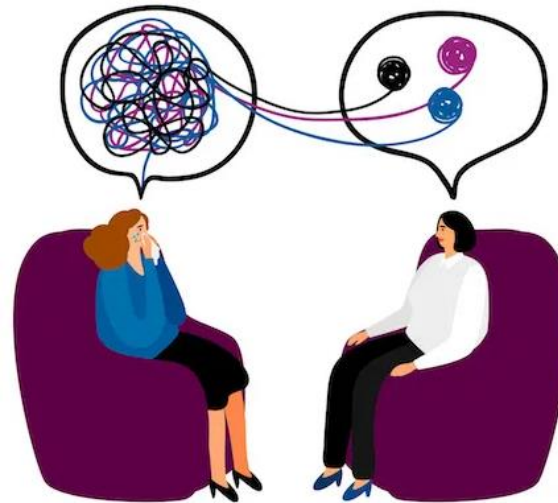


'It's Good to Talk': Breaking Down Barriers to Facilitate Access to Therapies

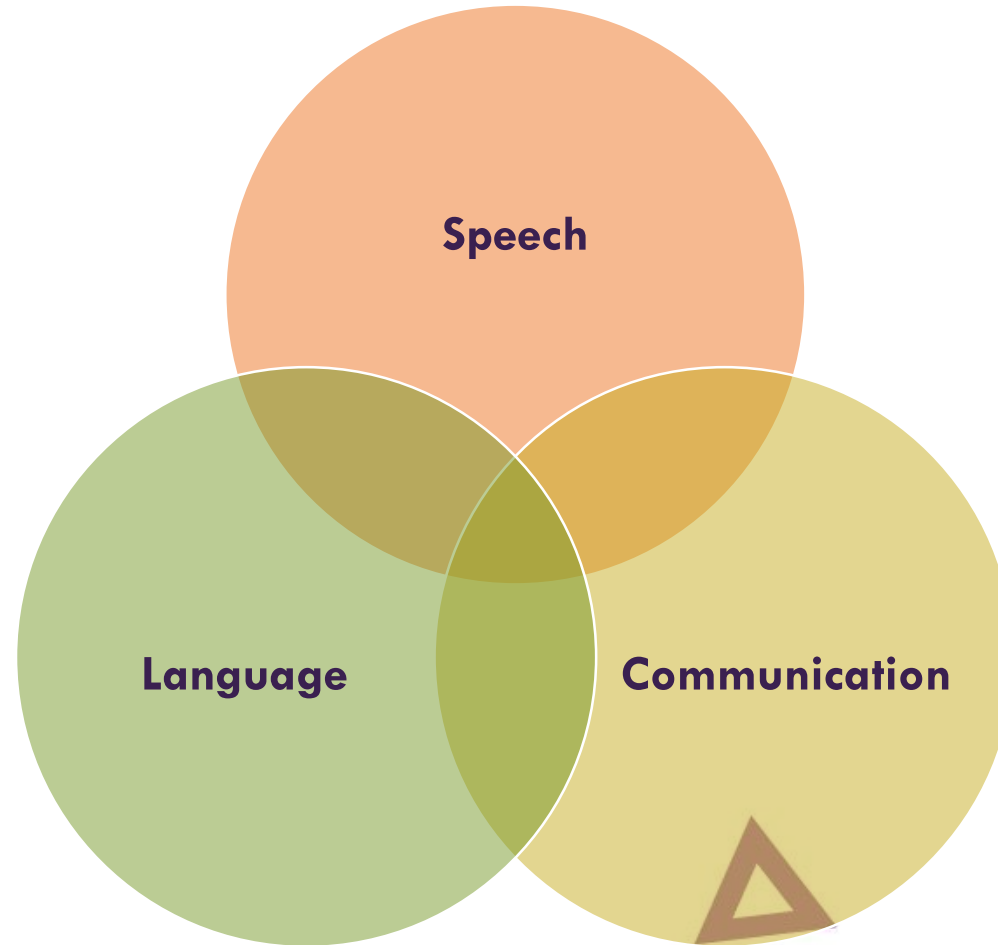
Claire Millar – Speech and Language Therapist,
Pontville School



What I will cover:

- What are Speech, Language and Communication Needs?
- Why are Speech, Language and Communication Needs important to consider in your practice?
- How can Speech and Language Therapists help?

