

Purpose

Intro

After the last session on forgiveness, you might have found it brought up difficult or strong emotions. Remember forgiveness is a journey, keep holding onto the cross!

This is our final session! During this session we are going to think a little bit about what we want our life to look like going forward, and also bring together all the things we have been practicing over the last six sessions.

Scripture

"Everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him". Colossians 1:16

Question

How do you feel about this being the last session? What will you miss about not doing the group – is there anything you are looking forward to now that the group is coming to an end?

What is Purpose?

Purpose can be described as "The reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists." English Oxford Living Dictionaries¹

Finding a purpose in our lives can give us meaning and help us to find out who we are. It can help us to find our identity.

Having a purpose can help lead to a fulfilling and meaningful life. It also changes how we view ourselves and gives us motivation and passion.

Discussion: When we lack purpose?

How do people feel when they lack a purpose, or can't find their purpose for their life? Make some notes below from the group discussion:

We all have days when we feel like we can't be bothered or not sure what to do with our time but if we lack purpose over time it can have some seriously negative effects, and over time can have a negative affect on our mood. Studies have shown that having a purpose and hope can increase life satisfaction² and reduce symptoms of depression³.

Discussion:

Think about 5 activities that you enjoy doing, share the following with the rest of the group.

How do they make you feel?

What do they say about you?

Imagine life where these 5 activities are no longer possible.

How do you feel now?

What does this mean for your life?

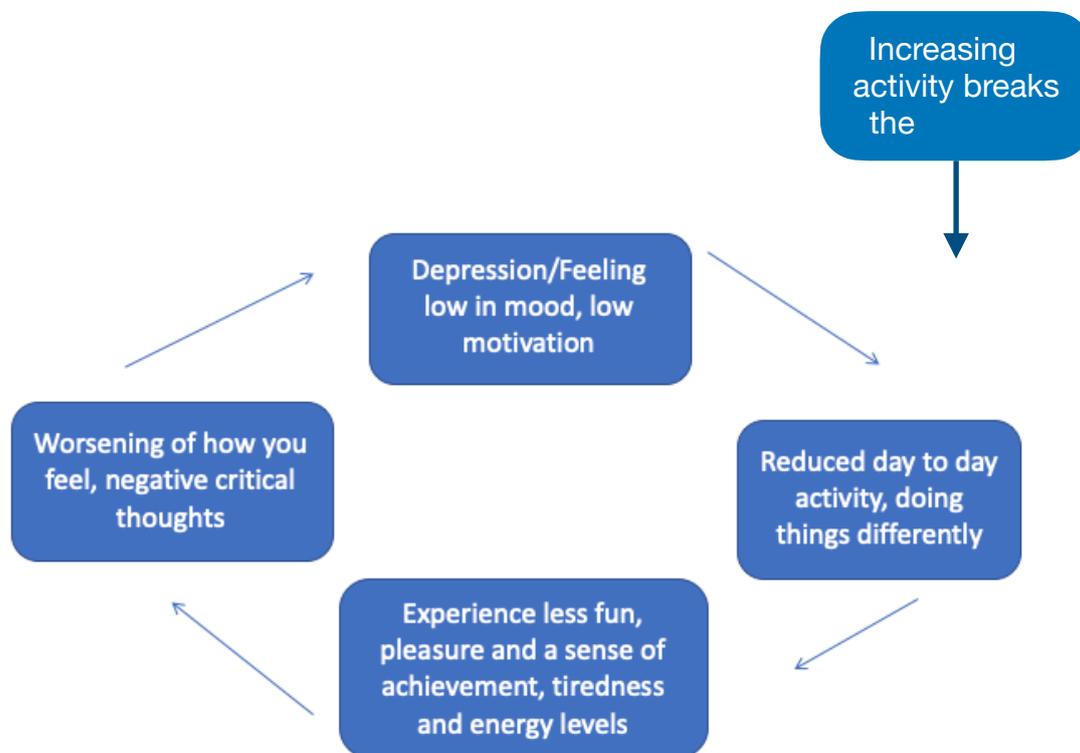
Cycle of Low mood and Activity

We can sometimes fall into a vicious circle, which we call the cycle of low mood and activity. When we are low in mood and have low motivation, we withdraw from activities that give us purpose or reduce what we do day to day. This sometimes means we isolate ourselves from relationships that give us meaning and we can lose our roles in life such as work or looking after others. We then experience less fun, have less purpose and often have less energy. Doing less can lead to guilty, negative thoughts or feelings of worthlessness which makes our mood even lower and it then becomes even harder to do activities.

