

Exploring Recovery

WORKSHEETS



These worksheets work best after you've watched the 'Exploring Recovery' video



Stories of Recovery

Recovery Definitions

Parts of Me

Tree of Life

Nourishing My Values

Living in Line with My Values

Identifying My Strengths

Making a Plan

If this is your first time exploring your voices, it may be helpful to work through these worksheets with someone you trust to keep you feeling safe and supported. This could be your:



Family



Friends



**Clinicians and
support workers**



Stories of Recovery

Recovery is about being able to enjoy a meaningful life despite ongoing symptoms or challenges. After a period of living with mental distress, it can sometimes feel hard to believe that recovery is possible. Below are some recovery stories from those with voice hearing experiences.



The Voices in My Head

TED Talk by Dr Eleanor Longdon

In this TED Talk, voice hearer Eleanor Longdon discusses her transition from highly accomplished honours student to almost drilling a hole in her own head in an attempt to free herself of her voices. Despite her battles, Eleanor learned to explore her voices, and was able to return to her studies and complete a doctorate. Her inspiring story is a wonderful example of success living alongside voices.

Available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=syjEN3peCJw



Recovery from Mental Disorders

Talk by Dr Pat Deegan

Pat Deegan was diagnosed with schizophrenia in her teen years, and was written off by professionals as a lost cause. Pat worked to break free from her 'schizophrenic' label, and gained her doctorate in psychology. Now a well-known researcher and advocate, Pat Deegan spends her life challenging perceptions, changing opinions, and making things better for people with mental health issues.

Available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhK-7DkWAKE



Living with Voices: 50 Stories of Recovery

Book by Marius Romme, Sandra Escher and Jacqui Dillon

This book contains 50 first-hand experiences of hearing voices and recovery. These powerful stories show that overcoming problems with voice hearing and leading a flourishing, meaningful life is possible. It shows a path to recovery by working to change their relationship with their voices, accepting their experiences, fighting against unhelpful labels and valuing the opinions of voice hearers.

Available to purchase from online book sellers.



A Tale of Mental Illness from the Inside

Ted Talk by Elyn Saks

Elyn shares her experiences of being diagnosed with chronic schizophrenia, becoming institutionalised and given little hope. Elyn has not been hospitalised in over thirty years and lives a meaningful life with a husband, a circle of friends and has an accomplished career as a professor of law and psychiatry.

Available on Youtube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6CILJA110Y



My Journey from Psychosis to Mental Health Nurse of the Year

Blog Post by Matt Ball

In this inspiring story, Matt Ball tells his amazing story in which he overcame deportation, drug abuse, homelessness, and five prolonged hospitalisations to become a highly-regarded Nurse Practitioner, Psychotherapist, mental health trainer, and the founder of an organisation for voice hearers. In this blog post, he shares his experience with hospitalisation, medication, and his recovery journey.

Available on Youtube at: www.samentalhealthcommission.com.au/matt-ball-journey-psychosis-2017-mental-health-nurse-year/

Recovery Definitions



Recovery is very individual, personal and looks different for every voice hearer. Take a look at some different definitions of recovery from voice hearers, scholars, and advocates.

"Recovery is a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life even with the limitations caused by the illness. Recovery involves the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness." - William Anthony, founder of the Centre for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

"I am no longer defined by myself or by others as my mental illness or disability, nor am I limited in opportunity, responsibility or direction. It's not who I am - though it may be a small part of me at times." - Laurie Curtis, scholar

"I began to take responsibility for my actions. I found myself getting excited about life and creative about my choices." - Lauren Tenney, Psychologist, Scientist and Advocate

"I am engaged in a lifelong process of obtaining, maintaining and slowly modifying my sense of who I am." - Anonymous

"It is a process of change, through which you can improve your health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach your full potential. Recovery is a process, a way of life, an attitude, and a way of approaching the day's challenges. It is not a perfectly linear process. At times, our course is erratic and we falter, slide back, regroup and start again." - Dr Pat Deegan, Voice Hearer and advocate

"Recovery for me is getting back to who I want to be." - Anonymous

Many of these definitions have similar elements, which include:

Recovery isn't a linear process

Reclaiming your identity

A change in attitudes

Developing strategies

Finding meaning and purpose

Each person's journey is unique and personal

Making your own choices

Recovery doesn't mean 'symptom-free'