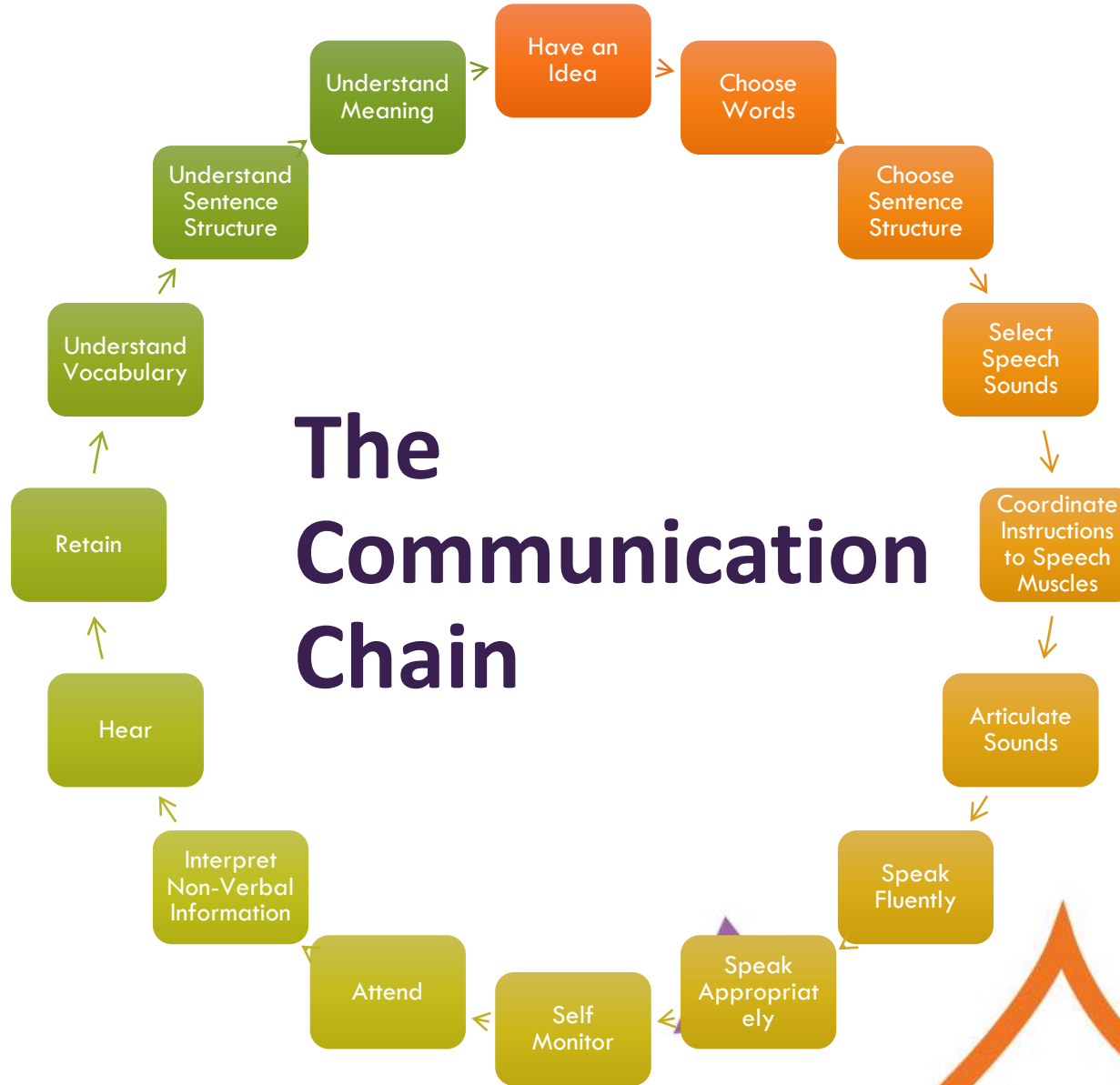
Speech, Language and Communication Needs



