



“Try Another Way” ©



Making Decisions

Contents

<i>How do I make this work?</i>	2
<i>What else can help?</i>	2
<i>Why I started to cut down</i>	3
<i>There’s not just one way to cut down</i>	3
<i>Not the way to do it</i>	3
<i>Reviewing your substance use:</i>	4
<i>Reviewing your substance use:</i>	5
<i>Reviewing your substance use: summary</i>	6



May 10 Version 4

I have got this far what now?



The first step in the “*Try Another Way*” © program is to put on paper your reasons for wanting to cut down or stop.

Changing something you have done for a long time isn’t easy.

Sometimes no matter what substance you are using doesn’t seem to be helping, but it feels better than when they are stopped.

When we change any behaviour, there has to be a good reason to do so. If we don’t have a good reason, then we usually don’t stick to it.



The Reviewing Your Substance Use Worksheets at the end of this newsletter, asks you to think about how using substances helps you. You will need to be honest with yourself, when you fill it in.

Now think about all the things that haven’t gone okay while taking substances

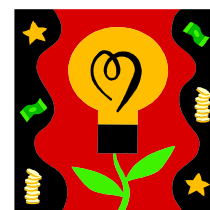


Sometimes you don’t know whether you will make it.

You are also asked to think about what it would be like not using substances? What would be good about it and would be the not so good things?

It is important to sit and think about both the good and less good things, for both using and stopping substances, so that you can find the reasons that will help you to continue to reduce or cease your substance use, even when you don’t feel good.

One of the ways to remind you of your reasons for cutting down or ceasing is to sticky tape the summary sheet to the fridge, mirror or wardrobe. This will help remind you each day why you have made a decision to try and cut down or stay stopped.



How do I make this program work?

1. Keep in regular contact with your Doctor.
2. Use the My Cutting Down Guide to help you to work out when you are going to take your tablets and when you are going to cut back.
3. Record every substance you take on the Record Sheet even if you have stopped it every day.
4. Complete the Reviewing Your Use worksheets.
5. Write down your reasons for stopping and sticky tape to the fridge or mirror. Use this to remind yourself that you can do this.



What else can help?

Keep a diary: write down how things are going each day. It is another way of checking how you have been going and how you have been coping. Filling it out at the end of each day gives you a chance to think about how the day went. As you look back over the diary, you will be able to see your ups and downs. Hopefully, there will be more ups than downs. Even if you have already



stopped, write down how each day has gone and remind yourself of how things are going since you stopped.

Alcohol: some people cope with cutting down or not taking other substances by drinking more alcohol. Doing this only leads to more problems. Try to cut down or even stop using alcohol while you cut down or cease other substance use. No matter

whether you are trying to cut back your alcohol or other substance use, try a light beer or only drink one to two cans of super (heavy beer), no more than 4 days of the week. Turn your wine into a spritzig by adding half a glass of soda water. Drinking less during this period, will also help you stick to your goal.



The following stories are from individuals who have tried to cut down their use of benzodiazepines. Their experiences are similar to other individuals who are trying to reduce or cease substance use. I hope you find their journey of assistance to you in your endeavours to cut back or cease substance use

My Story

Why I started to cut down the benzos



Meg started taking benzos 30 years ago. She wasn't coping and was having morbid thoughts. The tablets gave her courage *“and calmed the system down”*. Over the next 10 years, Meg took more and more tablets in order to feel good. During that time she was getting angry with herself because things weren't going right. Meg says, *“I decided to take control of my life. I had been through 10 years of therapy. I had been through a lot of therapists and I got sick of being stuck in the house. I got sick of not having a life and I wanted my life back. I wanted control of my life again and I decided that the only person who could help me was me. So I had a complete turn around because when I first got sick, it was oh me, poor me, this is happening to me but nobody really cares and I*

wanted people to care but nobody wanted to care. Nobody helped me, it was my problem, I had to deal with it”.

Meg also said, *“Since I have come off the tablets, I have grown a great deal. I have become a very strong person, a very opinionated person and a person to protect myself as well”*.



There is not just one way to cut down

Stephen said, “I guess I would call it a gradual weaning off. I just broke the tablets up, so I had 3/8ths for 2 to 3 weeks, then a 1/4 for 2 or 3 weeks and 1/8th for 2 or 3 or 4 weeks and finally none. I think I might have gone to sort of a crumb for a couple of weeks but at no stage did I have any ill effects or find that I couldn’t sleep or anything”.

Jane had a different



experience. She found that she could cope with life on 1/3 of a 5mg tablet. “I stayed like that, on the absolute minimum for another 12 years”.

With information and support from friends and a support group, Jane was eventually able to stop.

Trevor was on four valium per day for about 14 years. After having surgery, he didn’t need the tablets any more. He says, “the doctor put me on two Valium[©] a day and



he cut me back to one a day and he said no more. I just went off them. Just the same as if you go off, that you have a drink of water and you just put the glass down and that is it”.

If you have already stopped, look back at your Cutting Down Guide and think about how you did it.

Not the way to do it

Vic is a Veteran and is on other medicines to help with ongoing stress. His doctor recommended that he come off the benzos.

Vic says, “the doctor reckons it is going to take him two years to get me off these things they have got me on. He is going to persevere and do it, he says. So what I did, I went cold turkey. Cold turkey on the

Valium[©] and cold turkey on the coffee. It was the wrong thing to do, because I finished up in his surgery, in an absolute mess”.

