

Lesson Six: The Next Step

Aim: To encourage young people to think about the effects of depression on individuals and where they can gain support.

Materials needed:

Photocopy of the Problem Pages with questions
Copies of any additional worksheets

1. Put yourself in my shoes.
(This activity is adapted from Change Your Mindset, by Mind Out.)

Split the group into small groups of 3 / 4 and give each group a 'problem' with a list of questions attached. The 'problems' are all examples of people who are suffering with depression and have not asked for help.

Obtain feedback from each group along the lines of:

- What is the actual problem?
- What might stop a person from asking for help? How could they begin to overcome this?
- What might stop you from telling someone else how depressed one of your friends is?
- What might happen if nobody does anything?

Ending Points:

- Having someone to talk to is very important – having someone who will listen.
This includes support from friends and helping agencies.
- Your Doctor is very important. It is important to know who your Doctor is and how to contact them.
- No man is an Island – sometimes we all need support and we should know where to get it.

2. Complete some of the attached worksheets (Wheel of friends, My Hope Wall, Identifying and Using your supports) as a way of looking at possible sources of support and planning for the future.

3. Distribute the sheet '10 Tips for promoting positive mental health'.

Put yourself in my Shoes: Problem 1

Dear Sue,

I have just sat my mock exams at school and my grades were worse than I thought. Since then I haven't been studying because I feel what's the point. I wanted to do a course at Tech and now I won't get the grades to do this and don't know what else I can do. My parents keep nagging at me to study and everything I do is wrong. I mess up everything. I have started drinking at the weekends and have fallen out with my friends because we always end up fighting with someone. I feel so alone and no-one really cares and I'm beginning to feel desperate now as I can only see things getting worse. The best thing for everyone would be if I killed myself.
John, Aged 14

Questions:

- 1.What is the problem?
 - 2.What might be stopping John from telling someone other than Sue how he is feeling? How could he overcome this?
 - 3.Suppose you are John's friend and you are the only one who knows how he is feeling. What might stop you from telling someone? What could happen if nobody does anything?
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Put yourself in my Shoes: Problem 2

Dear Sue,

I am a 35 year old mother and have two children, 14 and 9 years. I am a Secondary School Teacher and have worked at the same secondary school for 10 years. My husband works long hours as an electrician. I cry a lot and sometimes I don't really know why. I always feel tired and am always forgetting where I put things or appointments I had to keep. I love my children and husband very much but find myself angry for the smallest of things and always end up crying. I know it must upset them to see me so sad all the time and crying but I feel there is very little I can do. Help.
Sally, Aged 35

Questions:

- 1.What is the problem?
- 2.What might be stopping Sally from telling someone other than Sue how she is feeling? How could she overcome this?
- 3.Suppose you are Sally's friend and you are the only one who knows how he is feeling. What might stop you from telling someone? What could happen if nobody does anything?

Put yourself in my Shoes: Problem 3

Dear Tom,

My name is Arleen, I'm 16 and I work full time in a Shop. I share a flat with one other girl and am a quiet person and have very few close friends. I like listening to music and reading when I get a chance. Sometimes when I am alone I cut my arms with scissors and now have scars. Last week my boss saw these scars and asked me to wear a long sleeved shirt so as not to upset the customers. I did this but was accused of not pulling my weight and was sacked a few days later. Now I am feeling really low and angry and am cutting myself even more. What should I do?

Arleen, aged 16

Questions:

1. What is the problem?
 2. What might be stopping Arleen from telling someone other than Tom how she is feeling? How could she overcome this?
 3. Suppose you are Arleen's friend and you are the only one who knows how she is feeling. What might stop you from telling someone? What could happen if nobody does anything?
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Put yourself in my Shoes: Problem 4

