

Understanding the Problem: *developing a formulation*

Following a comprehensive assessment, it is very helpful to develop a formulation of the person's problems / needs as the basis for planning intervention. A formulation of the person's problems / needs will act as a guide for treatment / intervention and provides the basis for a treatment and care plan.

A formulation shows:

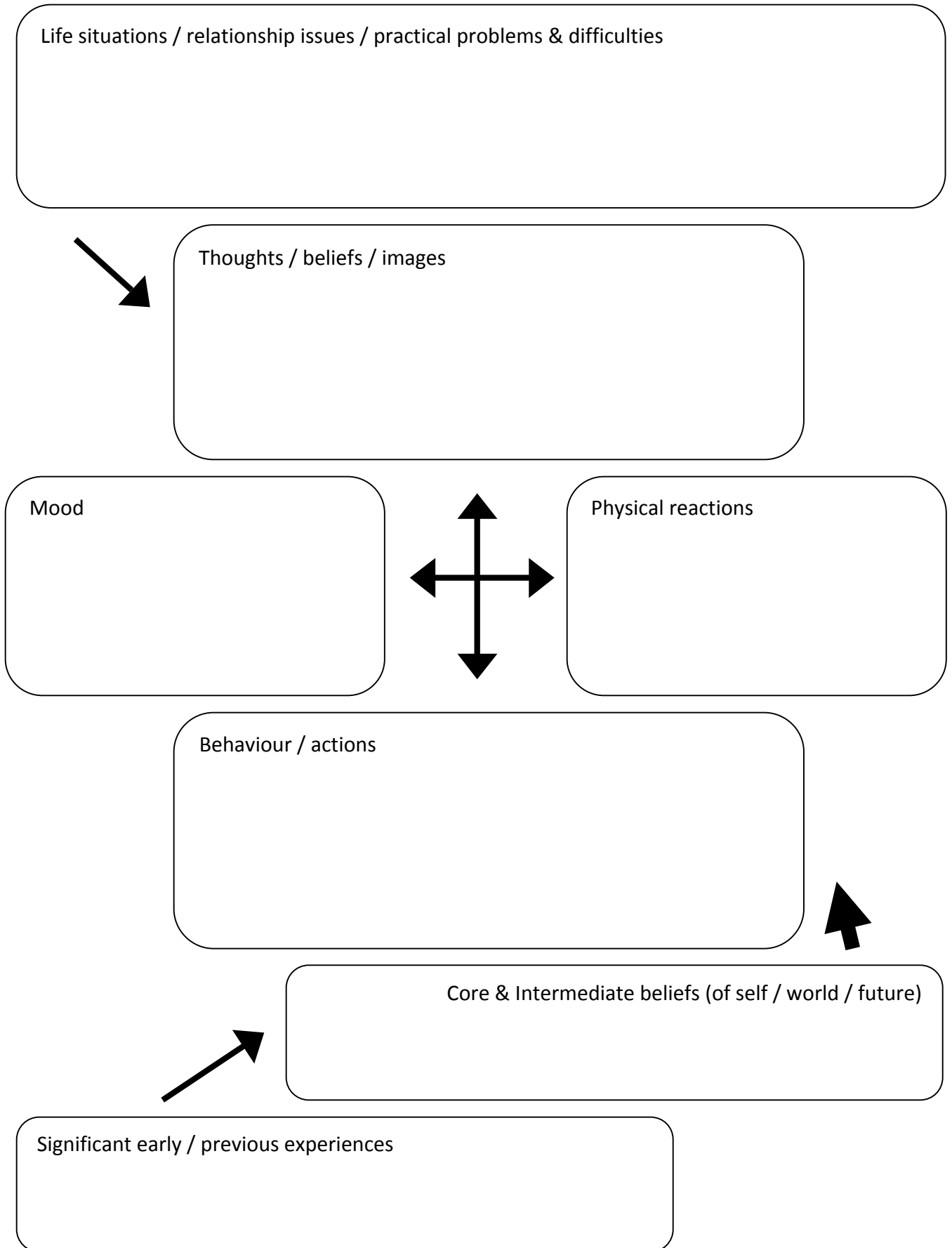
- the interactions between different key areas of the assessment – *for example*: the person's thoughts, behaviours, mood, physical reactions and events (Greenberger & Padesky 1995);
- is individualised and based upon direct observations, and best developed using the person's own words / phrases;
- is developed, tested and regularly reviewed with the person;
- and links directly with the treatment and care plan, identifying areas for change and providing a rationale for interventions.

Whichever model and method is chosen for developing a formulation, it needs to be presented and agreed with the person by adopting a highly collaborative approach. It can then be used as the basis for specific problem identification, goal setting and a discussion of treatment and care planning options.

An example of a generic cognitive-behavioural formulation record is shown on the following page, in addition to a version that could be completed by the person.

Use of these tools should be discussed within practice supervision.

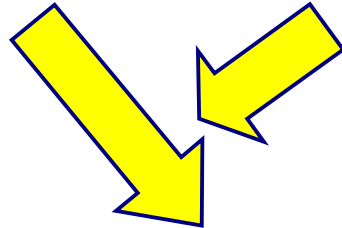
INITIAL FORMULATION (based upon the Five Areas Assessment)



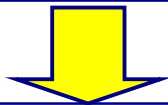
Working out why I developed this problem?

What made me vulnerable in the first place?

What then triggered the problem?



What is the problem?

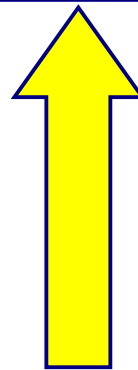


What are the signs / symptoms?

bodily

psychological

behavioural



What keeps the problem going?



What helps? What have I got going for me?