

# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS



**BREAKING FREE**

*Online*

A confidential online treatment and recovery programme for problem drinking and drug use

# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

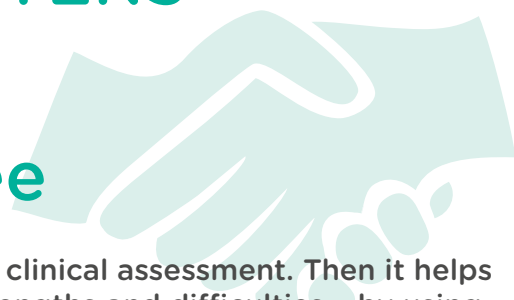
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone get started with Breaking Free



First, Breaking Free guides the person through a structured clinical assessment. Then it helps them to make sense of their recovery – and their current strengths and difficulties – by using a cognitive-behavioural diagram that is personalised to them.

### ASSESSMENT

### DIAGRAM

LET'S UNDERSTAND YOU 1/12

Choose your recovery programme

What would you like Breaking Free to call you?  
Tommy

How old are you?  
27

What is your gender?  
Male Female

What is your ethnicity?  
White: British

What would you like Breaking Free to help you with?  
Alcohol Drugs Alcohol & Drugs

Next



## ASSESSMENT: Understanding the person's strengths and difficulties

### How does this work?

When someone first uses Breaking Free, they work through a series of assessment screens, each of which contain a number of questions.

The person's responses to these questions give the programme a deep understanding of where they are in their recovery journey, their individual strengths and what specific difficulties they are currently experiencing.

### How can you help?

1. Encourage the person to think carefully about the questions before answering them.
2. Where appropriate, discuss the questions with them and share your own perspective – e.g. if you feel they're underestimating their current level of drinking or drug use.
3. Advise them to be completely honest in their answers. If necessary, explain that the more accurate an impression Breaking Free can gain of what's going on for them right now, the more powerful it will be in helping them tackle their difficulties.

4. If they're lacking motivation to work through the series of screens, explain that once they've answered the questions, they'll be shown a diagram that will help them make sense of what is going on, and will explain the issues that could affect their recovery.
  5. If they're really struggling to continue, advise them to log off. Then arrange with them to log back in and complete the assessment another time, ideally within the next day or two. Reassure them that all the screens they've already completed will automatically be saved, so they won't have to repeat them.
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## DIAGRAM: Understanding what could affect the person's recovery

### *How does it work?*

After the person has finished answering all the questions, they'll be shown a video sequence that describes what can affect someone's recovery. Central to this is a visual diagram that explains how someone's difficulties with alcohol or drugs are driven by six particular issues, all of which are related to each other: the difficult situations they encounter, their negative thoughts, their distressing emotions, their physical sensations (including cravings), their unhelpful behaviours, and their lifestyle.

Following this, the person will be shown a personalised version of this diagram. This is unique to them because it explains how their own individual difficulties fit together.

They can then start taking action to address their difficulties by using the strategies they will find in each area of the diagram. Although they are free to choose which areas to work on, a 'traffic light' system is used to advise them on which ones they should ideally prioritise.

### *How can you help?*

1. When the person has watched the video sequence, ask them whether the description of the issues that can affect someone's recovery fits with their experience. Share your own views with them - e.g. if you feel that certain aspects of their current lifestyle are causing problems for them.
2. Make sure they've fully understood the explanation before they move on to the diagram showing their own difficulties. Encourage them to replay the video sequence as many times as is necessary for them to take in the information.
3. When they view the personalised diagram of their own specific difficulties, discuss this with them. Focus on each area in turn, and then how everything fits together. Ask them whether the diagram rings true for them and, once again, share your own perspective.
4. Point out to them that, as well as using the switch in the top-left corner of the screen to toggle between the general diagram and their individual diagram, they can click on the icon next to it whenever they want to watch the video explaining the diagram again.
5. Advise them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the explanation of the 'traffic light' system. This explains why the areas of the diagram are all coloured either red, amber or green.

6. When they're choosing which area to start working on, advise them to consider those that are highlighted by the traffic light system as having a major impact on them (red) or a significant impact on them (amber). Emphasise that these are the issues that are most affecting their recovery at the moment.
  7. But if they indicate they don't yet feel ready to work on the areas that are shown as either red or amber on the diagram, explain that it would still be a very positive first step to use a strategy in an area shown as green. Suggest that if it would make them feel more comfortable, they can build up gradually to tackling the amber areas and then eventually the red areas.
  8. Wherever they choose to start, encourage them to do the Information strategy first, which will teach them about the area and motivate them to address it. Then they can move on to the Action strategy, which is a more involved, practical technique that will help them overcome their difficulties in that area.
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## THE KEY TO SUCCESS!

With all the intervention strategies described in this guidance, the key to success is for the person to keep practicing them in real life situations between their sessions on Breaking Free.

It's by rehearsing these proven strategies that they will learn to master them. And this is how they will achieve lasting behavioural change!

As a supporter, you can play a vital role in this by encouraging the person to:

**REFLECT** on the knowledge they gain from the **INFORMATION STRATEGIES**

**PRACTICE** as often as possible the coping skills they learn from the **ACTION STRATEGIES**

# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their difficult situations



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their difficult situations.

