

HEAD START

WHERE PEOPLE WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA CAN ACHIEVE THEIR ASPIRATIONS



A BETTER FUTURE:
IMPROVING RESILIENCE
AND RELATIONSHIPS



Head Start is a patient support programme developed and funded by the Otsuka/Lundbeck Alliance in collaboration with SANE and an expert Steering Committee (brought together by the Otsuka/Lundbeck Alliance)



WELCOME TO HEAD START

- Welcome to Head Start, a programme designed to help you develop the skills to come to terms with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or psychosis, learn to thrive and live life to your fullest potential
- Delivered by your local health service, Head Start is a collaboration between you, mental health charity SANE, mental health experts and the Otsuka/Lundbeck Alliance (who have funded the programme)
- Head Start offers a series of flexible modules that you can choose to work through at your own pace, with the support of your healthcare professional, at any stage of your experience with schizophrenia or psychosis



WHAT IS THIS MODULE ABOUT?

What do we mean when we say the word, resilience, in relation to something like schizophrenia or psychosis, and why is it important? Resilience is regarded as a person's ability to adapt to challenging situations, overcome obstacles and flourish. People often feel resilient when they understand their own personal experiences of schizophrenia or psychosis and have found ways to maintain a stable sense of mental wellbeing.

Resilience in the face of mental health challenges is something that people with schizophrenia have the power to own and embrace. This module is about strategies for building resilience, focusing on your mental wellbeing and managing relationships with the important people around you.



MODULE OBJECTIVES

- Provide you with strategies for building resilience that will allow you to cope with day-to-day challenges that you may encounter
- Help you maintain a more stable feeling of mental wellbeing from day-to-day. While it is normal for people's emotions to change over time, Head Start will equip you with the skills to deal with any prolonged negative emotions
- Explore the importance of social connections and expert support in increasing your resilience and ability to cope well, and help you nurture the important relationships in your life



WHAT CAN I ACHIEVE BY COMPLETING THIS MODULE?

If you want to learn how to bounce back from the challenges you face, improve your mind-set, feel less overwhelmed by certain situations and nurture the important people in your life, then this module may help you. By completing this module you can expect to:

- identify and implement small, positive adjustments to become more resilient to challenging situations in everyday life
- identify and reframe negative thoughts
- problem solve in everyday life
- manage stress levels through relaxation techniques
- connect with people around you, discover things you enjoy and build relationships



YOUR ACTION PLAN

Before we get started

In order to begin on your journey to resilience, it's really useful to get an understanding of where you are at currently with regards to your mental wellbeing. The questions below have been designed to give you and your healthcare professional an understanding of how you feel right now about a variety of aspects of your mental wellbeing.

You will be given a similar set of questions at the end of the module so you can track your progress and see the strides you have made towards becoming resilient.

1. I feel confident in managing my stress levels



2. I know which small, positive adjustments I can make in my life to help improve my resilience



3. I feel confident in meeting new people or taking part in activities



4. I feel involved in supporting my own wellbeing



GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is a really important part of any journey as it helps to gain clarity on what we hope to achieve and how much progress we have made. With the help of your healthcare professional, try to write at least three things you would like to get out of this module:

1

2

3



CHAPTER ONE:

Improving resilience through lifestyle

In this chapter we will be exploring how lifestyle can impact on your feelings of resilience, for instance some people feel more overwhelmed and emotional if they do not get enough sleep, while others find that they are sleeping too much and feel sluggish and unmotivated. These small habits of lifestyle have a big impact on whether you are just getting by or thriving.

This chapter will help you identify individual things in your lifestyle that may be hampering your progress towards a positive future.