Sam also found that **Cold Turkey** isn’t the way to go. “I’ve stopped it myself on numerous occasions, I have just cut it out and I went through three weeks of withdrawals, shakes, tremors, feeling sick, nausea, agitation,

nervousness, listlessness, sleeplessness, every side effect there was.

I have been through, the sweats, the vomiting, the diarrhoea, constipation and I have pulled myself off them. I went cold turkey. **Turkey isn’t the way to go**”.



“Try Another Way”[©] Program

Produced by Jan Parr as part of a self-managed trial for cessation of benzodiazepine use. The finding of this study will be published in Drug and Alcohol Review in 2011.

Reviewing your Substance use

Take the time to think about what is okay and not okay about using and cutting down your substance use. Follow the instructions in each column.

<p>Checklist 1: How does using substances help me?</p>	<p>Checklist 2: What don't you like about using them?</p>	<p>Checklist 3: What would be good about cutting down or stopping?</p>	<p>Checklist 4: What makes it hard to cut down or stop? What gets in the way?</p>
<p>Tick the comments that you agree with, and add other comments at the bottom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Calms me down <input type="checkbox"/> Helps me to cope <input type="checkbox"/> Helps me sleep <input type="checkbox"/> Helps me get through things that stress me <input type="checkbox"/> Can cope with pressure from work <input type="checkbox"/> Problems don't bother me so much <input type="checkbox"/> Feel good <input type="checkbox"/> Relieves pain <input type="checkbox"/> Controls negative thoughts <input type="checkbox"/> Cope with medical problems <input type="checkbox"/> Stops me being uptight <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps panic attacks under control <input type="checkbox"/> Like the feeling in my body <input type="checkbox"/> Don't stress out as much <input type="checkbox"/> Feel confident <input type="checkbox"/> Kills anxiety <input type="checkbox"/> Stops the panic <input type="checkbox"/> Makes me feel I can deal with the world <input type="checkbox"/> Helps me unwind <p>Add your own _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Now go onto checklist 2 and think about the reasons you don't like being on benzos.</p>	<p>Tick the comments that you agree with, and add other comments at the bottom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Feel depressed <input type="checkbox"/> Feel hung over in the morning <input type="checkbox"/> Can't be bothered with anything <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of energy <input type="checkbox"/> Going to sleep during the day <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to remember things or think clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Using more t than I should <input type="checkbox"/> I worry about my health <input type="checkbox"/> Find it hard to get other stuff done <input type="checkbox"/> Worry about how it's affecting my kids <input type="checkbox"/> Feel bad about myself <input type="checkbox"/> Feel tired a lot of the time <input type="checkbox"/> Have to hide it from other people <input type="checkbox"/> Makes it hard to work or get a job or study <input type="checkbox"/> Get angry with myself <input type="checkbox"/> Makes me lethargic <p>Add your own _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Now, flip the coin over and think about what it would be like if you stop the benzos. Tick all the boxes in Checklist 3 that fit for you.</p>	<p>Tick the comments that you agree with, and add other comments at the bottom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Feel healthier <input type="checkbox"/> Get other things done <input type="checkbox"/> Be able to work better or find work <input type="checkbox"/> More energy <input type="checkbox"/> Think more clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Feel better about myself <input type="checkbox"/> Look better or healthier <input type="checkbox"/> Be a better parent <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy other things in life <input type="checkbox"/> Being able to sleep without substances. <input type="checkbox"/> Remember things better <input type="checkbox"/> Save money for other things that are important to me <input type="checkbox"/> Be able to get out and about <input type="checkbox"/> I want my life back <input type="checkbox"/> Time to get off <input type="checkbox"/> Don't want to be addicted <input type="checkbox"/> Get involved in other activities <p>Add your own _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Now, think about all the reasons why cutting down won't work and see if they are in Checklist 4.</p>	<p>Tick the comments that you agree with, and add other comments at the bottom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Addicted <input type="checkbox"/> No-one around to help me do it <input type="checkbox"/> They are too easy to get hold of <input type="checkbox"/> Still enjoy using them <input type="checkbox"/> Help to deal with problems <input type="checkbox"/> Scared will get the shakes and jitters again <input type="checkbox"/> Can't sleep when I stop or cut down <input type="checkbox"/> Won't be able to deal with unpleasant feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Cravings – think about them a lot <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling irritable or moody when I stop or cut down <input type="checkbox"/> Boredom <input type="checkbox"/> Risk of stuffing up when I try new things <input type="checkbox"/> Won't be able to relax or unwind <p>Add your own _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>I have done all this, now what? Turn over the page and have a go at working out what is more important to you, keeping on using or trying to cut down or stop?</p>

(Adapted from H. Mentha, Getting out of it: How to cut down or stop cannabis)

Reviewing Your Substance Use - Example

All of the information from each of the checklists has been put into the table.