Finding hope

Not defined by mental illness

Living a meaningful life despite symptoms

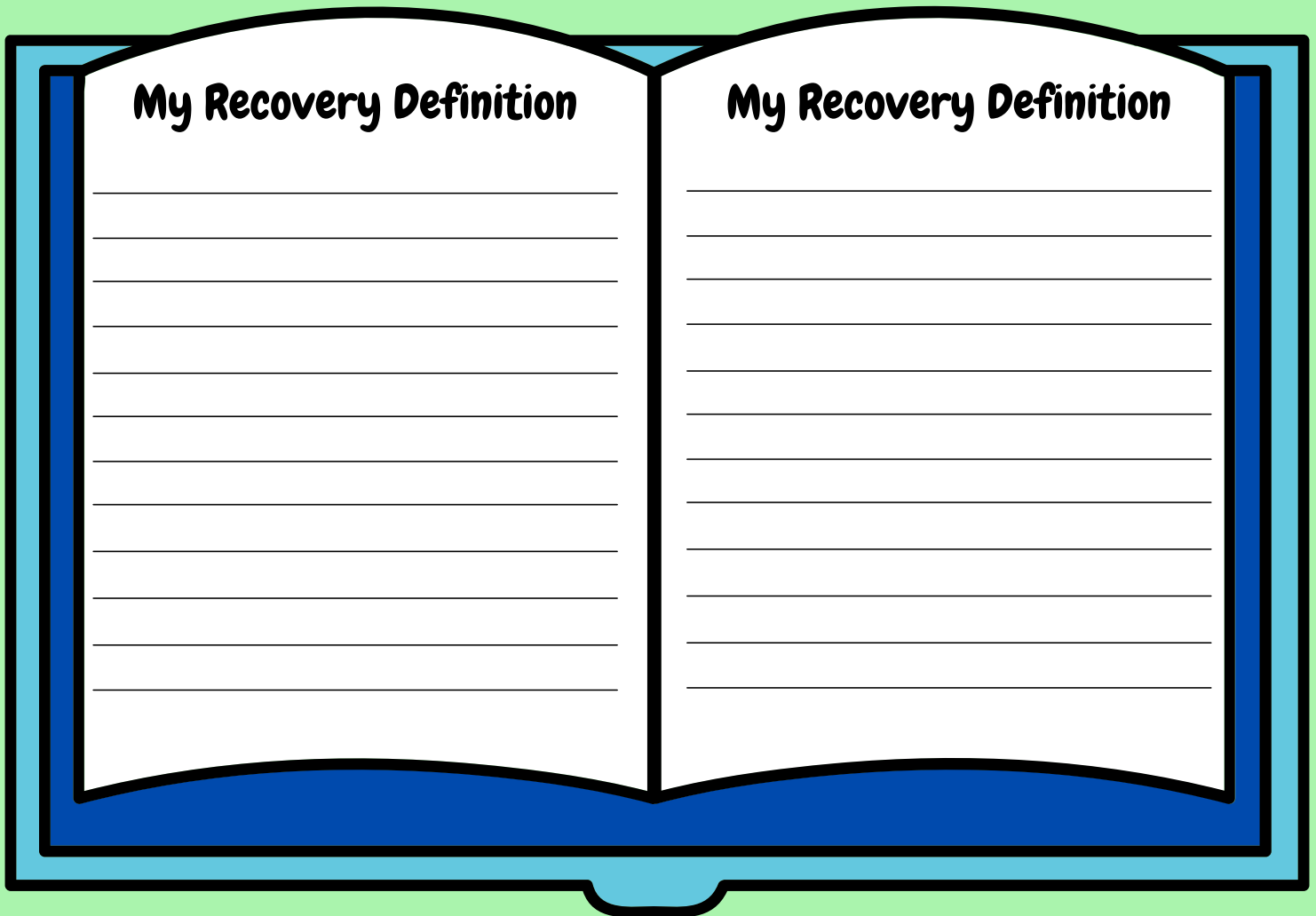
My Recovery Definition



Imagine you're writing a definition of YOUR recovery in the dictionary. Think about:

- What definitions/elements you liked on the previous page
- Your own opinions of recovery
- How you're feeling in recovery
- What you're doing (activities, hobbies, education, employment) in recovery

It may help to read through the different recovery definitions on page 3 for some inspiration.



The notebook has two pages, each with the title "My Recovery Definition" at the top. Each page contains ten horizontal lines for writing. The notebook is blue with a black outline.



Parts of Me



Activity

After a period of living with mental distress, we can sometimes lose touch with who we are and struggle with our sense of self. In recovery, it can be important to restore a more positive personal identity and bring back into focus other aspects of ourselves, such as our roles, interests and connections.

In this activity we look at identifying different parts that make up who you are outside of your voice hearing experiences or mental health issues.

Think about the different aspects of your life that make up who you are. Are you a good friend? A member of a family? The cook of the house? Maybe you're a painter? Or a gamer? Identify some of the aspects of who you are and write them in the spaces below.

Tree of Life



Activity

Below is an activity that uses the metaphor of a tree to help you explore the different parts of yourself and your experiences. Much like a tree we have roots (where we come from), a trunk (our strengths and what holds us up), branches (things we are reaching for and aspire to), leaves (important people in our lives), and fruit (gifts and lessons we have been given).

Take a look below at what each part of the tree represents and then over the page complete your own Tree of Life. You can use the template provided or draw your own tree, be as creative as you like. This may be something you add to over time, or share with family, friends or other people you trust to express your journey or gain their perspective.



roots

Where you come from

- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- Where did you go to school?
- What is your favourite memory?

- Does your background influence who you are today?
- How do you perceive your roots?



ground

Your life and the activities you do

- What tasks do you do on a weekly basis?
- What activities do you enjoy?

- Are you working, studying, volunteering or something else?
- What hobbies do you enjoy and do often?



trunk

Your strengths, skills and values

- What talents/skills do you have?
- What are your strengths?
- What do you value most in life?

- What skills would other people think you have?
- What values are important to you?



branches

Your hopes and goals for the future

- What are your hopes for the future?
- What would you like to achieve?

- What are small, short term things you'd like to work on?
- What are your long term goals?
- What would need to happen to achieve these?



leaves

Important people in your life

- Who plays an important role in your life?
- What influence do they have?

- Are there important people who are no longer in your life?
- Who do you look up to?
- Who do you admire in your life?



fruit

Gifts from important people

- What lessons or ideas have people taught you?
- What did they provide you with?

- Are these gifts/lessons material or immaterial?
- How have these gifts/lessons helped you?



compost

Things you want to reframe or leave behind

- Are there any aspects of your life you don't like or would like to change?

- Are there any places, experiences, or problems you don't want to be defined by?
- What do you want to let go of?

