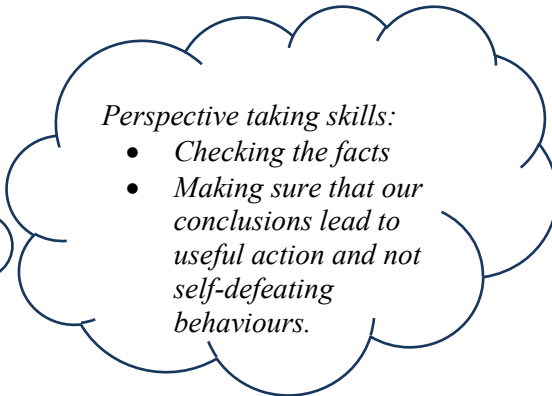
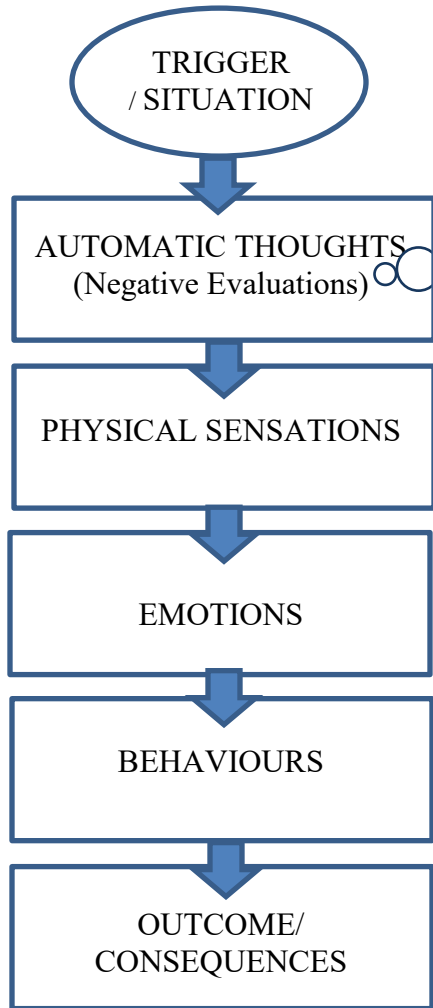




OVERCOMING DEPRESSION – SECTION 4
WORKING WITH OUR THOUGHTS – 1



In session 4 we start working directly on our automatic thoughts (number 2 on the graph above).

Have a look at the Getting Reengaged Worksheet that you have been asked to complete to help you get going with the tasks that you tend to procrastinate about. What sort of thoughts came to your mind when you were preparing to tackle these tasks? What kind of thoughts came to your mind if you were not able to do what you thought you should do or if you were not able to deal with things in the manner you have hoped? Write these thoughts down:

What have you noticed about these thoughts?

What was the outcome of your attempt to tackle things?

Was there a difference between your thoughts and what has actually happened?

If so, what was that difference?

If you were able to do what you planned despite your apprehensions, you might have already gathered some evidence that your thoughts are not always correct.

If you remained stuck despite your best efforts, the Perspective Taking Worksheet that you will learn today might help along. Change will not happen overnight and we might need multiple attempts to get unstuck.

Here are a few observations and guidelines for your future work:

1. Our thoughts, emotions, feelings and behaviours interact and come into play almost all at once.
2. Our **thoughts are more private than our emotions** and we are often not aware of our automatic thinking processes. Writing these thoughts down is not very comfortable but it is a way to create enough detachment so that we can take a look at our thoughts from a distance.
3. The negative automatic thoughts that activate feelings and behaviours associated with depression or anxiety are often very extreme in their negativity and falsely believed to represent the truth about our situation.
4. Thoughts are not facts. Facts refer to things without attaching any value judgment. Facts are verifiable. Thoughts are often value laden.
5. Only working with thoughts that are emotionally charged (hot thoughts) brings about a change in how we feel.
6. Changes in our thinking occur very gradually. Although seemingly superficial, rating scales are necessary to note these small changes. Keep in mind: all small changes add up.
7. Our emotional response depends more on how we perceive a situation than on the facts.
8. Sometimes our thoughts represent the facts about the situation so your perspective might not fully change after doing a thought record. Still, doing a thought record will assist you with clarifying your situation.
9. A “hot thought” is an automatic thought that creates the most distress. It takes some practice to uncover which hot thoughts should go under the microscope. A person who is in the process of recovering from a car accident or assault is not likely to benefit from challenging their perceptions of the severity of the incident they have suffered. However, such a person will benefit greatly from having a closer look at the thoughts that relate to their estimation of a possibility of regaining their former function or value of their life given their very real injuries.

WORKING WITH “HOT THOUGHTS”

Hot thoughts are attention grabbers even if we are not fully aware of what is on our mind. Hot thoughts most often come in a form of thinking shortcuts, which means that these thoughts tend to be articulated in extreme manner that reflects our psychological make-up more than the reality of the situation we are facing.

Consider two simple examples. Ana has invited people over for a dinner for which she has prepared some pasta. One of her guests tells her that she has really enjoyed the meal even though she does not like pasta very much. While Ana reminisces at home, Tom is in a board meeting where he just made some suggestions to improve the workings of the consumer service department. The boss thanks him for suggestions but states that the suggestions will have to be considered at a later date. We can

certainly imagine what may be going in these people's heads. Have a look at a table below. Put a check mark by the type of a thinking pattern that you might find familiar. Hot thoughts have been underlined.