ACTIVITY ONE

Picturing a better future

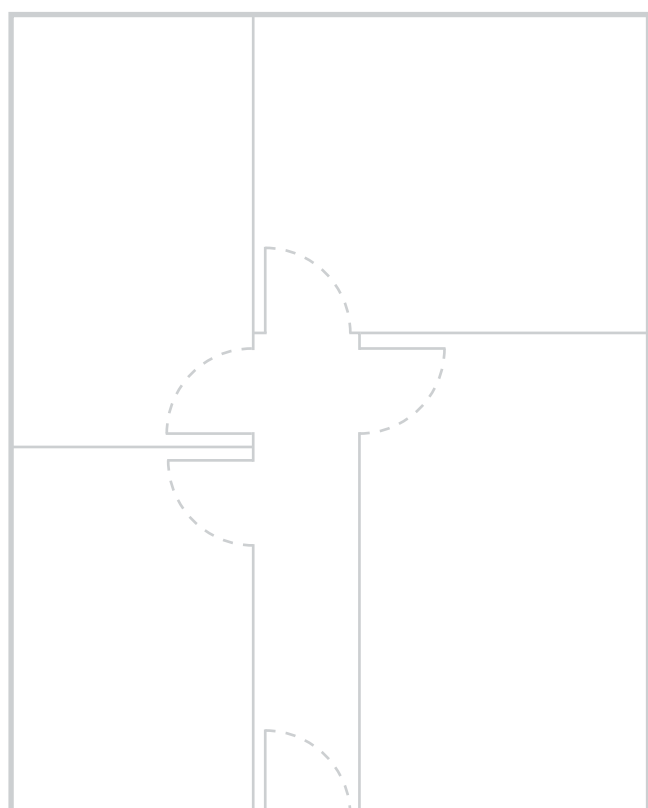
Resilient people usually have a positive image of their future, even if things are challenging in their life currently. Do you have a vision or dream for your future?

YOUR VISION, YOUR FUTURE.

Over the next few pages, we will help you to describe a future you would like to live in. We've used some questions and prompts that may be helpful but you don't have to use them if you'd prefer to think of your own. It's up to you.

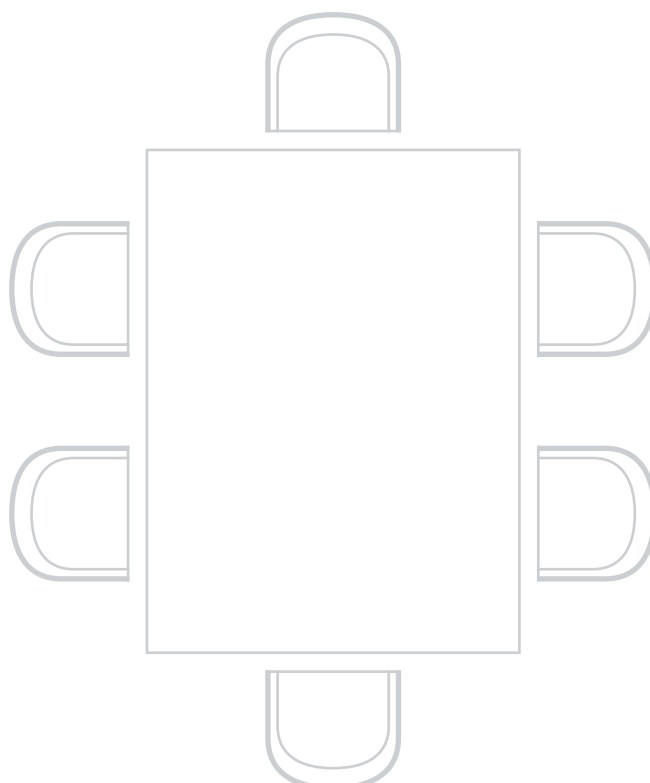
1. A place to live

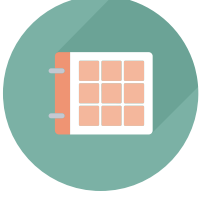
Using the image below, describe the sort of place you would like to be living. Add features and describe what it is like. You can draw or write – or both!



2. People in your life

Whether it be friends, family, colleagues or healthcare professionals, other people are key to helping you enjoy your life. Using the dinner table below, write or draw who you would like around it for your perfect dinner.



