

Welcome to Lifestyle Management

Lifestyle Management helps people with long term health conditions achieve control over their situation and practice effective self management strategies.

Lifestyle Management is one of Thistle Foundation's Health and Wellbeing services.

About Thistle Foundation

We are a Scottish charity that provides a range of tailored services for people with disabilities and health conditions. We go the extra mile to support people to lead great lives where they are in control.

We work across Scotland, with headquarters in Edinburgh. Our services include Supported Living, Health and Wellbeing, and Training and Consultancy.

If you ever need a bit more support from us, let us know.



Thistle Foundation

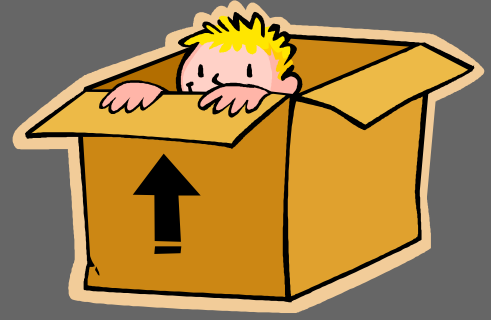
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT



What is Lifestyle Management?

Lifestyle Management is about building on your confidence, self-worth, knowledge and skills to help you cope and move on in life despite any difficult situation you might be in.

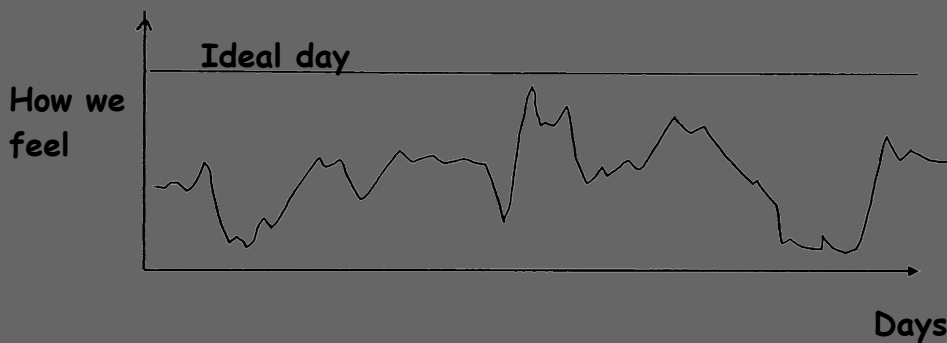
We believe this course is for anyone. In particular, people find great benefit when experiencing difficulties such as:

- Illness
- Long-term chronic conditions
- On-going and unexplained symptoms
- Trauma and loss
- Difficult life situations and changes
- Feeling excluded
- Poverty and mental-health difficulties

Our view of these situations

(difficulties, illness, symptoms, how we cope and how we feel on a day-to-day basis),

**is that they are always changing,
fluctuating day by day, or even moment by moment.**



Sometimes things seem better,
and sometimes things seem worse.



By noticing
what makes things seem better,
and by then doing more of it,
we find that our situations and symptoms can
improve.

We believe that no matter how chronic or seemingly hopeless a situation may be, there is always scope for making significant changes.

So this is why this programme is about change and learning useful skills that help us make that change.

It is about playing to our strengths, setting goals, overcoming obstacles, taking risks, experiencing setbacks and being willing to try again.

It is about achieving
control over our situation.

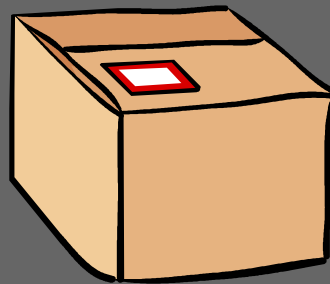
Lifestyle Management and Medical Conditions

Our focus in Lifestyle Management is on the person experiencing illness or symptoms -

not the illness itself.

We assume that people already know about their specific condition and their medical treatment (including medications), and are receiving on-going support in their medical management

Initially, we place the medical condition in a „box“.
Then we put the box aside and, instead,
focus our attention on you, as a person
regaining control over your symptoms and your situation.



We tackle the secondary effects of illness,
and so the course is about acceptance, becoming calm and reducing
symptoms associated with chronic stress. We build our mood, our self
esteem, and our physical and psychological fitness.