The Information strategy explains the importance of recognising high risk situations that could potentially cause them to want to lapse. And it motivates them to stop putting themselves in danger unnecessarily.

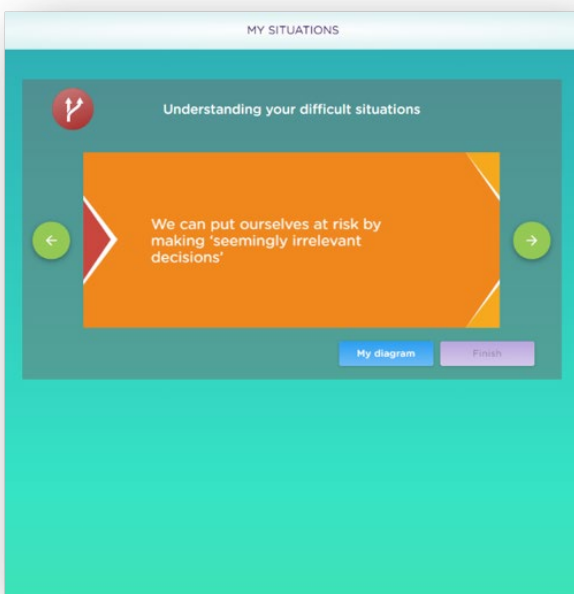
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that guides them to anticipate high risk situations and plan ahead. This allows them to take preventative action to either avoid or cope positively with each one.



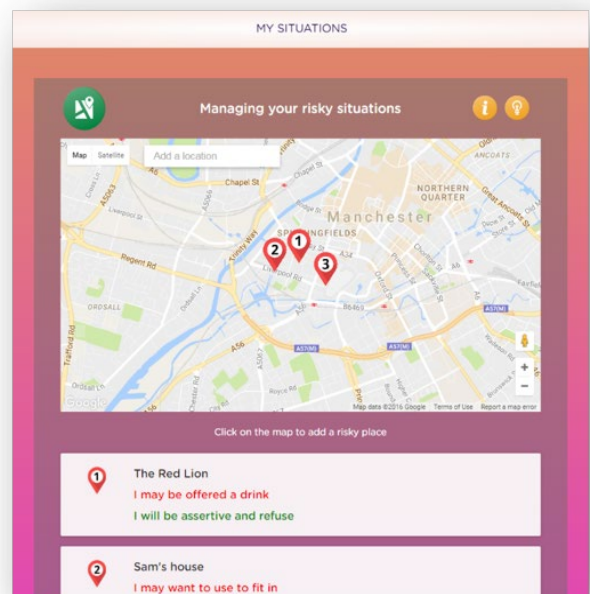
**INFORMATION STRATEGY**



**ACTION STRATEGY**



**Understanding your difficult situations**



**Managing your risky situations: Recognise-avoid-cope**

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your difficult situations

### *What is this strategy?*

This Information strategy explains how high risk situations could potentially cause the person to want to lapse. And it warns them of the dangers of making 'seemingly irrelevant decisions' - e.g. by deciding to test out their sobriety. It also explains the importance of taking preventative action to stop this from happening.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

#### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of difficult situations.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing difficult situations you may have faced in your own life, and explaining how these affected you and how you dealt with them. If you've struggled to cope with any particular situations, acknowledge this because it will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY:**

### **Managing your risky situations: Recognise-avoid-cope**

#### *What is this strategy?*

This Action strategy allows the person to identify and deal with the high risk situations that could affect their recovery and cause them to want to lapse.

It allows them to work out in advance how they can recognise the places that might be risky for them, avoid any difficult situations they could encounter in those places, and plan what they can do to cope if they need to go there.

The strategy first requires the person to create a map which provides an overview of the neighbourhood where they live (or any other place they visit regularly). It then asks them to drop pins to identify any specific places where they feel they could potentially get into high risk situations.

For each risky place they pinpoint on their map, they're guided to give it a name, identify the nature of the risk it presents, and choose a positive coping method they can use if, for any reason, they cannot avoid going there.

#### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.

2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and watch the video, which shows them how to do the strategy. Make sure they view the video in full screen mode (by clicking on the icon in the bottom-right corner of the video frame) so they can see clearly how the strategy works.
  3. When they're ready to start, help them to identify the first risky place and drop the pin onto the map.
  4. Make sure the name they give this place is clear and unmistakable. Then help them decide, by selecting from the options in the menus, why it could be risky for them and what coping method they will use to avoid lapsing if they end up going there. Point out that at the bottom of these two menus, there are free text options they can use to describe in their own words the nature of the risk and the coping method they intend to use.
  5. Once they've saved the first risky place to their map, ask them to keep going and consider where else might be dangerous for them. If they cannot think of anywhere, suggest any other places they may be considering but where you know they've got into difficulty in the past, or you feel they could potentially do so now.
  6. For each risky place they identify, help them work through the process of naming it, defining the risk it poses, and choosing a positive coping method to deal with it.
  7. If you feel they might struggle to resist pressure from other people to drink or use drugs, encourage them to click on the green icon to the right of the 'What coping method will I use?' question. This explains how to be assertive but not aggressive in refusing. Offer to help the person practice their assertiveness skills - ideally by role-playing with them if you feel able to.
  8. When they've finished creating their map, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
  9. Advise them to carry the action plan with them at all times to help them stay safe, particularly if they are in early stage recovery. Emphasise the importance of putting it into practice by avoiding the risky places they've identified if at all possible, or by using the coping method they've selected if they genuinely can't avoid going there.
  10. Whenever they actively avoid or cope with a high risk situation, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and giving them positive encouragement to keep using the strategy.
  11. Advise them to keep coming back to the strategy regularly to review their map and update it by adding other risky places. And stress the vital importance of doing this if you become aware of any new risky situations they might face, or you know they'll be spending a significant amount of time in a new place where they may not have anticipated the potential risks.
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their negative thoughts



