

**Appendix A: The “What Now?” Workbook**

**(In: Taylor, J. A., Jones, V., & Farrell, C. D. (2019). The “What Now?” Workbook: Its potential utility following life-changing events. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 86.)**

**Please reference as Taylor, J. A., & Jones, V. (2012). *The “What Now?” Workbook*. Salford, UK: Author.**

# What now?

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*What we do makes us who we are*

**This workbook can help you to:**

- **Think about activities that are, or have been important to you, why they are important and the effect they have on you**
- **Think about alternative activities**
- **Pick up the threads and start again**
- **Learn to adapt to a new or different way of life**

### How this workbook might be helpful for you

Scan your mind's eye over the range of activities that you engage in on a regular basis. These might include work activities, sports, recreation, hobbies, DIY, household chores, personal care, shopping, doing things alone, doing things with others – the list is endless! All the things that you have ever done in your life: all the everyday and not-so-everyday activities that you have taken part in since you were a child make you **unique**. They have helped to make you into the person that you are. The activities that you do help to shape your sense of 'self'. They also help to shape your image: how you present to other people.

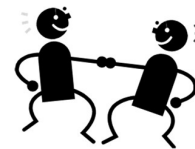
When you have been through a traumatic experience, you might feel that something basic and core, inside yourself, has changed. It's as if the person that you were before is not the person that you are now. Many people say that their sense of **identity**, or their **sense of self**, has been altered by what they have been through. This can make them feel lost, lacking confidence or uncertain about how to move forwards. After a traumatic experience many people stop doing activities that were important to them and this too can affect how they feel about themselves.

Does some of this ring true for you? Then this workbook might be helpful. It will help you to think about some of the activities that have been important in your life, to think about why they have been important, and how they helped to make you who you are. With this knowledge you can plan a way forward towards regaining a sense of self.

### How to use the workbook

You can complete the workbook on your own, or with someone else, but should answer the questions based on your own personal experience. Spend as much time as you need to on each section, but it is important that you take a break between sections. You could even complete different sections on different days, or over a few weeks. When complete, discuss each section with your occupational therapist, so that you can both make sense of it together.

You will find that some parts of the workbook are more meaningful to you than others, so you might want to say more in those sections. ***Feel free to leave some blank if they don't feel relevant to you.*** Remember – thinking back over the past can stir up all kinds of emotions, and that is okay – but you may wish to talk about this with your therapist.



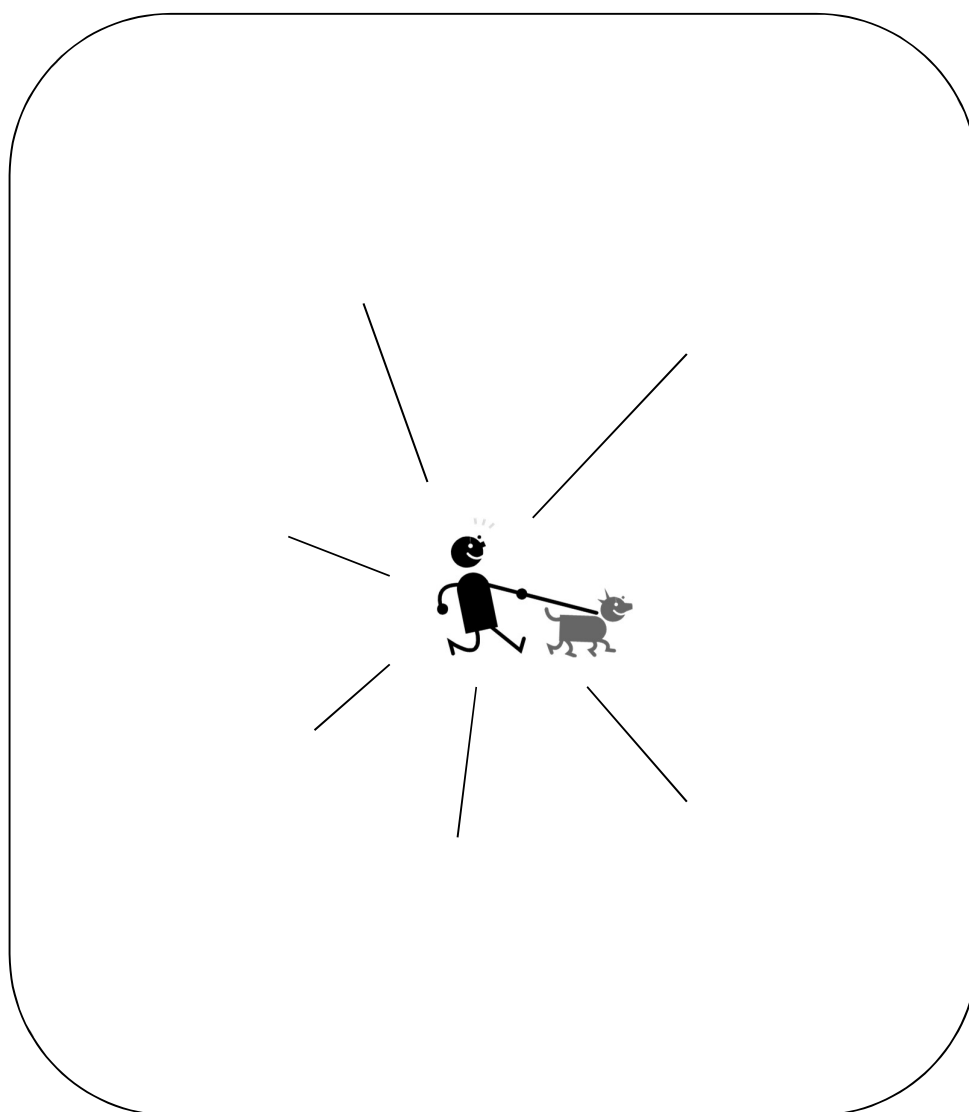
**Adapting to a life-changing event can be a life-long task, but you have to start somewhere!**