fruit

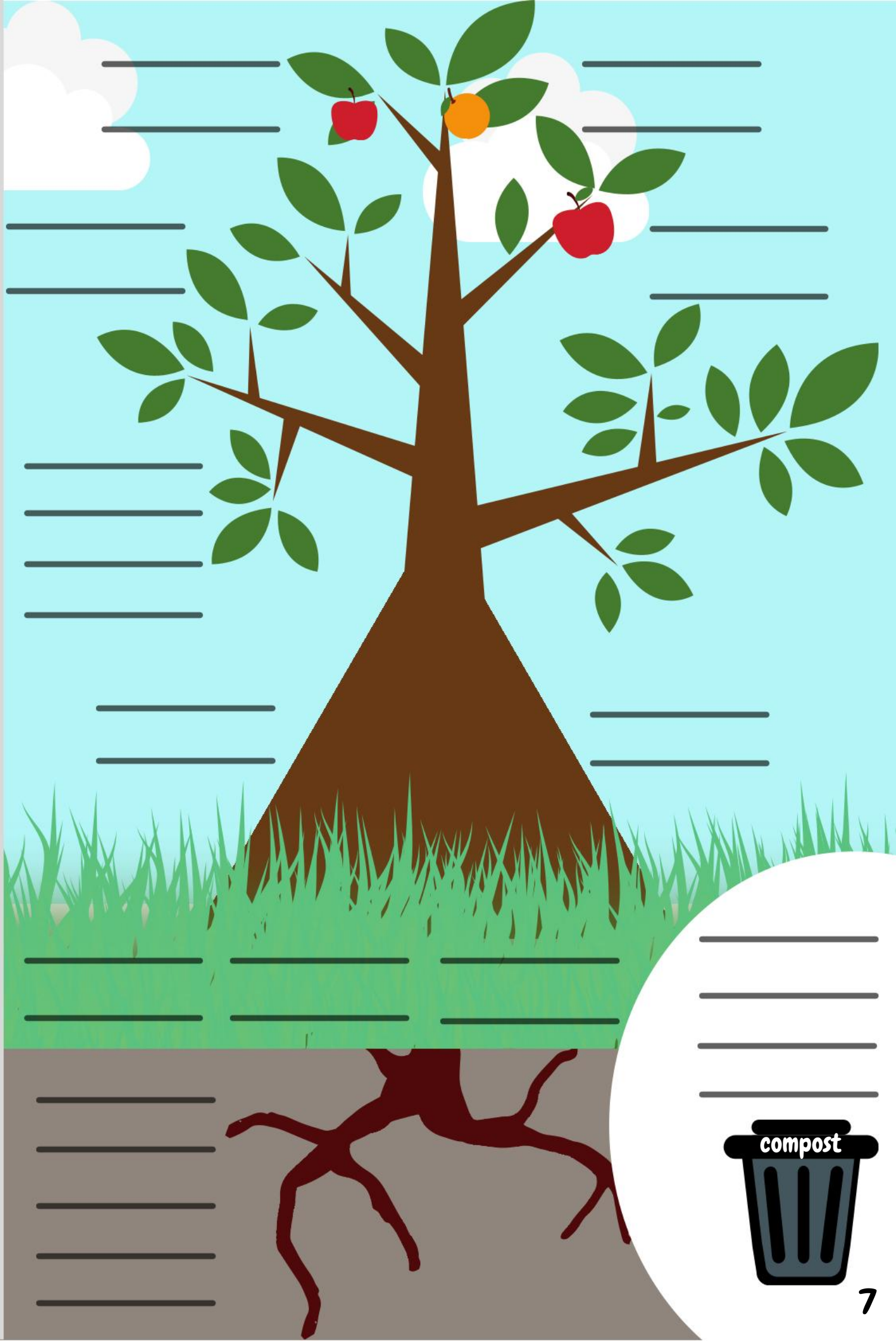
leaves

branches

trunk

ground

roots





Nourishing My Values

Our values are what we hold most important to us in life and give us a stronger sense of who we are. They drive us to grow, bring meaning to our life and can provide direction in our recovery, especially when we're feeling lost.

Personal Values

- Acceptance
- Attractiveness
- Hope
- Mindfulness
- Nature
- Achievement
- Caring
- Love
- Authenticity
- World peace
- Excitement
- Power
- Faithfulness
- Growth
- Work
- Forgiveness
- Intimacy
- Autonomy
- Spirituality
- Virtue
- Beauty
- Challenge
- Honesty
- Health
- Tradition
- Contribution
- Fitness
- Inner peace
- Hard work
- Simplicity
- Community
- Change
- Fun
- Justice
- Self-control
- Humility
- Environmentalist
- Genuineness
- Wealth
- Self-knowledge
- Adventure
- Compassion
- Solitude
- Nurturing
- Realism
- Integrity
- Dependability
- Rationality
- Openness
- Responsibility
- Accuracy
- Cooperation
- Self acceptance
- Balance
- Safety
- Purpose
- Flexibility
- Stability
- Knowledge
- Self-esteem
- Passion
- Friendship
- Independence
- Routine
- Tolerance
- Creativity
- Courtesy
- Order
- Humour
- Generosity
- Family
- Leisure
- Non-conformity
- Comfort
- Financial security

Values are like plants, they need nurturing and attention to help them grow and be strong. Let's think about how we nurture and grow our values through our actions and goals. How do we live in line with our values?



Family is really important to me, so I try to sit down for a family dinner three nights a week and dedicate a few hours to help my younger brother study for his final exams!

Health is one of my main values.

I try to nourish this value by staying active, surfing, skating, practising yoga, and eating lots of veggies!



Nourishing My Values

Activity

Reflect on your own personal values. There are often many things that are important to us in life, but have a think about what's MOST important to you. Think about what shapes who you are as a person, what drives your decisions and guides you in life. Write down your top 5 core values in the flower pots below.

On the flowers, write down what you do to nurture and grow your values. These might be activities, actions or future goals or ideas that will keep these values in focus. Have a look at the completed flower pot to give you some ideas.