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their negative thoughts.

The Information strategy explains how thinking negatively can affect how they feel emotionally. And it motivates them to learn how to think in more realistic and helpful ways.

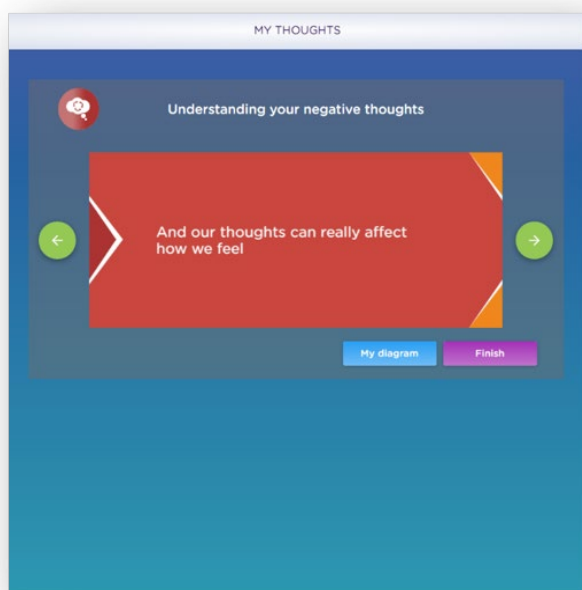
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that guides them to recognise and escape from their own negative thinking patterns.



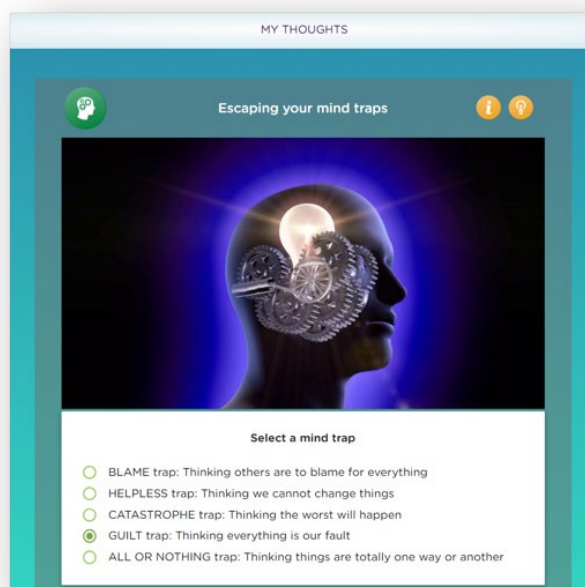
### INFORMATION STRATEGY



### ACTION STRATEGY



#### Understanding your negative thoughts



#### Escaping your mind traps

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your negative thoughts

### What is this strategy?

This Information strategy explains how negative thinking patterns, known as 'mind traps', can affect the person and cause them to feel bad for no reason. And it motivates them to learn how to think in a calmer, more balanced way that is based on the reality of each situation, rather than how they're feeling at the time.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

#### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of negative thoughts.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing negative thoughts you've experienced, and explaining how these affected you and how you dealt with them. By acknowledging times when you've had negative thoughts, you will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY: Escaping your mind traps**

#### *What is this strategy?*

This Action strategy enables the person to identify and escape from the negative thinking patterns - known as 'mind traps' - which could make them feel bad unnecessarily, and could potentially affect their recovery.

It allows them to focus in detail on the five most important mind traps: the blame trap, the helpless trap, the catastrophe trap, the guilt trap, and the all or nothing trap.

Once they've selected which mind trap they want to work on, the strategy guides them through a series of three steps so they can: first, understand the mind trap and the impact it's having on them; second, identify their own negative thoughts; and third, break free from this unhelpful way of thinking.

This process equips them to challenge their own negative thoughts and learn to think about situations in more positive, helpful and realistic ways.

#### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.
2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen, which guides them to select which mind trap they want to work on.

