

# 4D: DEALING WITH DISTRESS

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@beyondpsychl

@discoverytalk



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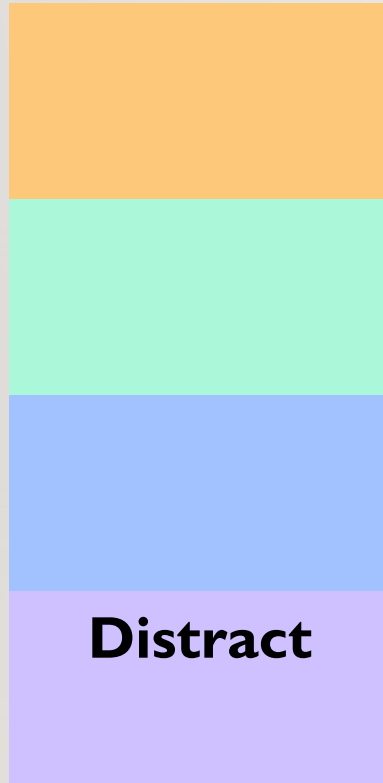
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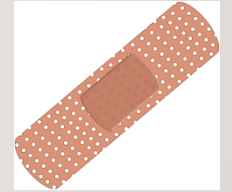
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## Take your mind off the stress right now



- They help to feel good, in the moment
- Examples; TV, exercise, games, hobbies
- Useful but the effects are not long lasting

## Diluting the effects of stress



**dilute**

- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**

It helps the brain to notice how the body feels but needs practice, practice, practice!

- **Square breathing**

Helps you take control

- **Grounding;**

Helps you take control of how you sense your outside environment

- **Mindfulness**

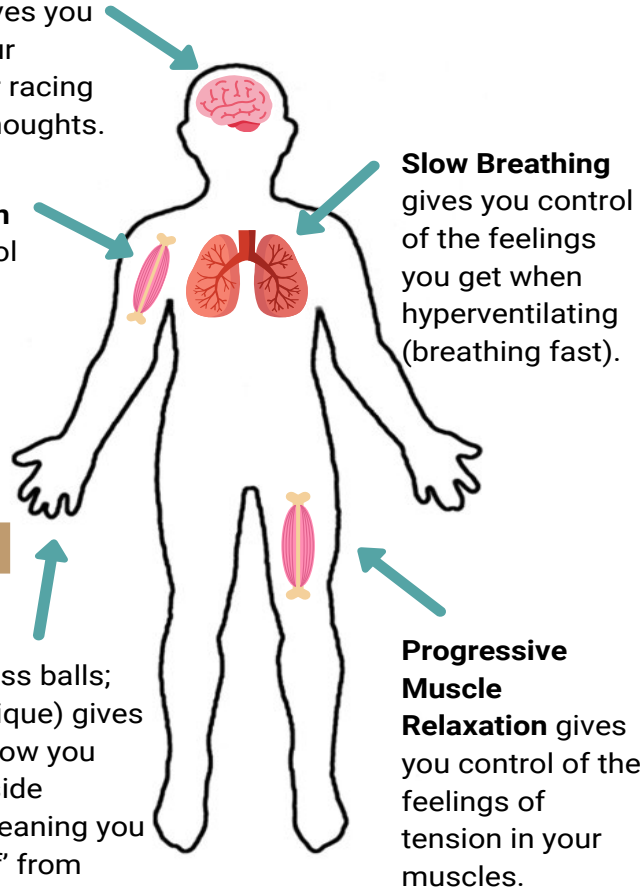
Living in the moment and letting negative thoughts come and go

**Mindfulness** gives you control over your experience your racing or ruminating thoughts.

**Applied Tension** gives you control over feelings of fainting & light headedness by increasing your blood pressure.



**Grounding** (stress balls; 'butterfly' technique) gives you control of how you sense your outside environment, meaning you feel less 'cut off' from things around you.



**Slow Breathing** gives you control of the feelings you get when hyperventilating (breathing fast).

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation** gives you control of the feelings of tension in your muscles.

You notice stress when your bodily systems get out of control because you are not able to meet your basic needs- for safety, self worth, connectedness to others, for example -

In the **short term**, Distraction helps you to try to meet these needs in other ways. Dilute strategies help you regain control over these systems.