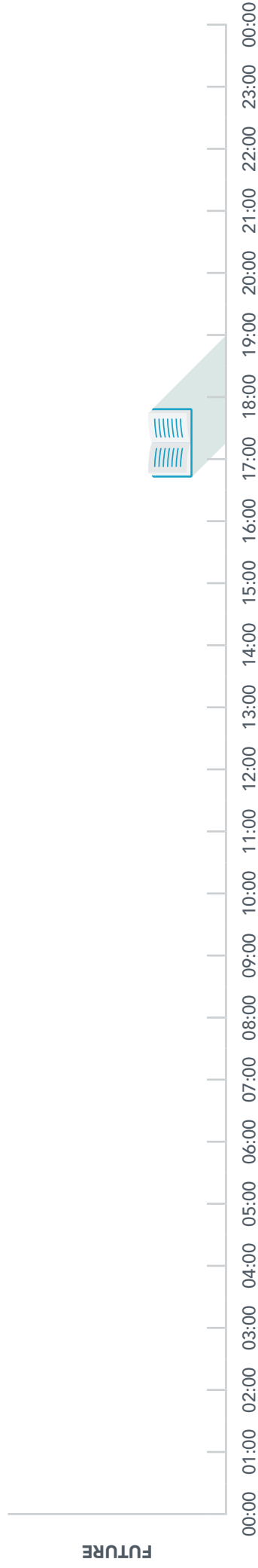
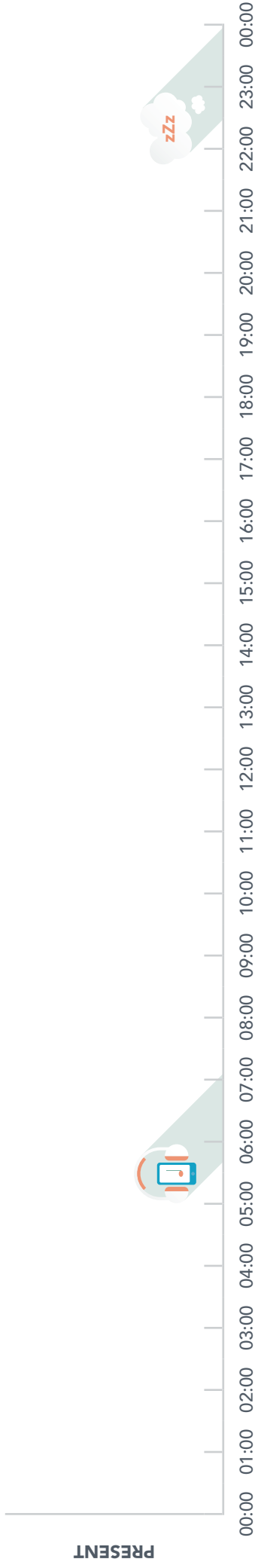
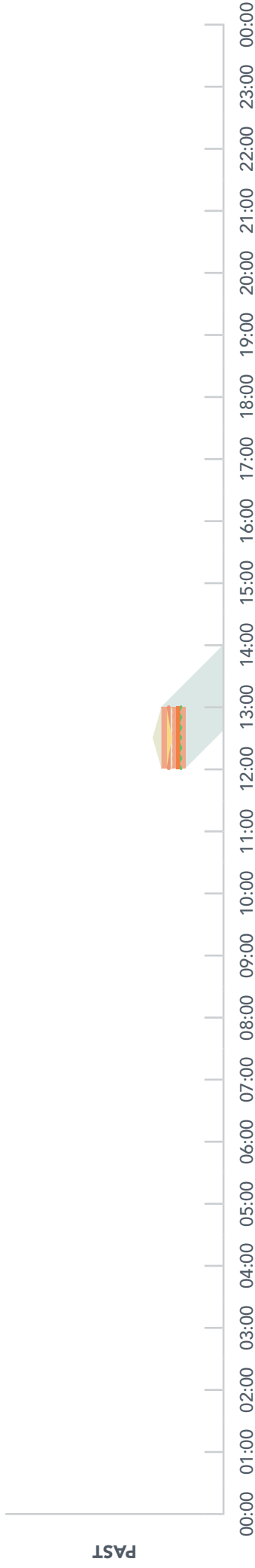


3. Day-to-day

Using the clocks below as a guide, describe what a typical day looks like in your past, present and future.

Try to think about the following: what do you spend your time doing? How did you spend your days before your diagnosis? How do you currently spend your days?

In the future, how would you like to spend each day? Do you do something different every day, or are your days similar?





ACTIVITY TWO

Identifying any hurdles to overcome

Working with your healthcare professional, come up with a short list of all of the lifestyle factors that you think might affect your ability to achieve these visions. It could be things like not getting 7–8 hours of sleep a night to not being able to leave the house. Perhaps think about your present clock from the activity above; what is preventing you reaching your future clock?