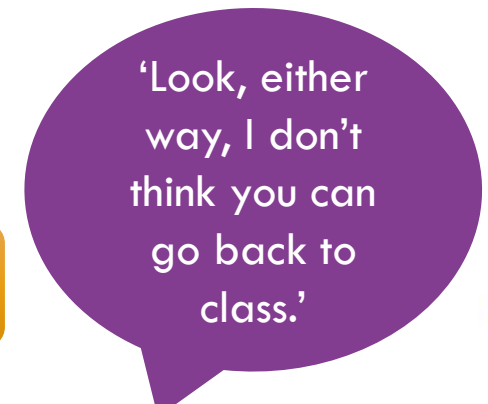
Input



Output



The Communication Chain



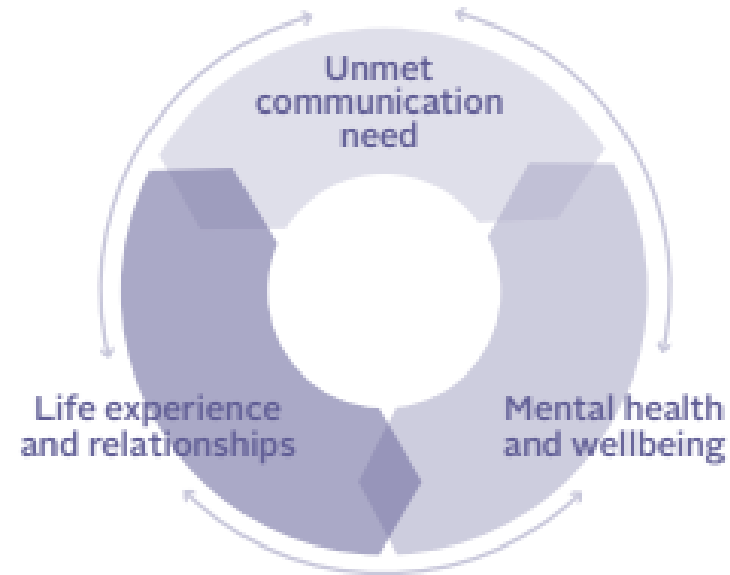
Why is it important?

81% of young people who present with social, emotional and mental health needs, will also have speech, language and communication needs, some previously unidentified (Hollo *et al.*, 2014).

Children with mental health disorders are five times more likely to report having speech, language and communication needs (NHS Digital, 2018).

Adolescents with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) are more likely to have symptoms of depression and anxiety than their peers (Botting *et al.*, 2016).

Pragmatic language difficulties in childhood are associated with psychotic experiences in adolescence (Sullivan *et al.*, 2016).



45% of young people referred to mental health services have a higher-level language impairment (Cohen *et al.*, 2013).

Activity

- Imagine you are in a shop, and you are trying to find a particular item. Try to explain to the shop assistant what you want without using the letter 'e'.
- Imagine the shop assistant responds, and you do not retain every third word. Could you follow her instructions?

Mental Health Implications

Without:	We may experience:
The ability to communicate our needs.	Frustration.
The ability to understand others.	Anxiety.
The ability to develop new relationships and have strong bonds with other people.	Social isolation.
A feeling of control i.e. an ability to make one's own decisions.	Powerlessness.
The ability to achieve.	Low self-esteem and low motivation.
The ability to create a life narrative.	Lack of a clear sense of identity.
The ability to self-reflect and problem-solve.	Poor judgment, and difficulties with making the 'right' decisions.





Join us on 2 February and get talking about mental health.

Conversations change lives.

Wherever you are, whatever the time, your conversation matters.





time to change
time to talk
day 2017

#timetotalk

IT'S OKAY TO TALK

SAMARITANS

No one should feel ashamed to talk about mental health



#timetotalk **time to change**
let's end mental health discrimination

WE ALL HAVE MENTAL HEALTH

start talking



 Mental Health Foundation

Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled.



Good mental health for all.
mentalhealth.org.uk

NOW WE'RE TALKING
FOR HEALTHY MINDS

BRITAIN GET TALKING

What are the Implications?

