



PATHWAYS TO RECOVERY PRACTITIONER GUIDE

**“Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction
ends up being the biggest step of your life.
Tip toe if you must but take that step.”**

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Anonymous

Overview of the Pathways to Recovery Programme

Pathways to Recovery (P2R) is a 12-session group work programme based on motivational theory and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). It is aimed at those who want to change but struggle to achieve it and who need greater stability and resilience in their lives. The materials focus on developing a range of coping strategies and skills to provide stabilisation and psychological flexibility.

See <http://www.moving-on.uk> for the latest information and for details accessing the Moving On App.

The Programme Contents

No.	Title	Contents
1	Getting started	Getting participants to feel comfortable in the group. Thinking about what we need to do to make the group successful. Focusing on what matters to us in life. Setting future goals
2	Moving forwards	Looking at destructive behaviours and the way we use them to manage difficult experiences. Examining the personal consequences of substance use. Weighing up advantages and disadvantages. Tipping the balance in favour of change.
3	Building a life worth living	Taking control of your own recovery. Looking at the consequences of refusing life as it is. Looking at risky behaviours and self-sabotage. Considering what we want our lives to be about.
4	Gaining stability	Looking at what we need to do to gain or regain stability. What coping strategies have worked for us in the past. Looking at techniques that can help us to cope with difficult situations
5	Letting go	Thinking about our history and how can get hooked up by it. Looking at how our minds can be unhelpful. Moving towards difficult situations rather than avoiding them.
6	Leaning in	Looking at the impact of cravings and urges. How they can be effectively managed Looking at distraction techniques and at urge surfing. Psychological reactions to distress and how we can lean in.
7	Doing something courageous	Looking at why we struggle with choices in life. Looking at choice from a values perspective. Making a courageous choice.
8	Getting connected	Looking at the relationships we have in life and their positives and negatives. Examining relationships from the perspective of recovery. Taking the temperature of our relationships. What makes a healthy relationship.
9	Slowing down	The benefits of slowing down and feeling able to manage. Creating positive experiences. Making a commitment to those things that are important to you in life. Practicing SOBER breathing.
10	Acting with kindness	Developing compassion for ourselves and others. Making active choices to help or not help others. Asking for help. Blocks to asking for help. Being kind to ourselves.
11	Being ourselves	Asks the question what does being yourself mean to you. Examines what our reputation is built on and how we can rebuild it. Looks at what we can do to act with confidence.
12	An ending and beginning	Reviews the progress we have made over the course of the programme and looks at how we can have a good ending.

The Shared Components of Each Session

Each session comprises shared components: (a) the weekly check in, (b) the delivery of the programme content, (c) setting the weekly challenge, (d) the check out, and (e) the practitioner debrief/process form. Each of these components is described below.

The Weekly Check In

The weekly check in is a fundamental part of the programme. It is designed to support people to implement the skills from the programme. It encourages people to work on their set challenges. It invites people to lean in to their vulnerability in a safe space. It works to help people to feel they are on a shared journey and they are part of something. It helps everyone to connect. It enables people to really consider how they are at the start and at the end of the session – and to see that feelings change across time.

Programme Content

Each session has a set of aims that will be linked to the vulnerability/resiliency model (see below). The content is designed to encourage discussion and the sharing of helpful techniques and strategies. The programme also has a brief pause at the beginning of each session. The pause is an opportunity for everyone to really show up to the present moment. There are a set of handouts to support each session.

Setting the Weekly Challenge

The weekly challenge is another fundamental aspect to the programme. The biggest predictor of change is where action takes place. We want to support people to get momentum in behaviour change. Everyone in the group (including facilitators) are expected to set and undertake a weekly challenge. It is noteworthy that people can sometimes set a challenge that is too big or difficult. The aim of facilitators is to help these challenges be guided by the SMART concept but is also important to note that missing a goal is a good learning opportunity! Weekly challenges need to be recorded so that they can be checked in/off the following week.

The Check Out

At the end of the session, we want to check out with each individual and the group, how they found the session, if they have any questions and is there anything they will take away with them. Occasionally people can be triggered or upset by the material covered in the session – that is not the aim, of course. It is often helpful to remind participants that anyone who is upset that they can meet the facilitators after the session.

Practitioner Debrief/Process Form

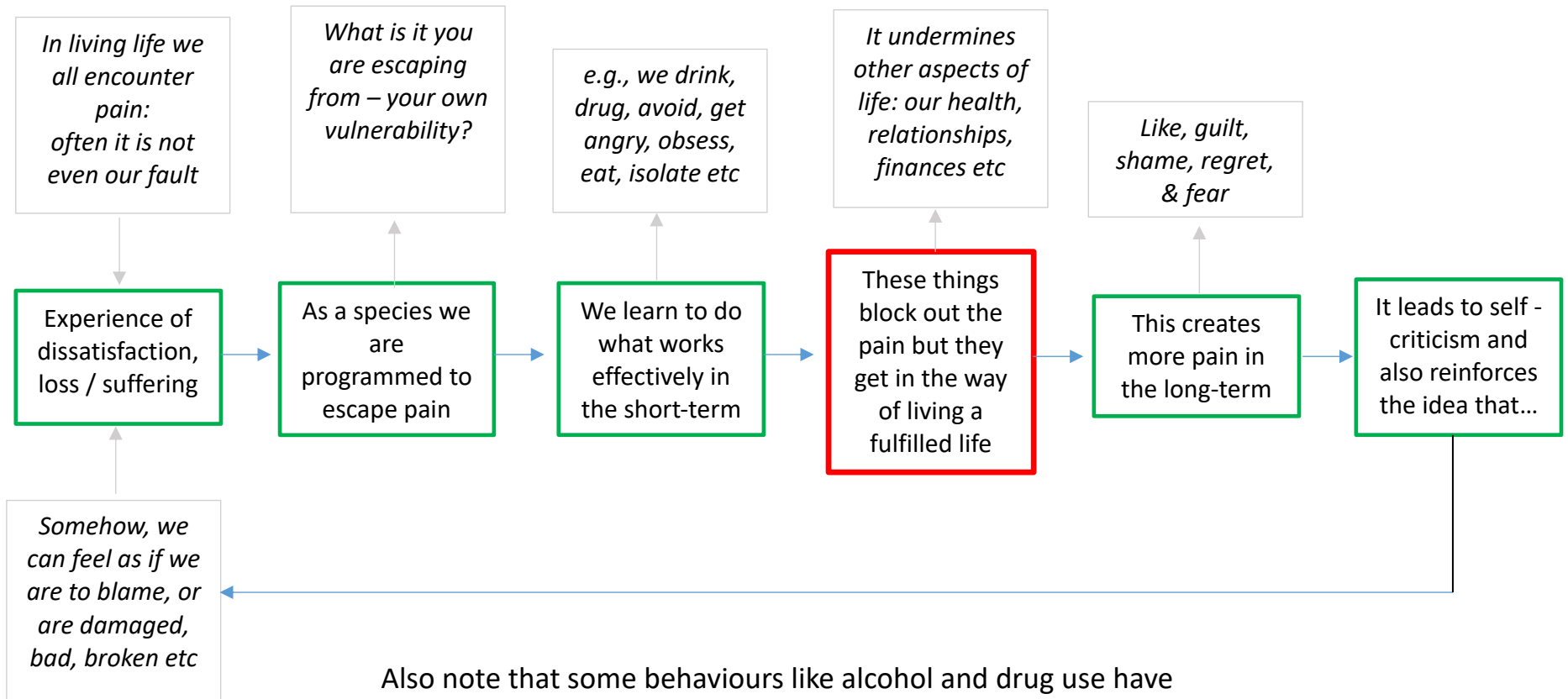
Another important aspect of the session is the debrief/process aspect. The group process form is to be completed by the facilitators after each session. It offers an opportunity for facilitators to reflect on the session (i.e., what worked well and what did not) and to consider how each of the participants are progressing on the programme.

P2R Group Process Self-rating Form

			No Evidence	Slight Evidence	Definite Evidence
START	Introductions	Did you name check everyone (formally or informally)?			
	Orientation	Did you orientate everyone to show up today?			
	Outline	Did you explain the focus of today's session?			
	Check-in	Did you check in with how each person was during their week?			
		Did you review the weekly challenge for each person?			
		Did you connect progress made to previous content / skills covered?			
General Group Process	Warmth / genuineness	Did you recognise gains made / support people when disclosing sensitive material, normalise struggles?			
	Empathy	Did you reflect back what participants said and use appropriate body language (nodding)?			
	Discussion	Did you let people talk about relevant issues and draw on the experience of other people in the group?			
	Time Management	Was the pacing okay? Did you cover all the material and leave enough time for the weekly challenge?			
	Manage Contributions	Did everyone contribute and did you keep everyone on track (i.e., not going over)?			
	Group Motivation	Is the group involved in the group process (i.e., contributing, considering changes)?			
	Participant Understanding	Is the group able to relate / understand the material?			
Ending	Weekly Challenge	Did you set the weekly challenge and encourage participation (i.e., also including facilitators to participate)?			
	Feedback	Did you check out how the session has gone?			

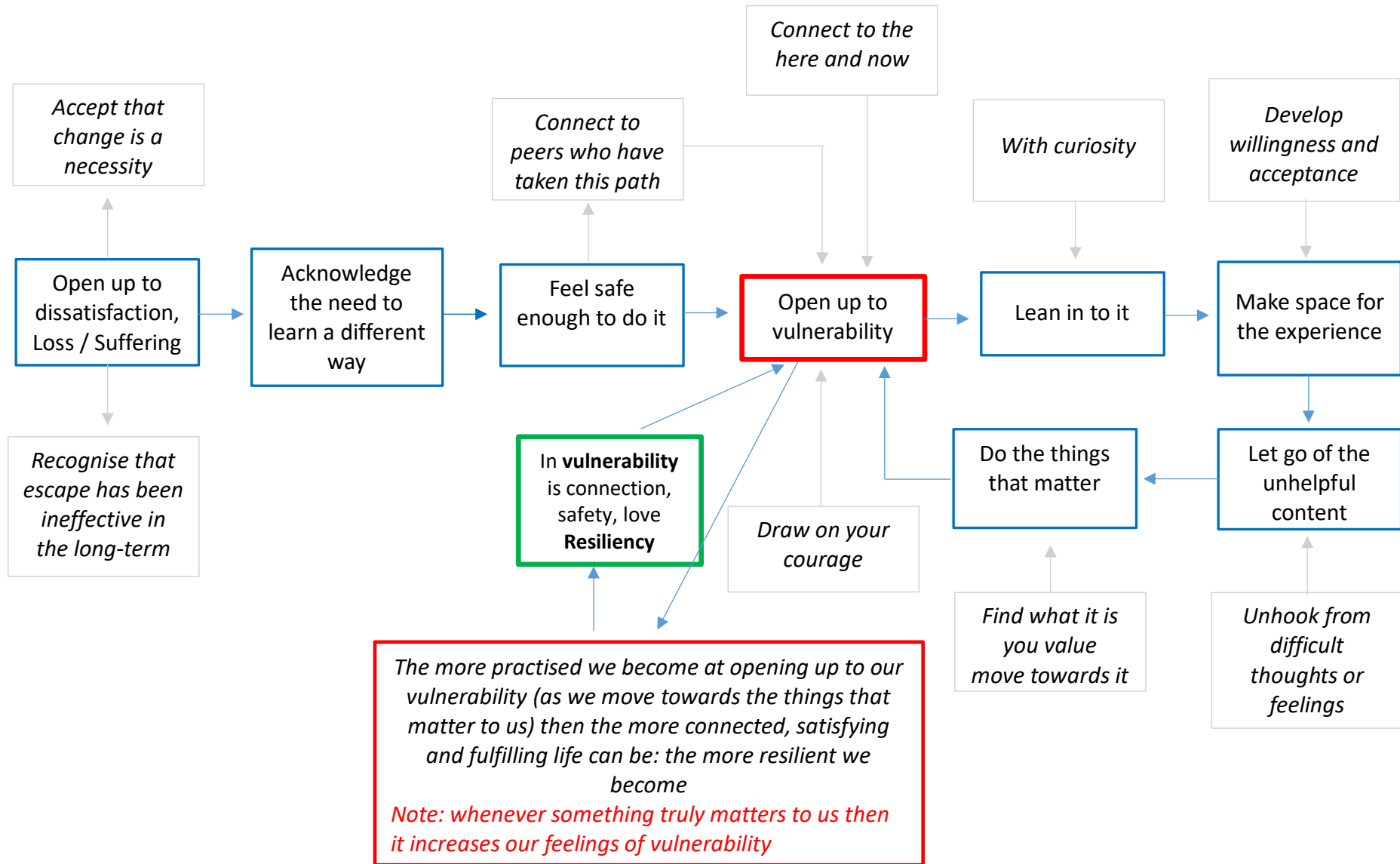
Model 1. The struggle with addiction

The struggle with addictive behaviours is not random. It often develops as a solution for managing psychological, physical and emotional distress.



Also note that some behaviours like alcohol and drug use have many rewarding properties – like relaxation, social camaraderie, buzz etc

Model 2: The Vulnerability/Resiliency model maps out how we might begin to understand and support the development of skills needed to support change.



Session 1 – Getting Started

There are several aims to this session.

- We want participants to feel safe and secure in the group and to help them feel that they are at the start of a shared journey. We want people to feel they are involved in a collaborative group.