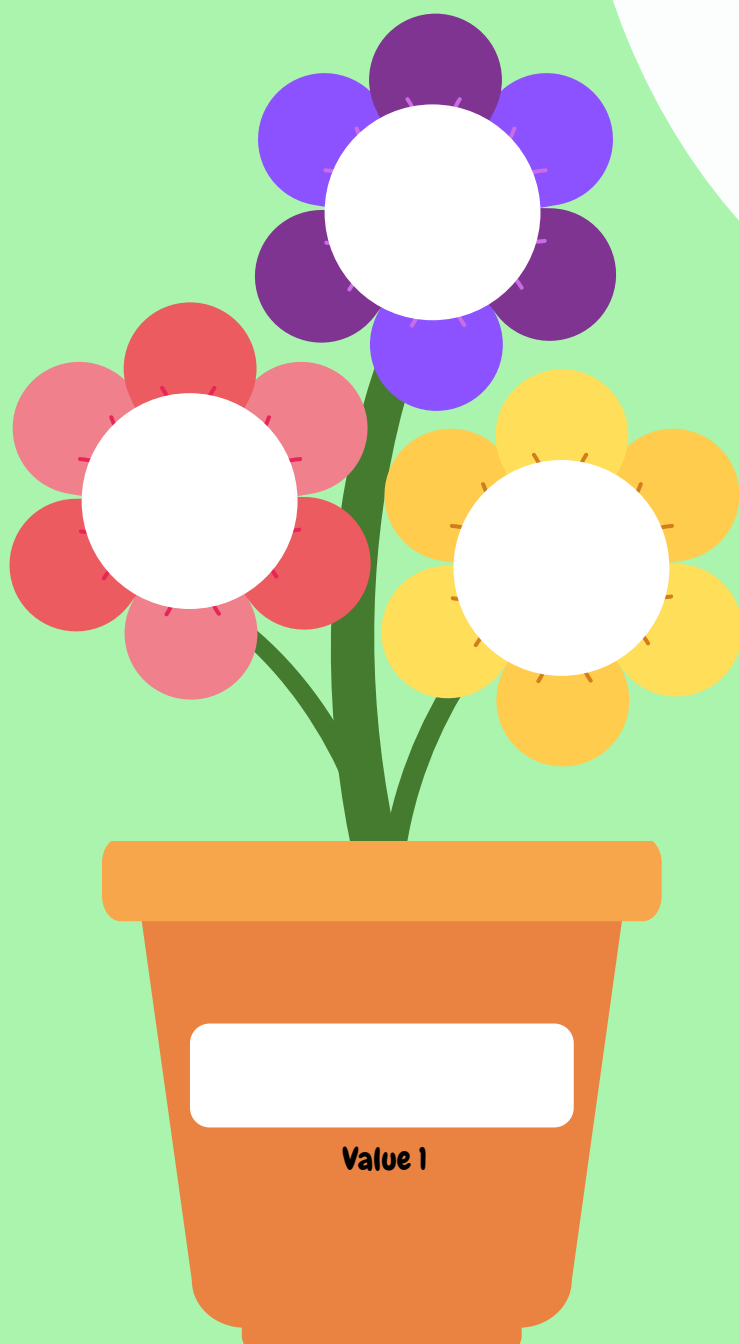
Things I will do to
nourish my values

Volunteer
work

