

Using a Card Sort Exercise: *identifying early warning signs*

Your named nurse / care coordinator or doctor can help you to identify your early warning signs by using a card sort method.

S/he will provide you with one or more sets of index cards, depending upon the type of symptoms that you experience, each with a common early warning sign written on it.

For each set of cards, go through the cards, picking out those that best describe how you were thinking, feeling and behaving before you became unwell. You may find it helpful to think about what other things were happening in your life at the time. You could also try asking those who were close to you at the time.

Once you have picked out a number of cards that best describe how you were thinking, feeling or behaving at the time, try and place the cards in the order in which they first began to occur.

Remember that the cards are written in a fairly general way. How could you make these more specific to you?

For example:

General: preoccupied with one or two thoughts

Specific: thinking about people being after me all the time

Having gone through the cards, are there any other signs, personal to you, that you would add to your list? Write these down.

Your named nurse / care coordinator or doctor can help you to make a record of these signs in the order that they tend to occur.

A template of cards & a timeline for use in a card sort exercise can be obtained from: www.mhtu.co.uk