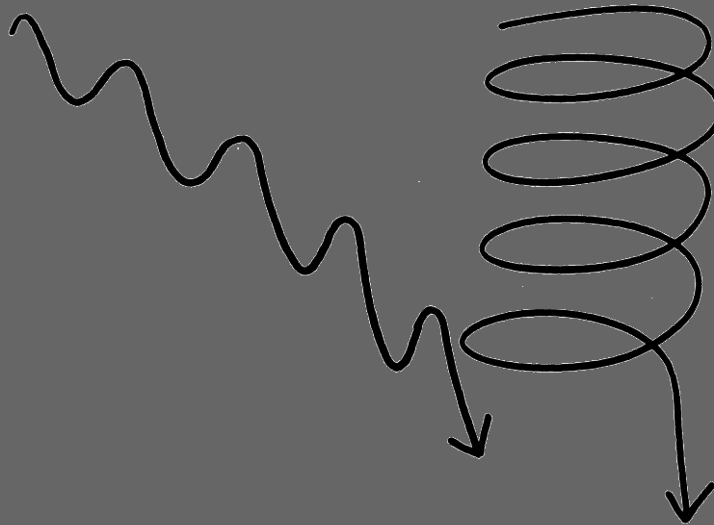
It is about getting involved in meaningful activities, finding ways to keep
connecting with people and living purposeful lives.

Later on in the course, we discuss possible health benefits from
practising these powerful self-management strategies. Although we do
not focus on cure or becoming completely free of symptoms, many people
experience significant improvement in their symptoms or in their ability
to move on in life despite their symptoms.

On the course we introduce ways of reversing unhelpful spirals.

Sometimes when are trying to cope with illness and difficult situations, we can actually make our situation worse.

We can spiral downwards towards disability by continuing to do what doesn't work



These spirals seem to be tangled up like a ball of wool and it can be difficult to tease out how to find a way forward.

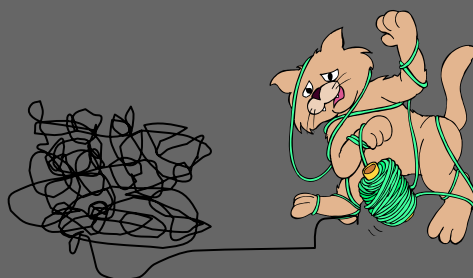
Altered wake-sleep cycle (Chapter 3)

Symptoms cycle (Chapter 4)

Boom-bust cycle (Chapter 6)

Lethargy cycle (Chapter 6,8)

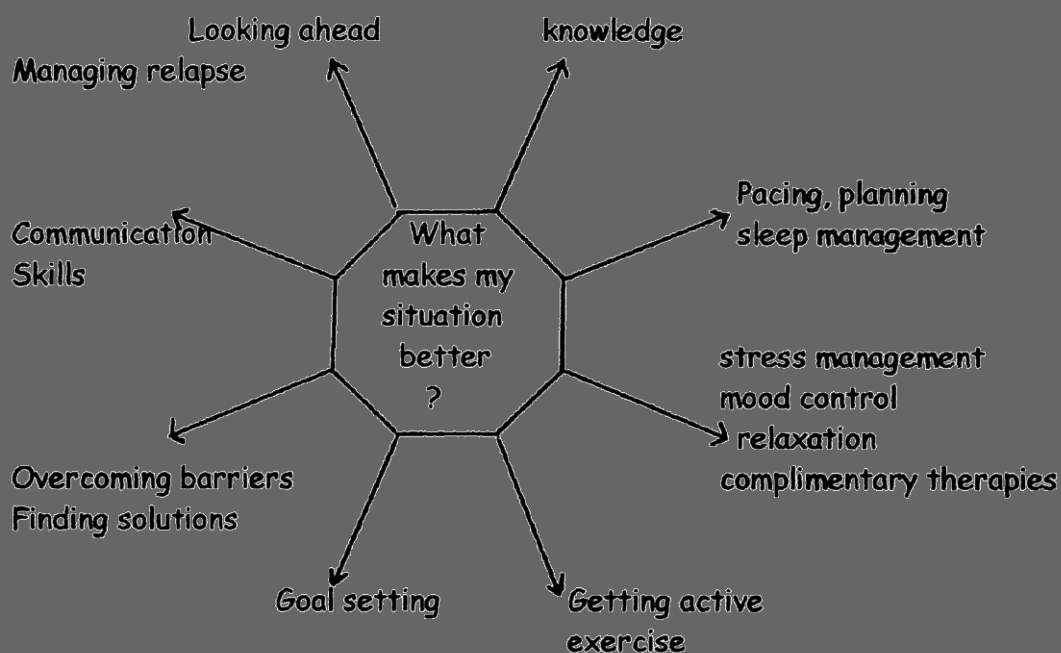
Inactivity cycle (Chapter 8)



This course is about practising vital self-management skills to help untangle the ball of wool and create more helpful upward spirals.

