



Navigating the Tough Times

WORKSHEETS



These worksheets work best after you've watched the 'Navigating the Tough Times' video



Knowing My Roadblocks

My Early Warning Signs

Clearing Out My Toolkit

Building a New Toolkit

Mapping My Journey

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**



Knowing Your Roadblocks



Roadblocks, or triggers, are the experiences and situations that make us vulnerable or uncomfortable and can lead to voices becoming worse. By understanding and recognising our triggers, we can prepare and work around them when they arise.

Take a look at some of the common internal and external triggers below.



Common Internal Roadblocks

Internal roadblocks or triggers come from within us. It could be a feeling, thought, physical sensation or emotion.

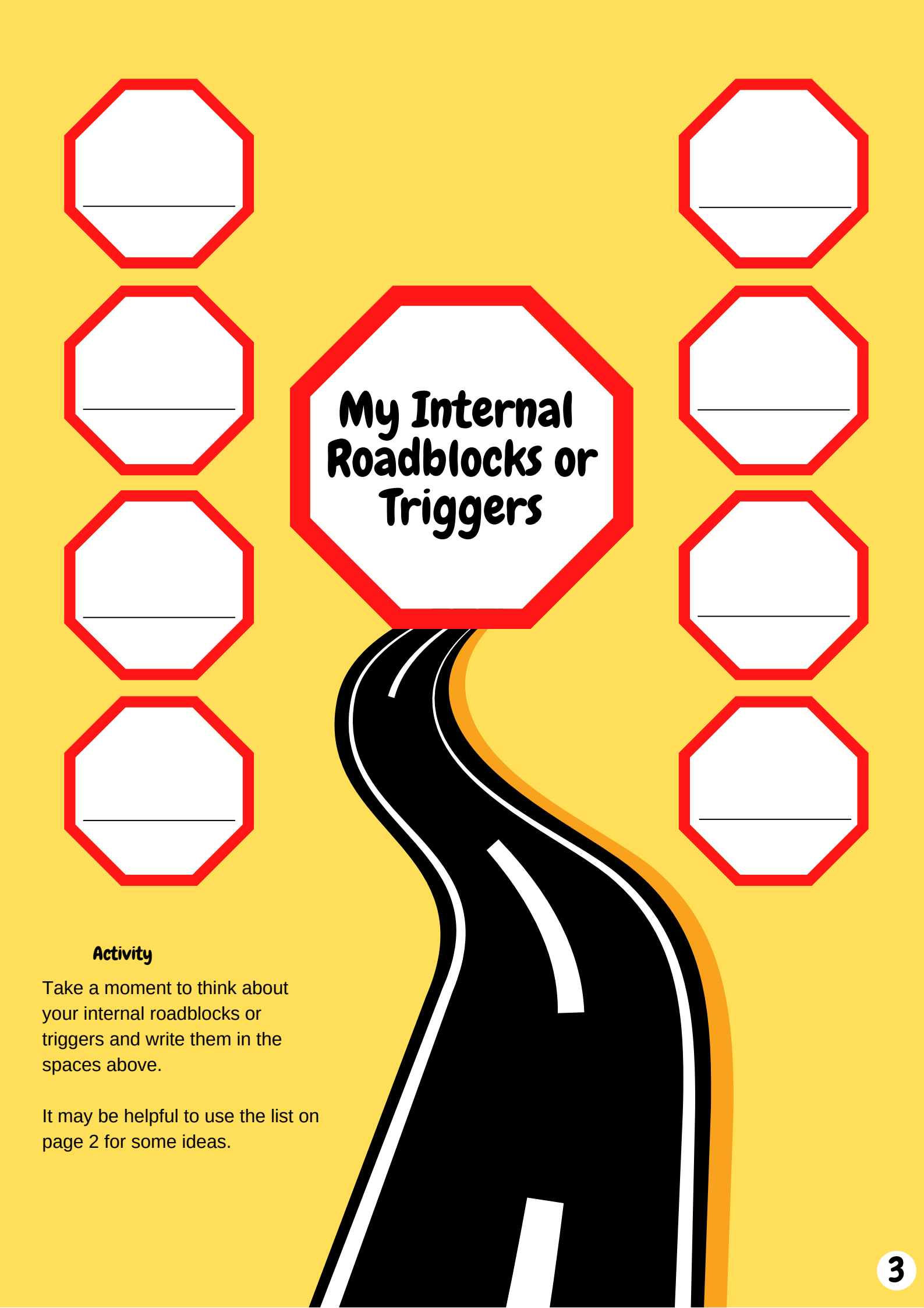
- Distressing or critical thoughts or voices
- Overwhelming or intense emotions
- Feeling paranoid
- Feeling insecure
- Being in pain
- Feeling sad or upset
- Feeling physically unwell
- Past memories or flashbacks
- Feelings of anger
- Feeling out of control
- Feeling physically uncomfortable
- Feeling alone
- Disrupted sleep
- Feeling stressed or overwhelmed
- Thinking about myself in a negative way