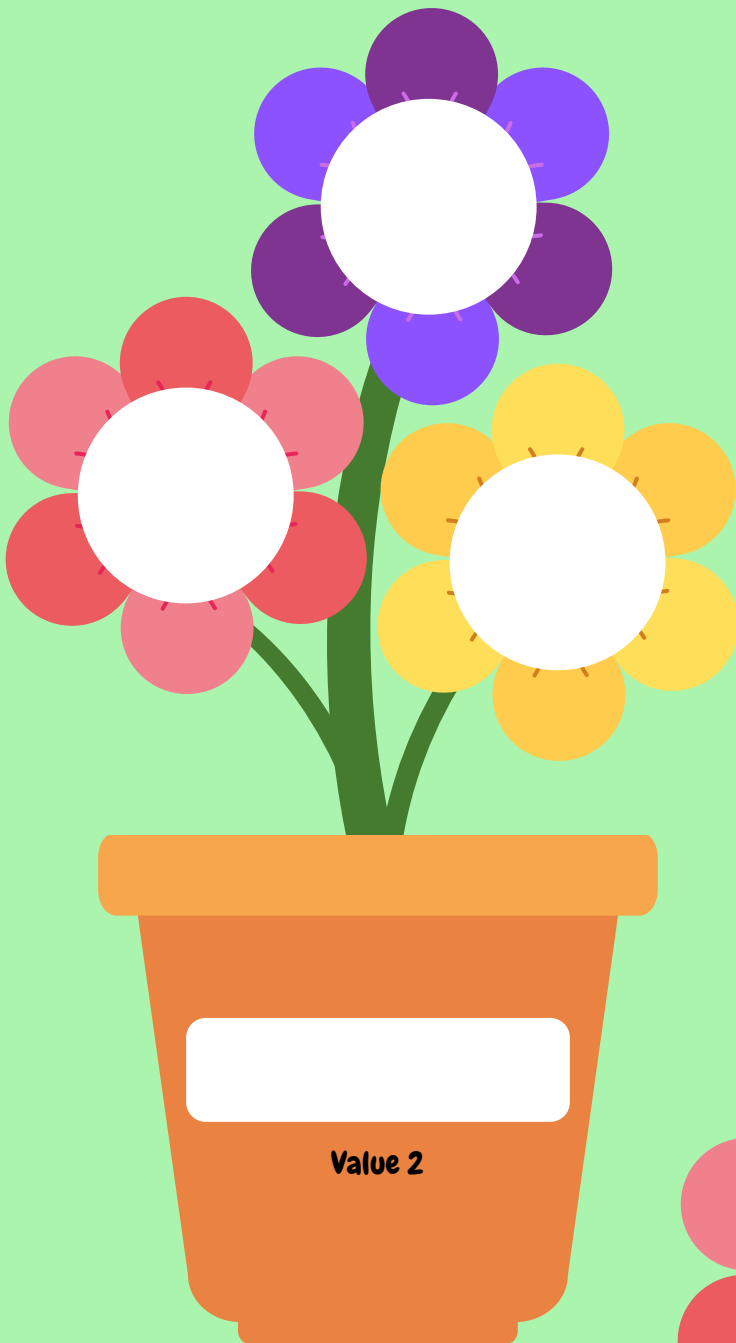
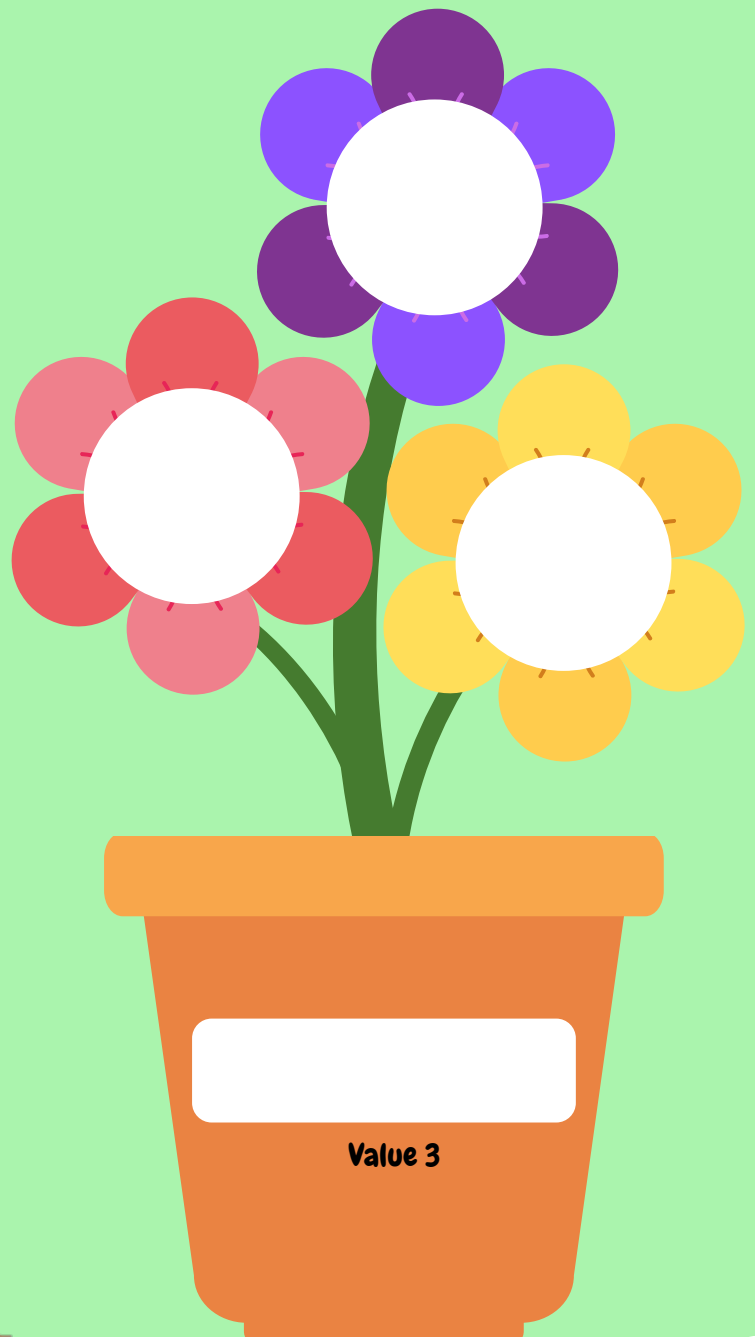
Joined a
local walking
group