**This is not an instant questionnaire – it will take several revisits and a lot of thinking.**

## *The starting point*

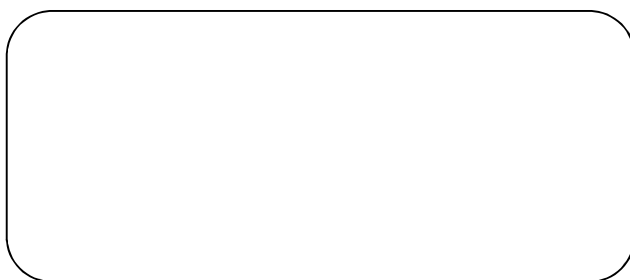
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The figure in the box below is you (except you may not have a dog!). Think over some of the activities that are, or have been, important in your life. What are the activities that **define** you, or have defined you in the past? They might be activities associated with leisure and recreation, work or other things such as caring for yourself or your home. Write these down around the central figure. Add more lines if you need to.



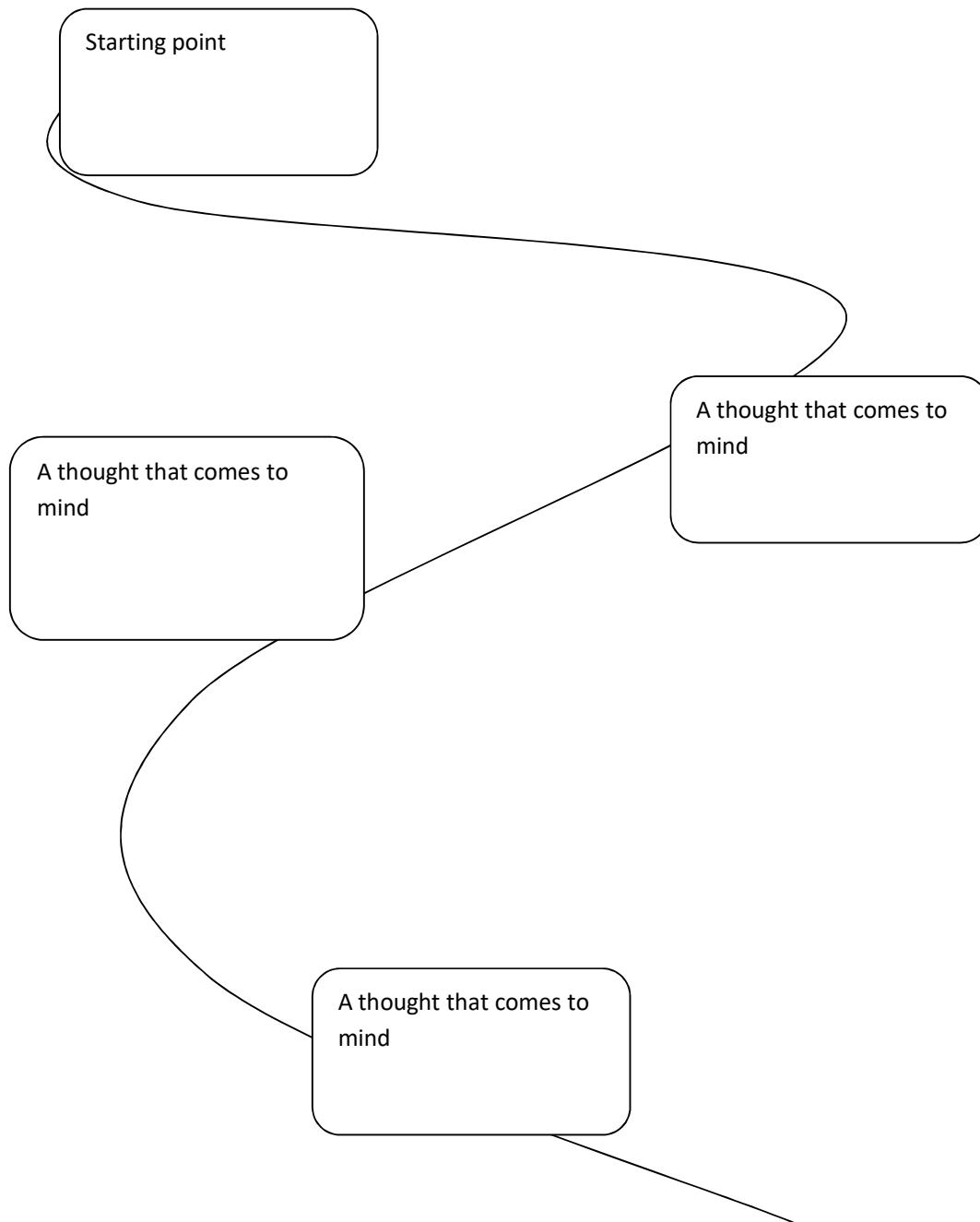
**Examples of activities:****Going to work****Reading a book****Walking the dog****Gardening****Playing with grandchildren****Cooking****Going to the pub with friends****Hobbies**