3. When they focus on understanding their selected mind trap (step 1), ask them to reflect on whether this sounds like the way they sometimes think. Share your own perspective and reassure them that, at certain times, most people think like this.
  4. When they focus on identifying their own negative thoughts (step 2), discuss with them how often they experience thoughts similar to those shown on the screen. And, if appropriate, give them examples of other thoughts you've heard them express that may suggest they're trapped in this negative thinking pattern. Encourage them to type these thoughts into the box provided.
  5. When they focus on setting themselves free from the mind trap (step 3), encourage them to recall a recent situation and then think carefully about the questions. Share your own perspective on whichever situation they highlight - so that you become one of the 'other people' whose impartial opinion they're asked to consider. And once you've finished reviewing the situation with them, discuss what evidence could be typed into the box at the bottom of the screen.
  6. When they've finished working through the sequence of screens, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
  7. Emphasise the importance of putting the action plan into practice by using it to challenge their own negative thoughts and replace these with more helpful, balanced and realistic thoughts.
  8. Whenever they actively challenge their negative thinking by using the action plan, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and giving them positive encouragement to keep using the strategy.
  9. Advise them to keep coming back to this strategy so they can work through all the other mind traps it contains. Explain that doing this will help to build their resilience and strengthen their recovery.
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their distressing emotions



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their upsetting or distressing emotions.

The Information strategy allows the person to understand their emotions better. And it motivates them to learn how to control them.

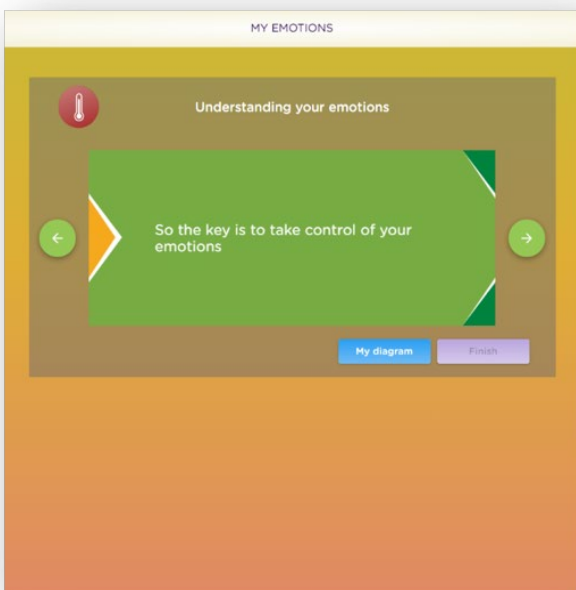
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that shows them how to take positive action to control difficult emotions such as anxiety, anger, frustration or agitation without lapsing.



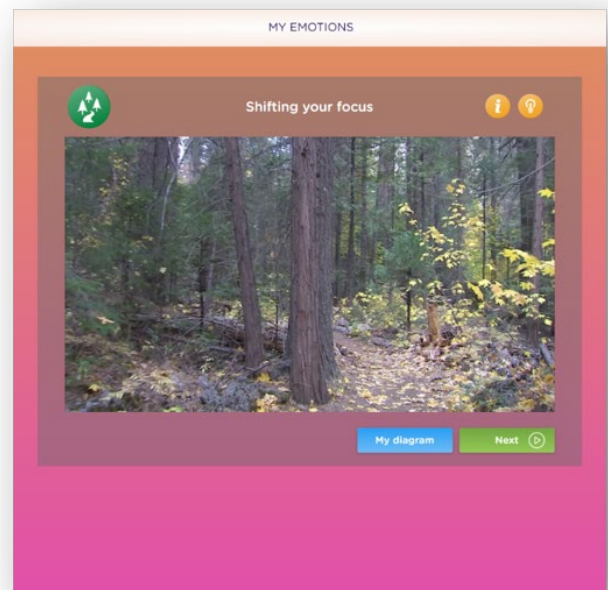
### INFORMATION STRATEGY



### ACTION STRATEGY



Understanding your emotions



Managing your risky situations: Recognise-avoid-cope

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your emotions

### What is this strategy?

This Information strategy enables the person to understand how their emotions are driven by how they think about things, and why trying to block out their emotions by lapsing will never work. And it motivates them to learn a powerful technique for staying calm in stressful situations.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of emotions.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing upsetting emotions you've experienced, and explaining how these affected you and how you dealt with them. By acknowledging times when you've felt stressed or wound up, you will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY: Shifting your focus**

### *What is this strategy?*

This Action strategy trains the person to take control of their emotions so they can stay calm in situations they find stressful or upsetting.

It allows them to overcome emotions like anxiety, anger, frustration or agitation by shifting the focus of their attention away from whatever is troubling them and immersing their mind in something else entirely.

They do this initially by focusing on a video of a walk through a forest. And then, by following the instructions in their action plan, they can learn how to shift their focus discreetly in any place or situation, without even needing to log in to Breaking Free.

### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.
2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen, which guides them to listen carefully to the instructions in the video as they watch it.

3. When they first watch the video of the walk through the forest, ask if you can watch it with them. If they're feeling stressed, upset or agitated at that moment, reassure them that this is a very good time to use the video to help them calm down and relax.
  4. Before the video starts, think about something that's bothering you at the moment - without necessarily telling the person what it is - and explain that you're interested in finding out whether this strategy will be able to take you away from it. If they tell you they're not feeling particularly emotional at the moment, encourage them to do the same.
  5. After the video has finished, share your own experience of it. And ask the person to reflect on whether it diverted their attention from whatever was troubling them, and whether it changed the way they were feeling and helped them to relax.
  6. If they tell you the video has not significantly altered their emotional state, advise them to watch it again, but this time concentrating even harder on what they're seeing and the instructions they're hearing. Encourage them to visualise being in the forest and, if they can, to immerse themselves in the experience.
  7. When they've finished watching the video, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
  8. Take the printed action plan or view it on screen and read through the instructions together. Help the person to practice shifting their focus to the environment or a particular object until they feel confident doing it. Remind them that they can use this way to control their emotions and calm down in any situation, without anyone else even being aware of what they're doing.
  9. Whenever you're in their company and realise they're starting to become anxious, angry, frustrated or agitated, prompt them to shift their focus immediately, using whichever method they prefer. Remind them that the more they use this strategy to take control of their emotions, the more powerful it will become.
  10. Whenever they manage distressing emotions by shifting the focus of their attention, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and giving them positive encouragement to keep using the strategy. Also, ask them to reflect on how effective the technique was in helping them to feel calmer and more relaxed.
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their physical sensations



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their unpleasant physical sensations, including cravings.

The Information strategy allows the person to understand their cravings better. And it motivates them to learn how to ride them out.

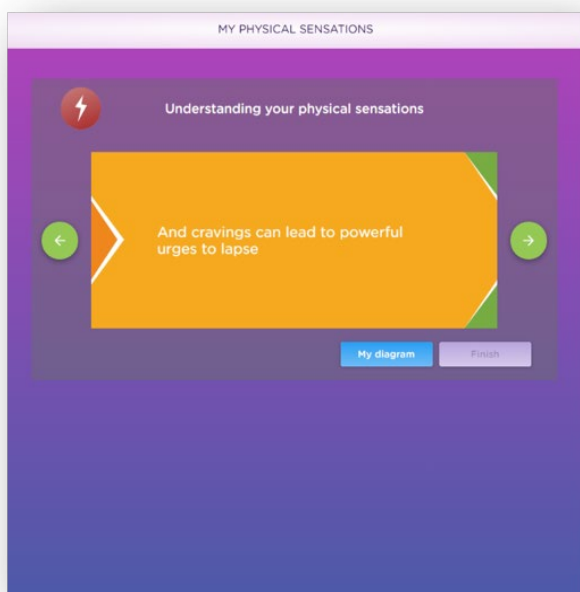
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that allows them to manage their cravings and urges by using the mindfulness technique of 'urge surfing'.



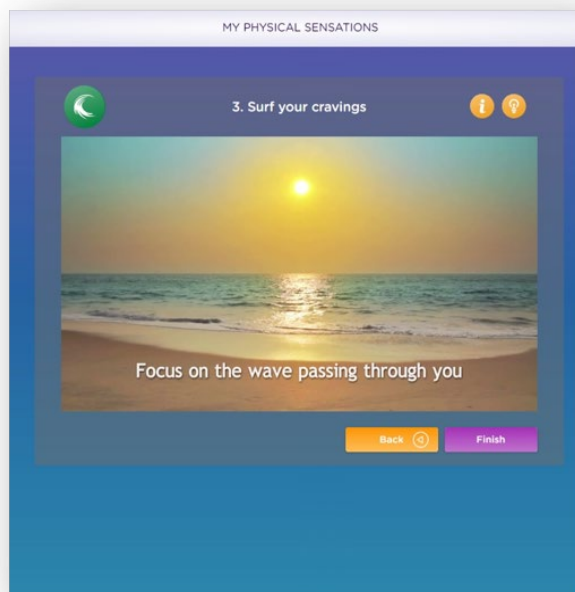
### INFORMATION STRATEGY



### ACTION STRATEGY



Understanding your physical sensations



Surfing your cravings and urges

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your physical sensations

### What is this strategy?

This Information strategy allows the person to understand what can trigger their cravings and urges, and recognise that succumbing to them by lapsing will only create more cravings. And it motivates them to learn a powerful technique for riding out their cravings by surfing them.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

#### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of physical sensations.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing unpleasant physical sensations you've experienced, and explaining how these affected you and how you dealt with them. By acknowledging times when you've been bothered by physical sensations inside your body, you will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY: Surfing your cravings and urges**

#### *What is this strategy?*

This Action strategy enables the person to ride out their cravings and urges rather than giving in to them by lapsing. For many people, this skill can be a vital element of staying on track with their recovery.

It takes them through a sequence that allows them first to understand their cravings and urges and what will really happen when they stop drinking alcohol or using drugs. This will dispel any fears they may have that their cravings and urges will either go on forever or remain at a high level of intensity.

Following this, the strategy guides them to tune in to their experience of the physical discomfort that is caused by their craving. It then shows them how to ride out the craving by surfing it rather than succumbing to it.

They do this initially by focusing on a sequence of videos. And then, by following the instructions in their action plan, they can learn how to surf their cravings and urges discreetly in any place or situation, without even needing to log in to Breaking Free.

#### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.