Went to the
local markets

Community



Nourishing My Values



Activity



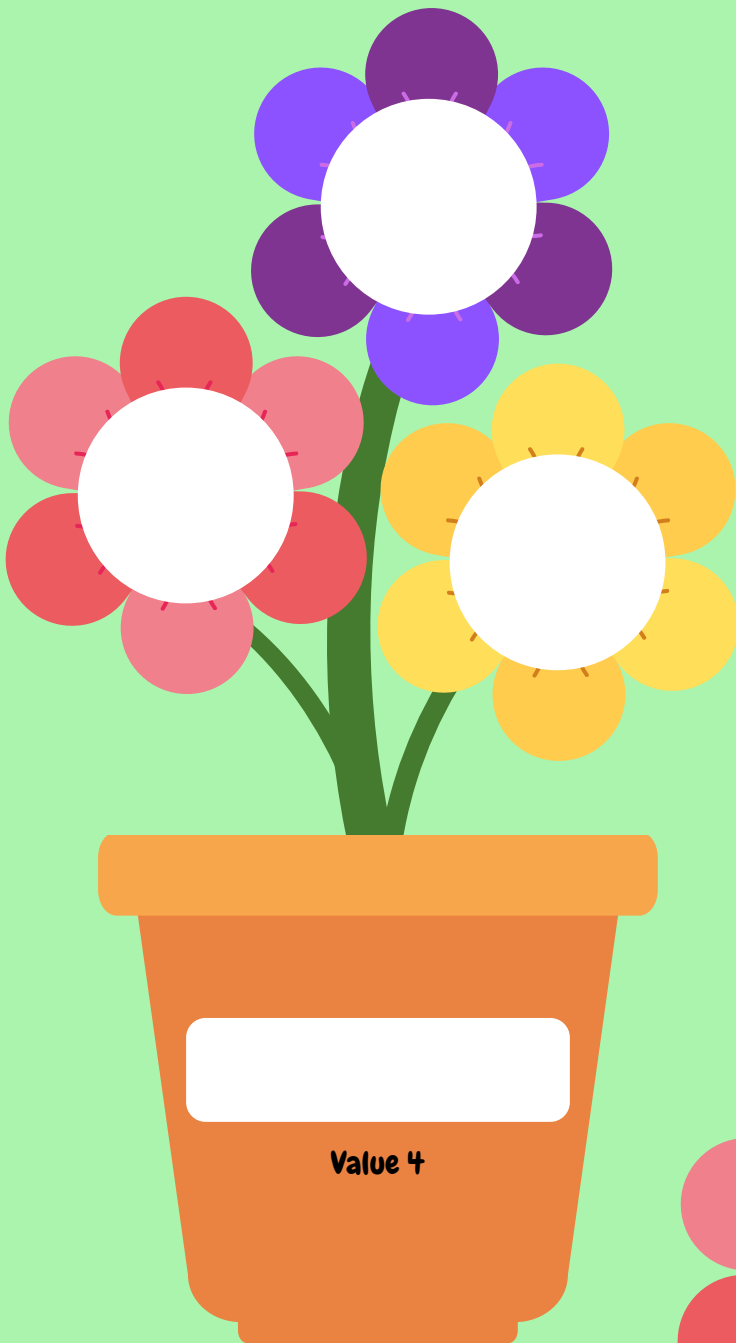
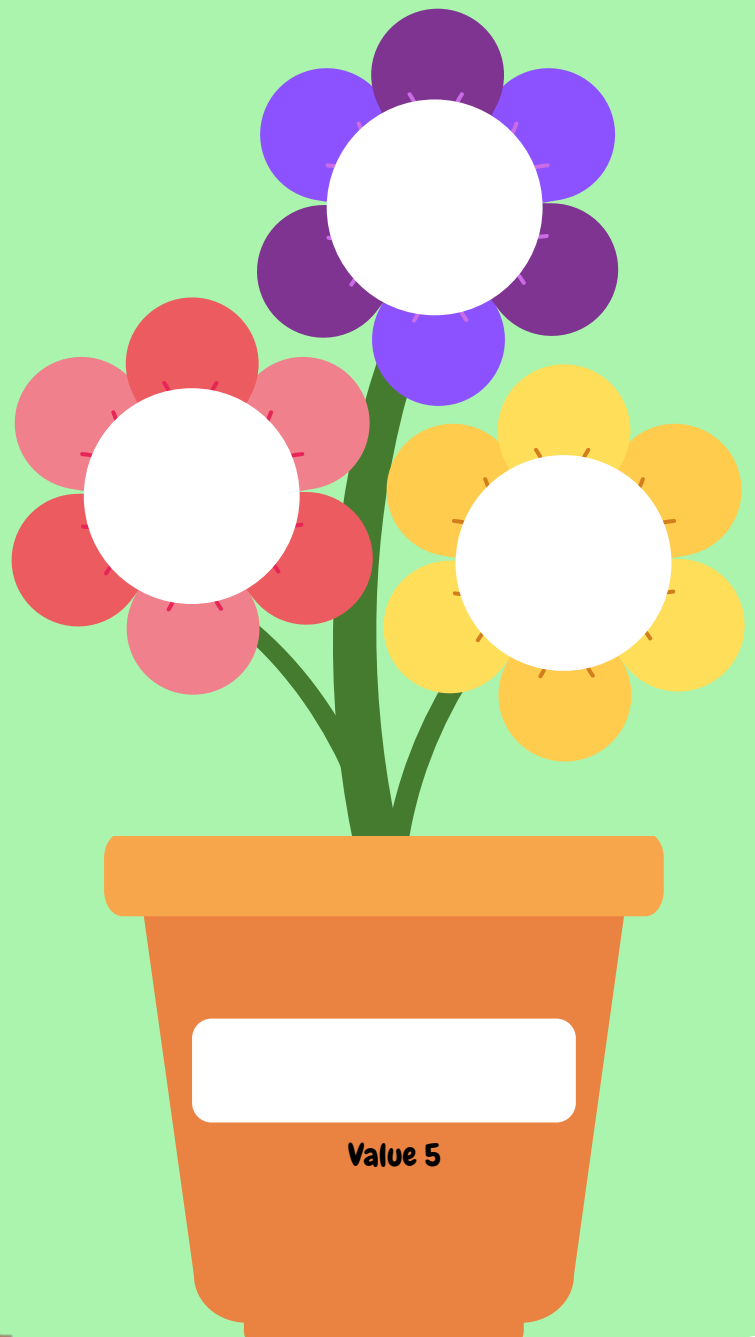
Write down your value.



Write down something you could do to help nourish that value.



Nourishing My Values



Activity



Write down your value.



Write down something you could do to help nourish that value.



Living in Line with My Values

Sometimes we may live in alignment with our values, while other times we may lose touch with them. When we are living closely to our values it is likely we will feel better about ourselves, feel more satisfied with our lives and feel more able to cope with any challenges or issues that might arise.

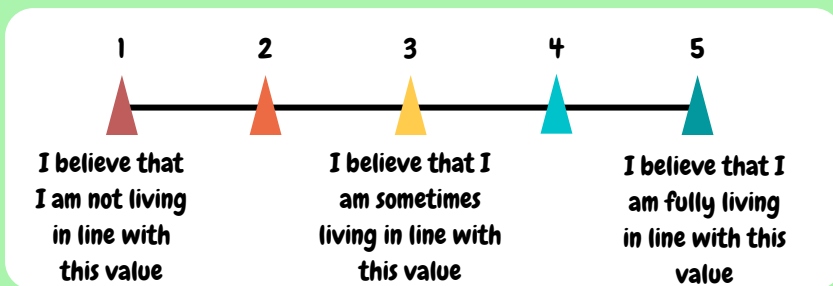


Activity

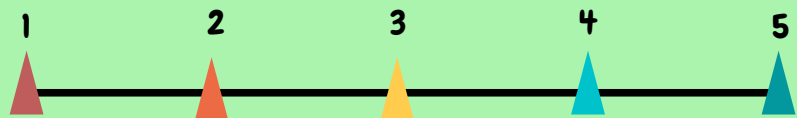
How well are you living in alignment with your values? How in focus are these values? How satisfied are you that you are living them out? In the spaces below write down your top 5 values that you identified on pages 9-11 and use the rating scale to help you identify how closely you are living in line with this value in your daily life.

