



Space in Diabetes from Low Mood and Anxiety - (IAPT) Descriptor

Space from Diabetes (IAPT) is a tailored online intervention aimed at individuals living with diabetes who are experiencing co-morbid symptoms of anxiety and/or depression. Space from Diabetes (IAPT) is an interactive and practical programme that provides psychoeducation, tools and activities to reduce the impact of co-morbid symptoms of depression and anxiety in a safe and confidential space.

Diabetes is a chronic condition that, if not managed correctly, can lead to severe long-term complications such as stroke, kidney failure, foot ulcers and damage to the eyes (WHO, 2015). Management of Diabetes focuses on the individual keeping blood glucose levels within a certain range, in order to prevent damage to organs (NICE, 2009). This goal can be achieved by the individual self-managing by balancing diet, exercising and adhering to prescribed medication in order to maintain optimal glucose levels.

Managing diabetes can feel like a burden and many individuals living with it who can experience low mood, anxiety and stress as a direct result of living with diabetes (Golden et al., 2008, Fisher et al., 2006). In fact, research shows there is a high co-morbidity between mental health disorders and diabetes, with individuals living with the condition being estimated to be at a 2-3 times higher risk of developing common mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety than the general population (Anderson, Freedland, Clouse & Lustman, 2001). The relationship between diabetes and mental health difficulties is thought to be bi-directional with symptoms of low mood and anxiety having the potential to increase the burden on individuals and result in poor self-care and self-management; the burden of living with diabetes also has the potential of leading to individuals experiencing low mood and anxiety (Golden et al., 2008). Targeting and relieving co-morbid symptoms of anxiety and depression can therefore relieve some of the symptoms that can interfere with the individuals' ability to self-care and self-manage, negatively impacting on their overall health and wellbeing.

The Space from Diabetes (IAPT) programme has therefore been designed specifically with users living with diabetes as well as symptoms of depression and/or anxiety in mind. Diabetes-specific information, validation and normalisation of the emotional and social impact of diabetes is incorporated into the program, facilitating users to understand the link between their mental and physical health. Tailored personal stories accounts and examples of individuals living with diabetes and co-morbid depression and/or anxiety are used to illustrate and normalise difficulties encountered, while making these relevant to this specific population.

The Space from Diabetes (IAPT) programme consists of 9 modules which aim to reduce symptoms of depression and co-morbid anxiety using the principles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (NICE, 2009). Each module is designed to follow a goal orientated and structured format comprising of an introductory video and quiz, psychoeducational content with examples and personal stories, interactive activities, homework suggestions and summaries (Maerov, 2006).



Therapeutic principles and concepts incorporated into the programme include Beck's (2011) **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy** model which argues that unhelpful and often distorted thoughts, beliefs and behaviours underlie and maintain symptoms of depression and anxiety and that these symptoms can be treated by making sustainable changes in our thoughts, beliefs and behaviour. The programme emphasises the user's ability to make changes in each of these key areas to reduce their symptoms of depression/anxiety and improve their ability to manage their diabetes.

The programme aims to relieve these symptoms of depression and anxiety by:

- *Focusing on developing more flexible ways of thinking, not only in relation to the individual's condition but in other aspects of their life*
- *Increasing awareness and understanding of emotions, and their link to physical health*
- *Increasing activity and motivation in daily life*

The programme is accessible 24/7, allowing users to access the programme at a time that suits them and in the comfort of their own home.

Programme Modules

Getting Started

This module provides information about Diabetes, encouraging the user to link their physical condition and symptoms to the psychological and emotional impacts of living with a long-term condition. The module introduces the user to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and how the Thoughts, Feelings Behaviour (TFB) Cycle can be a useful tool in understanding depression and anxiety. This module also contains a psycho-educational component to introduce the user to the cycle of depression and the emotional, cognitive and behavioural aspects of depression. All vignettes, personal stories and examples used throughout the programme are from the perspective of an individual living with depression. The user is also provided with a number of activities to enable them to become more aware of their mood and to understand their situation.