In the **long term**, you'll need the other 4Ds – to Develop ways to Discover what's at the root of the problem

## Develop

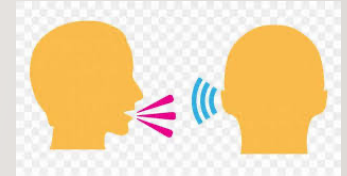
- Compassionate Mind Imagery (Gilbert, 2009)  
Bring an image to mind of when someone has been kind to you, and listened to your problems in a way that worked for you.
- Drawing on our own strengths: Reflecting on previous times we have coped
- Worry time – planning when in the day you will think about your problems & how long for and what you will do afterwards (dilute / distract).





**discover**

## Exploring the cause and facing the problem

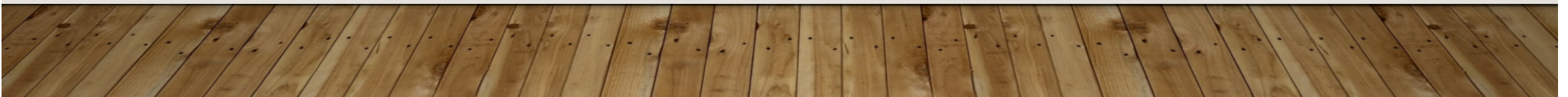


- Long-term; gets to the root of the difficulty
- Requires 'processing'
- Involves exploring your priorities/needs/goals
- Expression – e.g. talking, writing, drawing, music
- Listening
- Noticing
- Being Curious

# WHAT DO YOU NOTICE WHEN YOU ARE DISCOVERING?

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- What you really want
- What is getting in the way of what you want
- Your feelings about a problem
- Thoughts, feelings, images, at the back of your mind
- Being in two minds or having mixed feelings
- Your personal rules, principles, values, standards and ideals
- Spontaneous ideas and new perspectives





Talk

Write

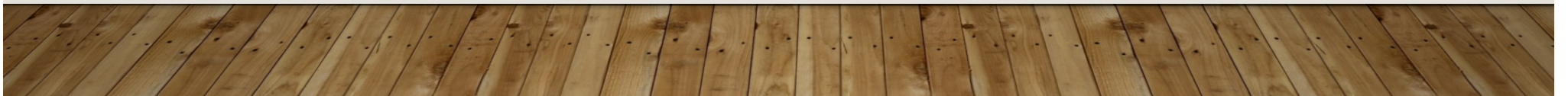
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Upward Arrow

Free Writing

Discovery Talk

Expressive Writing



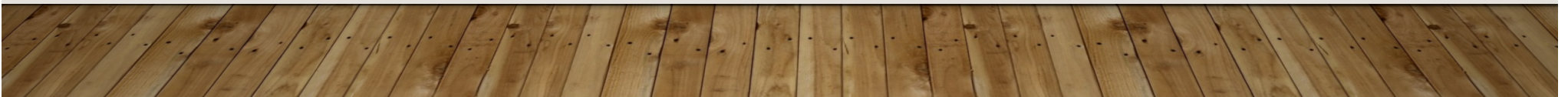
# FREE WRITING PRACTICE

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- Personal and emotional writing
- Write down what comes to your mind without taking the pen off the paper
- No attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar etc.
- Even when your mind goes blank, keep writing whatever comes to your mind, e.g., 'I don't know what to write'
- **Let's try...**

"At the moment the most difficult thing for me is..."