2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen, which previews the three steps contained in the strategy.
  3. When they focus on understanding their cravings and urges (step 1), watch the video sequence together and then ask them to reflect on whether it fits with their own experience of cravings and urges. If they struggle to understand any aspect of it, encourage them to replay the video as many times as is necessary before moving on to the next step.
  4. When they focus on scanning their body (step 2), do this with them by focusing on an itch, ache or twinge rather than a craving. Share your own experience of tuning in to the physical discomfort and locating the source of the feeling within your body, and then discuss their experience before moving on to the next step.
  5. When they focus on surfing their craving (step 3), do this with them by riding out the sensation of your itch, ache or twinge and not giving in to the urge to scratch the itch or move your body to relieve the ache or twinge. Share your own experience of surfing this physical feeling, and then discuss their experience. If the person is still struggling with a craving, encourage them to keep replaying the video, concentrating as much as possible on what they're seeing and the instructions they're hearing, until the feeling has subsided.
  6. When they've finished watching the sequence of videos, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
  7. Take the printed action plan or view it on screen and read through the instructions together. Help the person to practice scanning their body and surfing their craving until they feel confident doing so. Remind them that they can use this technique to ride out their cravings and urges in any situation, without anyone else knowing what they are doing.
  8. Whenever you're in their company and realise they're starting to experience a craving, advise them to surf it immediately. Remind them that the more they use this strategy to ride out their cravings and urges rather than giving in to them, the more powerful it will become.
  9. Whenever they overcome cravings or urges by surfing rather than succumbing to them, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and giving them positive encouragement to keep using the strategy. Also, ask them to reflect on how they feel after the physical discomfort has subsided, and how effective the technique was in helping them to ride it out.
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their unhelpful behaviours



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their unhelpful behaviours.

The Information strategy allows them to understand the importance of how they use their time. And it motivates them to put some essential structure into their daily routine.

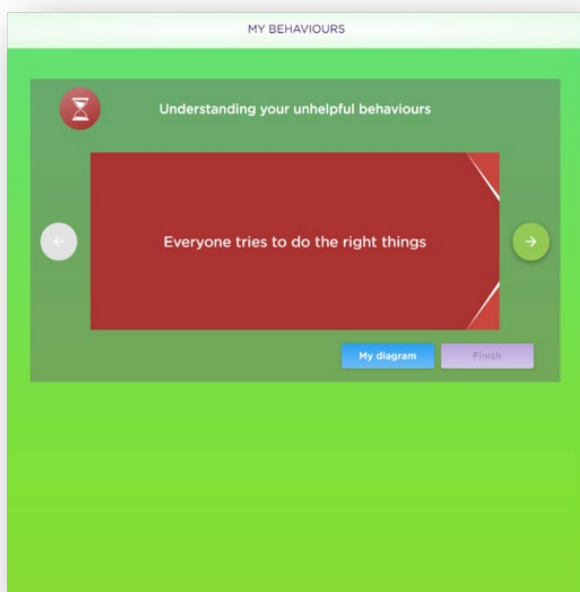
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that allows them to plan activities that will allow them to experience a sense of pleasure and achievement each day.



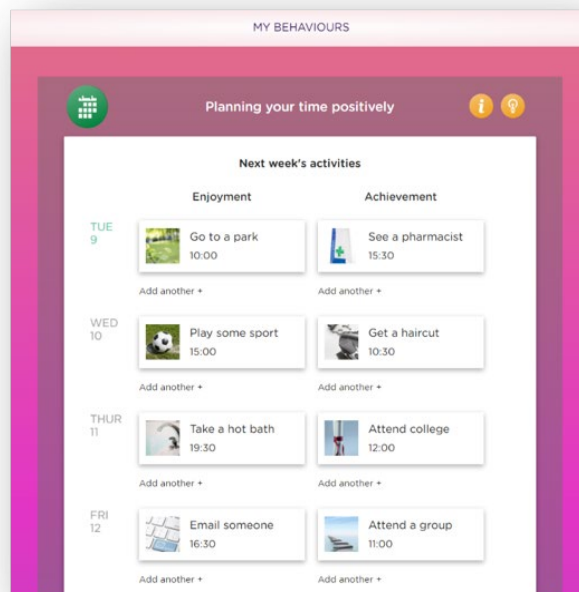
### INFORMATION STRATEGY



### ACTION STRATEGY



Understanding your unhelpful behaviours



Planning your time positively

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your unhelpful behaviours

### What is this strategy?

This Information strategy allows the person to understand how a lack of structure or routine in their days can affect how they feel, and potentially make them more vulnerable to lapsing. And it motivates them to take positive action to plan activities they can carry out.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

#### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of unhelpful behaviours.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing unhelpful behaviours you've used to help you cope with life's challenges. By acknowledging times when you've struggled to find any other ways to cope, you will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY: Planning your time positively**

#### *What is this strategy?*

This Action strategy enables the person to experience pleasure and a sense of achievement every day without using alcohol or drugs.

It allows them to plan out their time so they can use it more positively and constructively. And this will ensure that every day they will do at least one activity that gives them a sense of pleasure or enjoyment and one activity that gives them a sense of having achieved something worthwhile.

As well as making the person feel more positive and self-confident, creating more structure in each day will help them to avoid feelings of boredom, emptiness or loneliness that could make them vulnerable to lapsing.