Understanding Feelings

This module focuses on the "feelings" component of the TFB Cycle in Depression and Anxiety. The aim of this module is to help the user to understand and identify their emotions and their association with low mood, feelings of anxiety and living with diabetes. This module also addresses the physical body reactions that are associated with depression and anxiety, and the importance of considering the impact of lifestyle choices on mood. This module is tailored



to take into account the additional physical implications of living with and self-managing diabetes, and how these might also impact on lifestyles choices, such as exercise. The user can begin to build their own TFB cycles and track the impact of their lifestyle choices on their low mood or anxiety in this module.

Boosting Behaviour

This module focuses on one of the core issues of depression – inactivity and a lack of motivation. The user is introduced to the cycle of inactivity and its role in maintaining depression. This module helps to user to identify ways to motivate themselves to engage in pleasurable activities and activities that provide a sense of achievement. The user also learns about practical strategies to tackle the unpleasant physical feelings associated with depression and anxiety.

Spotting Thoughts

This module focuses on the “thoughts” component of the TFB cycle and introduces the user to negative thinking and its impact on low mood and anxiety. The user is introduced to a number of thinking traps and is encouraged to examine to the outcomes of TFB cycles. The activities allow to user to continue to build their TFB cycle and evaluate the outcome of each cycle they create.

Challenging Thoughts

This module focuses on taking action against negative and distorted thoughts. The user is introduced to “hot thoughts” and their impact on their low mood and anxiety. This module helps the user to learn techniques to tackle the various thinking traps that are common in depression and anxiety and to identify alternative ways of thinking. This module also introduces the user to coping thoughts and helpful self-talk thoughts.

Facing Your Fears

This module focuses on addressing feelings of anxiety. Many people who experience these symptoms avoid anxiety provoking situations or objects to escape the distressing emotional and physical responses in these situations. This module helps the user to understand the long-term adverse effects of avoidance and encourages the user to face their fears through gradual progressive exposure to their feared objects or situations. The user can develop their own hierarchy of fears and record their progress in an exposure diary.

Managing Worry

This module helps the user to understand the role of worry in maintaining anxiety and learn to define worries as those that are practical and those that are hypothetical. This module also encourages the user to take action against their worries through a variety of worry management strategies.

Bringing It Altogether



This module prepares the user for coming to the end of the programme and focuses on helping the user to stay well in the future. The user learns about warning signs that their mood is deteriorating and how to plan to ensure that they stay well. This module also highlights the importance of social support and continuing to use the skills and techniques that they have learned to prevent future relapse. The user has the opportunity to review the expectations that they had at the start of the programme and can set goals for the future.

Core Beliefs (Unlockable content)

Many people with depression struggle with the “thoughts” component of the TFB cycle. Although they may be able to identify unhelpful thoughts and thinking traps, they may struggle to identify alternatives or generate coping thoughts. The Core Beliefs module was developed to specifically target the deeply held core beliefs that are the underlying root of these unhelpful thoughts and keep the cycle of depression and low mood going. This module helps the user to identify healthy and unhealthy core beliefs and teaches them strategies to challenge core beliefs and generate more balanced core beliefs.

Modules	Goals	Topics	Activities
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education regarding the symptoms and impact of diabetes, anxiety and depression • Facilitate users to learn about the link between diabetes and mental health • Normalise and validate emotional difficulties when living with diabetes • Provide education regarding the CBT framework • Facilitate users to identify the relationship between their self-management of diabetes and any symptoms of low mood/anxiety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation regarding Diabetes, anxiety, depression and CBT • TFB Cycles specific to co-morbid depression/anxiety and diabetes • Identifying the impact of mood on self-management of diabetes • Personal Stories of characters living with diabetes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding My Situation • Mood Monitor • Staying in the present: a listening exercise
Understanding Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education regarding emotions and their impact on physical symptoms • Provide education on lifestyle factors and their impact on mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation regarding emotions • Impact of lifestyle choices including sleep, diet, exercise, caffeine, alcohol and medication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFB Cycle • Lifestyle Choices Chart • Staying in the Present



