

Space in Rheumatoid Arthritis from Depression

The Space in Rheumatoid Arthritis from Depression programme has been designed and tailored for individuals living with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) who are experiencing co-morbid symptoms of depression. The programme aims to relieve these depressive symptoms 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
- Increasing activity and motivation in daily life, in the context of physical limitations that can occur while taking into consideration the limitations to capacity that can occur in when living with RA 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 RA, 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 in RA. 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 RA. 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. The aim of this module is to help the user to understand and identify their emotions and their association with low mood and RA. This module also addresses the physical body reactions that are associated with depression, and the

importance of considering the impact of lifestyle choices on low mood. This module is tailored to take into account the additional physical symptoms of RA, 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 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 and the symptoms of RA. This module helps to user to identify ways to motivate themselves to engage in pleasurable activities and activities that provide a sense of achievement. This module also highlights the importance of pacing in RA, encouraging the user to find a balance between doing too little and doing too much. The user also learns about practical strategies to tackle the unpleasant physical feelings associated with depression.

Spotting Thoughts

This module focuses on the “thoughts” component of the TFB cycle and introduces the user to negative thinking and its impact on mood. The user is introduced to a number of thinking traps and is encouraged to examine the outcomes of TFB cycles. The activities allow the 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. This module helps the user to learn techniques to tackle the various thinking traps that are common in depression and to identify alternative ways of thinking. This module also introduces the user to coping thoughts and helpful self-talk thoughts.

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 in RA. 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.

Summary of the goals and activities in each module

Modules	Topics	Goals	Activities
Getting Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation about the symptoms and impact of RA and depression • Wellbeing in RA and the persistent pain cycle • Applying CBT to Depression in RA • The TFB Cycle specific to co-morbid RA and depression • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve understanding of RA and co-morbid depression • Introduce the TFB cycle • Learn about the role of thoughts, feelings and behaviours in RA and depression • Learn about CBT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding My Situation • Mood Monitor activity • Staying in the Present
Understanding Feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding emotions, their function and their impact on physical symptoms • Emotions that are difficult to cope with • Physical Body Reactions and mood • Lifestyle choices specific to RA • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about emotions and their role in the RA specific TFB cycle • Recognise emotions that are difficult to cope with • Recognise physical body reactions • Explore the impact of lifestyle choices on depression, RA and well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete their own Thoughts, Feelings Behaviours cycle • Lifestyle Choices Chart • Staying in the Present
Boosting Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation about mood boosting behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the link between mood and behaviours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity Scheduling: Pleasurable activities & achievements

Modules	Topics	Goals	Activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural traps in depression and RA • Increasing and pacing activity level safely • Helpful and unhelpful supports • Getting Motivated • The importance of achievements and pleasurable activities • Changing physical body reactions to improve mood • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve knowledge of common behavioural traps and how to beat them • Learn tips on how to get motivated during periods of low mood • Recognise the importance of pleasurable activities and achievements in boosting mood • Identify activities to target distressing physical sensations associated with depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying in The Present
<p>Spotting Thoughts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic thoughts and mood • Thinking traps • Catching unhelpful thoughts • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the role of thoughts in depression within the RA specific TFB cycle • Recognise negative automatic thoughts • Understand and recognise thinking traps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviours Cycles • Staying in the Present
<p>Challenging Thoughts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot Thoughts • Challenging negative thoughts • Tackling thinking traps • Coping with difficult situations, RA specific example • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about hot thoughts and how to recognise them • Learn to challenge negative thoughts • Learn how to overcome specific thinking traps • Recognise situations where it is necessary to use thoughts to cope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying hot thoughts in the RA specific TFB cycle • Generating more balanced alternative thoughts in the TFB cycle • Staying in the present

Modules	Topics	Goals	Activities
Core Beliefs (Unlockable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Core Beliefs and their relationship to mood and RA symptoms • Where do Core Beliefs come from • Identifying core beliefs • Challenging Core Beliefs • Balancing Core Beliefs • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve understanding of core beliefs, where they come from and their relationship to mood and RA 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Beliefs: Identifying, challenging, balancing, strengthening
Bringing it All Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finishing up • Warning Signs and planning for wellness • Social support • Preparing for the future • Preparing for relapse • Personal Stories of characters living with RA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for coming to the end of the programme • Recognise the importance of social support in staying well • Identify warning signs • Planning for staying well • Set SMART goals for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying Well Plan • SMART goals • Taking Stock • Staying in the Present