

Exploring Ambivalence about Treatment Options

(adapted from: Gray R (2003) Concordance Skills Manual. London: Institute of Psychiatry)

This may be a useful exercise for most people, as experience suggests that the majority of people have a degree of ambivalence about taking medication or completing treatment, but will be particularly useful with people who have a variety of beliefs about treatment and are uncertain about the importance of taking medication or committing time to a treatment option.

It involves helping the person to draw up a balance sheet, highlighting the positive and negative aspects of medication or other treatment option. Try to make a distinction between the short & long-term benefits of the treatment option, emphasising the less obvious or indirect effects of the treatment e.g. staying out of hospital, getting into fewer arguments, having fewer problems with the neighbours.

Depending upon the person's level of functioning, this exercise may either be completed with the person within one or more short sessions or given as an exercise to be completed.

As an example, part of a balance sheet for someone weighing up the pros and cons of taking an anti-depressant is shown on the next page, following which a blank record sheet is provided.

Balancing Up: *considering the pros & cons*

Example:

	Pros	Cons
Taking an antidepressant	Antidepressants did help me last time I was unwell	I don't like taking tablets Prescriptions are expensive I can't have a drink It's embarrassing
Stopping the antidepressant	I'll save money on prescriptions I won't need to remember to take the medicines	I might become depressed again

Make a list of what you consider as the pros & cons of the proposed treatment option:

	Pros	Cons
Deciding to <hr/> <small>(proposed treatment option)</small>		
Deciding not to <hr/> <small>(proposed treatment option)</small>		