	Keep using substance use	Cutting down substance use
Good outcomes	<p><i>Checklist 1: How does using substances help me?</i></p> <p>keeps me calm, relaxed, helps me sleep, stops me worrying about nothing, I can't cope without them, they make me feel good, slows everything down, takes away panic feelings, helps me sleep</p>	<p><i>Checklist 3: What would be good about cutting down or stopping?</i></p> <p>Won't be on them any more, won't have to rely on a substance to cope, don't want to be taking substances any more, think more clearly, feel better about my self</p>
Not so good outcomes	<p><i>Checklist 2: What don't you like about using them?</i></p> <p>Don't work as well, I take more than I should, I feel hung over in the morning, don't like being addicted, wake up with a thick head, worry about my health</p>	<p><i>Checklist 4: So what makes it hard to stop or cut down?</i></p> <p>I won't be able to live without them, still help me cope, won't be able to cope with the world, afraid of withdrawals, can't sleep when I stop</p>

Cutting down substance use	Keep using substances
1. Don't like being addicted	1. Afraid of withdrawals
2. Not working any more	2. Won't be able to cope
3. wake up with a thick head	3. Will get sick again

The most important reasons for cutting down and keeping on using have been written down.

Now comes the difficult part: Weighing everything up

My decision is?

I would like to try cutting down my substance use because I think I can cope without them.



Reviewing your substance use - Summary

Having thought about the good and not so good things about using and stopping your substance use, it's time to put it all together in a table. Follow the instructions in each of the boxes. Check out the example on page 5.

	Keep using substance	Cutting down substance use
Good outcomes	<i>Checklist 1: How does using Substances help me?</i>	<i>Checklist 3: What would be good about cutting down or stopping?</i>
Not so good outcomes	<i>Checklist 2: What don't you like about using them?</i>	<i>Checklist 4: So what makes it hard to stop or cut down?</i>

Write down the most important reasons for cutting down and keeping on using

Cutting down substance use	Keep using substances
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Now comes the difficult part: Weighing everything up

My decision is:





Sleeping Better

Practising the tips can result in a better night's sleep

Can't sleep: What do I do?



Difficulty going to sleep or waking up during the night is common

The tips in this newsletter may just make a difference. It is like learning to ride a bike or drive a car, it takes time. You may not see the benefit for a while. It doesn't mean that they don't work. However, if you don't practice them every time you go to bed, they will never work. If after a week, there isn't any improvement, talk to your Doctor or other Health Professional.

Before you go to bed

It is important that you prepare yourself for sleep. Going for a run or vacuuming the house just before you go to bed may make it less likely that you will go to sleep right away. Drinking alcohol before bed means that your sleep may not be as deep as it should be.

Instead: develop a relaxing routine such as:

- have a hot milk or camomile or valerian or other herbal tea
- read a book
- have a warm bath or shower
- listen to music.

Going to sleep

- Go to bed only when you feel sleepy. Try going to bed about the same time every night.
- Get up and go to another room if still awake after 20 minutes of trying to go to sleep.
- While awake, don't smoke or drink coffee. Don't do strenuous exercise or housework. Read a book, watch TV, build a model boat, do some craft or anything else that is quiet and relaxing.
- Go back to bed 60-90 minutes later and try to sleep again. Get up again if still awake 20 minutes later.



Remember no smoking or coffee.

Can't sleep: What do I do? (con't)

Next day

- Set the alarm for when you would normally get out of bed and get up at that time, no matter how much sleep you have had.
- Try not to have a day time nap.

You may not get very much sleep for the first couple of nights but your body will eventually get used to the routine.

Use the Sleep Record Sheet to track how things go over the next fortnight.

More hints

There is nothing more annoying than waking up at night and thinking about all the things that have happened during the day, especially the things that have gone wrong, or worrying about what might happen tomorrow.



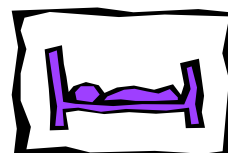
Go find your diary and write down the things that are bugging you. Remember, if you are still writing 20 minutes later, you will need to get out of bed and continue to write somewhere else.

Think up some positive coping self statements to help block out the negative thoughts. Be inventive. Write them into your diary so that you can remember them.

Can't think of your own - try these:

- I am here to go to sleep not to worry.
- My problems will still be there tomorrow so I will worry about them then.

(con't over the page).



More hints (con't)



Another useful way to stop the brain going over things is to keep saying to yourself the word "relax". Your brain will want to go back to what it was worrying about but you can eventually trick it into becoming relaxed.

If you find that you are going to bed early and waking up early, try spending time out in the sun in the late afternoon. You might like to go for a walk, weed the garden, chat to the neighbour over the back fence. Anything is okay as long as you spend at least 30 minutes outside.

This suggestion isn't just for the older person. If you are a shift worker, have jet lag, or have been ill, give it a go.



My Story

What I did to help me sleep



Many people find it difficult to go to sleep or to stay asleep. Two people shared their approach to sleeping better.

Nellie said that when she can't sleep she "*gets up and does various things*". At the moment, Nellie is making a patchwork blanket. She also said, "*finding things to do, that is the key I think. Get into hobbies, do some reading, do some exercise, have a nice long hot bath*".

Shaune found, "*that meditation is what has eased the pain in my left shoulder*", which helped her sleep better at night.



I just can't sleep



Ted is 80 years old. He lives by himself as his wife died 6 years ago. He was finding it extremely difficult to get a good night's sleep as he kept on thinking about everything he had to do.

His doctor referred him to a Psychiatrist, who prescribed Temaze[®] to help Ted sleep at night.

