<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vicious Cycle of Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Negative Thoughts Can Snowball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Does Stress Affect Your Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful Thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Unhelpful Ways of Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking The Habit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling Unhelpful Thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful Contacts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THOUGHT PATTERNS AND STRESS

The aim of these Wellbeing Workbooks is to help you learn more about stress and the things you can do to help reduce your stress when you feel very worried or anxious.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- There are four workbooks altogether and they should each take around 2 hours to complete
- The workbooks should supplement the information you are learning about mental health in your school classes
- Each workbook has information, exercises and games to help you learn about wellbeing
- The exercises in the workbooks are simply there to aid your learning. You do not have to share any of your answers to the exercises; you can keep them as private as you would like to
- If you are feeling really stressed and think you would like to talk to someone about this, there are phone numbers and websites at the back of this book which might be useful
IN SESSION 2 WE LOOKED AT:

- How stress affects our behavior
  - Avoidance
  - Under-activity
  - Over-activity
- How stress can affect our thought process
- How to work on avoidance and under-activity
- Things to help when you do too much

IN SESSION 3 WE WILL LOOK AT:

- How stress affects our thinking
- How to identify unhelpful thoughts and negative styles of thinking
- How our thinking affects our feelings
- How to challenge unhelpful thoughts
EXERCISE 1: HOW IS LIFE JUST NOW?

On the scale below, how good was life this week?

0________________________________________10

*As bad as it could possibly be*                      *As good as it could possibly be*

Now think about what has been happening in your life recently to make you feel this way. Think about the good things and the bad things:

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________
EXERCISE 2: WHAT MAKES A ‘GOOD LIFE’?

On the scale below, mark where you think you would need to score in order to feel you had a ‘good life’

0_________________________________________________________10

As bad as it could possibly be                                           As good as it could possibly be

How would you know you had reached this point where you had a good quality life? What would you be doing differently?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________
Let's revisit the Cycle of Stress that we've seen over the last couple of weeks. This time let's think about the thoughts section of the cycle.

*Stressful situation*
I have to speak in front of a large group of people

*Worrying thoughts*
What if I make a fool of myself?

*Behavioural changes*
Talking faster, stuttering

*Bodily symptoms*
Sweat, racing heart

*Feelings*
Anxiety, panic

Our feelings are determined by our thoughts, so the way we think will have a big impact on how we feel.
HOW NEGATIVE THOUGHTS CAN SNOWBALL...

Here is an example of how each worrying thought feeds into the next. As our thoughts become more and more extreme our level of stress increases.

- Typical – It wasn’t raining till I got here!
- The bus is ALWAYS late
- I’ll be late for work
- They will all be talking about me when I get in
- The boss won’t be happy
- I’ll get into trouble
- I’ll get pulled into the office
- I’ll get fired!

Recognising what we say to ourselves and changing it to more positive self-talk can be very powerful and significantly improve how we feel.

EXERCISE 3

Now you try: think of a situation you have been in where your thoughts have snowballed, and write down the sequence of thoughts that you had.

1. ........................................................................................................................................................................
2. ........................................................................................................................................................................
3. ........................................................................................................................................................................
4. ........................................................................................................................................................................
HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT YOUR THINKING?

Here are some examples of the common thoughts people have when they feel under stress. Unfortunately, these same thoughts INCREASE how stressed we feel:

- I can’t cope
- I’m useless
- They will all think I am stupid
- What’s the point in trying
- Things never go right for me
- There must be something wrong with me
- I just want to get out of here
- They are all looking at me
- They all know I can’t cope

What unhelpful things do you say to yourself when you are stressed?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________
EXERCISE 4

Have a think about the last time you felt worried, stressed or low.

**SITUATION** – Where were you, who were you with, what were you doing?

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

**THOUGHTS** – what were you saying to yourself at the time?

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
How did these thoughts make you feel?

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

How helpful were these thoughts?

