**Memory Skills Group: Session 1**

**Session Plan**

**Welcome and Mindfulness**

* *Welcome participants to the group*
* *Mindfulness Exercise*
  + Short discussion about how participants found it last week
  + Short recap on what mindfulness is and why it’s a part of our sessions. Specifically why we practice it at the start of our session.
  + Progressive Muscle Relaxation
* *Agenda for today’s session plan*
  + Have this written out on flipchart paper

**Review previous session and out of session work**

* *Recap of last week*
  + Ask participants to provide brief overview of last week’s session. Ensure to recap:
    - Overview of process of memory and learning (attention, information processing, encoding, storage, retrieval).
    - Overview of different types of memory (i.e. visual, verbal, autobiographical, procedural)
    - Why do people experience memory difficulties (e.g. head injury, difficult experience, fatigue)
    - How people with memory difficulties are affected.
  + Possibly have the above displayed on flipchart paper?
  + Discuss out of session work with participants
    - What difficulties and strengths did they identify?
    - Anything that surprised them?
    - Could refer to results of their cognitive assessments?

**Communicating my difficulties with others**

* A common problem for those with memory difficulties is whether to tell other people or not
* Pros and cons of telling others
  + Use flipchart paper and encourage group to generate these
  + One facilitator to lead discussion, other to be the scribe
  + Have readymade flipchart page after this page with ideas on
* Who might it be helpful to tell?
  + Use flipchart paper and encourage group to generate these
* Who do I communicate these difficulties?
  + Explain to the group that it can be difficult to know the best way to communicate our difficulties and the impacts they have on us
  + Generate ways to do this with group (write on flipchart paper)
  + Have readymade flipchart page after this page with ideas on

**Break**

**Overview of External Memory strategies**

* External memory strategies involve making external changes to our environment to help to aid memory
* Facilitators to take turn talking through each of the strategies.
* Refer to workbook for information
* Use examples and generate discussion
  + E.g. ‘does anyone do something similar already? When/where might this be useful? What might get in the way of using this?’ etc.

1. Visual aids
2. Verbal aids
3. Get organised
4. Boards
5. Notes
6. Journal
7. Post-it notes
8. Cues
9. To-do lists
10. Environment
11. Technology
12. Difficulty
13. Timing
14. Slow down
15. Breaks
16. Routine
17. Context

* How to know which strategies to use?
  + Discuss this with group
    - Depends on your area of difficulty – sign post to workbook in which the strategies are broken down into specific difficulties
    - Using your strengths to help with your difficulties? (e.g. if work well visually, visual strategies might be more specific)
    - Don’t overload yourself – don’t feel you have to use them all

**Summary**

* Ask the group to summarise the session

**Out of session work**

* Talk through each section of the task
* Explain that it will be helpful for participants to look back over the Memory Self-Assessment forms to remind themselves of their strengths and difficulties
* Encourage participants to practice their strategy and monitor how this is going for them
* Remind of the importance of practice and that something might not work for us first time but to keep trying