The strategy guides them through the process of selecting which activities for enjoyment and achievement they want to do, deciding when they want to do them, and creating an activity calendar that they can follow throughout the following week.

#### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.

2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and watch the video, which shows them how to do the strategy. Make sure they view the video in full screen mode (by clicking on the icon in the bottom-right corner of the video frame) so they can see clearly how the strategy works.
  3. When they're ready to start, help them to identify activities they can schedule for the week ahead. Make sure they select at least one activity for enjoyment and one for achievement for each day.
  4. When they're considering activities for enjoyment, suggest anything you remember them enjoying in the past, even if this was a long time ago, or any activities you've heard them say they'd like to try.
  5. When they're thinking about activities for achievement, suggest anything you recall boosting their self-confidence and making them feel good in the past, even if this was a long time ago.
  6. Make sure every activity they choose is realistic for them to do, even if they might need you or somebody else to accompany or support them.
  7. For every activity, help them to work out the best day and time to carry it out. Make sure they consider whether anything could potentially make this difficult and, if necessary, advise them to select a different day or time.
  8. When they've finished creating their activity calendar, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
  9. Emphasise the importance of doing all the activities they've planned. Encourage them to either carry their action plan with them or keep it somewhere they'll be able to look at it each morning and remind themselves what activities they've decided to do on that day.
  10. Do everything you can to make sure the person actually carries out the activities they've scheduled for each day. This could range from prompting them by telephone, text message or email through to providing more practical support - e.g. by offering to accompany them or helping them to plan travel arrangements.
  11. Whenever they do their activity for enjoyment and activity for achievement, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and giving them positive encouragement to do the same again the following day. Also, ask them to reflect on how the activities made them feel immediately afterwards.
  12. Whenever they're approaching the end of one week, encourage them to return to the strategy and plan out their activities for the following week so they can keep experiencing all the benefits of doing so.
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# GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTERS

## Helping someone tackle their lifestyle



Breaking Free contains two strategies to help someone address their lifestyle.

The Information strategy allows them to understand what they could gain by changing their lifestyle. And it motivates them to achieve this.

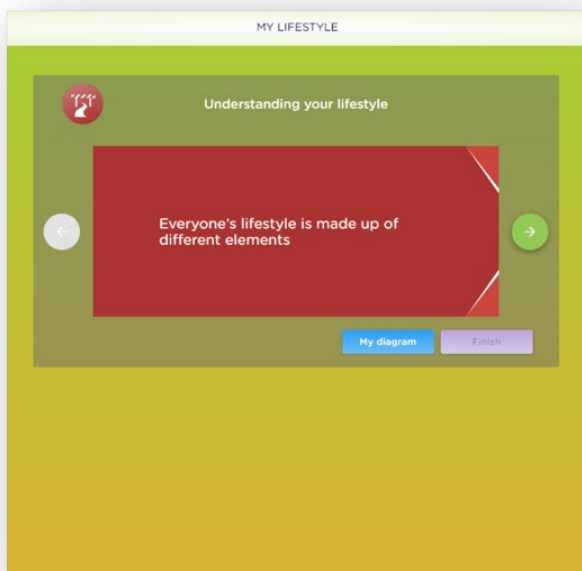
The Action strategy is a clinically-proven practical strategy that guides them to make real and meaningful changes to the aspects of their lifestyle that are causing them problems.



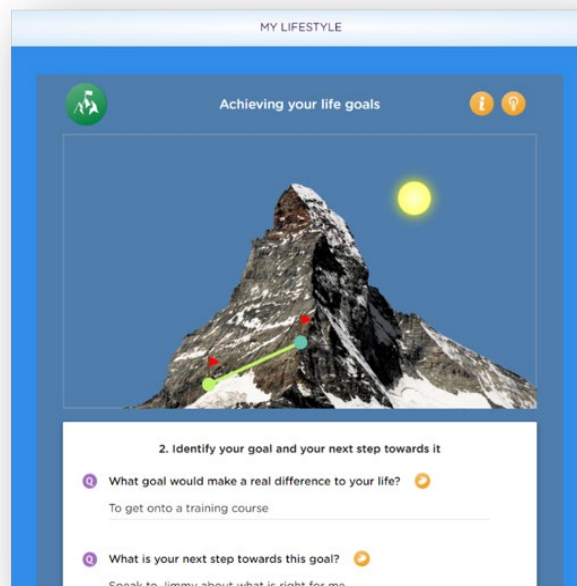
### INFORMATION STRATEGY



### ACTION STRATEGY



#### Understanding your lifestyle



#### Achieving your life goals

## INFORMATION STRATEGY: Understanding your lifestyle

### What is this strategy?

This Information strategy allows the person to understand that they can achieve any realistic goal if they approach this in the right way. And it motivates them to choose a life goal and start taking the necessary steps to achieve it.

The strategy requires them to work through a sequence of six coloured panels, each of which displays a key visual message and contains audio for them to listen to. They can control the speed at which they go through this sequence. And they can move backwards as well as forwards if they want to. This is important because everyone absorbs information in different ways and at different rates, and the person may want to watch and listen to a particular panel again.