Despite the fact that therapies are verbally based, language competence is rarely evaluated systematically before such therapies are undertaken (Cohen *et al*, 2000).

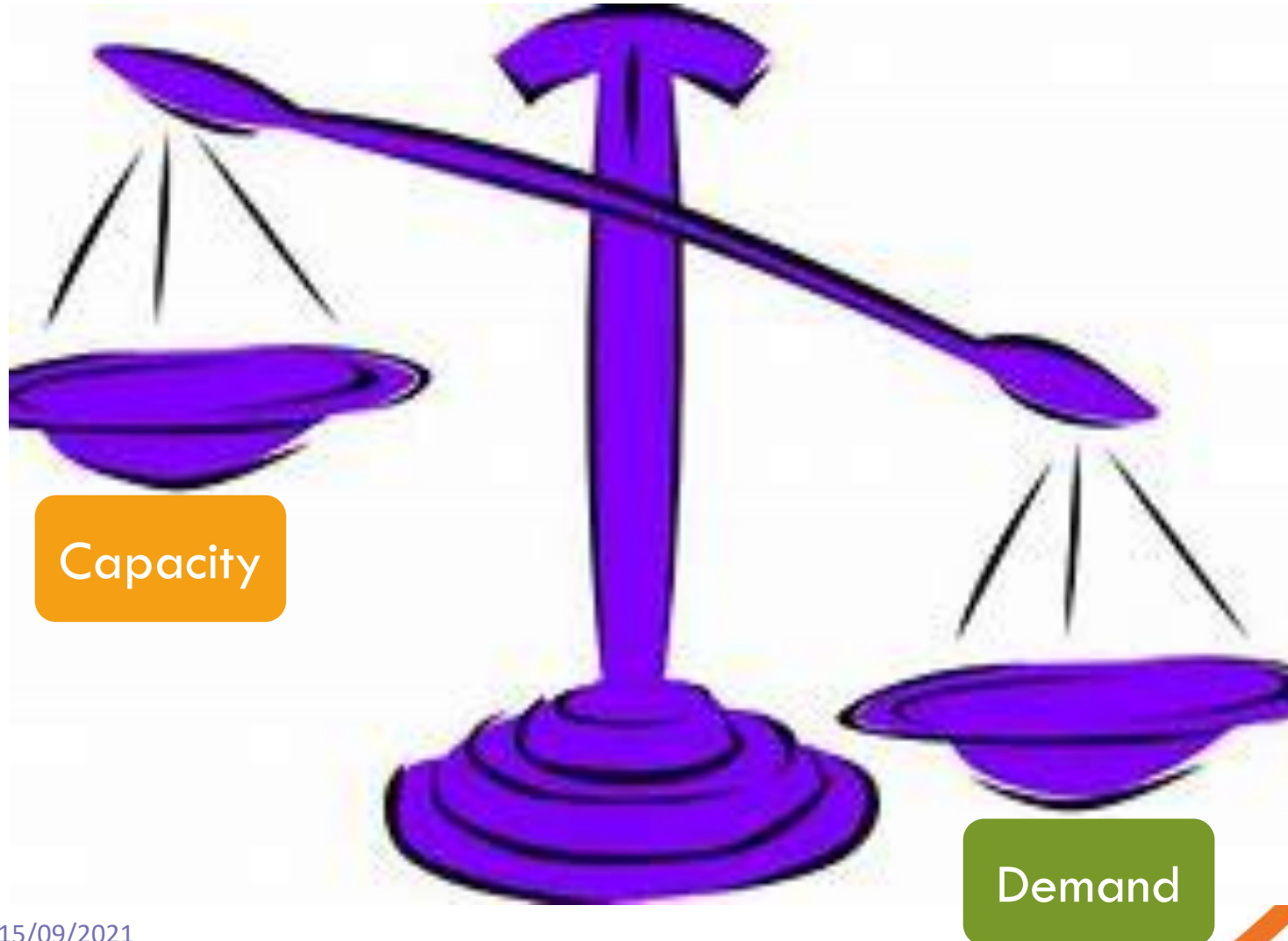
The success of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is dependent on a client's language and verbal reasoning capabilities (Snow, 2013).