Dear Tom,

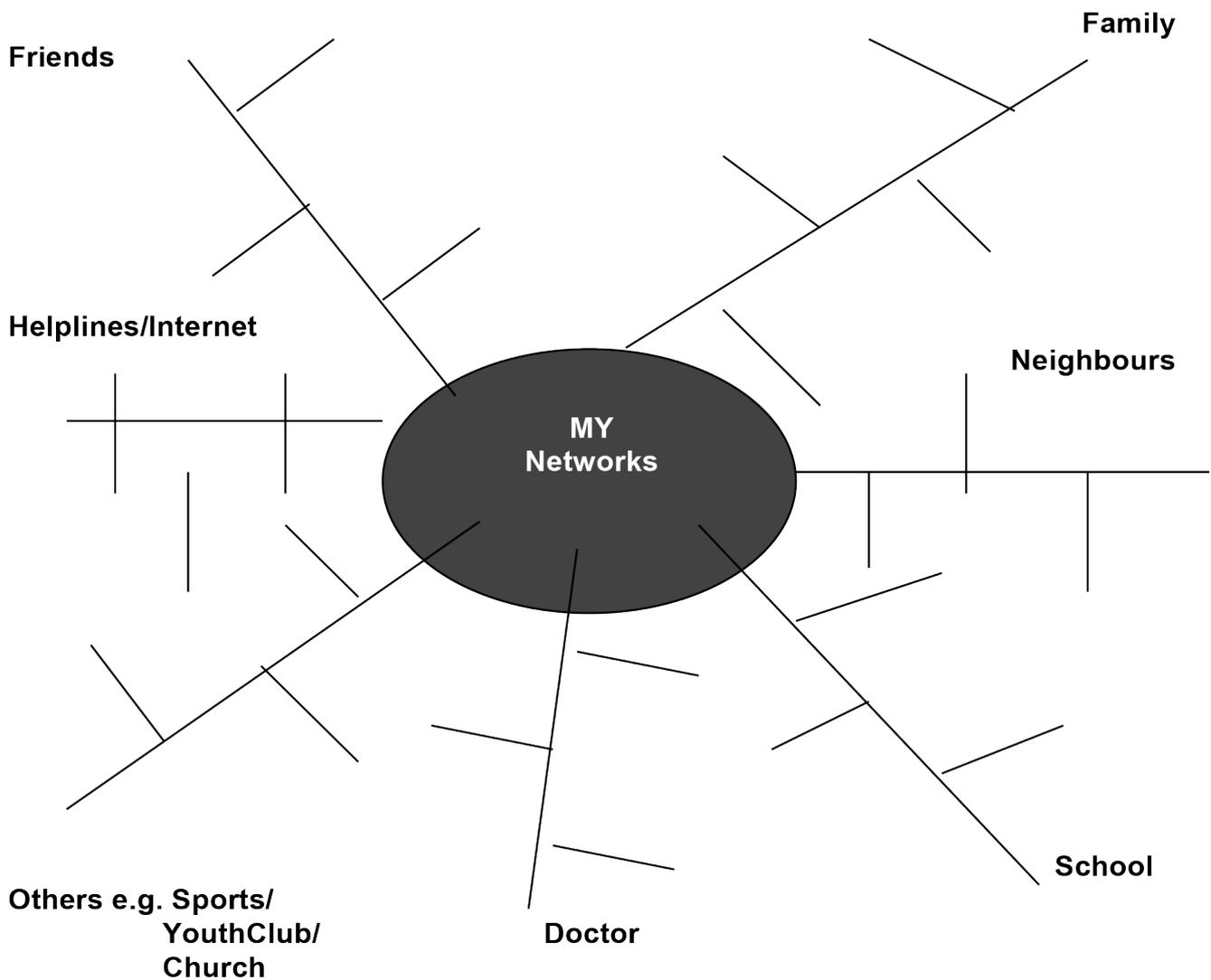
I work as a garage mechanic and have been happy in my job for over 2 years. Two months ago I started getting stressed out and really upset. I even lost interest in stock car racing which I love. I went to my doctor who told me that I had depression and gave me tablets to help me feel more like my old self. He also sent me to see a counsellor which has really helped. I am beginning to feel much better now and hope that I will be able to stop taking the tablets in a few months time with my doctor's agreement. I really want to tell my friends at the garage because they had to work with me when I was really stressed and upset, but am really worried that they will not understand and think less of me. What would you advise?

Joe, aged 19

Questions:

1. What is the problem?
2. What might be stopping Joe from telling someone other than Tom how he is feeling? How could he overcome this?
3. Suppose you are Joe's friend and you are the only one who knows how he is feeling. What might stop you from telling someone? What could happen if nobody does anything?

Wheel of friends



Sometimes we can all think & feel not very good about ourselves or what is happening around us. It is really important that we know that there is always someone we can talk to. Write down below the names of people you trust who you could turn to if you are feeling unhappy or depressed. If you know their phone number or email address, write it down too.

My hope wall*

It is really important that we know where we want to be in the future and what we would like to be doing. This way we can set goals for ourselves and make plans on how we are going to manage them. Focusing on the future and knowing that we are heading in the direction that we want to be, can really help us get through difficult times.

My hopes for the future

Example...

I will go and see Granny more often	What I need to do	Plan my weekends better
That I won't be picked on at school	What I need to do	Speak to my teacher
That Tommy will go out with me	What I need to do	Go to the party on Sat and ask him out
That I get a good job	What I need to do	Decide what I want and work for it
That I do well in my exams	What I need to do	Ask my teacher to help me get a study plan

My hopes for the future...

	What I need to do	
	What I need to do	
	What I need to do	
	What I need to do	
	What I need to do	

* Adapted from 'An Eye to Their Future' resource pack by Relate Teen

Identifying and using your supports

We can get support from many things ...for example, places, objects, people or organisations. Try to identify your current supports and ways you could develop them.

Places where you feel at home that give you a sense of belonging

Objects which may evoke happy memories

People you feel you can trust and rely on

Organisations where you feel you belong

Current Positives ...	Could be Positives ...	How can I make them positives?
1		
2		
3		
4		
Other		
Other		

10 Tips for Promoting Positive Mental Health

1. Build a positive self esteem – accept your strengths and weaknesses.
2. Eat well and exercise.
3. Create positive supportive relationships that count.
4. Get involved in activities that interest you and make you feel positive – sports, arts, volunteering.
5. Learn how to recognise your feelings and be critical of how you cope with the more difficult ones – learn how to deal with feelings effectively.
6. Express your feelings to people you trust – shout / cry / laugh – whatever. Don't be afraid to be honest and ask for help / support when you need it.
7. Put time aside everyday for yourself to relax – think about what this could involve, e.g., long baths, listening to music, reading a book, fishing...
8. Decide what you would like to do and set yourself small goals in order to achieve it – make decisions – it's really important feel that you have as much control as possible in your own life. Changing your mind is fine.
9. Get creative – writing down thoughts & feelings, drama, art... – all these activities let us express feelings without having to talk about them directly.
10. If you feel unable to cope and hopeless about your situation, contact your Doctor for support and information.