Common External Roadblocks

External roadblocks or triggers come from the environment around us. It could be a place, person, sound or specific situation.

- Having an argument
- Not being listened to
- Relationships starting or ending
- Being made fun of
- Relationship conflict
- Using drugs and alcohol
- Experiencing rejection
- Involvement with the legal system
- Becoming unwell or sick
- Being touched
- Threatening situations
- Being isolated
- Being in a crowded place
- Too much change at once
- Being reminded of traumatic experiences
- Financial issues
- Meeting new people
- Change in my current routine
- Being criticised
- Anniversary dates
- Coming off medication
- Being forced to do something
- Being restrained
- Not having my worries accepted
- People in uniforms
- Being put under the mental health act
- Being in hospital
- Someone close dying or being sick
- Not having access to my usual supports

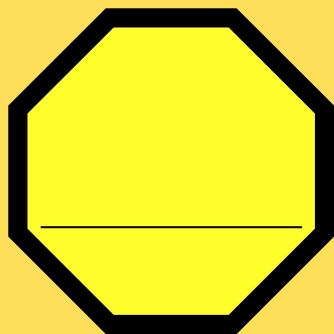
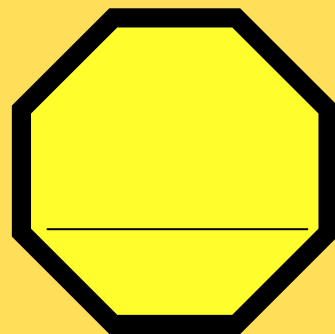
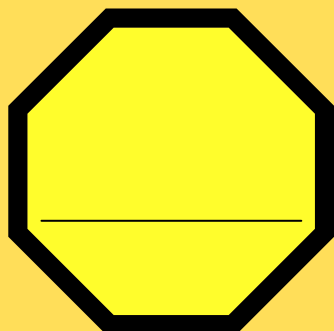
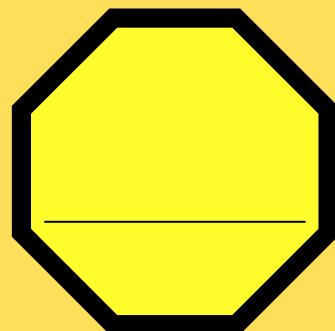
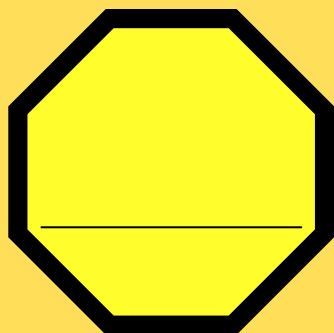
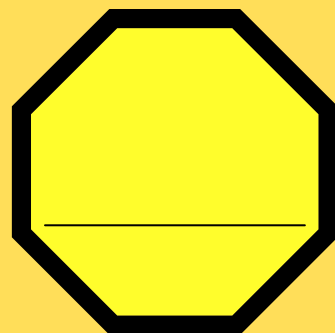
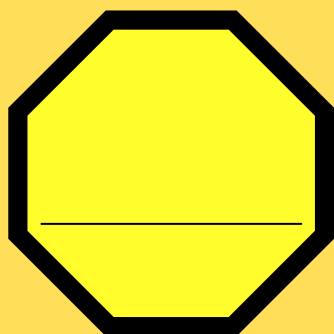
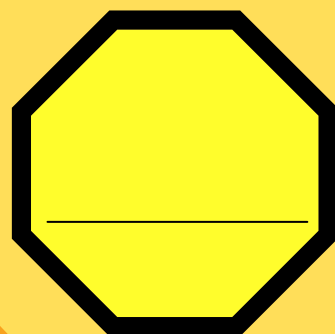


My Internal Roadblocks or Triggers

Activity

Take a moment to think about your internal roadblocks or triggers and write them in the spaces above.

It may be helpful to use the list on page 2 for some ideas.



Activity

Take a moment to think about your external roadblocks or triggers and write them in the spaces above.

It may be helpful to use the list on page 2 for some ideas.

My Early Warning Signs

Early warning signs are like the 'check oil' or 'open door' light on a car dashboard. They are the very first things we might notice about ourselves that tell us something might not be quite right or things are beginning to feel tough. Being aware of our warning signs means that we can take action early to restore balance and stay well.

Below are some common early warning signs. Do you recognise any of these?



Changes in my thinking, voices and experiences

- Racing thoughts
- Voices becoming louder or angrier
- Increased voice hearing
- Being forgetful or confused
- Thinking people are out to get me
- Thinking I am useless or hopeless
- Thoughts that things are being poisoned
- Difficulty concentrating
- Getting new voices
- Thinking people are impostors



Changes in how I feel

- Feeling tense or anxious
- Feeling irritable or angry
- Feeling like I have no control
- Feeling sad and upset
- Feeling like I should be punished
- Feeling restless or energetic
- Increased feelings of guilt, shame or embarrassment
- Feeling depressed
- Overwhelming emotions
- Feeling alone
- Feeling insecure or having low self-esteem



Changes in my behaviour

- Changes in my sleeping
- Doing things I regret
- Losing my temper easily
- Isolating myself
- Not leaving the house
- Spending lots of money
- Changes in eating and drinking
- Using drugs and alcohol to cope
- Yelling and shouting
- Pacing, fidgeting or constantly moving
- Ignoring friends or family
- Becoming obsessed with an activity
- Not acting in line with my values



My Early Warning Signs



Activity

Take a moment to think about your own early warning signs and write them in the spaces below. It may be helpful to use the lists on page 5 if you get stuck.



Noticing our early warning signs means we can take some extra care of our mental health, keep well and prevent relapse!



Clearing Out My Toolkit

To prepare for the challenges we might face, it can be helpful to pack a toolkit of coping strategies. Sometimes our toolkit can contain a few unhealthy or unhelpful strategies, that might provide immediate relief, however actually make us feel worse in the long-term.

Take a look at some of the common unhelpful strategies below. Do any of these sound familiar to you?

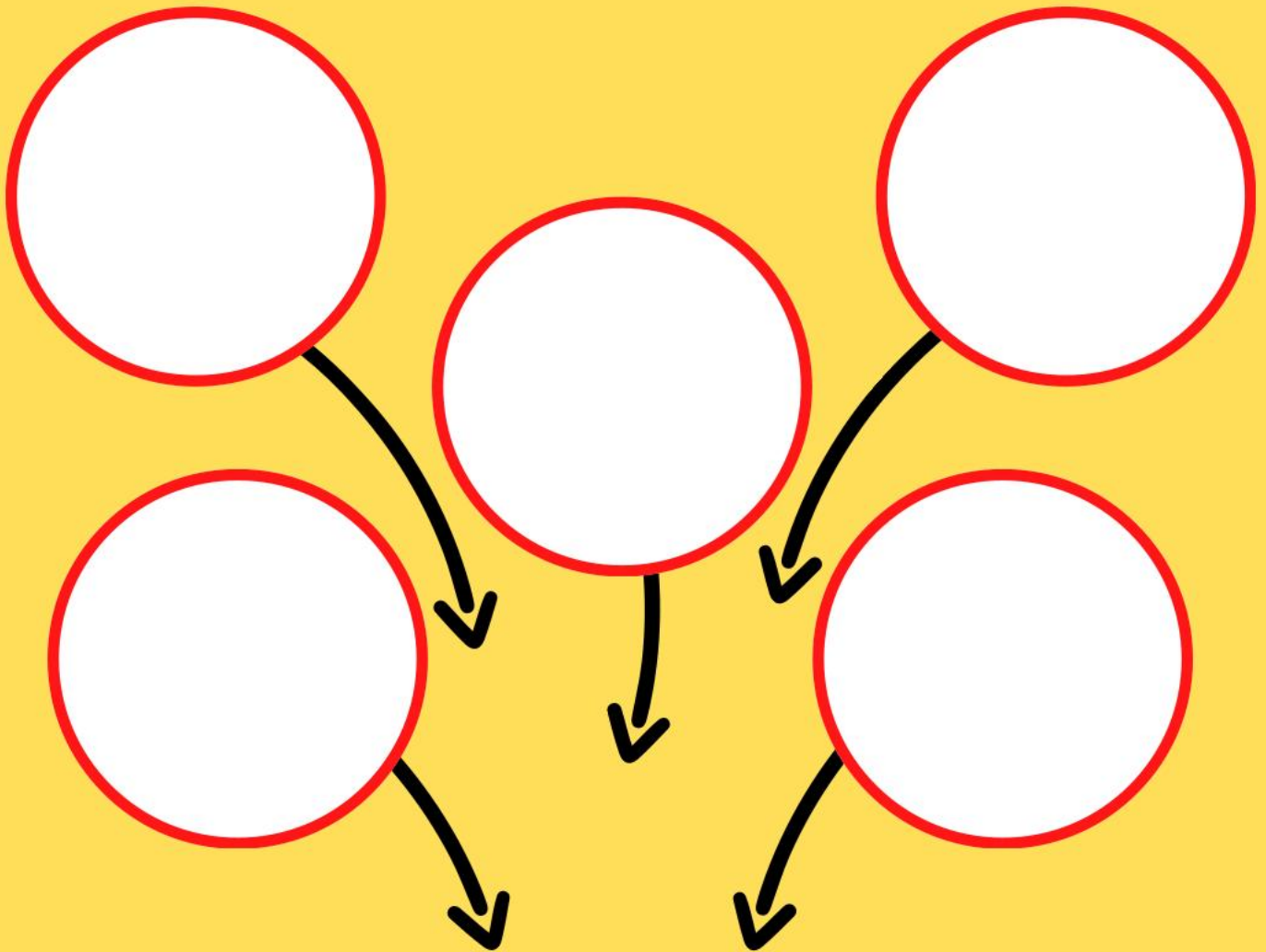


Clearing Out My Toolkit



Activity

What unhealthy or unhelpful strategies would you like to take out of your toolkit? Write them in the spaces below. Refer back to page 7 for common unhealthy strategies.



You may find it hard to stop using unhealthy ways of coping. This is normal! You might need to reach out to your supports and remember to be kind to yourself while you keep trying.

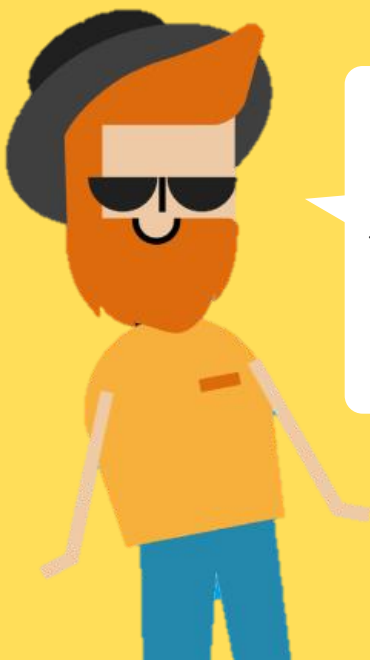


Building a New Toolkit

Now that we've unpacked the unhealthy coping strategies, let's think about what helpful and healthy coping strategies we can pack in our toolkit instead. This will mean you can feel prepared when you notice your early warning signs, if you are going through difficult times or experiencing troublesome voices.

Common Coping Strategies

- Reaching out for support
- Taking a bath or shower
- Using mindfulness exercises
- Listening to music
- Watching TV and movies
- Looking at magazines
- Praying or reading religious literature
- Going to church
- Calling a mental health support line
- Writing
- Drawing, painting or doing some craft
- Playing instruments
- Going somewhere quiet
- Cooking a good meal
- Keeping a journal of your thoughts or voices
- Reading
- Talking to others
- Spending time with friends or family
- Medication
- Looking at magazines
- Listening to podcasts
- Meditation
- Exercise and movement
- Talking to voices in a compassionate tone
- Connecting with people from my culture
- Having respite
- Seeking an inpatient admission to keep safe
- Keeping busy
- Cleaning
- Organising
- Playing video games
- Cuddling a pet
- Focusing on positive emotions and experiences
- Going for a walk
- Hugs
- Having a hot or cold drink
- Spending time in a relaxing place
- Breathing exercises
- Yoga
- Seeking support from mental health services
- Talking based therapies
- Swimming
- Going outdoors
- Gardening
- Sensory soothing
- Keeping a gratitude diary
- Scheduling activities



When things get tough for me, I spend time with my family, go for a surf, play music, and take my dog on a quiet walk.

When the voices are getting too much, I like to distract myself by reading, watching my favourite movie or cooking a good meal.



Building a New Toolkit



Activity

There are lots of different coping strategies we can try and it's important that we use the tools that work for us! What helpful or healthy strategies could you include in your toolkit? Refer back to page 9 if you need some ideas.

A diagram illustrating the 'Building a New Toolkit' activity. At the bottom is a teal-colored box labeled 'My Toolkit'. From the top of this box, several lines radiate upwards to connect to seven white rectangular cards arranged in two columns. The left column has three cards, and the right column has four cards. These cards are intended for the user to write down coping strategies. The entire activity is set against a yellow background, with a dark grey ground area at the very bottom.

Mapping My Journey



Activity

It can be helpful to map out the journey, so when you face difficult times you can refer back to this page to navigate your way through them. Use the boxes below to set out a clear plan for yourself for when things get tough. It will be helpful to refer back to the activities you have completed on pages 3, 4, 6 and 10.



What are my roadblocks?

Write down the triggers you have identified.

What early warning signs do I show?

Write down your early warning signs.



What tools will I use when roadblocks and warning signs arise?

Write down the coping strategies you will use.



How will I use my tools?

Write down how you will apply your coping strategies. E.g. I will write in my journal when I feel angry or distressed.



Who could I choose to support me along the way?

Write down the people you trust that could support you, or help you to use your coping strategies. E.g. family, friends or mental health services.





Congratulations!

You have completed all the worksheets for 'Navigating the Tough Times'! 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



Exploring Recovery



**Practical Coping
Strategies**



**The Compassionate
Approach**



**Exploring and
Explaining Voices**

Reference list

**Hearing the Voice (2022). Understanding Voices.
<https://www.understandingvoices.com>**

These worksheets have been developed by the MHDA Specialist Rehabilitation Service.