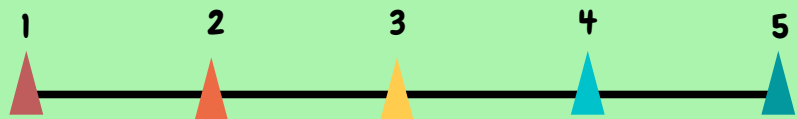


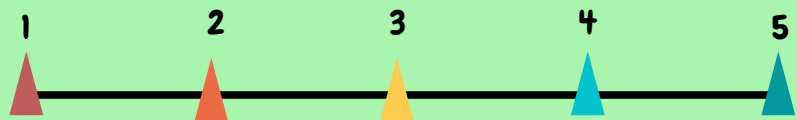
If you rate low on one of your values this just allows you a chance to reflect on how you could bring this value back into focus.

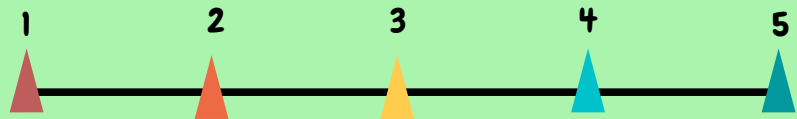


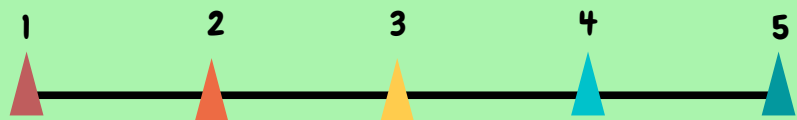
My Values











Identifying My Strengths

Some people experience intrusive or troublesome voices. This may bring about self-doubt and can make it easy to get stuck in negative thought patterns. When this happens it can be helpful to refocus our minds on our strengths, skills and abilities. This can help us to view ourselves beyond the voice-hearing experience and see who we are in a more positive light.

Voices may be part of your experience but they're not all you are!



Activity

Let's think about your interests, passions and what you are good at and brainstorm these below.

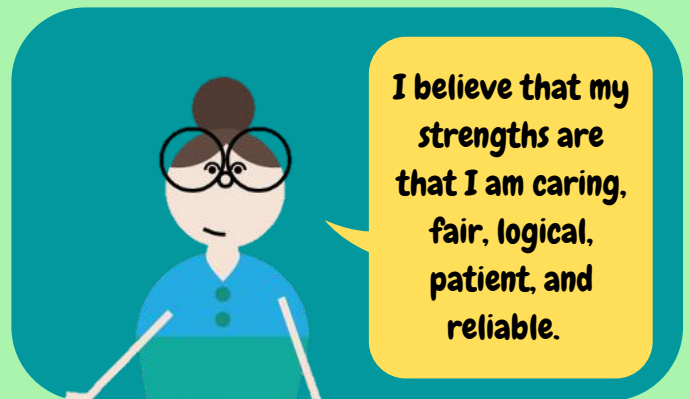


Identifying My Strengths

It can be helpful to take some time to remind ourselves of our strengths, personal qualities and abilities and to be able to celebrate these. What strengths do you see within yourself?

Strengths

- Ambitious
- Optimistic
- Gracious
- Authentic
- Open Minded
- Kind
- Caring
- Persistent
- Funny
- Creative
- Responsible
- Loving
- Dedicated
- Self-controlled
- Organised
- Enthusiastic
- Trustworthy
- Courageous
- Flexible
- Versatile
- Wise
- Honest
- Fair
- Hopeful
- Integrity
- Non judgmental
- Forgiving
- Logical
- Spiritual
- Tolerant
- Motivated
- Intelligent
- Patient
- Communicative
- Focused
- Curious
- Leadership
- Motivated
- Warm
- Willpower
- Energetic
- Educated
- Inquisitive
- Determined
- Outgoing
- Strategic
- Visionary
- Analytical
- Quiet
- Sincere
- Calm
- Loyal
- Persistent
- Accepting
- Supportive
- Encouraging
- Stable
- Steady
- Reliable
- Devoted
- Easy going
- Mature
- Organised
- Thoughtful
- Sensitive
- Protective
- Frugal
- Brave
- Cheerful
- Imaginative
- Joyful
- Light-hearted
- Introverted
- Extroverted
- Competitive
- Observant
- Sympathetic
- Intelligent
- Unbiased
- Balanced



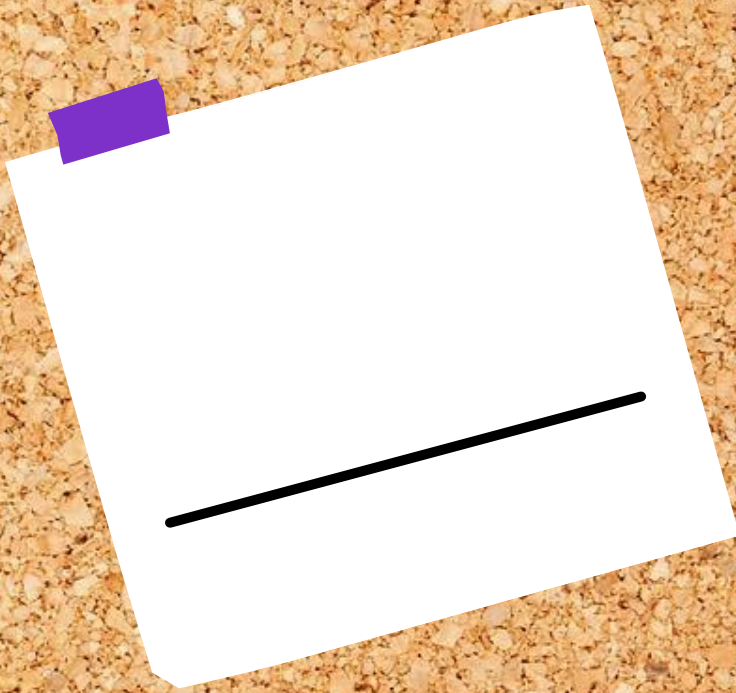
Activity

Take some time to reflect on your own strengths. On the next page write down some of the strengths you have drawn upon to navigate life or that have helped you get through the tough times. It may be helpful to look back to page 13 for some ideas or if you are having trouble, think about what someone close to you might say are some of your strengths.

