

Emotional toolkit: Thought diary

Thought diaries can be helpful when you notice that you are feeling stressed, low or upset, they can act as a 'pause & reset button' and make it possible to explore what's happening and capture difficult thoughts.

This allows you to see whether there are any patterns around certain situations, what goes through our minds, how we feel emotionally, the physical sensations we experience and the things we do or don't do.

To complete the diary, briefly make a note of the situation, ask yourself the questions below and then give yourself a chance to reflect on what you have noticed. You don't have to use the sheet, you can use a notebook or your smart phone if that's easier for you. The first row below is an example.

What's happening now/what was I doing or not doing?	How do I feel emotionally?	Do I notice any physical sensations?	What's going through my mind?	Is there an alternative thought?	What have I learned?
Exhausted after a day out.	Anxious: 7/10.	Stomach pains, breathless.	I'm having a relapse, it's all starting again. I need a scan urgently.	It's my first long day out, we've been on the go non-stop, I think that's why I'm exhausted.	I had a mindful coffee and gave myself chance to think. My anxiety level is now 3/10 – on my next day out I will pace myself, and ensure I set more re-charge spots.

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What's happening now/what was I doing or not doing?	How do I feel emotionally?	Do I notice any physical sensations?	What's going through my mind?	Is there an alternative thought?	What have I learned?

Lymphoma Action is grateful to Angela Waind, Consultant Counselling Psychologist at North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS foundation Trust, for creating the content of this resource.