. We all do..."	
"There are times when you just need to swallow your own emotions and get through it, but it's important later to find a way to process that, maybe with a colleague, or by being active – going for a walk for example"	
"There has been times when I've put a brave face on and pretended I was OK, but then later I've realised – no I'm not. It would have been better to try and find a way to at least not kid to myself that everything was fine."	
"When a patient is very distressed, especially if we can't get pain or other symptoms well controlled, or if they are really fighting and not accepting... that is very hard to be with."	
"It bugs me a bit that other people, the public, think this must be a really sad job all the time. Because to me it's not, it's really a privilege to do what we do and quite often there can be a lot of humour and feeling helpful to other people."	
"When I'm listening to a colleague about what they are finding hard, maybe a tough situation at work, I'm really understanding and supportive. But if that's me that's having the hard time I find it so much harder to be vulnerable like that."	
"I think the biggest problem is when you go over and over something in your mind. It's like you can't let it go, and that can lead you right down the rabbit hole."	
"As well as the emotional nature of this work, we are all working in teams and well... people don't always get along do they? We might say something the wrong way or take something the wrong way because we are all harassed and in a hurry."	
Do you have other experiences of work stress that aren't captured in these statements? Write them here:	

## Worksheet Two: Values, Goals and Actions

Thinking of the video and exercise see if you can write those important values in the space below. Remember values are abstract and tend to be guiding principles rather than specific actions. If you are having difficulty describing your own values, you can pick from the list below the box, as a guide.

In this box: write words about each area of life that you care about and how you would most like it to be in your life. If an area doesn't resonate with you, that's fine. These are about your personal choices.

### Some values that other people have identified as important to them are:

Parenting:	Being the kind of parent you want to be
Family:	Being the kind of son or daughter, brother or sister that you most want to be
Intimate relationships:	Being the kind of wife or husband that you would most want to be
Community / society:	Contributing to or giving something back to your community
Spirituality:	Practices that foster your sense of spirituality or faith, however you define that personally
Self-care:	Treating yourself well, looking after your own health and wellbeing
Personal growth	Doing things to nurture your own development, knowledge, skills, ideas.
Friendship:	Being the kind of friend that you most want to be
Recreation / Fun	Doing things to have fun, relax
Creativity	Doing things to express yourself in whatever medium of your choice

Now reflect on those values that you have identified as important to you and try to consider goals and actions within each of these areas. Goals are more specific destinations that you will visit as you travel in your valued direction and actions are the steps you will take to travel. For example, if you chose the value of

being a friendly colleague in your work as a health professional, one goal that might be in that direction is to encourage others to take a lunch break with you. An action that leads in that direction could be to suggest to a colleague at the beginning of the day that you take a break together. Use the table below to consider how the values that you feel are important to you could be translated into goals and actions. Try to consider goals and actions in each of the value areas that you wrote about on the previous page. Don't be too concerned at this stage if it's possible, or if it will be difficult, or even about if you can or will commit to these. Some of these you will already be doing, some may be new. At this stage, let yourself just think and dream and wish for what you would really want. We will deal with obstacles later!

Value	Goal	Action



### Worksheet Three: Awareness in Everyday Life

Growing our awareness skills is really two things: firstly its practicing meditation exercises to enhance our ability to notice the world around us, and the world inside us in a non-reactive way. Secondly, it is applying these skills in everyday situations. These are easier to do in calm or neutral situations, and we usually have to practice in those kinds of situations to be able to eventually use these skills when we are in a high-pressure situation.

To help you practice awareness in everyday life, choose three activities that you do each day. These can be any activities, for example, brushing your teeth, tying your shoe laces, eating your breakfast. It helps if they are neutral tasks that are relatively short. It's not realistic to expect yourself to be mindful for long periods of time, or when you are under pressure (at least not at first).

Practice approaching these tasks with the same qualities of present moment awareness that you encounter in the meditation exercises. For example, if you choose 'Brushing my teeth', pay attention to the feel of your toothbrush in your hand, the 'squeezy-ness' of the toothpaste tube, the coldness and minty-ness of the toothpaste in your mouth, notice how it feels as your mouth foams up, feel the toothbrush moving on your teeth and gums etc. If your mind wanders off during the tooth brushing, simply observe that and bring your attention gently back to the sounds, sensations, and sights of brushing your teeth.

