CHANGES MODULE 4: The Sliding Scale

When our mental health is in a good place, we can forget to look for the signs that indicate we are becoming at risk of mental distress. It can be useful to think of your own mental health as on a sliding scale that could go from 1 being "good mental health" to 5 being "a high level of mental distress". For many of us, when we spend a lot of time at a 5 without any relief, we are at risk of long-term mental health issues.



Nobody is at a 1 all the time because life is always changing. It's normal, healthy and human to slide up and down the scale. The purpose of this module is to invite you to think about your own scale. Ask yourself the following:

What are my personal signs I'm sliding up the scale?
These may be common or recognised signs such as crying, worrying, anger, changes to your sleeping, or they may be more subtle. An increased need for things to be clean or sudden snapping at those closest to you could be signs too. These signs will be personal to you.

At what point on the scale do I need to ask for help?
This will be different for everyone but recognising at what point you will need support is important. Everybody has a point where they no longer feel able to cope on their own. Be honest with yourself about where this point is.

What might stop me getting help?
Think about what barriers might exist for you. They could be physical, social, economical or emotional. How could you overcome these if needed?

Can I tell when I'm moving *down* the scale again and my mental health is improving?
It is important to give yourself credit when things are getting better and recognise what helped this to happen. This will allow you to build resilience and remind you that you have the tools to cope in the future.

How can I stay well?
Once you are getting better, it's important to make sure you don't take on too much. Setting manageable expectations for yourself can stop you ending up at 5 again really quickly.

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Discussion

What are your own signs that you're sliding up the scale?

Further resources:

Try tracking your mood by keeping a journal or using a mood tracker app.