Unfortunately, the problems that led to Ted not sleeping were not even talked about.

Eventually, Ted was referred to the local Community Health Centre where he was assessed for Home Care Assistance and was encouraged to join the local Senior Citizens' group.

I don't know the outcome of Ted's story, but he was given the chance to talk about being on his own after the death of his wife and to find out what community assistance he was entitled to.



"Try Another Way" ©

Program

Produced by Jan Parr as part of a self-managed trial for cessation of benzodiazepine use. The finding of this study will be published in Drug and Alcohol Review in 2011.





Straight Thinking

Ever wondered what to do when you can't think straight?



You have been going along just fine or just managing to hold things together, then it happens, something that you aren't able to deal with. It could be a crisis or something that has been there a long time.

The Straight Thinking Plan may help you cope with these situations and help keep you on track.

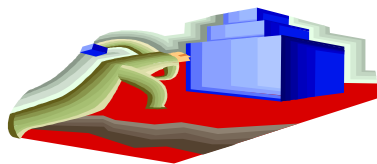
The first step in the “Try Another Way” © Straight Thinking Plan is “Don't Panic”.

Step two, sit down and think about what is happening at the moment. Write it down on your Plan. Putting things down on paper helps the brain begin to work out how to deal with the problem.

The next step is to think about “what is the problem?”. What is it that you are having difficulty dealing with? Once you have worked that out, you can start to think about how you may be able to make the problem smaller or even get rid of it.



There are many ways to deal with problems, some sensible and some not. “Try Another Way” © allows you to think of non sensible ways as well as sensible ones to deal with problems. Write down your ideas about how you can deal with the problem. Remember, you don't have to be sensible while doing this.



Now comes the hard part, finding another way. It's time to go look at what you have written in your Plan and think about a couple of ways that **could** help you deal with the problem. But, they have to be ones that you might be able to put into practice!



Trying a different way isn't easy, but doing nothing or keeping on doing what you have always done may not be the best way to go.

Thinking straight will only work if you take the time to practise. Start with something not too difficult, then try doing it with something harder.

There are often no solutions to life problems, but it is possible to try other ways to deal with them.

Use the Straight Thinking Plan to practice a different way to deal with a problem. Every time you come across a problem write it down in your diary and come up with a Straight Thinking Plan to deal with it.

Steps to Straight Thinking

1. Don't Panic
2. What is the problem?
3. Write down ways to deal with it (can be non-sensible)
4. What are the best two ideas that could work?
5. Try your best idea
6. If it doesn't work, try another way

Practice is the key to success



I can make it



My Story

Straight thinking - My way



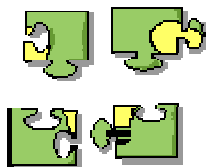
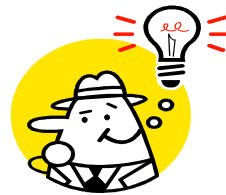
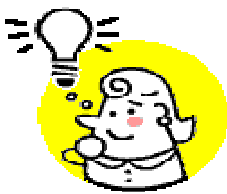
Justine has her own way of dealing with problems.

"If I am upset and depressed, or down or something, I sit down and I say now, okay is it because we had a fight this morning, or is it because I got a big bill coming up and I don't know how I am going to do something about it? Is it because there is other pressures, I go through, was it because the neighbours were drunk last night and they started fighting?"

So you just go through your checklist, then I look at everything and I think okay what can I do about it.

I have a big bill, I have got to pay it off. I don't know how I am going to do food. So, okay let's explore some options, we might go into dry food instead of frozen food or something which is a cheaper option, and quite nutritious, you know. By the time you have got your beans or rice and I think it encourages yourself, I might be having a tough time, say eh look I am getting through this and just feel good about getting through something. It is tough, but if you can do it tough, and you get through it, I think you have accomplished a great deal.

I think the person looking back in the mirror, she's the one, or he's the one whose going to get you through the day. There is nobody else around who is going to get you through, but the person looking back in the mirror. So if you look at the person in the mirror and you are happy with what you see, that's great. If you are not happy, get out and you know do something for yourself to cheer yourself up. Sometimes just a woman buying a lipstick, can do more than a tribe of doctors".



Straight Thinking Plan

1. Don't panic

2. What is happening at the moment?

3. Why am I having problems with this?

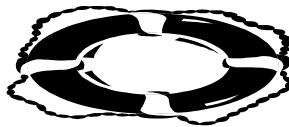
4. Write down some ideas that might reduce or fix the problem (can be non-sensible).

5. What are my best two ideas?

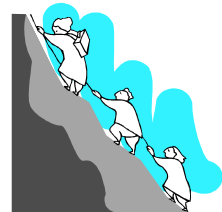
6. Which one will I try first?

“Try Another Way” © means doing *something* even when you feel like just sitting down and doing nothing.

**Remember: if it doesn't work, try another way.
Don't Give Up and Don't Panic**



Thinking straight may be your lifeline



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“Try Another Way” ©



Be Active

Being active helps keep you on track

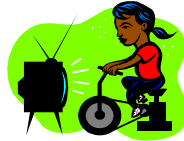


Often, when things aren't going okay, all you want to do is nothing. Guess what? Do you really feel better when you do nothing?