These tasks then become a cue to paying attention more purposefully in everyday life. Just like any kind of training, the more you practice these the better your skills at staying present will become.

Use this sheet to identify and commit to daily awareness building tasks and to record how you are doing on each one.

**I will commit for the next week to bring a present moment focus of attention to the following three daily activities:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Put this sheet somewhere where it will remind you each day. Use this chart to tick to record that you have remembered to engage in this task:

Task	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1							
2							
3							

## Worksheet Four: Active Self Care

In our previous research, a number of people said that they knew looking after yourself is important in this line of work, but they didn't really know exactly what they did to do that. Other people said that they had very explicit activities that they do to unwind and look after themselves. Those that mentioned having an explicit self-care plan all spoke of how beneficial it was. This worksheet uses that knowledge to help you to be more explicit about activities that you can engage in that help you to deal effectively with the challenges of working in palliative care.

The first section builds on your awareness skills by asking you to notice how you carry stress. For some people they might feel muscle tension, headaches, for others it might be that they feel less enthusiastic about things. Other people find their sleep pattern is the first thing to tell them they are stressed. Other people find they comfort eat.

The second section asks you to generate ideas about things you can do to actively look after yourself. These may be things you already do or have heard about other people doing or have thought about doing. When putting things in this box there is no expectation that you will do them – it is just to have a place to generate and park ideas.

The third section asks you to construct a plan for things that you will do regularly to help you to maintain your active self-care. This plan can be altered at any time, be flexible with it. Each box has some examples as suggestions, but you can make your own if these don't suit you. Notice how the examples are as specific as possible.

Signs that I am carrying stress:

(e.g. waking early in the morning and not able to get back to sleep, irritable with my children)

Ideas about things I can do to respond effectively:

(e.g. going for a walk, doing a Joe Wickes exercise video, phoning a friend)

What will I do regularly to maintain my wellbeing:

(e.g. I will take an actual 30-minute lunch break, I will plan to do a family walk, I will go for a bike ride on Saturday, I will book a massage every other month, I will do yoga twice a week)

### Worksheet Five: Barriers and how to deal with them

You may have noticed that once we set ourselves a goal or a direction, it's quite likely that obstacles will appear! Sometimes these are obstacles in the world out there and sometimes they are obstacles that our own mind has generated. This worksheet helps you to track the barriers and how you deal with them. It's part of our overall 'building awareness' skill set. If you find yourself blocked in your progress of actions, goals and values, try to write down the barrier, and how you responded to it. Try to identify the immediate (short term) *and* the longer-term consequences. Short term consequences are usually very powerful, even if the long-term consequences are undesirable. Tracking consequences in this way can help you to see which choices are effective and which need some work. That work will be the subject of later sessions. There is an example completed for you, but you can use this for your own examples.

ACTION or GOAL	BARRIER	What I did?	What happened next? SHORT TERM	What happened then? LONGER TERM	What could I do differently?
<i>I wanted to eat more healthily</i>	<i>Was tired and late home so I couldn't be bothered cooking</i>	<i>I put on a pizza from the freezer</i>	<i>Relief, less effort, easy tea, yummy pizza!</i>	<i>I felt bad, I felt like giving up, I'm not being as healthy as I want</i>	<i>Well, first not beat myself up: change is hard! I could cook on Sunday and freeze portions. I could use the slow cooker.</i>

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ACTION or GOAL	BARRIER	What I did?	What happened next? SHORT TERM	What happened then? LONGER TERM	What could I do differently?

### Worksheet Six: Practicing Unhooking Skills

To help you in developing your stepping back skills, it can be helpful to track which skills you have been using. Use the sheet below to reflect each day which of the types of 'unhooking' exercises you have been using. Tick the box if you have used that technique that day, you can use as many as you like. To remind you of the different skills, they are described overleaf.