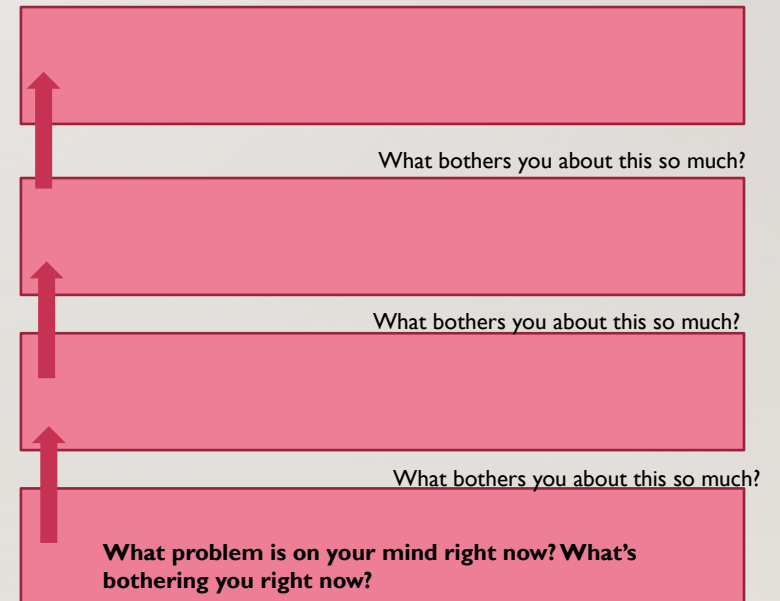
"At the moment it is important for me to..."



# UPWARD ARROW PRACTICE

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- Say aloud what problem is on your mind
- Ask “What bothers you so much about that?”
- Repeat
- Notice your problem now
- Is there a bigger goal?
- Is there a conflict?
- Does your stress make sense?

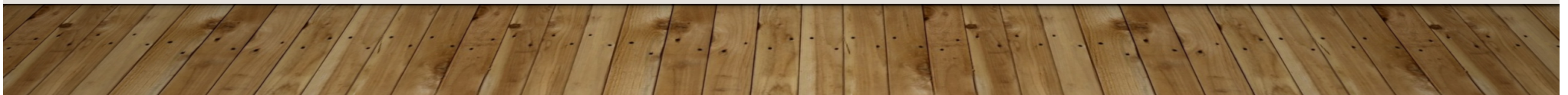


# DISCOVERY TALK

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- Based on a counselling method known as “Method of Levels”
- You do this in pairs – a speaker and a listener
- The speaker talks about a problem they are having
- The speaker is in charge of what to talk about, and when to start and stop
- The listener attends closely and stays curious
- The listener regularly asks questions about the problem
- The process works best when the questions are varied, genuine, brief and they help clarify what the speaker is currently feeling, thinking and noticing
- The listener does NOT offer their opinion, advice, interpretation or try to summarise

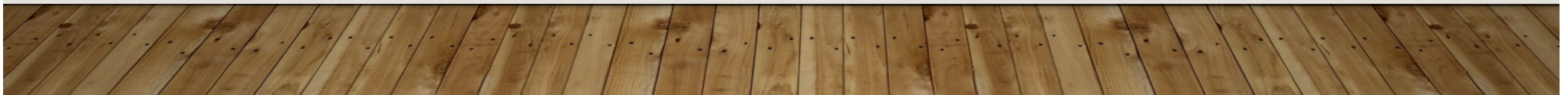


# TIPS FOR DOING DISCOVERY TALK

- Do:

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  - Listen carefully
  - Stay curious & help the speaker to explore further
  - Ask brief questions
  - Use the speaker's words
  - Get detail with your questions, e.g. distance, space, size, time
- Don't:
  - Summarise
  - Give advice
  - Offer your opinion
  - Make an effort to try to look empathic
  - Try to solve the problem for them

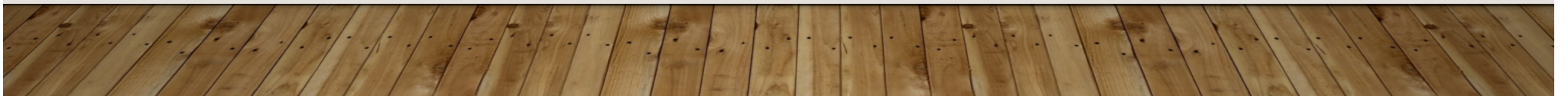




# PRACTICE

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“I push myself so hard to make sure my children do all their work that I blow my lid and shout at them”