“Try Another Way” © means doing something when things aren't going okay rather than doing nothing . It doesn't matter what it is, as long as it is not sitting there worrying about what is going wrong.

Think about what is going right and how you can make it even better, but thinking by itself is not going to keep you on track.

Being active is also important. It doesn't mean going out and pumping iron or climbing the nearest mountain. But it does mean thinking about what else can I do? What do I have the time and money to do? What interests me? What can I do on a daily, weekly or monthly basis?



It is really hard to be enthusiastic about things when things are not going right. But, doing something active helps *make things right*. It also keeps your mind off the things that aren't going right.

It is really important that you are able to do something active every day of the week. It can be by yourself, with a group, indoors or out, cost you money or is free. No matter what it is, doing it is part of “Try Another Way” ©.

Now go to the Fun Time List - Tick all the one's you might like to try. Write them on the Fun Time Plan.



My Story

What kept me on track

Many people shared their stories with being active as part of a research project to help people cease benzodiazepine use.

Sheila got into a lot of heavy exercise “*like really physical stuff, bit of kick boxing and I would often go for good hard walks, up the hill and sweat it out*”.

Nellie also got very active. “*I raced around that oval until I got myself so pooped and tired to get myself to sleep*”.

Shaune found a much more gentler way of doing things “*meditation as well as Tai Chi*”.

Having a friend take charge helped Susan to cut down. “*He made me go fishing and camping, places where there was no access to anything, no alcohol*”.

Michael took another way. He found yoga. He says, “*it was intense, 4-5 times per week, for 2-3 months*”.

Remember: Be active



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Fun Time Plan

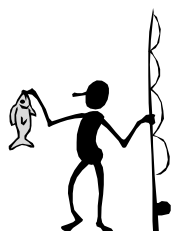
1. Write down all the activities you would like to do (See Fun Time List on the next page for ideas)

2. Which one’s could you do at least once per week? (remember you need to be active at least 5 days per week).

3. What could stop you being active?

4. Which one will you try first?

The important thing is to “Try Another Way” © . Don’t give up if your ideas don’t work. Go back to your list and think again.

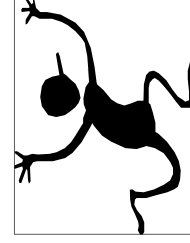


Fun Time List

Some of these activities you would never dream of doing. Be daring, be honest, be frugal, but give some of them a go. Tick the ones you might be interested in. Come up with some of your own. Put your plan on the next page of this newsletter. Give it a go and have fun. Remember, practice is the key. You won't feel better unless you do something every day and make it part of your daily routine. For the next 2 weeks use the record sheet to track the activities you tried each day.

Physical Activities	Creative Activities
Tai Chi	Hobbies
Yoga	Writing a journal/poetry/songs
Exercise classes	Painting/drawing
Jogging	Reading
Kick boxing	Making jewellery
Swimming	Sewing
Walking/ bushwalking	Learning a musical instrument
Running	Art/Craft classes
Playing a team sport	Writing letters
Tennis/squash	Learning to dance
Mowing the lawn	Cooking
Bike riding	Photography
Bowls (indoor, tenpin, lawn)	Pottery
Recreational Activities	Pampering Yourself
Fishing	Hot bath/bubble bath/spa
Bird watching	Therapeutic massage
Spending time at the beach	Relaxation exercises
Going camping	Meditation
Gardening	Listening to music radio
	Improving your appearance

Religious involvement	Entertaining Activities
Going to church	Visiting museum/art gallery
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Mental Exercise	Other Activities
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Playing chess	Doing a TAFE course
Jigsaw puzzles	Exploring one's community
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Board games	Collecting objects eg stamps, coins
Social Activities	Visiting the neighbourhood centre
Meeting a friend for coffee/lunch	Joining the library
Have a BBQ/picnic	Redecorating/rearranging the unit/ house
Joining a social/community club	

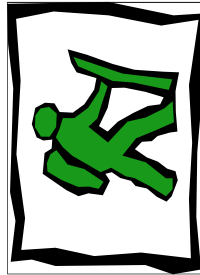
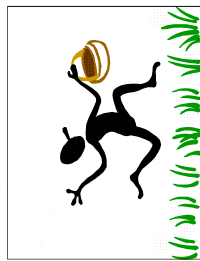


Fun Time Record Sheet

Over the next 2 weeks record all the activities that you have tried. It is okay to try something and never do it again. There is always something we would like to do if we had the time or money. Now is the chance to give it a go. It doesn't matter what others think or say. Most of us hate recording what we do or putting everything down on paper, but if you record every day the active things that you have done, by the end of the fortnight you may be pleasantly surprised.

Remember: Give it a go.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1							
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							
Week 2							
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							





Coping with Worrying About What Might Happen

Use these ideas to stay in control

Contents

- 2 *What else can I do - slow down your breathing*
- 2 *Control your thinking*
- 2 *Relaxation*
- 2 *Be active*
- 2 *My story*
- 3 *Other newsletters*
- 4 *Notes*
- 5 *Fun time list*
- 6 *Fun time record sheet*
- 7 *My coping plan*

I just feel like I'm dying



Sometimes concerns about “what might happen” or negative feelings and thoughts seem to appear out of no

-where. Have you ever thought how did all this start? The first step in learning a new way to do things is to think back about how things start.

Ever come across a situation like this?