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
Unhelpful thoughts are:

- Automatic
- Seem to come from nowhere – but are actually based on our beliefs
- Seem reasonable, so we tend not to question them

Unhelpful thoughts can:

- Happen when our emotions change e.g. when we get stressed
- Create more stress
- Become a habit and get much worse if they aren’t tackled

*These thoughts can take many different forms:*

1. **Words and sentences:**
   - I will collapse if I have to wait in a big queue at the shop
   - No-one will talk to me if I go into the staff room
   - I can’t do this job anymore, it’s too much for me and everyone knows that I can’t cope

2. **Images:**
   - Seeing yourself lying on the shop floor, ambulance outside
   - Seeing yourself making a fool of yourself or imagining everyone talking about you when you leave

3. **Memories:**
   - Seeing someone else who had collapsed in a shop in the past
   - Remembering the last time you felt low or the last time you didn’t do so well at work or did something wrong
“What if...”

“I can’t cope with...”

“What is the point...”

“How do I get out of...”

EXERCISE 5

Look back at your answers for Exercise 4. In any of your thoughts, do you notice:

- “What if ...” thoughts?
  
  Yes ☐  No ☐

- “I can’t cope with ...” thoughts
  
  Yes ☐  No ☐

- “What is the point ...” thoughts
  
  Yes ☐  No ☐

- “How do I get out of ...” thoughts
  
  Yes ☐  No ☐
COMMON UNHELPFUL WAYS OF THINKING

- **Taking on responsibility**
  “I take on responsibility particularly for things going wrong even when a situation has nothing to do with me”

- **Mind reading**
  “I tend to assume other people don’t like me / think badly of me”

- **Over personalising**
  “I focus on or blow small slights out of proportion”

- **Looking on the negative side**
  “I tend to focus on the black side of things”

- **Jumping to conclusions**
  “I tend to assume that the worst will happen”

- **Being too hard on yourself**
  “Overlooking my strengths and focusing on my weak points”

- **Gloomy view of the future**
  “I overestimate the chances of bad things happening”

- **Making extreme statements / rules**
  “I often say I “must”, “should”, or “have to” I want things to be just right / perfect”
Complete the word search puzzle to identify different types of unhelpful thinking!

BEINGNEGATIVE
EXTREMERULES
GLOOMYFUTURE
HARDONYOURSELF
JUMPINGTOCONCLUSIONS
MINDREADING
OVERPERSONALISING
EXERCISE 7

➢ Look again at the thoughts you wrote down earlier.

Use the following pages to help you identify some of your unhelpful ways of thinking about yourself, others and the future.

Being hard on yourself
☐ Yes ☐ No

Looking on the negative side
☐ Yes ☐ No
Gloomy view of the future
☐ Yes ☐ No

Jumping to conclusions
☐ Yes ☐ No

Mind reading
☐ Yes ☐ No
Taking on responsibility unnecessarily

☐ Yes  ☐ No

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Over-personalising

☐ Yes  ☐ No

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Making extreme statements/rules

☐ Yes  ☐ No

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
You can learn to think more positively in the same way that you learned to think negatively but you have to practice.

Here are some positive statements to practice saying to yourself daily:

- I can overcome this
- I am able to deal with this situation
- I can ask for help if I need it
- Things will get better for me
- I can take control
- I do have choices
- I’ve done this before so I can do it again

MEMORY POINTS

- The way we think affects the way we feel and act
- Stress is associated with certain unhelpful ways of
- These ways of thinking become a habit
It should be easy? To stop the unhelpful thoughts we should simply stop thinking them...but unfortunately, it’s not always that easy.

**Pink Elephants**

1. In your mind, picture a pink elephant.
2. Now, stop thinking about the pink elephant.
3. Are you still thinking about it?

Often when we try NOT to think about something, we actually think about it MORE

So the question is, what CAN we do to tackle unhelpful thinking?
Here are some questions you can ask yourself that may help in tackling unhelpful thoughts:

- Firstly, **do not judge yourself** for having negative types of thinking.
- Secondly, ask yourself, **what is the evidence to support this thought?** Is the thought actually true?
- What **alternative views** are there? What would other people say?
- **Does this thought help me?** Does this way of thinking hold me back? How?
- What unhelpful thinking styles have I noticed (see p10)? What was the **result of those unhelpful thoughts?**
- **What can I do** to change the situation?

**EXAMPLE SCENARIO**

What typical thoughts would you think if someone you knew walked past you on the street without acknowledging you or saying hello? Might they be something like this...

- *I must* have done something to upset her and she is ignoring me.
- *How dare they walk by me like that!*
- They do *not* like me and don’t want to talk to me.
The following examples show how you can take an unhelpful thought and change it to a more positive thought.