We can break this cycle by doing some meaningful activities, even when we don't feel like it.

One of the best ways to tackle low mood is to gradually become more active, to choose activities you enjoy that give your life meaning. This helps us get out of the cycle of low mood and activity we saw above.

We all need a purpose for getting up in the morning that gives us fulfilment.



It is important to increase activity levels slowly and to go at your own pace so that you don't do too much in one go or become overwhelmed.

Often our purpose is tied to our identity, the things we do are a part of who we believe we are, or who we think we should be. For example, we can find our identity in a job that fulfils what we believe our purpose is, or in caring for others such as children or family. The things we do that are aligned to our purpose feed into our sense of who we are and help form our identity.

Identity is what makes us who we are and incorporates our personality, values and beliefs.

God has given us the ability to enjoy life, not just endure. Finding activities for every day that we enjoy and getting a balance is important as it helps us to get the best out of life.

Purpose doesn't stop at enjoying life. As Christians we believe that the purpose in our lives is far greater than our own fulfilment. It is to bring glory to God.

Activity: Three Dimensions

Occupational therapists breaks all the different activities we do in our lives in to three different categories:

Self - care eg

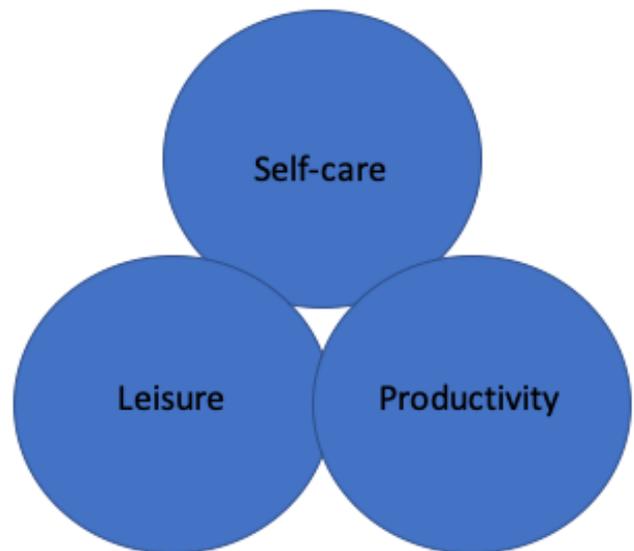
Personal hygiene – Washing and grooming
Sleeping
Eating well
Spending time relaxing

Leisure

Any hobbies you enjoy
Spending fun time with friends and family
Going out for a nice meal
Anything you do just because you enjoy it!

Productivity

Looking after children
Volunteering somewhere
Education or learning
Housework and chores
Going to work



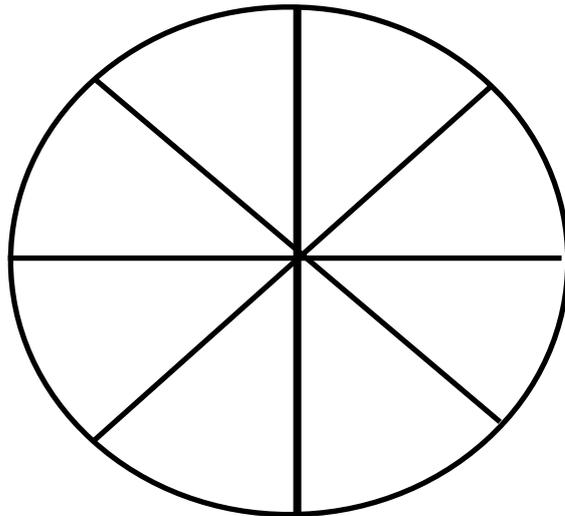
As we looked at earlier, our wellbeing is usually at its best when we manage to balance these three categories, but this can sometimes be hard if physical or mental illness prevents us, or the different roles we have put extreme demands on our time. For example parents of new children don't often get much leisure or self-care time!