Walk into supermarket



Heart beats faster, start to breathe harder



Think must be having a heart attack, making a fool of myself



Leave supermarket



Get breathing back under control



Don't go to supermarket again

Or, has this ever happened to you?



Have to wake up early



Worry about not getting up on time



Don't sleep very well



Get out bed feeling tired



Don't have any energy



Start to worry about not coping



Go to the Doctor



Once this pattern starts, it keeps going like a downward spiral.

Next time it all happens try this

Walk into supermarket



Heart beats faster



Stop



Tell yourself you are in charge



Slow down your breathing



Stay with the feelings until they stop

Taking charge of your worry and panic means accepting that no matter how bad you are feeling, you are not having a heart attack or making a fool of yourself. By standing and facing your thoughts and feelings, rather than avoiding them, you find them fading away.

You can also take charge of your worrying before and when you are in bed and still wake up on time. Try this or come up with a better one.

Set two alarms, one 5 minutes later



Have a warm milk before bed



Go to bed earlier than usual



Start to worry



Tell yourself you are in charge and will wake up on time

So what else can I do?

1. Write in a diary every day

Keeping a daily diary allows you to keep track of how you are getting better at taking charge. Writing down your worries and what you did to get them under control allows you to think through what has been happening. You can then go back a week later and see how you are going. (con't over page)

So what else can I do? (con't)



Sometimes there are things that you don't want anyone else to know about, write these down on another piece of paper and then rip it up and put in the bin.

2. Slow down your breathing

When things aren't going okay you tend to breathe faster and from the chest and not the diaphragm. To get everything back under control, it is important to stop and consciously slow down your breathing.

Keeping your breathing to one every 6 seconds will help. That is, breath out for 3 seconds and then in for 3 seconds. Try saying out-out-out as you breathe out and in-in-in as you breathe in. Keep breathing slowly until your heart stops pounding. If you are in a shopping centre walk outside and sit down and concentrate on your breathing. Then return to the supermarket and continue with your shopping.



Practise slow breathing every day, so that when you are feeling totally out of control, you will be able to do it.

3. Control your thinking



Taking charge of your thinking means replacing all those negative thoughts with positive ones. This means believing that you are in control and that using positive thoughts can make things better.

Try these for a start:

- I am only feeling stressed and I can cope with these feelings.
- I will focus on what is happening and not what might happen.
- I will control my thinking and not add to my worry or fears.
- I will sit quietly until it fades away.
- These feelings cannot harm me.
- Nothing awful is going to happen to me.
- I will stay here and practise my breathing until I feel better.



If those ideas don't work, try this. Look around and find five things that are red or count how many light fittings are close by. You could probably come up with some better

So what else can I do? (con't)

ones than these. Like everything else you will only get better at this if you practice every day.



4. Relaxation

There are many different ways to relax from deep muscle relaxation to yoga and meditation. Take the time to look in your local library, bookshop or on the web for books or audio tapes. Set yourself a goal to practice relaxation for at least 20 minutes each day. The more you do it, the more able you will be to use it when you need it. Practice is the key to success.

5. Be Active

Check out the Fun Time list attached. The more active you are, the more able you are to cope with things when they go wrong. Remember, a half hour of activity at least 3 days per week is also good for your heart.

You are now ready to complete the My Taking Charge Plan on page 7.

*Remember: if it doesn't work
"Try Another Way" ©*

My Story

I will get there

Frances has been treated for agoraphobia for the past 11 years and says, "I realised I was trying to be what I used to be, but I couldn't be what I used to be."



I realised then this is where I am. I am fighting a big fight here and the people that are close to me know about it and if the other people can't accept me like this, that is too bad, because this is where I am at. I started to believe in myself and realised, I am not perfect. I take myself for myself now. This is how I am and have confidence in myself that I will get off the Valium[®]. I will be great. That's one of my main aims, and I don't care how long it takes, I won't do it in a hurry".



To keep track of how she is going, Frances has been writing down bits and pieces in a book.

Fun Time List

Some of these activities you would never dream of doing. Be daring, be honest, be frugal, but give some of them a go. Tick the ones you might be interested in. Come up with some of your own. Put your plan on next page of this newsletter. Give it a go and have fun. Remember, practice is the key. You won't feel better unless you do something every day and make it part of your daily routine. For the next 2 weeks use the fun time record sheet and track the activities you tried.

Physical Activities		Creative Activities	
Tai Chi		Hobbies	
Yoga		Writing a journal/poetry/songs	
Exercise classes		Painting/drawing	
Jogging		Reading	
Kick boxing		Making jewellery	
Swimming		Sewing	
Walking/bushwalking		Learning a musical instrument	
Running		Art/Craft classes	
Playing a team sport		Writing letters	
Tennis/ squash		Learn to dance	
Mowing the lawn		Cooking	
Bike riding		Photography	
Bowls (indoor, tenpin, lawn)		Pottery	
Recreational Activities		Pampering Yourself	
Fishing		Hot bath/bubble bath/ spa	
Bird watching		Therapeutic massage	
Spending time at the beach		Relaxation exercises	
Going camping		Meditation	
Gardening		Listening to music/ radio	
		Improving your appearance	

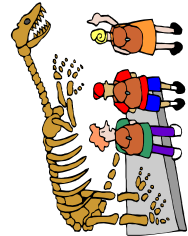
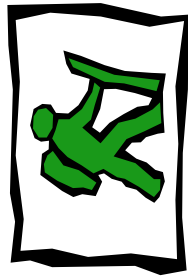
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Fun Time Record Sheet

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Remember: Give it a go.