Mainstream interventions that are not adapted often fail to improve the mental health of autistic children, and in some cases will worsen their mental health (Read & Schofield, 2010)

'I had communication issues with each therapist because they expected me to be neurotypical, so I would take things too literally and they thought it was a defence mechanism, or I'd try to explain meltdowns and they focused on my thoughts rather than how to deal with over-reactive sensory perception.'

- Autistic Adult (Camm-Crosbie *et al.*, 2018).

Demands versus Capacities



What am I asking the young person to communicate about?

What are the circumstances?

Are they at baseline?

Common Communicative Demands

- Be open to discuss personal issues with a stranger.
- Create clear and consistent narratives of past events.
- Attend to lengthy descriptions of treatment plans or goal setting discussions.
- Regulate oneself when discussing upsetting themes.
- Engage in discussions involving complex vocabulary.
- Understand idiomatic and non-literal language.
- Communicate and identify emotions in oneself.
- Identify and understand other people's perspectives.
- Self-reflect.
- Problem-solve.
- Plan for the future and imagine an alternative, more positive reality.

'All the psychological input in the world doesn't make a difference if the [person] doesn't understand it'

- Youth Justice Staff Member
(Snow *et al.*, 2017)

Signs of Communicative Difficulties in Sessions

- Lack of progress in therapy.
- Difficulties recalling the previous week's discussion.
- Processing time evident, or long pauses after questions.
- Misses the point of questions, or shows evidence of tangential thinking.
- Lack of spontaneous conversation and apparent reliance on 'learnt' phrases that make conversations seem rehearsed.
- Uses vocabulary incorrectly or out of context.
- Requires information to be repeated often.
- Difficulties recalling past events in sequence.



Speech and Language Therapist Role

- Assessment to ascertain skill level and/or appropriateness of planned intervention.
- Tailor intervention materials to a young person's specific needs.
- Prior teaching of key vocabulary and/or concepts to support smoothness of intervention delivery.
- Joint delivery of intervention to ensure accessibility of content.
- Support and train others to feel confident in adapting their interventions.
- Encourage and facilitate the young person to make decisions and participate in their care, as appropriate.

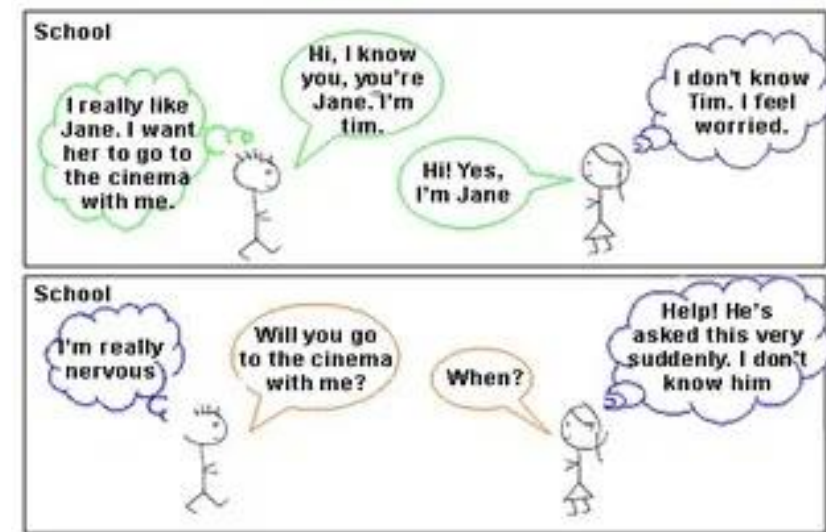
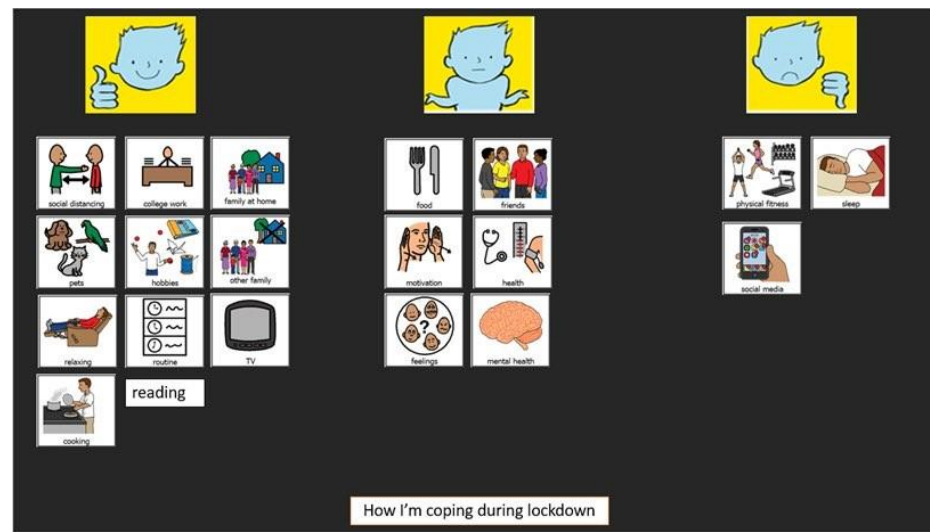
'Working in a multi-disciplinary team with a speech and language therapist has supported me to build an understanding of how communication difficulties may impact on clients' relationships with themselves and with others'
- Music Therapist (RCSLT, 2021).

Simple Adaptations to Interventions

- Minimise distractions.
- Consider appointment time, length and location.
- Plan to have an initial few sessions to develop rapport.
- Keep sentences clear and concise.
- Before reframing your question, pause to support processing time.
- Reduce use of ambiguous or idiomatic language and abstract terms.
- Avoid complex grammar.
- Use closed questions where possible.
- Ask them to repeat what they have understood from your conversation.
- Make it visual!



I don't understand	Can you break that into chunks?	Can you write it down?
What does ___ mean?	What's the important bit to remember?	Say that again please

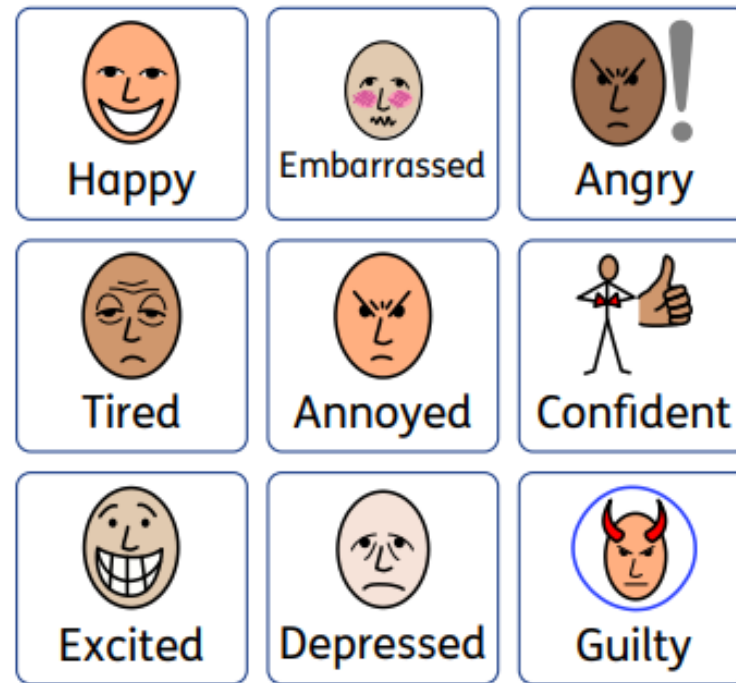


Prompt Cards



Visual Safety Plan

Talking Mat



Emotions Cards

Comic Strip Conversations

Coping Strategies that are Harmful	
Harmful Behaviours	Possible Cost
Spending too much time thinking about the past	Missing out on the good things happening now; Becoming more depressed
Thinking about the future and worrying too much	Not noticing the good things happening now; Becoming more anxious
Being alone to avoid being hurt by other people	Miss out on having fun with other people
Using alcohol or drugs to feel numb	Risk becoming addicted; Don't ever learn to feel better; Health problems
Take painful feelings out on other people	People don't want to be around you; Feel ashamed at hurting people you love; Become lonely
Engaging in self-harming behaviours	Risk death, infection, scarring, shame

Now, I want to ask you a strange question. Suppose that while you are sleeping tonight and the entire house is quiet, a miracle happens. The miracle is that the problem which brought you here is solved. However, because you are sleeping, you don't know that the miracle has happened. So, when you wake up tomorrow morning, what will be different that will tell you that a miracle has happened and the problem which brought you here is solved?