<p><u>A guest told Ana:</u> “The dinner was great even though I don’t like the pasta”</p>	<p><u>Manager told Tom:</u> “These are good suggestions but we will not be able to look at them for quite some time”</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CONSEQUENCES</p>
<p>I should not have made pasta. I should have known better. <u>I never know how to do things right.</u></p>	<p>I should have not made these suggestions now. My timing sucks. <u>I never know when to open my mouth.</u></p>	<p>Self-doubt and worry follow. Inviting people over or voicing one’s opinion at a meeting becomes less likely. As a result, we lose opportunities for positive interactions, which in turn reinforces our view we may not be capable of such interactions.</p>
<p>After all the effort I went to? How dare she? The payment I get. People are just not considerate. <u>People just use you.</u></p>	<p>After all the effort I went into analyzing the data. What a jerk he is. These guys don’t know which side to spit. They just look after themselves. <u>I am just a pawn to them.</u></p>	<p>Resentment and irritation follow. A person may wait and do nothing until others offer some form of restitution. As the other people may not even be aware of this perception, restitution does not follow, and the sense of low importance becomes entrenched. This person will remain convinced that people just look after themselves and that he or she is being used.</p>
<p>I didn’t know she did not like pasta. Did I insult her? What is she thinking about me? I did not come across that well here. <u>I am inconsiderate.</u></p>	<p>Darn, he is just humoring me. I wonder what he is thinking. I made an ass of myself. Here is a guy who does not even know how to play the game right. <u>I am a loser.</u></p>	<p>Self-doubt, irritation, and shame follow. Some individuals experiencing these emotions withdraw socially. This of course reinforces a self-view of being a loser or being inconsiderate (after all if I were considerate, I would have been with others now). Others compensate by reassurance seeking (excessive excuses and excessive permission asking) that ultimately may annoy the other party and yet again confirm the view of self as a loser.</p>

Let’s have another look at the examples above. List examples of the facts about these two examples and list examples of the thoughts that Ana and Tom had about their experiences. What are the characteristics of facts? What are characteristics of thoughts?

	THOUGHTS	FACTS
Examples		
Characteristics		

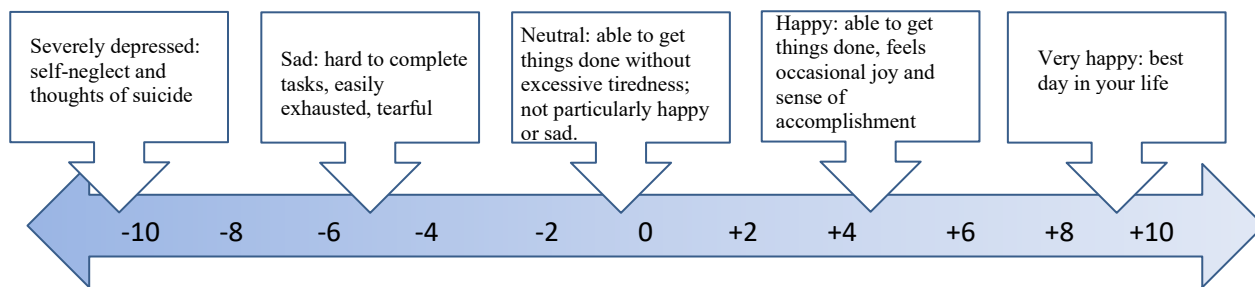
THOUGHT RECORD – GAINING PERSPECTIVE

REACTING	1: Situation Describe the situation in which you have experienced distressful emotions. Where were you? What were you doing?	
	2: Thoughts Write down thoughts that come/came to your mind about your current situation. Circle the thought that causes the most distress. This is your hot thought that you will be working on. (If your thoughts are all questions (“whys” or “what ifs”), rewrite them as statements. For example, “Why does it happen to me?” becomes “This happens to me” and “What if I lose my job?” becomes “I will be jobless”.)	3: Rate your mood from -10 to + 10.
	4: What do you have an URGE to do about this situation?	
GAINING PERSPECTIVE	5: Write down all the FACTS that support your conclusion:	6: Write down all the FACTS that do not support your conclusion:
	7: Write down a balanced statement that describes your situation by taking into the account the facts for AND against our initial conclusion.	
	8: Given a more balanced view of your circumstances, what actions make sense to get you closer to what you want?	9: Re-rate your mood from -10 to + 10.

GAINING PERSPECTIVE

REACTING	1: Situation Describe the situation in which you have experienced distressful emotions. Where were you? What were you doing?)	
	2: Thoughts Write down thoughts that come/came to your mind about your current situation. Circle the thought that causes the most distress. This is your hot thought that you will be working on. (If your thoughts are all questions (“whys” or “what ifs”), rewrite them as statements. For example, “Why does it happen to me?” becomes “This happens to me” and “What if I lose my job?” becomes “I will be jobless”.)	3: Rate your mood from -10 to + 10.
	4: What do you have an URGE to do about this situation?	
GAINING PERSPECTIVE	5: Write down all the FACTS that support your conclusion:	6: Write down all the FACTS that do not support your conclusion:
	7: Write down a balanced statement that describes your situation by taking into the account the facts for AND against our initial conclusion.	
	8: Given a more balanced view of your circumstances, what actions make sense to get you closer to what you want?	9: Re-rate your mood from -10 to + 10.

KEEPING TRACK AND KEEPING HONEST



DATE:							
Rate your overall mood for the day using the scale above and mark it on the graph.	+10						
	+8						
	+6						
	+4						
	+2						
	0						
	-2						
	-4						
	-6						
	-8						
-10							
What challenges / stresses were you faced with today?							
Did you engage in any meaningful activity? If so, what was it?							
What skill have you practiced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in meaningful activity <input type="checkbox"/> Thought Record :
What other things were you able to accomplish?							