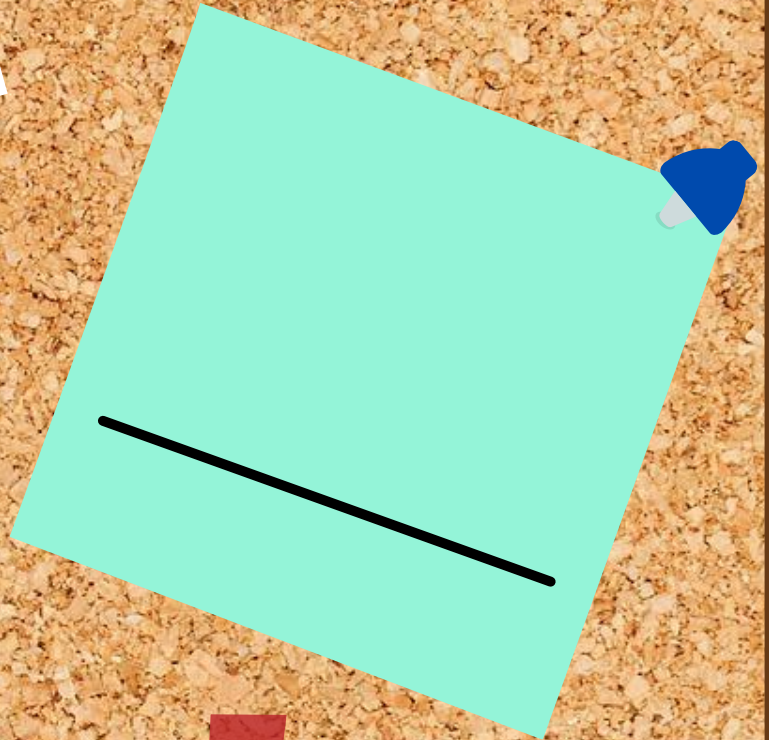
You may wish to put this list somewhere you can see it as a reminder to yourself at times when it might be hard to acknowledge them.



My Strengths



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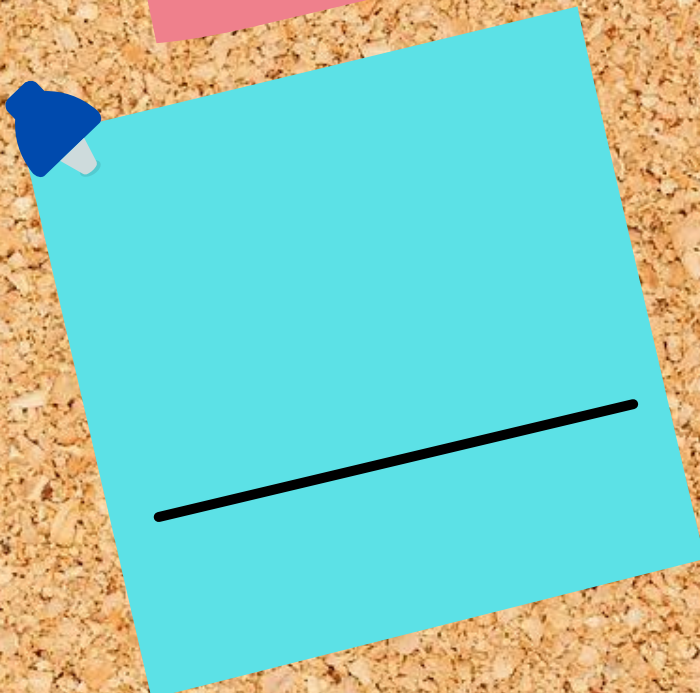
A teal rectangular sticky note with a blue tab at the top right corner. A single horizontal black line is drawn across the middle of the note.



A pink rectangular sticky note with a red tab at the top left corner. A single horizontal black line is drawn across the middle of the note.



A yellow rectangular sticky note with two red tabs at the top left and top right corners. A single horizontal black line is drawn across the middle of the note.



A light blue rectangular sticky note with a blue tab at the top left corner. A single horizontal black line is drawn across the middle of the note.

Making a Plan

By harnessing our values and strengths we can begin to restore our sense of self and identity beyond our voices. This can help us to feel more in control and more able to cope through the difficult times and achieve the things that are important to us.



Activity

Think about a value or strength that you would like to bring back into focus in your life. On the next page have a go at developing a plan for this.

One of my strengths is creativity, but I haven't dedicated time to anything creative over the last few months. I'm going to make a plan to go to visit an art gallery or book in for a pottery class!



Learning is really important to me, but I haven't committed to learning anything new for a few years now. I'm going to make a plan to go to a course to learn to speak French at the community college!



I value friendship, so I think I'm going to plan to reconnect with a few of my old friends from work. I haven't spoken to them since I retired two years ago!



My Plan



What value or strength would I like to bring back into focus?



How could I do this? What activity or action could I commit to, to bring this value back into focus?



When and where will I do this?

Will you need to go to a specific place to complete this action or activity (e.g. community college to do an art class)?



What resources will I need?

Will you need finances, support, transport or supplies to do this action or activity?



Do I need support while I'm working on this?

Who can offer you emotional and practical support? Will someone join you while you do this activity?



What barriers might I face?

Will the voices make this activity difficult? Are there financial issues? Do you have a limited support network?



How can I overcome these barriers?

Eg. Seeking out a support network, using coping strategies for intrusive voices, saving up to fund activity or commitment.



How will I celebrate or reward myself for completing this activity?

Will you celebrate with your family or friends? Will you reward yourself with a nice meal?



Congratulations!

You have completed all the worksheets for 'Exploring Recovery!' Great job!

Want to keep exploring and working with your voices?

Take a look at these videos and worksheets:



**Introduction to
Hearing Voices**



The Big Questions



**Navigating the
Tough Times**



**Practical Coping
Strategies**



**The Compassionate
Approach**



**Exploring and
Explaining Voices**

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