1
2
3
4
5

Now to complete the task:

- Underline the hurdles that you think might be impacting you the most
- List below the three that you most want to work on in this session
- Agree with your healthcare professional three specific goals that you are going to focus on. Examples could include aiming to get to bed before midnight this week, or aiming to maintain a healthy diet. Please also include an idea of how long you'd like to focus on these areas

Resilience goal

For how long/by when?

Resilience goal	For how long/by when?
1	
2	
3	



ACTIVITY THREE

Reflecting on your lifestyle resilience goals

Use the box below to reflect on how successfully you were able to keep up with your resilience goals. Bring this along to your next appointment to discuss with your healthcare professionals.

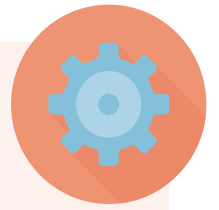
1. Were you able to stick to the goals? Why/why not? Look at your future clock, are your days beginning to resemble your ideal day?

2. What was challenging?

3. What was rewarding?

4. What did you learn about how your lifestyle may be impacting on your ability to cope and move towards your vision of how you want your life to be?

5. What will you do differently/continue to do?



CHAPTER TWO:

Psychological techniques for improving resilience

Being resilient helps to prevent negative thoughts derail your day. This can be particularly challenging if you hear voices that express negative thoughts about you or others. Some people with schizophrenia or psychosis learn to acknowledge and observe negative thoughts and think about ways in which they can reframe these thoughts and turn them into something more positive.

Talking therapies

Research has shown that people with schizophrenia or psychosis who engage with talking therapies, such as counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), are much more likely to have a better quality of life than those who don't. The CBT technique aims to identify and challenge detrimental cycles that occur between your thoughts, behaviours and emotions. The three activities below are a small selection of well-established psychological techniques used in CBT that you can try out and discuss in more detail with your healthcare professional.



ACTIVITY ONE

Reframing negative thoughts

Over the next week or two, try to become aware of any negative thoughts you have. It is important that you do not place any judgement on these thoughts or feel bad about them but simply observe them for discussion with your healthcare professional at your next appointment. Using the log below may be a useful to track your negative thoughts, what triggers them and how they affect you. Insert those thoughts in the following log:

What was the thought?							
Where were you?							
What triggered the thought?							
How do you feel?							
Evidence that supports the thought							
Evidence that doesn't support the thought							
Alternative thought							
How do you feel about the alternative thought?							



ACTIVITY TWO

Thinking about a problem

With your healthcare professional think about a recent problem you encountered and complete the following questions:

What made me vulnerable in the first place?

Triggers for the most recent episode

'The Problem'

Things that keep 'The Problem' going

(These might include things that you do to control 'The Problem')

Positive things that I've got going for me

Now that you have a better understanding of dealing with problems, note down and discuss with your healthcare professional how you could approach this problem differently in the future if it arises again.

Managing stress

For many people with schizophrenia or psychosis, relaxation can be a challenging thing to do, particularly in stressful situations. It is often tempting just to stay at home or do nothing but this does not reduce the damaging aspects of stress and does not build resilience.

To reduce stress we have to do activities that activate the natural relaxation response that we all have inside our bodies. Activities you could try include deep breathing, meditation, rhythmic exercise and listening to peaceful music.



ACTIVITY THREE

Abdominal breathing

Next time you are feeling stressed, go to a quiet place and place a hand on your chest and stomach. Breathe in deeply and slowly through your nose so you can feel your stomach expanding. Concentrate your thoughts and attention on your breathing. Breathe in for a count of four through the nose and breathe out for a count of four through the mouth. Repeat this for ten breaths.

How did you feel after this breathing exercise?



CHAPTER THREE:

Improving social connectedness

Connecting with other people isn't always easy for people with schizophrenia or psychosis and many people end up isolating themselves from friends, family and new people. But research shows that social support is really important for your journey through life beyond schizophrenia. Social connectedness is also a key part of resilience because we are made stronger by those around us. This is known as social resilience.



ACTIVITY ONE:

Embracing new interests

Write a list of all the activities and interests you enjoy or would like to try. These could be sports, educational activities, crafts or anything else that comes to mind.

Examples could include: painting, music, photography, walking, football, reading and learning.