Exercise	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
1 "I'm having the thought that..."							
2 Saying thoughts in a different voice							
3 Singing thoughts							
4. Thought repetition (milk, milk, milk)							
5. Leaves on a stream (seeing thoughts external to me)							
6. Perspective taking (what would I say to....)							
7. Seeing the thoughts as MINE, but not ME							
Write here any other techniques you've been using to step back from thoughts and feelings:							
What has been the effect of practicing 'unhooking'? Make any notes here, what have you noticed?							

## **The different unhooking skills:**

**“I’m having the thought that”:** When you catch yourself having a thought that is unpleasant or hard to have, for example “Oh my god I can’t deal with this!” See if you can catch yourself, take a deep breath and rephrase it in your mind “I am having the thought: ‘Oh my God, I can’t deal with this’”. After saying it like that for a moment, try one more step, by saying in your mind, “I am noticing that I am having the thought, “Oh my God I can’t deal with this”

**Singing thoughts:** Choose a go to tune that you can use. For me (David) for some reason it worked well when the tune was ‘Don’t blame it on the boogie’. Sing your tricky thought to that tune (either in your mind or out loud – depending on the situation). I think it’s good to have a tune prepared, but you can experiment with mixing it up and using different tunes. Even though this is one of the more unusual unhooking skills, it’s also one of the most powerful. It can radically change how we deal with our thoughts, even the ones that could be true.

**Saying thoughts in a different voice:** Just like the singing your thoughts exercise, this one is one of the more unusual ones. Think of a person that you could imagine saying your tricky thoughts. It might be helpful to practice this in advance, before the ‘heat of the moment’. Imagine the Queen saying it, or imagine Billy Connolly saying your thoughts. It could be a character such as Yoda, Marge Simpson, or Batman. Alternatively you could imagine something general such as a robot voice saying the thought.

**Thought Repetition:** Remember the milk, milk, milk exercise? Take your tricky thought and boil it down to its essential oil: what one word would represent this thought? For example, if I were facing a challenge and I had the worry: “What if I mess this up?” I might boil that down to the word ‘Fail’. With this exercise, I repeat the word fail over and over for about 90 seconds. Use a watch or timer to do it rather than just guessing. The first 20 seconds you will usually notice a rise in stress about it, keep going through that and see what happens.

**Leaves on a stream:** This is the exercise we practiced, and you can practice it on your own using the audio MP3 file. In addition, once you get familiar with the practice, you can use this activity when you have a tricky thought. Simply take a moment to imagine that you could see the tricky thought outside of your mind. Imagine what it would look like on a leaf floating past you on the stream? It may float off, or it might linger with you, just see if you can watch it. Notice what it is like to see it outside of you: you are here, the thought is over there.

**Perspective Taking:** When you have a tricky thought, try and catch it and ask yourself, “If a friend told me they were having this thought, what might I say to them?” See if you can also extend that same supportive, friendly voice to yourself.

**My thoughts are mine; they are not me:** When you catch a tricky thought, see if you can notice that there is a difference between the you that is having the thought and the thought itself. This thought does not describe the whole of you. It might be part of you, but YOU are having it. You are bigger than your thoughts. Thoughts might be like clouds in the sky. See if you can notice what it feels like to say, “I am the sky, not the clouds.”

### Worksheet Seven: Revisiting active self-care

Taking everything that you have learned from this programme into the future, revisit the active self-care worksheet. You'll notice it now also has some additional elements around overcoming obstacles. After completing this, put it somewhere as a reminder to you to keep this part of your life active. Revisit this regularly, keep this document live.

<p>What will I do regularly to maintain my wellbeing: (e.g. I will take an actual 30-minute lunch break, I will plan to do a family walk, I will go for a bike ride on Saturday, I will book a massage every other month, I will do yoga twice a week)</p>	
<p>External Barriers that I will need to plan and problem solve (e.g. shift patterns, seasons, lockdown etc)</p>	
<p>Internal Barriers (e.g. thoughts, feelings, sensations, energy etc.)</p>	<p>What skills can I use to tackle these barriers?</p>