Some of the activities that you wrote on page 4 will be more special (**more meaningful**) than the others. Write one of the more meaningful ones in this box here. **You can revisit the others later if you wish. For example, you can focus on a leisure activity now, and then a work-related activity later.**



Do you have any photographs of being involved with this activity? If so, you might find them useful to help you to recall what it was like, more clearly? Do you have any equipment / materials or other items that you used for this activity? If you write some of them here, then it might help you to get a stronger image of the activity, and stronger memories.

Imagine this line represents the timeline of your involvement with the activity – jot down how and when you started doing it, and any pictures and thoughts that come to mind. Add more boxes if you want to represent anything else that was / is important.



Keep the timeline and the memories in mind when you fill in the questions in the workbook. The questions are designed to get you to think a bit more deeply about what the activity means / meant to you. Your answers may help you to think about a meaningful way forward.

When you answer the questions in the workbook be aware of the emotions that you feel - they will give clues about which aspects of the activity are important.

It is normal for some sections to prompt more thoughts and longer answers than others. There are no right or wrong answers. Each person will answer the questions in different ways. If you feel as though questions are asking you to repeat yourself, or if they are not relevant – put N/A. It is those things that are relevant to you that matter.

**The workbook is in four sections:**

Section 1: Being active	page 8
Section 2: Place, time, body and people	page 11
Section 3: The changing self	page 16
Section 4: What now?	Page 18

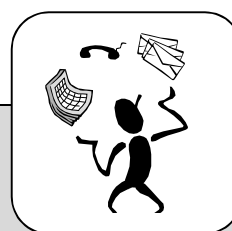
# Section 1

When we go about our daily life, doing activities that we have to do, or choose to do, we are **active**. When we are active we make an impression on ourselves and on others. We build *self*-image and a *social* image.

*Thinking again about the activity that you named on page 5. . . .*

*Think about the times you have done this activity . . . .*

Try to say a little more than yes or



## Competence

*– or how well you did the activity*

*Did the activity make you feel competent / capable?*

*Did it help you display your ability and skills to others?*

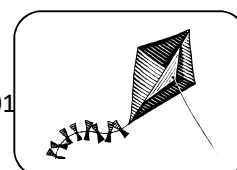
*While doing the activity, did your ability and skills improve?*

*Did you ever feel you just couldn't do it?*

*Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to*



Don't forget, some answers might be short, some might be longer. You might not want to answer some at all. Don't fill in boxes that aren't relevant to you

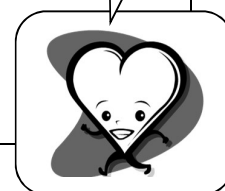


<b><i>Being in control</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity make you feel as if you were in control?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did things sometimes get in the way of you doing the activity? (practical or personal)</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity mean that you had to solve problems if they arose?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did you ever feel helpless or out of control?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did you set goals for yourself?</i></b>	
<b><i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i></b>	

## ***How you express or involve your values***

<b><i>Did this activity involve being loyal to other people?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did you feel any obligations to others?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity involve helping other people?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity enable you to contribute to the wider society?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity help you to care for yourself in some way?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did it ever feel like you were being a bit selfish?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity have a connection with spirituality for you?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did it ever involve making comparisons of yourself with other people?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did you do this activity because it felt like it was expected of you? Or the right thing to do?</i></b>	
<b><i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i></b>	

Take a break  
after this section



## Section 2

Think about the activity you named at the beginning and examine it in relation to the 4 aspects below – you might get some insights about what the activity means to you.

Remember, you can give expanded answers, or a simple 'yes' or

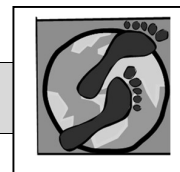


### ***Doing it in a particular place or places***

<p><b><i>Did the activity have to be done in a particular place or could it be done anywhere?</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>Did you need a lot of space?</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>Did the activity take you into places that meant a lot to you?</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>Did the activity involve feeling safe?</i></b></p>	
<p><b><i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i></b></p>	



<b>Time</b>	
<i>Did it take up a lot of your time?</i>	
<i>Was time important? Did you use it to measure your performance?</i>	
<i>Was the activity especially linked to a particular time of year, or special occasions?</i>	
<i>Did it link back to anything in your childhood?</i>	
<i>Did it link to other generations of your family? (e.g. parents, children?)</i>	
<i>Did the activity make a connection to history for you?</i>	
<i>Does the activity provide any kind of link to the future?</i>	
<i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i>	



## ***Body and mind***

***Did the activity impact on your emotions and /or your thoughts?***

***Did the activity impact on your senses?***

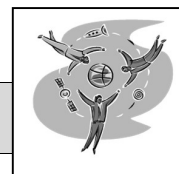
***Did it have an impact on your body?***

***Did the activity ever make you feel like your body was at risk?***

***Did the activity ever make you feel like your body was fit and young, or weak, or ageing?***

***Did the activity help you to care for your body and / or mind?***

***Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to***



## ***Other people***

***Did the activity involve being with others? Did this feel like a good experience? Were there problems?***

***Did this activity fit in with your family's expectations of you? Did it fit in with your own culture?***

***Did the activity help you make friends or find a place in your local community?***

***Did it help you to build stronger bonds with your family or friends?***

***Did the activity have an impact on your social image? Did you ever feel foolish? Or proud?***

***Did the activity ever make you doubt yourself?***

***Did the activity involve you being with friends?***

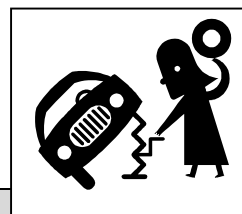
<i>Did the activity involve you being with an animal / animals?</i>	
<i>Did you have to have special equipment / materials / tools for this activity?</i>	
<i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i>	



Do you want to  
take a break  
now?

## Section 3

Activities change us, and, often, the way we do the activity over time changes too.



### ***Changing involvement with the activity***

<p><i>Can you recall when you first came across this activity?</i></p> <p><i>What do you remember?</i></p>	
<p><i>Did you do more, or less, over time? Did it matter?</i></p>	
<p><i>Did you get better or worse?</i></p> <p><i>Did it matter?</i></p>	
<p><i>Did your involvement with the activity change over time?</i></p>	
<p><i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i></p>	



## ***Changes to the self***

<b><i>Did doing the activity change you physically? (e.g. sometimes, or over time)</i></b>	
<b><i>Did doing it change you psychologically (e.g. mood, confidence, thoughts, learning)?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did your social circles and contacts change?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did the activity give you a sense of satisfaction / fulfilment?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did you learn anything about yourself?</i></b>	
<b><i>Did doing the activity ever make you feel as if you are being pulled in two directions?</i></b>	
<b><i>Jot down any notes / thoughts, if you want to</i></b>	



Now you've done all this – is there anything that stands out for you? Has the workbook made you think differently? Have you learnt anything about yourself?

## Section 4: What now?

Glance back over what you have written in the 3 sections above. The questions weren't all relevant to you, but some of the questions and your answers may have been very important and personally meaningful. Those boxes probably look full and 'busy'. Any activity can have many meanings for each person. The workbook should have helped you to understand what this activity (and perhaps others) means to YOU and, maybe you have learned more about your 'self'.

Looking back, can you indicate (with a ✓) on this table, which were the 'busy' or meaningful sections of the workbook, for you?

Section	Competence	Control	Values	
<b>1</b>				
Section	Place	Time	Body & Mind	Other people
<b>2</b>				
Section	Changed involvement with activity	Changes to the self		
<b>3</b>				

- Have you learned anything that you didn't know about yourself?
- Have you learned anything about what made this activity special / meaningful / rewarding for you?
- Can this be used to shape some goals for moving forward into the future?