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My Taking Charge Plan

When you have worry or panic, your body reacts as if there is danger, and you tend to focus on how bad things are and how much worse it might get. Taking charge means staying with the feelings until they fade away and replacing negative with positive thoughts.

1. What happens when I worry or panic?

Think about what happens to you when you worry or panic. Write it down.

Flip the Coin Over

2. My Taking Charge Plan

The first step in making a plan work is to write it down. The next one is to put it into practice. Put this sheet somewhere where you can see it everyday, so that you can practice how you will cope with feelings and thoughts in the future. Learning a new way of doing things isn't easy but with practice it gets much easier.

Tasks

When are you going to do it?

Write in my diary

Practice slow breathing

Practice positive self-statements

Try to relax

Be active at least 3 times a week – go back and check you're Fun Time List



Congratulations on developing a Taking Charge Plan
Practice it every day



"Try Another Way" © Program



Planning Your Day

Tips for getting everything done that you need to

Content

- 2 *How to fit everything in*
- 2 *Other things to think about*
- 2 *Pleasure and mastery*
- 3 *Saying no is okay*
- 3 *I just can't sleep*
- 3 *I still can't do anything*
- 4 *What have I achieved today and how to plan tomorrow*
- 5 *Daily planner*
- 6 *Weekly activity plan*



I just can't find the time



Have you ever found yourself saying, “I just can't find the time to do this”, or sat down at the end of the day and thought “where has the day gone” or “I haven't done anything that I needed to”.

It happens to all of us at some time. Using the tips in this newsletter may help you to get to the stage of saying “That's great, I got things done that I needed to”.

Where do I start? (con't)

Sometimes not doing tasks you have always done such as making the beds, ironing or weeding the garden, will give you time to do other tasks you have set yourself.

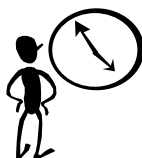
It is also important to include some fun activities in your daily schedule. Doing fun activities helps you keep on track and keep the “blues” away.

Where do I start?



The first step in taking charge of your day, is to be realistic about what you can actually do in a day. There will always be more tasks that could be done than hours in which to do them. Asking yourself some questions is one way to start to do this.

- Are there tasks I must do today?
- Can I carry out the tasks I have set myself?
- Do I need to ask for help to get things done?

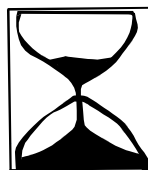


Planning your day also means:

- Doing tasks today rather than “putting them off”.
- Only doing tasks that are part of your daily plan, even though other people think you should do other tasks.
- Giving yourself time to sit down and think about what is happening.



How to fit everything in



The following tips may help you to plan your day so that at the end of it you are happy about what you have achieved.

1. Allow yourself time to sit down every evening and think about what you have achieved today and what you have to do tomorrow.
2. Write out a “To Do” list. Have a think about what you have written and which one's are the most important. Re-write your list and put the most important one's at the top.
3. Plan your day around the tasks you have set yourself, write them onto the Daily Planner.
4. Take your Daily Planner with you when you leave the house, it will help remind you of what you have set yourself and not to take on more tasks.
5. At the end of the day sit down and have a look at what you have achieved. (con't over page)



How to fit everything in (con't)

- For each of the tasks you have completed, identify whether it was a pleasurable activity or a mastery activity (explanation next column). Then rate each activity on a scale of 1 to 10. Have a look back over your day and give yourself a pat on the back for what you have achieved.
- Now start to plan tomorrow and the next day.

Remember to include some exercise on your "To Do" list every day. Have a look at Newsletter 6 "Be Active" for some ideas.

Allow yourself some time to sit down and read the newsletters and to complete the worksheets. Also, go back and have another look at them, as there may be tips that could help you now.

Some "me" time also needs to be included in your day, even if it is reading the newspaper in bed.

Things aren't always going to work out the way you would like them to, however, using these tips may help make things go right more often.

Other things to think about

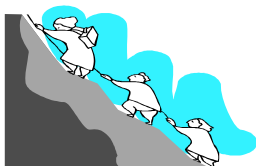


Sometimes it is a good thing to take on a challenging task or something you have never done before.

However, you need to think through:

- your reasons for wanting to do it
- what you can learn from it and
- what the costs may be.

That is, you need to weigh up the benefits of doing it against the costs. If it looks okay, do it and enjoy it, and take on a more challenging task next time. Put at least one challenging task on your weekly planner.



Pleasure & Mastery



Feeling down and not coping makes it hard to do things and to get through the day. Doing activities for the fun of it (pleasure) and those that involve

looking after yourself or others (mastery) helps keep the "blues" in control. Check out the list below for some examples of "pleasure" and "mastery" activities. It is important to plan to do at least one of each type of activity every day and to try to increase the number each day so that there is less time in your day to be "blue".

Sometimes, there is too much to do in any one day and most of them involve mastery activities. If this is what is happening for you, then there is a need to sit down and think about what is happening. Is it okay or is there a need to change things? Think about how you can increase the pleasure activities that you are doing each day.