1
2
3
4
5

Often a good way to approach a task like this is to start small and build up to your final goal as you feel more comfortable. There are three main steps for you to take when looking to get involved in a new activity:

1. Find an activity you would like to try, or perhaps rediscover an activity you used to enjoy
2. With the help of your healthcare professional identify a session or a course that suits you and that you would feel comfortable attending. By working with your healthcare professional you can ensure you will have all the support you need to take this step
3. Attend and enjoy the session!

Session details:

1. How did you feel going for the first time?

2. What did you learn?

3. Did you meet any new people?

4. How did you feel after attending?

5. What could you do differently next time?

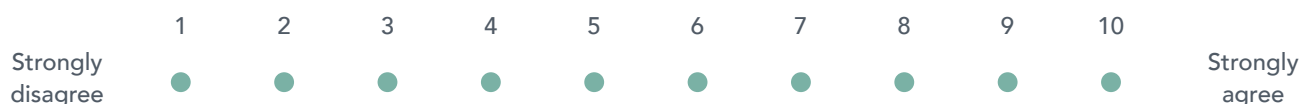
6. Will you make a plan to go back or try a different group?



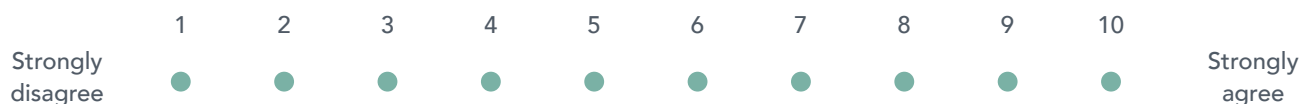
MODULE EVALUATION

Congratulations on completing this module! If you enjoyed these activities why not speak to your healthcare professional about trying one of the other modules in this series?
In the meantime, please complete the module evaluation so we know how you got on.

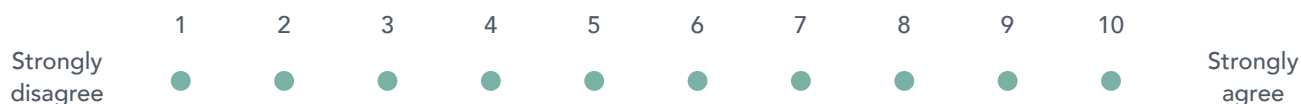
1. This module helped me meet the goals I set at the beginning



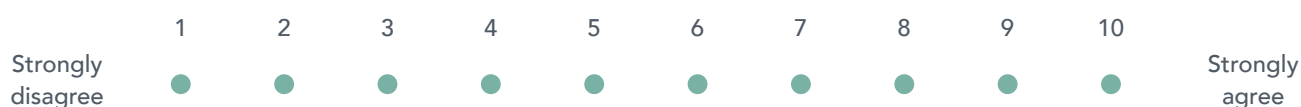
2. I feel confident in managing my stress levels



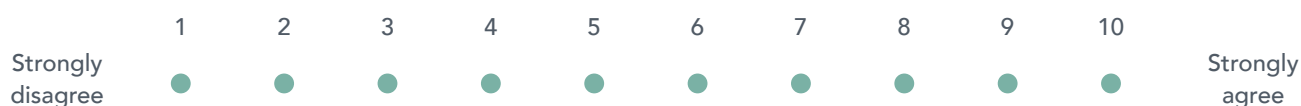
3. I know which small, positive adjustments I can make in my life to help improve my resilience in the future



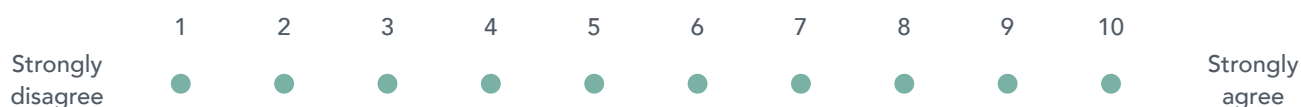
4. I plan to use the learnings from this module in my everyday life



5. I feel confident in meeting new people or taking part in activities



6. I feel in control in supporting my own wellbeing



7. Do you have any other feedback on the module or suggestions about ways in which we could improve it?

8. Reflecting back on this module, what have you learnt/gained from this experience?

Healthcare professional comments:

Date of completion: