

<p>Session 1: Understanding your IBS</p>	<p>Rationale for self-management which includes the following explanations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible causes of IBS and illustrative physiology of the digestive system together with the functional changes that occur in the gut as a result of IBS. 2. How the autonomic nervous system (“fight-or-flight” stress system) may interact with the enteric nervous system.
<p>Session 2: Assessing your symptoms</p>	<p>Self-assessment of the interaction between thoughts, feeling and behaviors and how these can impact on stress levels and gut symptoms.</p> <p>Development of a personal model of IBS which incorporates these elements.</p> <p>Homework: Daily diaries of the severity and experience of IBS symptoms in conjunction with stress levels and eating routines/behaviors.</p>
<p>Session 3. Managing Symptoms and Eating</p>	<p>Review of the symptom diary.</p> <p>Behavioral management of the symptoms of diarrhoea and constipation, and common myths in this area are discussed. Goal setting is explained.</p> <p>The importance of healthy, regular eating and not being overly focused on elimination is covered.</p> <p>Homework: Goal setting for managing symptoms and regular/healthy eating. Goal setting, monitoring and evaluation continue weekly throughout the program.</p>
<p>Session 4. Exercise and Activity</p>	<p>Importance of exercise in symptom management is covered.</p> <p>Identifying activity patterns such as resting too much in response to symptoms or an all-or-nothing style of activity is addressed.</p> <p>Homework: Goal setting for regular exercise and managing unhelpful activity patterns if relevant.</p>
<p>Session 5. Identifying your thought patterns</p>	<p>Identifying unhelpful thought (negative automatic thoughts) in relation to high personal expectations and IBS symptoms is introduced.</p> <p>Link between these thoughts, feelings, behaviors and symptoms is reinforced.</p> <p>Homework: Goal setting plus daily thought records of unhelpful thoughts related to personal expectations and patterns of over activity.</p>
<p>Session 6. Alternative thoughts</p>	<p>The steps for coming up with alternatives to unhelpful thoughts are covered together with personal examples.</p> <p>Homework: Goal setting plus daily thought records including coming up with realistic alternative thoughts.</p>
<p>Session 7. Managing Stress and Sleep</p>	<p>Basic stress management and sleep hygiene are discussed.</p> <p>Diaphragmatic breathing, progressive muscle relaxation and guided imagery relaxation are presented in video and audio formats.</p>

	Homework: Goal setting for stress management, relaxation techniques and good sleep habits.
Session 8. Managing flare-ups and the future	The probability of flare-ups is discussed and patients are encouraged to develop achievable, long term goals and to continue to employ the skills they have learnt throughout the manual to manage flare-ups and ongoing symptoms.