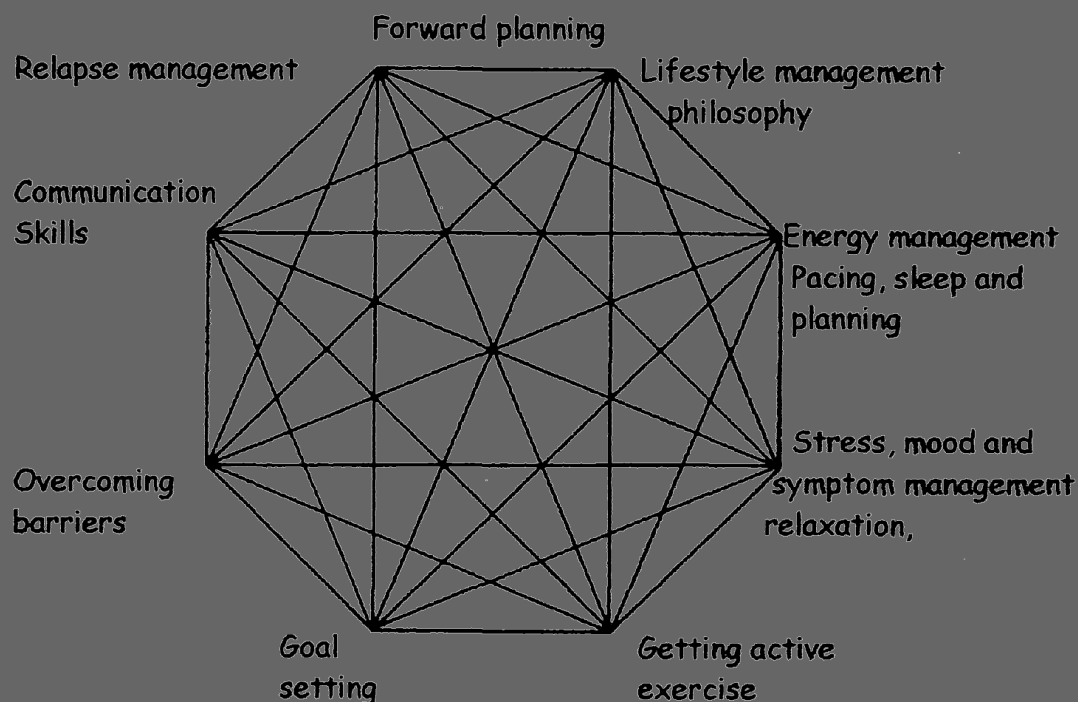
It is a way of coping with illness and difficult situations that makes our situation better.

The arrows on the chart below point towards skills that people have found help make their situation better.



Now our tangled ball of wool looks more like a spider's web.

The Spider's Web shows how the components of the programme interlink.



The Difference
that Makes
The Difference

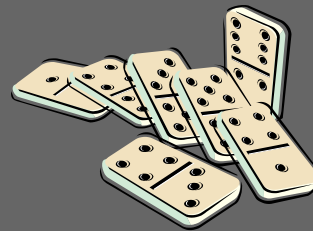
Some people have initially commented that there seems an awful lot to learn and practise.

However, they notice that, if they practise even one element of the programme, they begin to see changes happen in other elements.



It's a bit like a snowball rolling down
the hill
gathering momentum!

Or setting the first domino in motion.



We can focus on small changes.

We can focus on what we can change.

We can focus on
The Difference
that makes
The Difference

For instance,

- By practising pacing, you will relax.
- As a result, you may sleep better and be more rested.
- Your mood will be better and you will find yourself thinking more clearly.
- You will have the clarity to think about what you want out of life, and the energy to move forward to achieve these aims.