- Based on the vulnerability/resiliency model (see above), we are aiming to enhance connection, get people moving, and encouraging skills development.
- The session begins with an ice breaker and setting the formula for success.
- It encourages participants to consider their goals.
- We introduce the concept, and set out to identify, a weekly challenge.
- We check out.

Good practice:

We recommend that facilitators take some time to debrief after each session. The use of the P2R Group Process Self-rating Form (see above) is a helpful aid for facilitator debriefing.

Session Tasks:

1. Introductions / Ice breaker
2. Formula for success
3. Consider a 12-week goal
4. Measuring Recovery Strengths (optional)
5. Setting a Weekly Challenge
6. Checking Out
7. Facilitator Debrief

Handouts

1. Working On Goals
2. Working On Goals Example 1
3. Working On Goals Example 2
4. Recovery Strengths Questionnaire (optional)

Welcome

At the start of the session we want to emphasise that this group is designed to offer specific practical help to people who want change but are finding it difficult to achieve. Everyone in attendance has been invited to attend because they are in the same position. We want to offer the latest in psychological methods to help support change. There will be lots of skills to discuss and learn but just as importantly we want to hear ideas for change from everyone in the group. We will also invite everyone to undertake a weekly challenge. Note in this session there is no real check in as such.

A Mindful Pause

We encourage participants to engage in a very brief mindful pause at the start of each session. This is simply a one or two mindful breaths. In this session it is about what brought you here today? What are you hoping to get from coming? There is no real enquiry afterwards it is simply an opportunity to be present.

Ice Breaker

The Ice Breaker is a brief technique that is intended to (a) get people talking, (b) to get people to find common reasons for attending and (c) as a great way to get to know everyone's names. We are interested in what people are hoping to get from the group. Write it all up on the board and make a point of sharing the common themes.