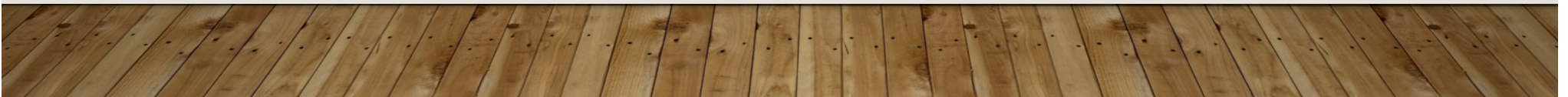




# EXPRESSIVE WRITING

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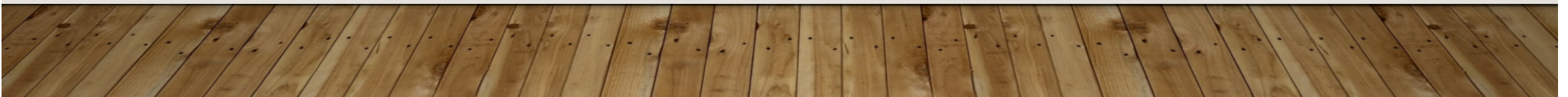
- “In your writing, really let go and explore your very deepest emotions and thoughts about the what is causing you stress at the moment. You might tie this to other parts of your life: your childhood, your relationships with others, including parents, lovers, friends, relatives, or other people important to you. You might link your writing to your future and who you would like to become in your future, or to who you have been, or who you are now. Do not worry about form or style, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, or grammar.”



# TAKE HOME MESSAGES

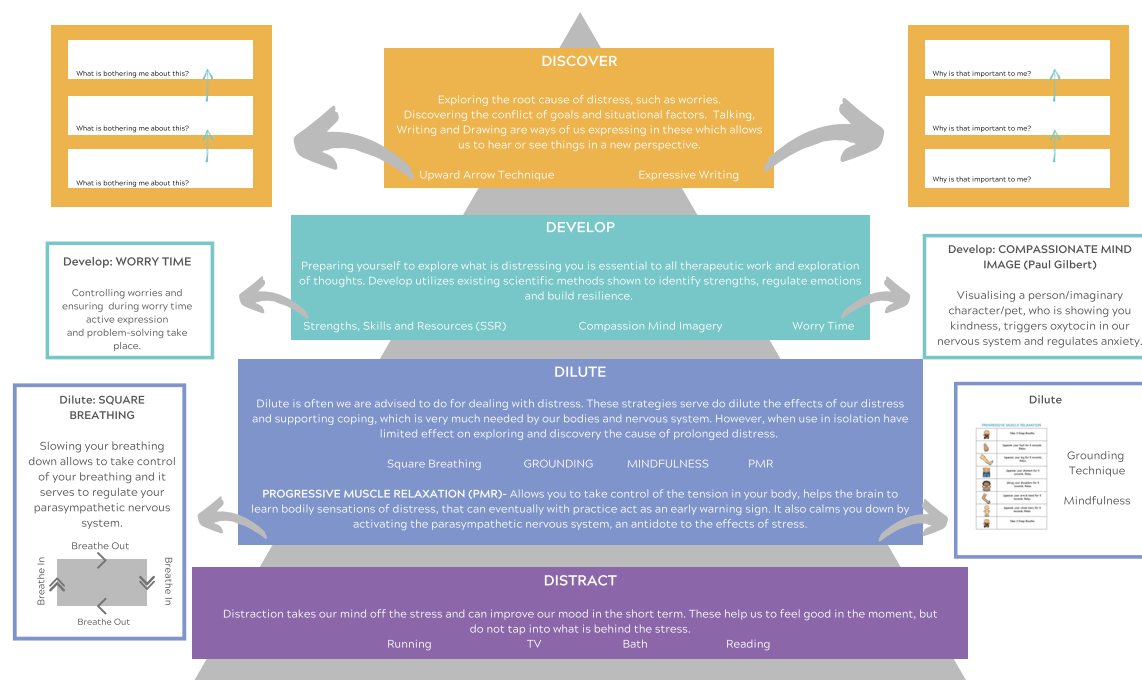
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- It is OK to try out any of these approaches
- Most people use all 4 Ds
- Use the way of getting the 4 Ds that works for you, in your situation
- When stress doesn't go away, try something different
- Free writing and the upward arrow are simple ways of discovering what is at the root of your stress
- Expressive writing and Discovery Talk go into more detail



## The 4 D's to Dealing with Distress

Developed by University of Manchester Dr Warren Mansell in collaboration with Beyond Psychology. Based on Perceptual Control Theory; The Neuroscience of Understanding Emotional Wellbeing, Functioning and Distress.



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# THANK YOU

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