

## Session 12: Blue Print for Change

We have now come to the final session of the 12 regular sessions. In today's session we would like you to take a look back over the previous 11 sessions and then answer some questions to help you to maintain and increase any improvement you have noticed over the past 11 sessions.

This exercise is called the Blue Print for Change and there are six questions to answer:

Question 1: what have I learned about my problems?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I found it really useful to think about the 'sad flower' diagram'. I know that when I am depressed I feel lost, alone and defeated. When I feel this way it is easy for me to think negatively, especially to label myself as a loser and other people as uncaring. I know that I tend to ruminate on how relationships haven't worked out for me and to blame myself. I get irritable easily and then feel awful when I snap at my Mum when she tries to help me. I particularly noticed that I withdraw from people who care about me and avoid looking after myself or doing the things I used to enjoy. I find I drink too much and eat too little. My motivation goes down and my sleep gets disrupted.*

Question 2: what changes have I made?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I have been making sure I break problems down into small steps rather than trying to do it all in one go. I have a regular sleep routine and eat three times a day. I have cut down my drinking to no more than two small glasses of wine in the evening. I make a weekly schedule of activities, making sure I take care of myself and my home, carry on with my hobby of quilting; arrange to go out with a friend at least twice a week; take on a new project at work; have my Mum and Dad down for the day and visit my brother and his partner to see my niece.*

Question 3: what are my vulnerabilities?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I know that ever since I was young I have been somewhat shy and find it difficult to mix with people. This means I can easily feel left out and avoid going to social events that I might enjoy. I know I get easily hurt by rejection and have not been dating for months after splitting up with my last boyfriend - I think I've got some unfinished business to do with how that hurt me. I'd like to be with someone again but I'm scared of getting hurt. I know I can be a perfectionist and that stops me from enjoying things that I achieve.*

Question 4: what do I need to do to work on my vulnerabilities?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I need to make a break from the past and take some risks in dating again - there's a guy who's a friend of a friend who's hinted he'd like to ask me out and I'd quite like to try a date with him. I need to take the time to enjoy what I've done and to listen to compliments when I do things well, rather than running myself down.*

Question 5: what should I do if I have a setback?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I need to spot the early warning signs when I start to feel overwhelmed and to put things off. On the other hand I also know that when I have a bad day I shouldn't read too much into it and definitely not take a sick day, go to bed and stop going out. I should re-read what I've written in my journal and the workbook from this group. I need to make sure that I tell my friend Mandy what's going on so she can encourage me back to the gym. If things do get really bad I can go back to my GP or re-refer myself for some support.*

Question 6: what are my strengths?

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Tess answered as follows:

*I know that I'm a caring and loyal friend; I can be very determined; I'm well organised at work; I'm good at arts and crafts.*

Now that we've got to session 12 it might be useful to remember that happiness is not just the absence of depression. There is research from positive psychology that shows that we can increase our happiness by using some simple measures.

The first is to keep using the Positive Events Log where each evening you write down three things that went well that day and why, or things that you are grateful to have in your life – they can be small, simple things - you might like to get yourself a nice notebook or diary to use for this.

The second is to attend to the following five areas of life:

- Make connections with other people – see supportive friends and family regularly
- Exercise regularly – at least 30 minutes a day
- Notice and attend to the moment – take time out of your head and 'smell the roses'
- Keep learning and growing: look out for opportunities for personal development
- Give and participate selflessly – be an active part of your community

Tess made a decision to:

- *Phone or see a friend each day*
- *Walk to work at least three times a week and go to the gym twice*
- *Use my lunch break to take a walk in the park, join a mediation group*
- *Start an evening class*
- *Volunteer in a local care home once a week*

Tess used the monthly activity schedule to make sure she stuck to her decision. Write your own choices below?

Make connections: \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise: \_\_\_\_\_

Notice the moment: \_\_\_\_\_

Lifelong learning: \_\_\_\_\_

Participating: \_\_\_\_\_

The third is to attend to these three areas:

- Treat time as a finite resource – this is not a rehearsal
- Spend time on activities and goals that have meaning for you – focus on what's really important, not the trivial and unimportant
- Spend time on things that make you feel better, not things that make you feel worse

You could use the Life Goals handout to make sure that whatever you are doing is in line with your goals and values. Think about what you would like to achieve in five years time and then fill out each box as it applies to you.

We hope that you have found this group helpful and we are really grateful for your contributions. If you'd like any spare worksheets from any of the sessions please ask and we'll be happy to let you have what you need.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future.

## **Life Goals**

Physical Health

Friends

Psychological Well-being

Career

Finances and Money

Education

Intimate relationships

Personal growth

Family

Recreation and Leisure

Living environment

Spiritual life

***Moving forward: 4-weekly diary of positive activities***

Suggested daily activities. Once a day I will...

Suggested weekly activities. Once a week I will...

Suggested monthly activities. Once a month I will...

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday