Academic Self-management Program Manual

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www.thefridge.org.au
http://unistudentsuccess.com/the-fridge/

Contents:
- Self-management Manual: Introduction and Case Studies
- Self-management Strategies: Summary
- Appendices (Worksheets and Guidelines)
- Bibliography

15/04/16 update: During February and March 2016, JC constructed a “self-management for effective learning” Moodle section which was then imported into all of the UNSW 2015 project courses+. The advantage of this strategy is that the section can be adapted easily to the learning, teaching and assessment context of the particular course.

Contact j.cranney@unsw.edu.au for further information.

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SELF-MANAGEMENT MANUAL: INTRODUCTION AND CASE STUDIES

Who is this Manual for?

This manual is primarily intended for undergraduate course coordinators, head tutors, and higher education well-being officers who wish to integrate self-management activities into the curriculum of their courses (= units, modules, subjects) or into their extracurricular programs. The target population is undergraduate students, although these strategies can also benefit high school students, postgraduate students, and any adult or emerging adult!

How did this Manual come about?

This Manual is a product of a UNSW Teaching Fellowship (to J.Cranney, 2015) which extended the work of an OLT Grant (Cranney, Andrews, & Morris, 2015). The worksheets were created and adapted as we collaborated with UNSW course coordinators to integrate the various self-management strategies into diverse curricular contexts ranging from online delivery in psychology to face-to-face exercises in genetics labs.

What is self-management?

Self-management is defined as the capacity to work effectively toward meaningful goals, and to be flexible in the face of set-backs. Note that the first half of this definition reflects planning and goal-striving behaviour and the second half reflects resilience behaviour, but both components are intertwined by the process of flexibly working toward meaningful personal outcomes. We have found that students with higher self-reported behavioural self-management have higher self-reported well-being, resilience, academic performance, and capacity to adapt to change (Cranney, Nithy et al., in prep.).

The evidence-based activities listed in this manual are associated with higher academic performance and well-being, and are based on research in goal-setting, motivation, time-management, mindfulness, procrastination, psychological flexibility and positive psychology.

They are grouped around four categories, which reflect the proactive motivational sequence including the consideration of consequences of changing circumstances and varying outcomes:

A: Defining meaningful goals
B: Working toward meaningful goals
C: Staying Flexible
D: Facing setbacks

These categories are based on both the motivation and resilience literature. Defining Meaningful Goals draws heavily on self-determination theory (e.g., Deci & Ryan, 2000) and on the values literature (e.g., Harris, 2006); Working toward meaningful goals draws on recent literature in social cognition and clinical psychology (e.g., Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2010); Staying flexible draws on the acceptance commitment training literature (e.g., Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010); Facing setbacks draws on cognitive behavioural approaches (e.g., Edelman, 2012).

How should this manual be used?

Course coordinators and other instructors should choose and adapt the worksheets to suit their particular context (preferably in a systematic and pre-planned manner, including revisiting material at strategic times during the semester, and having tutors use the materials in their individual work with students—see the later ASMP case studies section). Where feasible and available, guidelines and implementation examples are given. If you adapt one of the worksheets, please let us know,
so we can add a brief description of your adaptation to this manual, allowing others to learn from your experience. Similarly, if you have suggestions for more self-management activities that you would like to share through this manual, please contact us. Finally, don’t forget to evaluate by asking students immediately and/or at the end of the semester, what they thought of the exercises. Different students will have different gaps in their self-management skill sets, so in a universal whole-of-course approach, you are likely to obtain mixed evaluations. Targeted approaches (e.g., out-of-class tutor consultations) are likely to yield positive ratings and outcomes. Within or between course experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation approaches can be challenging from an internal validity perspective, but are not impossible (feel free to consult: j.cranney@unsw.edu.au).

**Brief case studies**

**Biology.** The idea for worksheets originated in discussions with Rebecca LeBard for her 2015 Level 2 biochemistry course, whereby she wanted to support students to better manage their time so as to submit their assignments on time (with positive consequences not only for students, but also for staff, eg less pressure for extension requests). For that course, we designed fairly generic worksheets (A3/4) which were delivered (following a tutor training session) within labs and lectures, along with the goal selection video https://vimeo.com/120112496. Concurrently, “duty” tutors such as Stella Sheeba (on duty in the course common space at particular times for individual student consults) used the worksheets to help individual students who needed assistance in planning and executing their assessments. Stella reported a large increase (cf. previous year) in the number of individual consultations, which we attribute to the “normalizing” of discussion of self-management strategies during the in-class activities. Average grades were higher compared to the previous year. In the subsequent Level 2 genetics courses, partly because of some overlap in the student samples, we introduced some new activities (e.g., values exercise A1), and we also much more specifically tailored the nature and timing of the worksheets to the assessments. For example, adapting the mental contrasting worksheet, we specifically asked students to reflect on the just completed (named) assessment, and how they might better prepare for the next (named) assessment.

**Business & Law.** In the 2015 Semester 1 iteration of the ASMP in Leela Cejnar’s Level 1 course, we first introduced the program with the goal-selection video, and asked tutors to have students complete the goal selection and time-management worksheets at the beginning of subsequent tutorials. This met with mixed success, partly because of the lack of tutor training. In the Semester 2 iteration of the ASMP, we approached a highly motivated tutor, Lyn Brady, to allow us to conduct brief self-management exercises at the beginning of about half of her weekly tutorials. Some of the worksheet were specifically tailored for these classes, and their introduction was often couched in terms that these students should respond to (e.g., evidence for successful use of these strategies in business).

**Overall,** some care needs to be taken in tailoring the exercises to have maximum impact for the particular student cohort—whether this be the perfectionism (and associated anxiety) of (mostly) high-performing students, the values self-examination of a-motivated students, or the “selling” of evidence-based strategies to the average motivated but un-informed student.

**The Fridge and related websites**

**The Fridge** is a website with self-management videos, worksheets and resources. The Fridge can be accessed at http://thefridge.org.au

The main component of the website is currently divided into four modules: Goal and Time Management, Motivation Management, Work and Study Management, and Well-Being Management. Each module contains several videos with evidence-based self-management information, resources and worksheets.
The team behind the website is happy to receive submissions, feedback, animated videos, or worksheets that may be added to the website on an ongoing basis. The website is currently being updated by volunteers, so please be patient.

**Unistudent success** is a website for both students and staff, which has a page devoted to the use of the Fridge as well as other self-management materials, including this Manual. This can be accessed at [www.unistudentsuccess.com/the-fridge](http://www.unistudentsuccess.com/the-fridge)

**Psychological literacy** is a website that is devoted to recording the development of the concept, which is defined as the capacity to intentionally use psychological science to achieve personal, professional and societal goals (Cranney & Dunn, 2011). Evidence-based self-management is a component of psychological literacy. This website can be accessed at [www.psychologicalliteracy.com](http://www.psychologicalliteracy.com) (this website is in transition, and possibly can be found at psychlit.com).

**Acknowledgements:**
Rebecca LeBard, Lyn Brady, Kate Hutton-Bedbrook, Sue Morris, Peter Baldwin, Taylor Innes, Leigh Mellish (UNSW).
A1. Valued Intentions

A key aspect of acceptance-based strategies is the concept of values, and encouraging young people to think critically about what is important to them. There are various accepted lists of values that may be used, and these can be interpreted in any way relevant to the individual. This activity is most effective if completed at the beginning of the semester, and may be used as an “icebreaker” activity before goals are set. It can also be used at a time when students may be struggling to balance their priorities. The activity could be preceded by the goal selection video (https://vimeo.com/120112496), so students understand its relevance to goal setting.

A2. Reasons for your Goals

According to self-determination theory, our behaviour is regulated by different sources or kinds of motivational factors that range on a continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation. This reflective exercise encourages students to think about and understand their goals in terms of these motivational sources, enabling them to recognize, for example, that they may be undertaking a task not because they are inherently interested in it, but because they value the relationship with significant others who expect them to undertake the task. Recognising these sources helps students to make informed decisions about their current and future goals. This handout can be given to students either as an in-class or online activity, in relation to goal definition.

A3. Goal-setting: Group

Step 1: Research has shown that students who write down goals have higher academic performance and well-being than students who do not. This activity guides students through an evidence-based goal selection process using a playful mock activity, where students (preferably in groups) are asked by the instructor to choose a “silly goal” (e.g., visiting the moon), and follow a methodological process to plan out the achievement of that goal. This sets a foundation for students to individually complete the same process for a “real” goal (Step 2).

A4. Goal-setting: Individual

Step 2: Once students have been introduced to the concept of meaningful goals, the opportunity can be presented for students to begin to set their own goals, both academic and non-academic. Intrinsic motivation can be evoked by linking academic goals to values, and addressing the reasons why a written goal is important to the student. Appropriate planning of the attainment of the goal will involve students planning out the path to achieve the goal, considering the resources they may need, and contingency plans for barriers they may face. This activity should be introduced early in the semester, perhaps making specific reference to the first assessment.

A5. WOOP it: Mental Contrasting 1

Mental Contrasting (and implementation intentions) is an effective tool to clarify the path necessary to achieving a goal, particularly if the goal is overwhelmingly large or unclear. Mental Contrasting involves making a wish (W), visualizing the outcome (O) of having already achieved a goal, then returning the awareness to the present, thinking about what obstacles (O) there might be to achieving those outcomes, and then planning (P) what steps need to be undertaken to overcome the obstacles and reach the goal (implementation intentions). This exercise helps students identify the tasks they would need to complete in order to overcome obstacles and achieve that intended outcome, and is thus a useful activity to introduce in the context of goal-setting. This activity could be introduced one or two weeks prior to the due date for an assessment, making specific reference to that assessment.
Working toward Meaningful Goals

B1. Mindfulness 1 – For Goal Attainment

While there is a growing amount of research around Mindfulness Meditation, in this activity we introduce Mindfulness as an activity that can assist with goal-oriented behaviours such as attention. By presenting the topic of Meditation in a non-clinical light, this script reduces the stigma around the regular practice of mindfulness meditation, both as a religious concept and also as a tool for those who need to “relax” and de-stress.

B2. Weekly+ Time Management

In the digital era, students flourish with autonomy around the tools they use to manage their time. Some students may use journals, while others may use smartphone apps or digital calendars. This activity can be introduced by encouraging students to think critically about their time management and time-management tools. This could be introduced as an optional weekly activity in tutorials. Moreover, reference to the Goal and Time-management module of www.thefridge.org.au can be made, with particular reference to the video on the use of Google calendar.

B3. Assessment Time Management

A key aspect of self-management is time management in the academic environment. Simply encouraging students to think systematically about their preparation for exams can have a powerful impact on their performance. In this brief activity, students complete an assessment time management worksheet, which encourages them to think about the barriers to their assessment preparation. This worksheet is most effective if reviewed regularly, i.e. each week in tutorials.

B4. Mental Contrasting 2

When combined with implementation intentions, mental contrasting can be used more effectively when positioned as a tool to overcome resistance to completing a goal-oriented task – in the form of a fear of failure, lack of motivation to complete a task, and in instances of procrastination. Provided students are confident that they can achieve the set goal, mentally visualising the outcome and its benefits, as well as what is needed to achieve the goal, can help students more easily identify the ways to overcome barriers to goal achievement. While Mental Contrasting 1 is used during goal planning, Mental Contrasting 2 uses a similar script, but with a focus on the process of working toward the goal.

B5. The Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique is a time-management tool that fosters discipline and metacognition of productivity and focus. In this activity, students spend 25 minutes (or some other self-allocated time) studying, and 5 minutes (or some other self-allocated time) taking a break. After four 25 minute sessions, students are encouraged to take a longer, 20 minute break. This strategy ensures that students are taking healthy breaks, while also challenging them to measure the length of time they are able to work without distractions.

B6: Post-Assessment Reflection

It’s wonderful to receive a good grade, not so wonderful to receive a bad grade. In both cases, it is worthwhile for students to reflect on why they did well (so they know to continuing employing “winning” strategies), or why they did not do so well (so they can change their behaviour). This worksheet prompts them to do that.
Staying Flexible

C1. Well-Being Audit

Optimal well-being is associated with optimal performance in academic and goal-oriented tasks. There are a number of theories about the factors that contribute to effective well-being, and many of these ideas have been incorporated into an accountability where students can autonomously self-manage their own well-being by personalizing the content of their path to optimal well-being.

C2. Positive Emotion Toolbox

Positive emotions are often seen as a “nice-to-have”, but recent research suggests that a foundation of positive emotions is fundamental for effective performance and flourishing. Students could be introduced to the relevant research in this field, and then they could complete an exercise intentionally savouring a positive experience.

C3. Mindfulness 2- for Resilience

A key concept within Mindfulness Meditation is the concept of forgiveness, which needs to repeatedly occur when the mind notices that the attention has wandered away from the intended focus of awareness on the breath. By encouraging students to foster a regular practice of Mindfulness Meditation, practices of setting intentions and practicing forgiveness can be fostered with time. The principle of self-forgiveness is central to self-management, as the key characteristic of resilience is the ability to “bounce back” to the intended goal-directed behavior in spite of a setback.

C4. Mental Contrasting 3

Once students have been familiarized with the concept of Mindfulness Meditation and the principle of acceptance, facilitators may use their discretion in starting a discussion around the fear of failure that often drives procrastination and perfectionism. By encouraging students to foster a perspective of acceptance, mindfulness principles can be used to increase students’ capacity to be willing to experience feelings of discomfort associated with possible failure, and thus successfully initiate and hopefully complete a task.

Facing Setbacks

D1. Procrastination Exercise

Procrastination often stems from avoidance of feelings of frustration, boredom, being overwhelmed, or fear of failure. Simply identifying the thoughts and feelings around the task that is being postponed, deconstructing the task into smaller parts, and setting an implementation intention, can make it easier to take action. Our procrastination worksheet guides students through this process.

D2. Mindfulness 3- for Acceptance

A common misconception among students is that it is bad to feel stressed – a belief that leads to unhealthy avoidance behaviours. An emerging concept in psychological science is that of acceptance – that willingness to experience stress or discomfort while one is taking action toward one’s valued goals. You may choose to introduce this Mindfulness exercise with a video designed for skeptics, http://www.happily.com/hd/meditation-101-animation/ followed by a practice video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5Fa50oj45s. The intention of this exercise is to demonstrate the core principle of acceptance-based training – the willingness to experience discomfort.
D3. Relaxation

On a practical level, many university students simply do not know how to relax. In this script, students are guided through deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, integrating elements of mindfulness meditation with evidence-based principles of relaxation. These strategies can be introduced to students as a stress-relief strategy or conducted with the intention of measurably reducing stress.

D4 Distress Management

Psychologically literate students should be familiar with the basic elements of common forms of psychological treatment of distress, including cognitive behavioural therapy approaches. In this handout, the basic elements are laid out in a way that young students may understand, with examples of how they can be used, and a toolbox of strategies relevant to different situations. It is important that students receive appropriate guidance and counsel when learning to use these strategies.

D5. Stressor Management

A major problem in universities is the stigma attached to discussions around mental health including stress and anxiety. Simply having a discussion about stressors can promote help-seeking behaviours among students. In this activity, students should be guided in a discussion around stress and stressors, in order to normalise feelings of stress and share strategies and tools to manage stressors. Concepts such as deep breathing and relaxation are introduced.

A1: Valued Intentions
A2: Reasons for your goals
A3: Goal-setting: Group
A4: Goal-setting: Individual
A5: WOOP it: Mental Contrasting 1

B1: Mindfulness
B2: Weekly+ Time Management
B3: Assessment Time Management
B4: Mental Contrasting 2
B5: The Pomodoro Technique
B6: Post-Assessment Reflection

C1: Well-Being Audit
C2: Positive Emotion Toolbox
C3: Mindfulness For Resilience
C4: Mental Contrasting 3

D1: Procrastination Exercise
D2: Mindfulness for Acceptance
D3: Relaxation
D4: Distress Management
D5: Stressor Management
Appendix A1: Valued Intentions: Variation A

This is introduced as a class exercise, using slides or paper copies. Alternatively it can be transformed into an individual homework exercise. Either way, it would be good to have the values list accessible to students after the exercise, so that they can return to the material when needed. It could be preceded by the goal-setting video, https://vimeo.com/120112496

“It makes sense that we should intentionally spend our time doing things that we value, but we rarely stop to think of the things that are important to us. Values are about what is most important to you, deep in your heart; what sort of person you want to be; what is significant and meaningful to you; and what you want to stand for in this life. So one approach is to think about that, and deduce your values. Another approach is to use this list of values to help you think about why you are spending your time the way you are.

A values exercise can help us identify what is important to us, which can then be used to guide our intentions to undertake activities that are aligned with our values.

1) From the list, select up to 5 values that are important to you. These words mean whatever you want them to mean. (60 seconds)

2) Now in pairs, (introduce each other), and select one of the values to talk about with your partner. Explain WHY that value is important to you today. You can share as much or as little as you want - be sure to listen non-judgmentally when others are sharing. (2 minutes)

3) Now, identify one action that you can take to help live according to that value. Specify where and when you will undertake that action, and any barriers (and solutions) you might face achieving it. (60 seconds)

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<th>SAFETY</th>
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Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au, based partly on:
See www.thefridge.com.au for more resources.
Appendix A1: Valued Intentions: Variation B

“We may soon be asking you to think about the assessment tasks and your goals/intentions for this course. Some would argue that there is no point setting an intention (ie to pursue a goal or complete a task) unless we know why we are setting it. In general, values are about what is most important to you, deep in your heart; what sort of person you want to be; what is significant and meaningful to you; and what you want to stand for in this life. So one approach is to think about that, and deduce your values. Another approach is to use this list of values [on slide, sheet, cards] to help you think about why you are spending your time the way you are. In Groups of 3, discuss which of the values are important to you today, and explain the reasons why. You can share as much or as little as you want - be sure to listen non-judgmentally when others are sharing. Then set an intention (ideally one that relates to your being a student in this course) to help you act on that value this week. Acting on your values means staying true to yourself.

eg
- I value Asking For Help today, so I will set the intention to ask my tutor for help after class today.
- I value Daring to Dream today, so I will set the intention to study for 2 whole hours tonight, starting at 7pm.
- I value Embracing the Moment today, so I will mindfully savour my lunch (even though I have had a tough morning).

Make sure the intention is at a specific time and date, that the outcome is measurable (ie you can tell that you have done it, and how well), and involves taking action - that is, it involves moving your body to perform a physical behaviour.”

Timing:
- in groups, introduce each other
- 2 min to choose your values from the list below
- 5 min to discuss
- 2 min to write down your intention
- 5 min to discuss that with your fellow students
- 5 min for tutor to randomly ask groups for example responses

### Valuing ourselves:
- Seeing possibilities
- Moving
- Feeling pleasure
- Giving thanks
- Finding peace
- Asking for help
- Understanding
- Accepting yourself

### Valuing living:
- Creating
- Dancing for joy
- Achieving

### Valuing in the presence of difficulty:
- Letting it be
- Seeking wisdom
- Staying with uncertainty
- Struggling
- Saying goodbye
- Feeling secure
- Feeling difference
- Forgiving

### Valuing relationships:
- Being compassionate
- Trusting
- Belonging
- Being truthful
- Loving and being loved
- Connecting
- Admiring

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au, based partly on:
Hayes, L., & Coyne, L., ACT conversations: Values cards for use in individual and group therapy with young people.
See www.thefridge.com.au for more resources.
Choose an important goal that you are working toward. State it here: _____________________

Now, rate it according to the following dimensions.

1.) You strive for this goal because somebody else wants you to, or the situation seems to compel it.

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2.) You strive for this goal because you would feel ashamed, guilty, or anxious if you didn’t.

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3.) You strive for this goal because you really feel that it’s an important goal to have.

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4.) You strive for this goal because of the enjoyment or stimulation which the goal provides you.

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**Scoring:** Subtract the sum of scores for 1 & 2 from the sum of scores for 3 & 4 to give an answer between -16 (completely 'controlled' motivation) and +16 (completely 'autonomous')

If this goal is rated in the negative zone, you may need to consider:

**Why** are you striving toward this goal? There may be good reasons, such as meeting family obligations, which are important to us, as we have a strong psychological need for relatedness. However, in order to meet our other psychological needs for autonomy and competence, ensure that you have other goals that you are simultaneously working on, that meet those needs.

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Created by J.Nguyen, V.Nithy & j.cranney@unsw.edu.au, based on work by SDT researchers:

See [www.thefridge.org.au](http://www.thefridge.org.au) for more resources. v. 190216
Appendices A3-4:
Goal-setting: Group

In your group of 2 or 3 (5 min):

a. Choose a ridiculous goal eg go to the moon; learn how to juggle chainsaws; start an empire (30 sec): __________________________

b. Make the goal as specific as possible, and devise a way to measure the outcome:

c. Divide your goal into sub-goals (eg things that you will aim to achieve, or individual tasks that each need to be completed to achieve your goal). Add methods and deadlines.

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<th>Sub-goal/tasks:</th>
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d. Think about what resources you will need (prepare), and work out ways to get those resources. (perhaps add above)

e. Anticipate potential barriers/setbacks, write them down, brainstorm solutions, choose one and write it down. But also have backup plans.

f. Anticipate reviewing your goals and sub-goals/tasks periodically, and recognize that you might need to change your sub-goals and methods, and even your goal—can you think of a feasible alternative?

g. Follow up with the (more serious) Individual Goal-setting worksheet.

Created by j.cranney@unsw.edu.au and v.nithy@unsw.edu.au
See www.thefridge.com.au for more resources. v.190216
Goal-setting: Individual

a. Write down some goals for this semester. These may be related to your studies, health, and some other domains. Ensure you have at least one academic goal.

b. Focusing on an academic goal (eg obtaining a distinction in this course by handing in good quality assessments in time): Write down **WHY** you want to achieve this goal.

c. Make the goal as **specific** as possible—*eg* focusing on this course--AND devise a way to **measure** the outcome (*eg* you intend to obtain at least a distinction for each assessment in this course).

d. **Divide** your goal into sub-goals/tasks (*eg* things that you will aim to achieve, or individual tasks that each need to be completed to achieve your goal). Add methods and deadlines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-goal/Tasks</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Resources needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Think about what resources you will need (**prepare**), and work out ways to get those resources. (perhaps add to above)

f. **Anticipate** potential barriers/setbacks, write them down, **brainstorm** solutions, **choose** one and write it down. But also have **backup** plans.

g. Anticipate **when** you will **review** your goals/sub-goals periodically, and recognize that you might need to change your sub-goals/tasks and methods, and even your goal—what might be a feasible alternative? (*eg* obtaining at least a pass in the course).

**Do it!** Write down what you need to do today, this week!
Appendix A5: WOOP it: Wish, Outcome, Obstacles, Plan

1) Choose a challenging but feasible goal that you would love to successfully achieve (= wish). (You might set the goal of eg getting a distinction in your next assessment; doing more exercise; asking someone out). Write down the Goal (10 seconds):

2) For 60 seconds, mentally visualize the outcome of having successfully achieved the goal. Make your vision as detailed as possible. Where are you? What do you see? What emotions are you feeling, now that you’ve achieved your goal? What are other people saying?

3) Write down as many positive benefits you can think of, of having achieved that goal (30 seconds) (eg getting distinction--> improved self-confidence and energy, reduced stress later in semester).

4) Write down at least 3 tasks you will need to do to achieve your goal.

5) Now write down up to 3 current obstacles that may get in the way of successfully achieving the first of those 3 sub-tasks. (30 seconds) (eg procrastination, employment demands, other assessments).

6) Write down a plan to overcome the primary obstacle you identified. This works in IF-THEN statements: IF [a particular situation] arises, THEN I will [engage in behaviour that promotes my goal]. (60 seconds). (eg given that you know you are prone to procrastination, you will prepare by finding out evidence-based strategies to deal with procrastination, so that when you are tempted to procrastinate, you can try out those strategies).

7) Write down specific Implementation Intentions to take action toward your goal = specific, scheduled tasks at a given time and date. (60 seconds) (eg “After dinner tonight at 8pm, I’m going to revise my notes for 25 minutes”).

Subsequent steps:
--return to Step 6—it will take more time and energy, and perhaps discussion with others, to continue to successfully come up with solutions to obstacles. But there will never be a perfect solution, and you have to start somewhere!
--return to Step 7—research has also shown that writing down the sub-tasks necessary to achieve your goal will help motivate you to act on those sub-tasks.

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au. Based partly on:

See WOOP and Oettingen websites:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mobxiKaYqU; http://www.woopmylife.org; http://www.psych.nyu.edu/oettingen/

See www.thefridge.org.au for more resources. v. 190216
Appendix B1: Mindfulness 1

“Scientific studies from universities including Harvard and Cambridge University have shown that Mindfulness Meditation, if practiced consistently for several weeks, can improve attention and result in improved academic performance in exams and assignments. It has been shown to result in functional changes in regions of the brain such as the prefrontal cortex, which is ‘in charge’ of decision making. Mindfulness is about having the intention to hold the attention to something – often the breath or the body, with a non-judgmental attitude. When the mind wanders off into other thoughts, we notice that the mind has wandered, forgive ourselves, but let go of the distracting thought, and gently return the attention back to the thing we have intended to focus our attention task.

When we procrastinate, we often engage in behaviours other than those we intended to do. Since Mindfulness helps us attend to the things we have intended to do, it may help reduce Procrastination.”

The instructor may take the class through a brief mindfulness exercise, or show them these videos:
Rationale: http://www.happify.com/hd/meditation-101-animation/
Try it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5Fa50oj45s

Note: Tell students they do not necessarily have to close their eyes (some find this difficult), but pick a spot on the floor to look at).
Appendix B2: Weekly Time Management

*What assessments are due next? ________________________________

What is your overarching academic goal for this semester? ________________________________

- In the checklist on the left below, write down a to-do list of all the tasks you have to do this week. * = most important.
- Reflect on how the checklist tasks relate to this broader overarching goal.
- Choose two important tasks/sub-goals to break down; make sure you know why they are important to you. Break these down in the table on the right hand side; make them specific and measurable.
- Come back to this worksheet at the end of the week to see how you fared—fill in the right side of the table.
- Adapt this resource to your needs!

Task Checklist--THIS WEEK: Breakdown of 2 Important Tasks/Sub-Goals: Review NEXT WEEK:

☐ ____________________________

**THIS WEEK’s ACADEMIC task/sub-goal #1 (eg for this course) =**

How can you break this task down?

☐ ____________________________

Are you measuring your progress? How?

☐ ____________________________

What resources do you need?

☐ ____________________________

Potential barriers?

☐ ____________________________

How to deal with barriers; backup plan?

☐ ____________________________

**THIS WEEK’S task/sub-goal #2 =**

How can you break this task down?

☐ ____________________________

Are you measuring your progress? How?

☐ ____________________________

What resources do you need?

☐ ____________________________

Potential barriers?

☐ ____________________________

How to deal with barriers; backup plan?

☐ ____________________________

TIME-TABLING tool: Use some kind of timetable/calendar (smart phone, or below)

Insert: Academic sub-goal activities, PLUS sleep, exercise, friends, job, domestic, music/sport etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your day</th>
<th>DAY 1 =</th>
<th>DAY 2 =</th>
<th>DAY 3 =</th>
<th>DAY 4 =</th>
<th>DAY 5 =</th>
<th>DAY 6 =</th>
<th>DAY 7 =</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hrs slept?</td>
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Appendix B3: Assessment Time Management

Assessment Time-management (suggest using pencil, or soft copy); Course: __________

Consider: How well do you want to do in this course (eg grade/mark)? _____ Why?__________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Due date</th>
<th>Sub-tasks?</th>
<th>Resources needed?</th>
<th>When (&amp; where, how) will you work on sub-task?</th>
<th>Potential obstacles &amp; solutions</th>
<th>Done! Reward?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment 1</td>
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<td>Due?</td>
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<td>Worth?</td>
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<td>Assessment 3</td>
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<td>Due?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worth?</td>
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<td>Assessment 4</td>
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</table>
Appendix B4: Mental Contrasting 2

This is an exercise that helps you work toward achieving a meaningful goal using visualisations. The human brain has difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is mental imagery, so when you are imagining yourself doing something, you are tricking the brain into thinking that you are practicing that activity.

Take piece of paper or writing tablet, or write on this sheet. Firstly, write down a challenging but feasible goal that would be satisfying to achieve. Choose a goal that would give you a feeling of pride or accomplishment if you successfully achieve it, and write it down. In the next line, write down why that goal is important to you. When we talk about what is important, we are thinking about our values, and evoking intrinsic motivation.

Now, I’ll ask you to get everything out of your hands, switch your phones off, and tune into the present moment. For the next two minutes, I want you to set the intention to focus your awareness on this goal. Other thoughts may enter into your mind, but just be willing to let those thoughts come and go as you focus on your goal. Take some long deep breaths to relax, settle into the present moment, and bring your awareness to your breath.

Now, I want you to imagine that you have successfully completed the goal that you wrote down*. Imagine that you are feeling good about having successfully completed this goal, and try to make your mental image as vivid as possible. What are you seeing when you have successfully completed your goal? What are you hearing, or what are you saying to yourself? (Pause). If you notice that your mind is wandering away from your mental image, just notice that your mind has wandered and return your awareness to making the mental image more and more vivid.

Open your eyes and write down as many positive benefits as you can think of, of having successfully completed this goal. Why would completing this goal be a good thing? What would completing the goal successfully give you?

As you write these down, you may start to think about the steps you need to take to achieve that goal, and identify some potential barriers that you might face when trying to achieve your goal. Write down (a) the steps you need to take, and (b) at least ONE Barrier or obstacle.

Now, close your eyes again and imagine that you are taking action to complete the task. If feelings of discomfort or anxiety arise, just allow those feelings to arise, without needing to change them. Hold your awareness on the mental image of yourself working towards taking action on the goal. (Long Pause). Now I want you to imagine the barrier that you identified getting in the way of you achieving your goal. Be as vivid as possible with your imagination.

In the spaces below, write down some contingency plans, IF a barrier occurs, you will do what? For example, if you get distracted, you will forgive yourself and return your awareness back to the intended task.

The final part is perhaps the most important part. I want you to write down a specific implementation intention for taking action on this task. This looks like a relatively small action step that you can schedule in your calendar for a specific time at a specific date. You want to make this task as specific as possible.

The great thing about this exercise is that you can take the implementation intention and make it the goal of another worksheet. Then you can run through the process again for that smaller task!

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au. Based partly on: Oettingen, G., & Gollwitzer, P. M. (2010). Strategies of setting and implementing goals; Mental contrasting and implementation intentions. In J. E. Maddux & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), Social psychological foundations of clinical psychology (pp. 114-135). New York: Guilford.

Critical thinking note: The social literature* suggests that wholly positive visualisation reduces motivation and performance, and that these should be more balanced ie consider both the positive outcome as well as challenges and potential failures.

See www.thefridge.org.au for more resources.
Appendix B5: The Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique is a time-management tool that fosters discipline and metacognition of productivity and focus. In this activity, students spend 25 minutes (or some other self-allocated time) studying, and 5 minutes (or some other self-allocated time) taking a break. After four 25 minute sessions, students are encouraged to take a longer, 20 minute break. This strategy ensures that students are taking healthy breaks, while also challenging them to measure the length of time they are able to work without distractions.

The Pomodoro technique is a great tool to use when studying in groups. Students can hold each other accountable to adhere to the strategy, allowing each other to speak, use their phones or take bathroom breaks only during break periods, unless absolutely necessary!

**Web Tools:** www.pomodorotechnique.com. Tomato-Timer
Windows/Mac APP: Pomodorable

**Phone Apps** – Clearfocus, Clockwork Tomato, Pomodoro Timer, Pomodoro Keeper, Stopwatch App

**Physical Tools** – Clock, Egg Timer, Watch

Share and discuss time-management and productivity strategies together. How do YOU overcome Procrastination?

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au  Based partly on:


See www.thefridge.org.au for more resources.
Appendix B6: POST-ASSESSMENT REFLECTION

Having now completed your most recent assessment task, ask yourself these questions:

1) Were you happy with the work you did (ie in assignment or exam)? YES NO PARTLY

2) What could you have done differently, to make you feel you would have done better?

3) Did you manage your time adequately to complete the task? Did you use the Assessment Time-Management Worksheet? Did you go through all the steps illustrated in the goal selection/setting video?

4) What other obstacles existed, and how might you deal with them better next time?

The next assessment task in this course is: ______________________

1) How well do you want to do in that assessment task? (eg Pass, Distinction) [= wish]

2) Spend a few minutes visualising, in detail, how it would be, to do well in the next assessment task. (eg feelings, what people would say when you tell them). [= outcomes]

3) Then write down 3 benefits of achieving what you want in next assessment task.

4) In terms of where you are now, write down three obstacles that are currently in the way of moving toward to achieving your goal.

5) Now do a bit of brainstorming about how you might deal with those obstacles (eg the obstacle might be that you are a bit stuck about some aspects of the task—will you ask your tutor or the duty tutor about this? eg is it the case that you have other assessments and you feel as though you do not have much time—will you use some of the tools, such as the Assessment Time-management worksheet, to help you with this?)

6) Write down at least one thing that you will do TODAY toward achieving your goal with the next assessment = specific, scheduled sub-tasks at a given time and date. (eg “After dinner tonight at 8pm, I’m going to do a first draft of my oral presentation, so I know what additional research and skills I need to do a good job”).

Subsequent steps:
return to Step 5—it may take some time and energy, and perhaps discussion with others, to continue to successfully come up with solutions to obstacles. But there will never be a perfect solution, and you have to start somewhere!

return to Step 6—research has also shown that writing down the sub-tasks necessary to achieve your goal will help motivate you to act on those sub-tasks.

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au. Based partly on:

See WOOP and Oettingen websites:

See www.thefridge.org.au for more resources. v. 190216.
Appendix C1: Well-Being Audit

Optimal well-being is associated with academic performance – students with higher well-being tend to perform better than students with lower well-being. Integrating positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, appreciation and contentment into your day can help you see opportunities where others may see problems. This worksheet may help you keep track of the aspects of your lifestyle that contribute to your well-being.

How on track are you with your academic tasks/goals? (mark appropriate place on line):

| 0% | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

How might you improve your rating next week?

_____________________________________________________________

Write down what you can do TODAY to reduce your workload TOMORROW:

_____________________________________________________________

Write down what you can do THIS WEEK to reduce your workload NEXT WEEK:

_____________________________________________________________

Any other comments or words of encouragement for yourself?

Domain Analysis/Well-being Audit
On the following scale, please indicate how much time and effort you dedicated to each of the following domains of life this week. YOU be the judge of how much you need of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOT ENOUGH</th>
<th>ENOUGH</th>
<th>A LOT</th>
<th>TOO MUCH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleeping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Things that make you happy (eg music/sport)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Things that give you purpose (eg helping others)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spending time with close friends, family, partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialising or going out partying</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercising</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating healthily</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (eg working, meditating):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</table>

Reflection Questions:
Have I been studying as much as I could have--or have I been procrastinating? ____________________________

How was this week different from last week—is the change positive? ________________________________

What is ONE domain where you want to do LESS next week? ________________________________

What is ONE domain where you want to do MORE next week? ________________________________

While studying or thinking about studying, I have been:
Anxious---------------stressed-------------distracted----------focused/present.

When thinking about my ability to manage my workload, I have felt:
Hopeless------------pessimistic---------neutral--------optimistic------confident

If you find yourself on the left side of either of the last two scales, consider a visit to The Hub: https://student.unsw.edu.au/hub

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au and j.cranney@unsw.edu.au  See www.thefridge.org.au for more resources. v.190216
Appendix C2: Positive Emotion Toolbox

Cultivating positive emotions can reduce distress and build resilience. Here are some ways to cultivate positive emotions, either alone or in groups.

1) Acceptance

List 3 things you can wholeheartedly accept about the present situation. Take a minute to breathe into the feeling of acceptance.

2) Gratitude

List 3 things you could be grateful for that are related to the present situation. Take a minute to breathe into the feeling of gratitude.

3) Humour

List 3 light-hearted perspectives that can be humorous about the present situation. Take a minute to have a giggle about these ideas.

4) Curiosity

List 3 things that you are curious about that are related to the present situation. For each item, write down an action you can take to follow through on that curiosity.

5) Optimism

List 3 things that you can be optimistic about that are related to the present situation. Take a minute to breathe into the feelings of optimism or excitement.

6) Hope/Faith

List 3 future events that you can look forward to that give you a sense of hope or excitement. Take a minute to visualize that situation and the notice the feeling of hope.

7) Self-Compassion

List 3 Things that you love about yourself that are related to the present situation. Take a minute to breathe into the feeling of self-compassion.

8) Loving-Kindness

List 3 things that you are grateful for that are related to other people in your life. Take a minute to breathe into the feelings of loving-kindness to any others in the situation.

9) Savouring

List 3 simple pleasures that you can savour within the next 24 hours. Examples may include fruit, pets, sunshine, music, connection with friends or family.

Appendix C3: Mindfulness for Resilience

A key concept within Mindfulness Meditation is the concept of self-compassion, which needs to repeatedly occur when the mind notices that the attention has wandered away from the intended focus of awareness on the breath. By encouraging students to foster a regular practice of Mindfulness Meditation, practices of setting intentions and practicing compassion can be fostered with time. The principle of self-compassion is central to self-management, as the key characteristic of resilience is the ability to “bounce back” to the intended goal-directed behavior in spite of a setback.

So I want you to turn off your phone, get everything out of your hands, and take some deep breaths to ground yourself in the present moment. (Pause). Become aware of the sounds in the room, and just hear them without needing to label them. (Pause). Now become aware of the sensations of your physical body, without needing to change or fix them. Notice if there is any discomfort, and allow yourself to relax into the present. Finally, I want you to become aware of the fact that you breathe. (Pause).

For the next few minutes, we are working toward a goal of holding our awareness on our breath. (Pause) As beginner meditators, it is almost guaranteed that your attention will wander away from your breath from time to time. Our challenge is to see how quickly we can let go of the distracting thoughts and return our awareness back to the breath (Pause).

The intention with this exercise is to demonstrate how Mindfulness Meditation can help foster the kind of self-compassion and renewed attention that is essential to resilience. See how long you can hold your awareness on your breath now. (30 second pause)

When our mind starts to wander, just accept that there will always be thoughts coming and going, and return your awareness back to the breath. This is the same quality of self-compassion that you can exercise when you experience a set-back to achieving your goals. (Long Pause)

It’s OK if your mind has wandered away from your breath, just accept that as normal for the human brain, and return your awareness back to your breath.

Now when you’re ready, returning your awareness back to the room, wriggling your fingers and toes, and gently opening your eyes.
Appendix C4: Mental Contrasting 3

“In this exercise you’ll have the opportunity to consider some setbacks to achieving your goals. Visualising our setbacks can be helpful, but it may also involve some negative feelings. If you’d prefer not to participate, that’s fine. If you’d like to chat privately about your experiences during the exercise please feel free to see me after class, or email me afterward.

1) **Choose** a challenging but feasible goal that you would love to successfully achieve. *(You might set the goal of eg getting a distinction in your next assessment; doing more exercise; asking someone out). Write down the Goal (10 seconds).*

2) For 60 seconds, **mentally visualize** the **outcome** of having successfully achieved the goal*. Make your vision as detailed as possible. Where are you? What do you see? What emotions you are feeling now that you’ve achieved your goal? What are other people saying?

3) **Write down** as many **positive benefits** you can think of, of having achieved that goal (30 seconds) *(eg getting distinction-> improved self-confidence and energy, reduced stress later in semester).*

4) **Write down** at least 3 things you will need to do to achieve your goal.

5) Now write down up to **3 current obstacles** that may get in the way of successfully achieving the first of those 3 sub-tasks . (30 seconds) *(eg procrastination, employment demands, other assessments).*

6) Now, mentally visualize one of the obstacles getting in the way of your goal. Imagine that this obstacle is causing you to fail to achieve your goal. Take notice of any changes to the physical sensations in your body when you imagine failing to achieve your goal. Allow those feelings to be there without needing to fix or change them.

7) Let the thoughts, feelings and physical sensations associated with failing come and go. Return your awareness to your breath. *(30 sec Mindfulness)*

8) Now, bring to mind something you are grateful for. This could be a pet, or a family member, or even just beautiful weather or food. Imagine the sensation of delicious food in your mouth, and take notice of the feelings of appreciations. Take note of the physical sensations in your body associated with the feeling of appreciation and gratitude. Allow these feelings to expand and flood your body.

9) **Write down** a **plan** to overcome the obstacles you identified. This works in **IF-THEN statements**. So: IF [a particular situation] arises, THEN I will [engage in behaviour that promotes my goal]. (60 seconds). *(eg given that you know you are prone to procrastination, you will prepare by finding out evidence-based strategies to deal with procrastination, so that when you are tempted to procrastinate, you can try out those strategies).*

10) **Write down** Implementation **Intentions to take action toward your goal** = specific, scheduled tasks at a given time and date. (60 seconds)/( eg “After dinner tonight at 8pm, I’m going to revise my notes for 25 minutes”).”

Created by v.nithy@unsw.edu.au (edited by j.cranney@unsw.edu.au). Based partly on: Oettingen, G., & Gollwitzer, P. M. (2010). Strategies of setting and implementing goals: Mental contrasting and implementation intentions. In J. E. Maddux & J. P. Tangney (Eds.), Social psychological foundations of clinical psychology (pp. 114-135). New York: Guilford.


See [www.thefridge.org.au](http://www.thefridge.org.au) for more resources. v.15/04/16
## Appendix D1a: Procrastination Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am procrastinating on:</th>
<th>I am procrastinating on this because:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the specific task(s) you are procrastinating on</td>
<td>Don’t know where to start? The task will be boring? The task will be challenging? Other reasons?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I want to complete this task because:</th>
<th>Do I need to get or do anything before I can start?</th>
<th>What is the first small action I can take and when?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write down at least 3 reasons why you actually do want to complete this task</td>
<td>Acquire resources, remove distractions, set aside time, etc</td>
<td>Break the task down into smaller steps and write down the very first step.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.  

2.  

3.  

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Appendix D1b: Procrastination and Mindfulness Exercise

Instructor: read this. Student: record this and play back when necessary.

“Who has heard of Mindfulness? Who here has heard of Procrastination?
When we Procrastinate we are experiencing an avoidance response to discomfort, but it’s not the discomfort of doing the task, it’s avoidance of the uncomfortable emotions we might feel when we think about doing an uncomfortable task. Often this uncomfortable emotion is anxiety.

In an anxiety response there is a conflict between the prefrontal cortex and the limbic system. The prefrontal cortex is responsible for decision making and the amygdala which is within the limbic system is responsible for the fight or flight response to a threatening stimulus.

Research has shown that we can actually change the way these parts of the brain function through regular attention training, and the specific type of attention training is mindfulness meditation.

In mindfulness meditation, we are setting the intention to hold our awareness on the breath, with a non-judgmental attitude, noticing when the mind has wandered (which it will), and returning the awareness to the breath over and over again.

So in this activity we are going to be showing you the way in which mindfulness can help you overcome procrastination in the short term, and regular practice for about 2 months can start to make changes in the brain so it can help you in the long term.

In your notebook, write down one goal that you have been procrastinating on, or that you are dreading to think about completing. Make it a specific, slightly challenging task, that you have a tendency to procrastinate on. (Pause). Now, divide the task into at least 3 smaller actions.

Now, take 3 long deep breaths to ground yourself into the present moment. Let go of any worries about the past or future and centre yourself into the here and now. Become aware of the sensations in the room, and of the sensations in your body. For the next few minutes, set the intention that you are going to let go of any distracting thoughts and be focused on the here and now. Now close your eyes and bring your awareness to the sensations of your breath. Choose a specific point on your breath to focus on – whether it is under your nostrils, in your chest, or the rising and falling sensation in your belly. Is your breathing shallow or is it deep? Remember that there is no need to change the way you are breathing, just notice its natural rhythm. Hold your awareness on your breath for a few seconds, with a non-judgmental attitude. If your mind starts to wander, notice that your mind has wandered and gently return the attention back to the breath. If you find yourself getting distracted by a thought, gently notice that the thought is there, and gently return your attention to your breath, letting go of that thought.

Now, bring to mind the first sub-task on your list. Imagine yourself completing the first action associated with that task. Pay attention to the details, whether these are images, actions, sounds, thoughts or feelings associated with completing the task. Notice any uncomfortable sensations arising in your body and allow your breathing to deepen to expand into those uncomfortable sensations.

Bring your awareness back to your breath, and notice if anything has changed in your breathing. Allow any uncomfortable sensations to be, and notice them without needing to judge or change them. Consider that these sensations are only temporary, and that they will pass. Be willing to experience these uncomfortable sensations without needing to change them. Hold your awareness on your breathing for another few seconds, and if your mind wanders, forgive yourself and gently return your attention back to your breath.

Now take a nice, relaxing deep breath, gently wriggle your fingers and toes, and return your attention back to the room. Use this exercise to accept feelings of discomfort as you actually commence the task that you have been procrastinating about. Use it whenever necessary.”

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Appendix D2: Mindfulness for Acceptance

“I want you to set the intention to focus your awareness on the present moment, and postpone any thoughts or worries about other things you have going on until after the activity is over. Take some long deep breaths to relax, settle into the present moment, and bring your awareness to the sounds in the environment, without needing to label them, just noticing that there are sounds in the environment.

Now just become aware of your body, and scan through your body from your head, to your shoulders and arms, to your chest, your stomach, your legs, and rest your awareness on your feet for a few seconds. If you notice your mind wandering, just notice that your mind has wandered and return your awareness back to your feet, resting there.

And now I’d like you to become aware of your breath, and the fact that you are breathing. You don’t need to do anything except be aware of your breath – you are very good at breathing, you have been doing it for a long time. (Pause). Now bring to mind an uncomfortable situation in your life—perhaps when you have failed to achieve a goal. (Pause) Tune into any discomfort you are experiencing in your body. Noticing these sensations, gently return back into the room and open your eyes.

Sometimes it can be helpful to simply accept our uncomfortable experiences rather than try to reframe them.

1) What bodily sensations are you experiencing that are uncomfortable?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Try to see those bodily sensations as simply just that – uncomfortable sensations. What have you done in the past to escape or avoid these particular feelings of discomfort?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2) What did that cost you in terms of long-term happiness, relationships, habits or wasted time and money?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Bring your awareness to the same uncomfortable sensations. Describe any emotion underlying these uncomfortable sensations: ________________ Give it a rating from 0 to : ___

Now, spend a few minutes sitting with this emotion, allowing it to be there without needing to fix or change it. When your mind starts to wander, notice that it has wandered and gently return it back to experiencing the bodily sensations associated with this emotion, without needing to change it. After a few minutes, make a note of whether the emotional intensity around these bodily sensations has changed:

______________________________.

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Appendix D3: Relaxation

Script -- (15 Minutes). Can be read by instructor, or student can record and play back.

Note to the Speaker: *Speak slowly and deliberately, using lower voice tones.* Baritone and alto tones are better than tenor and soprano. Practice using a recorder several times before using the relaxation script with your clients. Do the relaxation in a dimly lit, quiet room. It may be accomplished by sitting in a comfortable chair, or by lying flat. Lying down is the preferred position.

“Before I begin I would like you to take a few seconds to relax as much as you can totally on your own..... Settle back as comfortably as you can. Let yourself relax to the very best of your ability....Now, as you relax like that, clench both fists, just clench your fists tighter and tighter, and study the tension as you do so. Keep them clenched and feel the tension in your fists, hands, forearms....and now relax. Let the fingers of your hands become loose, and observe the contrast in your feelings....now let yourself go and try to become more relaxed all over...Once more, clench your fists really tight...hold them, and notice the tension again....Now let go, relax; your fingers straighten out, and you notice the difference once more....Each time, pay close attention to your feelings when you tense up and when you relax. Now straighten your arms, straighten them so that you feel the most tension in the triceps muscles along the back of your arms, stretch your arms and feel that tension...and now relax. Get your arms back into a comfortable position. Let the relaxation proceed on its own. Your arms should feel comfortably heavy as you allow them to relax....Straighten your arms once more so that you feel the tension in the triceps muscles; straighten them. Feel the tension...and relax. Get your arms comfortable and let them relax further and further. Continue relaxing your arms even further. Even when your arms seem fully relaxed, try to go that extra bit further; try to achieve deeper and deeper levels of relaxation.

Let all of your muscles go loose and heavy. Just settle back quietly and comfortably. Wrinkle up your forehead now; wrinkle it tighter...and now stop wrinkling your forehead, relax and smooth it out. Picture your entire forehead and scalp becoming smoother as the relaxation increases... Now, close your eyes tighter and tighter...place all of your tension in your eyes....and relax your eyes. Keep your eyes closed, gently, comfortably, and notice the relaxation....Now clench your jaws, bite your teeth together; study the tension throughout the jaws....relax your jaws now....learn to appreciate the relaxation....Now press your lips together tighter and tighter....relax the lips. Note the contrast between tension and relaxation. Feel the relaxation all over your face. The relaxation progresses further and further....Now attend to your neck muscles. Press you head back as far as it can go and feel the tension in the neck; roll it to the right and feel the tension shift; now roll it to the left. Straighten your head and return to a comfortable position, study the relaxation, let the relaxation really develop....Now shrug your shoulders, pull them up and try to touch your ears. Hold the tension....drop your shoulders and feel the relaxation. Neck and shoulders relaxed. Shrug your shoulders again and move them around. Bring your shoulders up, forward, and back. Feel the tension in your shoulders and in your upper back....drop your shoulders once more and relax. Let the relaxation spread deep into the shoulders, right into your back muscles; relax your neck and throat, and your jaws and other facial areas as the pure relaxation takes over and grows deeper....deeper....ever deeper.