If you find that you are having plenty of "fun" (pleasure) activities and not doing many mastery activities, then it is also time to have a think about what is happening for you and do you need to take on more responsibilities.



Examples

Pleasure Activities

- Reading in bed
- Morning coffee
- Watching TV or DVD
- Phone call to friends/ family
- Going for a walk
- Surfing the net
- Painting
- Writing a poem
- Listening to the radio or music

Mastery Activities

- Doing the dishes
- Cooking meals
- Getting out of bed before 9am
- Helping friends or family
- Clearing the cobwebs
- Doing the laundry
- Cleaning out the cupboards
- Weeding the garden



Saying No is okay



Another part of taking charge of your day is to be able to say “I am unable to help you with this task” without feeling like you have let others or yourself down.

Then comes the challenge of working out what you can help with and whether you can fit it into your “To Do” list.

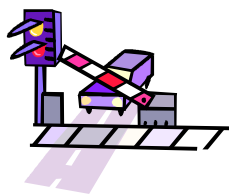
Remember, you are in charge of setting your priorities.



I still can't do anything

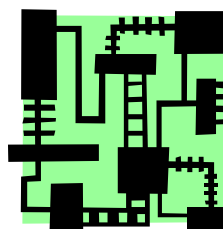
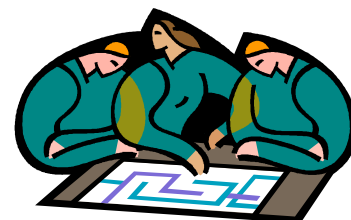
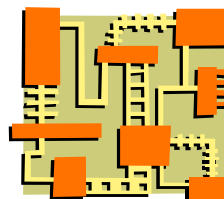
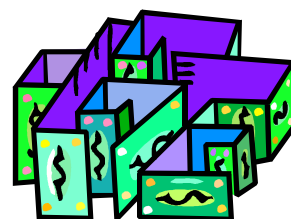
Okay, you have sat down every night, looked at what you have written down to do today and found that you haven't done any of them. Everything you tried to do turned out to be too difficult to do, or every time you started to do something, everything went wrong and you never finished it.

On page 4 is a questionnaire that may help you to better understand what is happening. Fill it out and have a look at what you have written down.



“Try Another Way” © Program

Produced by Jan Parr as part of a self-managed trial for cessation of benzodiazepine use. The finding of this study will be published in Drug and Alcohol Review in 2011.



What have I achieved today? And how to plan tomorrow?

Set yourself a time every evening to sit down and think about how your day went. What was it that you did and what were the things you were unable to do. This is not a time to worry about what didn't happen or what you “should have done”, but a time to look at what did happen and to start to prepare for tomorrow.

What did get done?		What didn't get done?	
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
3.		3.	
4.		4.	
5.		5.	

TO DO LIST:

Now comes the hard part. Thinking about tomorrow. What is it that you need and want to do? It is important to write down what you want to do, not just what you “should do” or what someone else wants you to do. Write everything down in Column 1 “Tasks to be completed”. Remember to include a “fun” activity in your day, or even some exercise.

You now have to put your list in some kind of order. Think about how important is each of the tasks that you have set yourself. Which one's are the most important to achieve tomorrow? Write the most important one at the top of Column 2, cross it off your list in Column 1. Now work through the rest of your list in Column 1 and write each one in Column 2, then cross it off the list in Column 1.

It is okay to have tasks in Column 1 that you don't prioritise and put in Column 2. Keep this list and look at it again tomorrow night.

The next challenge is to fit your priority list into the Daily Planner. Make sure that you include a “fun” activity. If you can't think of any, have a look at the Fun Time List in Newsletter 6.

Column 1: Tasks to be completed

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

Column 2: Prioritising Tasks

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	



Daily Planner

Now that you have your priority list, its time to write down when you are going to carry them out. Remember to put your fun activity in first. Try to carry out most of the tasks you have set yourself. It is okay if you don't get things done.

Sit down every evening and review how your day went. It is now time to rate your activities. Was it a pleasure activity (e.g. reading the newspaper, phoning a friend) then rate it on a scale of 1 (little pleasure) to 10 (much pleasure). Was it a mastery activity, (taking care of yourself or others e.g. preparing a meal, paying bills, giving someone a lift), then rate it on a scale of 1 (little sense of achievement) to 10 (great sense of achievement). Take into account how hard the task was and how you were feeling. There are no right or wrong answers, however, what you have written down will help you to plan for the next day and to set up your weekly schedule.

Hours	Activity	Rating	
		Pleasure	Mastery
<i>Example</i>	<i>Have coffee and read the paper</i>	5	
<i>Example</i>	<i>Make a special dinner</i>		6
Before 6am			
6-7			
7-8			
8-9			
9-10			
10-11			
11-12			
12-1			
1-2			
2-3			
3-4			
5-6			
6-7			
7-8			
8-9			
9-10			
After 10pm			



Weekly Activity Plan

Use this planner to help work out the things you will do over the next week. Have a look at the tasks you didn't put into your daily priority list, can you slot them in later in the week? Write in a “fun” activity every day. There needs to be a balance between what you would like to do, what you “should” do and what other's “expect” you to do. *All the best with becoming a better planner.*

Date:							
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before 6am							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
After 10pm							