It's important that we have lots of activities in our live that have meaning, and make us feel as though our activities are inline with our values and who we see ourselves as. For example, if you really value time with other people, and believe it is important to show care for others, a voluntary role which is done purely on your own may not reinforce your sense of worth and who you are.

Imagine the wheel below is your day. Think about 8 different activities you do every day and score each between 0–10 depending on how much time you spend on them.

Then colour code each activity, self care, leisure, productivity and colour in each section.

Once you've completed the wheel – what do you notice? Are you balanced across the three categories – or do you do more of one category?



What changes might you need to make in order to be more balanced?

During this week, why don't you try and complete the time table below and see if you can create a more balanced week for yourself – and also ask yourself, do the activities I am doing confirm who I believe I am as a person? Also remember the self-compassion session – are you being kind to yourself in the balance of activities?

What does the Bible say about Purpose?

"Everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him". Colossians 1:16

To know our purpose we must begin with God. We were born by his purpose and for his purpose. In what ways have you found purpose in your faith in Jesus?

We are created in God's image for relationship with him. For all Christians our purpose is to glorify God by worshiping and obeying him, keeping our eyes on eternity and knowing him intimately.

Following God's purpose for our lives enables us to experience true and lasting joy, the abundant life that He desires for us.

As Christians we believe that God has called us to a specific purpose as we walk forward with him. He has a plan for each of our lives which he knew about before we were born

"Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" Psalm 139:16

"You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit- fruit that will last- and so whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you" John 15:16

How have you seen God's plan work out in your life? Have there been times where it has been difficult to see his purpose in situations? How do you cope when it is hard to understand what God's purpose is in something?

"Set your minds on the things above, not on earthly things" Colossians 3:2

Sometimes it is hard to understand God's purposes if we only look at our life on this earth, there are also times when we need to look at things with a focus on eternity.

How does focussing on eternity change perspective of life? How might it change how we invest our time, spend our money and use our talents our relationships?

When we have an eternal perspective our attitude to life and our purpose changes. When we are looking to God and focusing on eternity we use our gifts, talents, opportunities, energy and resources that God gave us for building His kingdom.

Discussion and Close

Well done for completing the final session of Wellbeing Through Faith!

Over the last six sessions we have thought about

- How we can tackle fears and anxieties that might stop us from enjoying life
- How to create a more grateful attitude and realise all the good in life that we can enjoy
- Challenging and tackling some of those untrue thoughts that can make us feel very low and unwell
- Being kind to ourselves, and not allowing difficult thoughts to condemn us or make us feel bad about ourselves
- Forgiving and letting go of some of the hurts we have experienced and clinging onto the cross instead.
- How we might better structure the things we do each week to help us with our sense of purpose and identity!

We really hope you have enjoyed these six sessions, and that you have found some practical tools that can help you put to work the biblical truths we have learnt.

Let's pray together to close

Prayer

God I thank you for creating me and giving me life. I thank you for every gift, and talent you have given me and for making me the way I am. I pray that I as I seek you I can find my purpose in you. I thank you that you can use my past and every part of my life to glorify you.

In Jesus name Amen

Daily Planner

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							
7pm							
8pm							
9pm							
10pm							

References

1. Oxford Dictionary. Available at: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/purpose>. Accessed 5th November 2020
2. Bronk, K. Hill, P. Lapsley, D. Talib, T. Finch, H *Purpose, hope, and life satisfaction in three age groups*, 2009. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*. 4 pp. 500-510
3. Harlow, L.L., Newcomb, M.D., Bentler, P.M. *Depression, self-derogation, substance use, and suicide ideation: lack of purpose in life as a mediational factor*. 1986 *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 42(1), pp.5–21.

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