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate users to identify the impact of their emotions using the TFB Cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal TFB CycleMaking changes through mindfulnessPersonal Stories of characters living with diabetes	
Boosting Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide education regarding behavioural traps in depression and normalise the impact of low mood on behaviourFacilitate users to identify the benefits of activitySupport users to plan and implement behavioural activationEmpower users to reflect on and overcome barriers to activity such as rumination and poor social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Psychoeducation regarding the role of behaviour in depressionBenefits of ActivityGetting started when motivation is lowGoal SettingBehavioural Activation and Activity SchedulingSocial support and ruminationPersonal Stories of characters living with diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">My Motivational TipsMy ActivitiesYour mood and your bodyActivity SchedulingStaying in the Present
Spotting Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide education regarding negative thinking and moodProvide education on NATS and thinking trapsSupport users to identify the impact of their thinking traps on their mood using the TFB CycleFacilitate users to spot negative automatic thoughtsSupport the use of mindfulness techniques to reduce the impact of negative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Psychoeducation regarding the impact of unhelpful thinking stylesUnderstanding Negative Automatic ThoughtsImportance of challenging thoughtsTypes of thinking trapsMindfulnessPersonal Stories of characters living with diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TFB CycleStaying in the Present: A listening exercise
Challenging Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide education regarding thought challengingProvide education regarding the benefits of thought challenging and teach users to identify a hot thoughtFacilitate users to work through the steps of thought challenging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Psychoeducation regarding thought challengingIdentifying a hot thoughtThe steps of thought challengingTackling thinking trapsCultivating helpful thinking stylesPersonal Stories of characters living with diabetes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TFB Cycle with thought challengingMy Helpful Thought appStaying in the Present: A listening exercise



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide users with extra tips for specific thinking traps that users commonly struggle with • Support users to cultivate healthy coping strategies to use in challenging situations 		
Facing Your Fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the role of avoidance in maintaining fears and anxiety • Recognize safety behaviours • Develop a hierarchy of fears • Face fears using graded exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance and why it should be avoided • Safety Behaviours • Graded Exposure • Building a hierarchy of fears • Personal Stories of characters living with Diabetes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy of Fears
Managing Worry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education regarding the vicious cycle of worry • Facilitate users to recognise practical and hypothetical worries using the Worry Tree app • Support users to learn techniques to manage and control excessive worry • Empower users to use worry time to manage excessive worry • Facilitate users to enhance their problem-solving skills • Supported to use mindfulness techniques to manage worry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation regarding the vicious cycle of worry • Practical vs Hypothetical Worries • Techniques to manage worry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry Time • Problem Solving • Staying in the Present • Personal Stories of characters living with diabetes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Worries app • Worry Tree app • Worry Time app • Staying in the Present
Bringing it all Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate learning on techniques and strategies to manage diabetes and co-morbid anxiety/depression • Facilitate users to identify early warning signs of relapse • Empower users to utilise social support • Support users to set goals for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing up and Taking Stock • Preventing Relapse • Importance of Social Support • SMART Goals • Personal Stories of characters living with diabetes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Well app • SMART goals • Taking Stock • Staying in the Present



Core Beliefs (unlockable)

- Improve understanding of core beliefs, where they come from and their relationship to mood and anxiety symptoms
- Improve knowledge on how to recognise hot thought themes and underlying core beliefs
- Learn how to challenge core beliefs by finding evidence
- Learn to balance core beliefs using balanced alternatives
- Gain insight into experiences of core beliefs
- What are Core Beliefs and their relationship to mood, anxiety and Diabetes symptoms
- Where do Core Beliefs come from
- Identifying core beliefs
- Challenging Core Beliefs
- Balancing Core Beliefs
- Personal Stories of characters living with Diabetes
- Core Beliefs: Identifying, challenging, balancing, strengthening

References

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