#### *How can you help?*

1. Watch and listen to the sequence of information panels with the person, explaining that you're interested in understanding the significance of unhelpful behaviours.
  2. After each panel, ask them to reflect on how it fits with their own experience. And, where appropriate, consider sharing your own perspective - e.g. by discussing any problems you've experienced with your own lifestyle, and explaining how these affected you and how you dealt with them. By acknowledging times when you've struggled with aspects of your lifestyle, you will help the person to recognise this is entirely normal.
  3. Make sure they've understood the information contained in each panel before they move on to the next one.
  4. When they reach the end of the sequence and create their information summary, encourage them to print this out and keep it somewhere they will be able to find it easily.
  5. Advise them to read through it regularly and keep reflecting on how it relates to them and their own personal circumstances.
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## **ACTION STRATEGY: Achieving your life goals**

#### *What is this strategy?*

This strategy allows the person to achieve their goals and create the life they really want.

It guides them through a series of four stages so they can: first, identify a life goal and the next practical step they can take towards achieving it; second, recognise the main barrier to them completing the step; third, work out how they can overcome that barrier; and fourth, increase their motivation to take the step they've identified.

This is a very powerful way for the person to address any areas of their lifestyle that they recognise are causing them problems.

Crucially, this process maximises their chances of success by helping them to plan every step very carefully so they can approach it with confidence and a high level of motivation. And by completing each step and then moving on quickly to the next one, they will build momentum and keep moving towards the life goal they're striving to achieve.

#### *How can you help?*

1. First, encourage the person to click on the 'light bulb' icon in the top-right corner of the screen and read and/or listen to the information it gives them. This will motivate them by explaining how the strategy can help them and how it will strengthen their recovery.
2. Next, ask them to click on the 'information' icon in the top-right corner of the screen, which encourages them to select a mountain to climb.

3. When they focus on identifying a life goal, make sure whatever goal they choose is realistically achievable and would make a significant difference to their life if they were to attain it. Encourage them to focus on whichever aspect of their lifestyle is most challenging for them at the present time and, if necessary, share your own perspective on this. And if they're struggling to set an appropriate life goal, ask them to click on the 'helping hand' icon and discuss the suggestions it provides.
4. Following this, help them to break their chosen life goal down into a series of smaller, more manageable steps. Ideally, these steps should be written out as a numbered list. To highlight how this process might work, ask them to click on the 'helping hand' icon and discuss the example it provides of a goal that has been broken down into eight separate steps.
5. Once they've chosen their next step, make sure they can genuinely answer 'yes' to the series of four questions that are designed to ensure the step they're planning to take is appropriate. If they answer 'no' to any of the questions, help them to identify a different step that would be more suitable at this stage and more manageable for them. Remind them that it doesn't matter how small this new step may seem as long as completing it would move them a little further along the road towards achieving their life goal.
6. When the person focuses on recognising the main barrier to completing the step, discuss with them all the barriers that are listed. Ask them to consider the potential of each barrier to prevent them from carrying out the step they've identified. If necessary, share your own perspective - e.g. if you feel they may be underestimating how much a particular barrier could hinder their progress. If they indicate that none of the barriers listed are likely to cause them a significant problem, encourage them to type into the box at the bottom of the screen the biggest obstacle they believe they could face when they actually attempt the step.
7. When they focus on overcoming the barrier they've identified, ask the person to reflect on whether the two 'IF ... THEN ...' statements shown under 'What you can say to yourself' ring true for them. Guide them to work through the practical suggestions contained in the section on 'What you can do', and then help them to identify the best day and time to carry out their step. Make sure they consider whether anything could potentially make this difficult and, if necessary, advise them to select a different time.
8. When they focus on getting motivated to take the next step towards their life goal, discuss with them all the statements that are listed and ask them to identify which ones they find personally meaningful. Then discuss whether completing the step could have any other benefits for them, which can be typed into the box at the bottom of the screen. If appropriate, share your own ideas - particularly if you feel that taking the step may have certain benefits for them that they may not yet have recognised.
9. When they've finished working through the sequence of screens, encourage them to print out their action plan straight away if possible.
10. Emphasise the importance of taking the step they've planned. Advise them to keep their action plan close at hand so they can stay mindful of when they're due to take the step they've planned.
11. Do everything you can to make sure the person actually carries out the step. This could range from prompting them by telephone, text message or email through to providing more practical support - e.g. by offering to accompany them when they're scheduled to do it.

12. Whenever they complete the step, reinforce this by recognising their efforts and emphasising that, however small it may have been, it has moved them closer to achieving their life goal. Ask them to reflect on how this makes them feel. Then encourage them to return to the strategy as soon as possible to plan out their next step forward and so keep building positive momentum.
  
  13. If they're unable to complete the step for any reason, discuss this with them and try to identify the main obstacle that got in their way. Encourage them to see what happened as a blip rather than a failure. And remind them that their attempt to take the step was a positive action in itself, as well as a valuable learning experience. Next, help them to break the step down into smaller, more manageable steps and return to the strategy. Guide them through the sequence of screens so they can plan out the first of these new steps. And pay particular attention to what they can do to make sure the same barrier doesn't prevent them from succeeding next time.
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