Formula for Success

The formula for success has two purposes: first to set the ground rules for this and all subsequent sessions and, second, to set the scene for people to support one another along the way. It is important to ensure ownership for the formula for success is held with the group members. As the facilitator it might be necessary to encourage service users to think about possible factors that help groups to run more smoothly. Items might include: Respecting everyone's opinion, Adhering to confidentiality, Not judging others, Allowing each person to be heard (by not talking over others), Starting on time etc

The Pendulum

The Pendulum metaphor describes how people with substance misuse and/or other mental health problems experience life. Many people have the unpleasant experience of feeling bad, which leads them to strive to feel good (or sometimes, even to just simply not feel bad). One way to do this is to use substances. Often, though, people feel good for a short time but the pendulum simply swings back to feeling bad again. The more someone swings the pendulum one way the greater the swing other. The sense here is that the more a person tries to control feeling good (with their substance use), then the more likely he or she is going to remain feeling bad and be stuck in the unending cycle, resulting in a sense of insecurity. In this metaphor service users are challenged to think about another way, which will help them to feel more secure. If the person could climb out of this battle with the pendulum ball, perhaps to the anchor point of the pendulum, then would this give greater balance? This programme will help people to begin to consider another way, which will slow down the swing of the pendulum. What we cannot promise is to rid the person of ever feel bad again (being alive has some painful consequences), but what can be achieved

is a way breaking the cycle that keeps the unpleasant feelings from occurring again and again.

Considering Goals

Having goals and challenges is central to the success of this programme. This session focuses on the 3-step system and SMART goals. The 3-step system is simple after you find a goal then set a reminder to do it – most people simply forget to act on their goals; next get into a routine – often having levels of goals with one so low in effort it is almost impossible not to do it will then help maintain the routine; and finally set a reward for achievement. SMART goals also increase the likelihood of goal achievement. Use the handouts below to explain the goals

Setting a Challenge

In this first session help participants to consider an easy goal that might do before the next session. Everyone including the facilitators set a goal. The challenge can be to do something to enhance wellbeing, or to do a chore often put off. Facilitators make a note of the challenge for the check in next time. Let the group know you will check in next week with everyone to find out how they got on with their challenges.



Check Out

Remember to check out with everyone. How is everyone feeling? Name check and ask each person.

A final note: in our experience of running groups we have noticed people can often find it very challenging to come back again for a second session, even when, logically, they might know it is the best thing for them to do. In acknowledging this fact with participants and reminding them that self-doubt is likely to creep back in again might help them consider how they will overcome their fear/self-doubt. Ultimately, this can go some way to supporting people to come back.

Working On Goals

1.	Think of something in your life that you want to change...	
2.	Think of specific goal...	
3.	List the barriers that have/might prevent you achieving your goal...	
4.	How might you reduce/overcome these barriers...	
5.	What can you do to make your goal more measurable?	
6.	What will your end goal be?	
7.	How will you know you are making progress?	
8.	COSTS: Is there anything you might have to give up or let go of to reach your goal?	

S

Specific - rather than vague, have a well defined goal.

M

Measurable - so you know when you've achieved it.

A

Achievable - something that can be done.

R

Realistic- within the limits of YOUR resources.

T

Time-limited - a goal that has an end-point.

Working On Goals - Example 1

1.	Think of something in your life that you want to change...	Get healthier
2.	Think of specific goal...	Improve diet by reducing carbohydrates
3.	List the barriers that have/might prevent you achieving your goal...	Time and effort. Giving up foods I used to eat
4.	How might you reduce/overcome these barriers...	Plan meals and buy right foods
5.	What can you do to make your goal more measurable?	Eat foods lower in carbohydrates and higher in protein
6.	What will your end goal be?	Improved health / lose weight
7.	How will you know you are making progress?	I will feel better and achieve targets
8.	COSTS: Is there anything you might have to give up or let go of to reach your goal?	Some of the foods that give me a quick fix

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Working On Goals - Example 2

1.	Think of something in your life that you want to change...	Get fitter
2.	Think of specific goal...	Start exercising
3.	List the barriers that have/might prevent you achieving your goal...	Lack of time and feeling low in energy
4.	How might you reduce/overcome these barriers...	Plan specific routine and time to do it. Set levels of activity.
5.	What can you do to make your goal more measurable?	List times (three times per week)
6.	What will your end goal be?	Improved fitness / better wellbeing
7.	How will you know you are making progress?	I will feel better and achieve targets
8.	COSTS: Is there anything you might have to give up or let go of to reach your goal?	Watching TV

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