(de Shazer, 1988)

How many of you feel, especially when gripped by intense emotions, that you are 'right,' the sole proprietor of the truth?

(Rathus & Miller, 2015)

The situation you're in is like being in a tug-of-war with a monster.

(Hayes, Strosah & Wilson, 1999)

What would your friend say if he/she heard this belief?

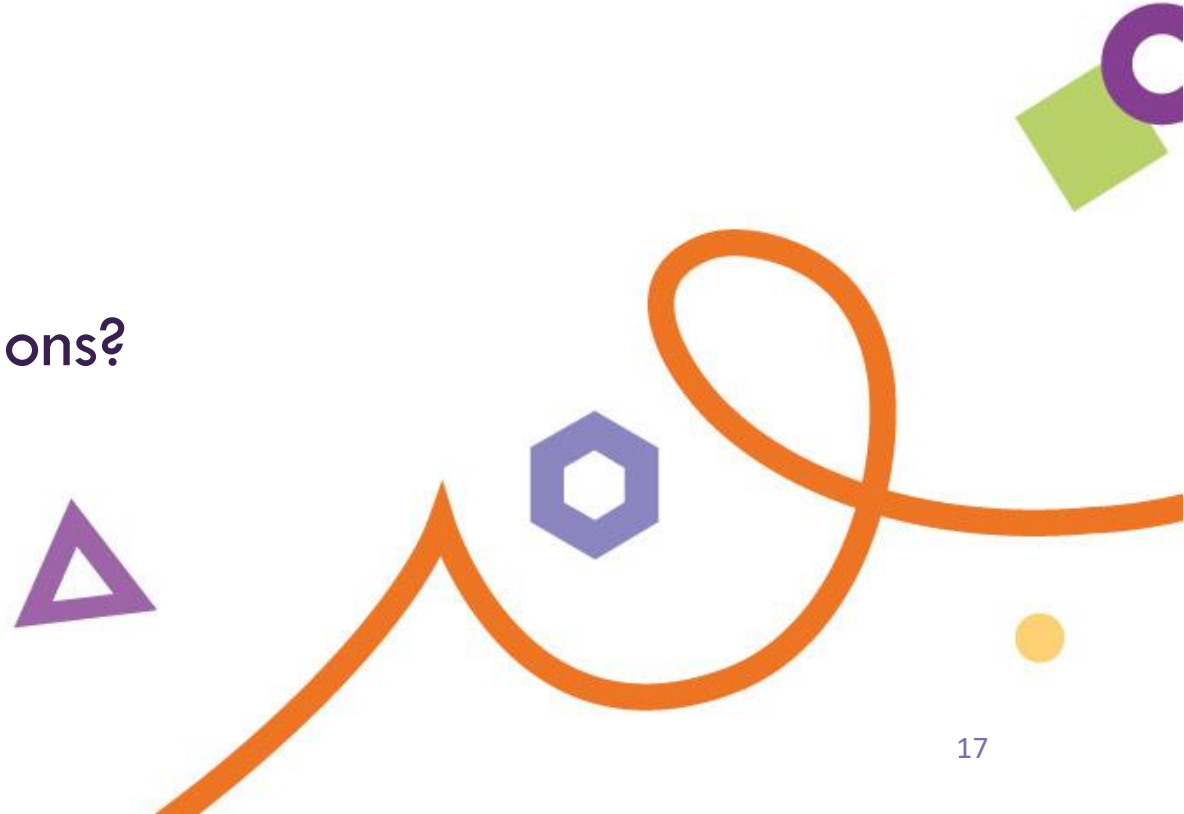
(Todd & Freeman, 2011)

Conclusion

[The Box – free online training | RCSLT](#)

[Mind Your Words – Free e-learning course | RCSLT](#)

Any Questions?



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