Relax your entire body to the best of your ability....feel that comfortable heaviness that accompanies relaxation.... breathe easily...freely in and freely out. Notice how the relaxation increases as you exhale. As you breathe out just feel that relaxation. Now breathe right in, fill your lungs, inhale deeply and hold your breath....study the tension...now exhale, let the walls of your chest grow loose and push the air out automatically...continue relaxing and breathe freely and gently... feel the relaxation and enjoy it ... with the rest of your body as relaxed as possible, fill your
lungs again, breathe in deeply and hold it again. That's fine, breathe out and feel the relief ... just breathe normally. Continue relaxing your chest and let the relaxation spread to your back, shoulders, neck and arms. Merely let go and enjoy the relaxation. Now pay attention to your stomach muscles, make your stomach hard ... notice the tension ... and relax. Let the muscles loosen and notice the contrast. Feel the general well-being that comes when you relax your stomach. Now draw your stomach in, pull the muscles right in and feel the tension this way, now push out and feel the tension ... once more pull in and feel the tension ... now relax your stomach fully ...Let the tensions dissolve as the relaxation grows deeper, deeper, ever deeper. Each time you breathe out notice the rhythmic relaxation both in your lungs and in your stomach ... notice thereby how your chest and stomach relax more and more.

Try and let go of all contractions anywhere in your body ... all parts relaxing further and further, ever deeper. Now relaxed as you are, I would like you to tense all the muscles in your right leg. Hold it ... and now relax. Let the muscles loosen as the relaxation takes over. Once more tighten the muscles of your right leg while the rest of your body stays as relaxed as possible ... and now relax. Relaxing more and more, ever deeper. Now push your right foot downwards away from your face. Feel the tension in your arch, ankle ... now return your foot to a comfortable and relaxed position. Now while the rest of your body stays as relaxed as possible, tense the muscles of your left leg ... hold it ...and now relax. Simply let the relaxation develop. Once more tense the muscles of your left leg ... and now relax ... relaxing more and more. Now, push your left foot downwards away from your face. Feel the tension in your arch, ankle ... and now relax your foot.

Keep relaxing like that for a while ... feel how heavy your muscles have become. In a state of perfect relaxation, you would feel unwilling to move a single muscle. Think about the effort that would be required to raise your right arm ... as you think about raising your arm, notice if tensions may have crept in. If so let them go and relax your arm more. Now you can become twice as relaxed as you are right now merely by taking two very deep breaths ... and slowly ... very slowly exhaling ... (wait 10 seconds). Now relaxed as you are, I would like you to imagine your own neutral scene, something for you that is comfortable and very relaxing."
Distress Management

Choose an experience that was mild-to-moderately distressing (ie not extremely distressing), and take these steps:

1) What was the Activating event that caused distress? Only write down the objective facts of what happened- who, what, where, and how.

________________________________________________________________________

2) The experience of distress is the Consequence of this activating event. What were the emotions, feelings and unhelpful behaviours that came up around this event?

________________________________________________________________________

3) Emotions are usually triggered by some underlying cognitive beliefs. What thoughts and Beliefs lay behind these emotions?

________________________________________________________________________

4) Distress comes when we take our thoughts and beliefs as the truth. However, our thoughts and beliefs can often be faulty rather than true. You can see some common “Faulty Thinking” styles on the next page.

   How can we Dispute our beliefs by looking at this event from a different perspective, with more healthy beliefs? (See Faulty Thinking Index)

________________________________________________________________________

5) What are some new beliefs which would be more Effective in achieving your goals?

________________________________________________________________________

6) Sometimes it takes action for us to adopt healthier beliefs.

   What positive action/s could you take or behaviours you could perform today or this week to make it easier for you to Flourish tomorrow or next week?

________________________________________________________________________

Also think about what actions you could take to mitigate the extent to which events like this cause you distress in the future, ie to Grow resilience.

________________________________________________________________________
FAULTY THINKING INDEX

Sometimes our thoughts are warped and don’t accurately reflect reality. In these cases it is not helpful to believe your thoughts. Thus, get familiar with these forms of faulty thinking so you can identify when your thoughts are not helpful for you.

1) All-or Nothing thinking: Are you seeing things in black or white? eg the idea that if your work is not perfect than it is useless. Try and see if there is a grey area or middle ground.

2) Overgeneralisation: Are you seeing a one-off event as something that is “always” the case?

3) Mental Filter: Are you seeing a small negative part of the picture without seeing the big picture with all its positives?

4) Disqualifying the positive: Are you forgetting or undervaluing any good things eg comments, achievements, or self-compassion?

5) Jumping to conclusions: Are you thinking negatively about something without enough supporting evidence?

6) Mind-Reading: Are your beliefs or emotions the result of some thoughts (about what others may be thinking) that you have no real evidence for?

7) Fortune Telling: Are you predicting what you think will happen in the future without any concrete evidence to do so?

8) Magnification: Are you catastrophizing a situation ie “making a mountain out of a molehill”, or minimising other aspects of the situation that are more important and positive?

9) Emotional Reasoning: Are you taking your emotions and feelings as reflections of reality? eg “I feel it, therefore it must be true”.

10) “Should-ing” – Are you thinking in terms of should’s or must’s? It can be healthier to think in terms of preferences, and be accepting of the (imperfect) way things are, and be open to ways they “could” be even better.

11) Labeling and MislABELing – Are you name-calling yourself or others or putting emotionally charged labels on events or actions? Try to return to a more unbiased perspective.

12) BlamING – This involves personalising the situation by blaming yourself for the event where the fault is not truly yours, OR playing a victim and blaming others when the fault is not truly theirs.

13) Heaven’s Reward Fallacy: Are you holding onto unspoken expectations - as though someone is keeping score of sacrifices that you “should” be rewarded for?

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Appendix D5: Stress Management

Usually people think of stressors as negative, but they are a natural part of life - it is usually our reactions to life events, rather than the events themselves, that lead to distress. We cannot always control stressors but we CAN manage the way we deal with the thoughts and emotions that come with them.

Below are a list of “stress management” tools you may or may not already know, that may help to reduce the extent to which stressors cause distress. Each of these tools has been backed by scientific research on stress reduction. For each activity, ensure that you are comfortable, and that you are rid of all distractions for the time allocated for the implementation of the strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep Breathing</td>
<td>Breathe into your diaphragm, counting from 1-5 on both the inhale and the exhale. Try to balance the length of the inhale and exhale, and do this for 5-10 minutes. Hold one hand on your chest and one hand on your stomach to help keep your awareness on your breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive Muscle Relaxation</td>
<td>Move through your body tensing and relaxing muscle groups one at a time. The awareness of muscle tension, monitoring of muscle tension and conscious relaxation of each muscle may help you to relax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massage</td>
<td>A massage administered by a qualified massage therapist can help relax your muscles, enhance your circulation, and reduce stress levels. Ensure that you stay present during the massage session, rather than worrying about your workload, as this does not help!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise, Sport</td>
<td>Physical exercise is a critical part of both physical and mental wellbeing. It is generally advised that young people set aside 75 minutes per week for moderate intensity activities, involving a combination of both muscle-strengthening and aerobic activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindfulness Meditation</td>
<td>Set the intention to hold the awareness onto the present moment, with a non-judgemental attitude. Use the breath as an anchor for the present moment, choosing a point on the breath, and returning the awareness back to the breath every time the mind wanders. Practice daily for reduced stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other?</td>
<td>____________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other?</td>
<td>____________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discuss some of these strategies with your peers, and exchange new ones.

I am interested in trying ___________________________ to help maintain my well-being.

I will set the intention to implement this strategy at ___________________________ (time and date)

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