“I’ll look like an idiot. People will be looking at me”

**Alternative Positive Coping Thought:**

- People have their own lives to think about, why would they look at me?
- There are plenty of people not looking at me
- Even if they do look, why does it matter? What makes me think their opinions are so valuable?
- The last time I had to do this it turned out to be completely fine

Can you think of another positive coping thought to balance the unhelpful thought “I’ll look like an idiot”? You can write it in the box below:

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
“My heart is beating so fast I am going to have a heart attack”

**Alternative Positive Coping Thought:**

- This has happened before and I’ve been OK
- This is just my body’s reaction to fear
- I can manage this
- I cannot die from a panic attack

*Can you think of another positive coping thought? You can write it in the box below:*
“I am useless”

Alternative Positive Coping Thought:

- I might not feel good about myself right now but I have done things that are worthwhile
- Everyone has bad days
- That didn’t go as well as I had hoped but that doesn’t mean I am useless

Can you think of a different positive coping thought? You can write it in the box below:

____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
In this exercise, think back to some of your unhelpful thoughts and then try to come up with a more balanced alternative thought.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNHELPFUL THOUGHT</th>
<th>BALANCED POINT OF VIEW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEMORY POINTS**

- Notice the unhelpful thoughts you are saying to yours
- Challenge these thoughts and come up with more balanced alternatives
AND FINALLY

Over the next week, notice what goes through your mind when you feel stressed or low.

Try to tackle any unhelpful thoughts by using the techniques from the exercises you have done in this workbook.

If you identify any unhelpful thinking, try to ask yourself:

What is your evidence for this thought?

What alternative views might there be?

Notice if you feel differently once you have asked yourself these questions and have challenged your way of thinking.

EXERCISE 9

Now try to solve the cryptogram below to reveal an important message from this workbook. Some of the letters have been solved for you to start you off.

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z |
| 20|   |   |   |   | 10|   | 15|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 6 |   | 22|   |   |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23
1. Which of the following diagrams represents the **vicious cycle of stress**?

   a)
   
   b)
   
   c)

2. Our feelings are primarily determined by our ___________

   a) Intelligence  
   b) Personality  
   c) Thoughts

3. What do we mean when we say “negative thoughts can snowball”?
a) When one negative thought takes over your mind
b) When one negative thought leads to another negative thought and so on, with each thought becoming more and more serious
c) When you have several negative thoughts about different things in your mind at once

4. Unhelpful thoughts are ___________ and ___________

a) Voluntary and based on beliefs
b) Automatic and come from nowhere
c) Automatic and based on beliefs
d) Voluntary and come from nowhere

5. Common unhelpful ways of thinking include...

a) Taking on responsibility, mind reading, jumping to conclusions
b) Under personalizing, mind reading, making extreme statements
c) Having a gloomy view of the future, not taking on responsibility, jumping to conclusions

6. Ways to tackle unhelpful thoughts include...

a) Not judging yourself for having the thought, ignoring evidence which suggests the thought may not be true, questioning how helpful the thought is
b) Judging yourself for thinking so negatively, questioning if there is any evidence to support the thought, questioning how helpful the thought is
c) Not judging yourself for having the thought, questioning if there is any evidence to support the thought, questioning how helpful the thought is
USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Childline**
  - Phone: 0800 1111 (free 24 hour)
  - www.childline.org.uk

- **Mental Health Foundation**
  - Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities
  - www.mentalhealth.org.uk

- **Mind**
  - Promotes views and needs of people with mental health problems
  - Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)
  - Website: www.mind.org.uk

- **NHS**
  - NHS 24: phone 111
  - www.nhs.org.uk

- **PAPYRUS**
  - Young suicide prevention
  - Phone: 0800 068 4141 (Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm &7-10pm. Weekends 2-5pm).
  - www.papyrus-uk.org

- **Rethink Mental Illness**
  - Support and advice for people living with mental illness
  - Phone: 0800 5000 927 (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm)
  - www.rethink.org

- **SafeSpot**
  - An app and website designed for young people to improve coping skills and access information about mental health
  - Website: www.safespot.org.uk
  - App: available on Google play/Apple store for free

- **Samaritans**
  - Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair
  - Phone: 116 123 (free, 24hour)
  - www.samaritans.org.uk