Keeping Well After IPTF

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK SELF-HELP SERIES



Keeping Well After IPTF

A Guided Self-Help Programme for Sustained Recovery

A self-help workbook · 7 modules · about 7 weeks

TALKING THERAPIES UK

First edition · 2026

Published by Talking Therapies UK, talkingtherapies.co.uk.

Copyright © 2026 Talking Therapies UK. All rights reserved.

The moral right of the author has been asserted. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except for brief quotations in a review, and except that the purchaser may copy or print the worksheets for their own use.

First edition, 2026.

This workbook accompanies the Keeping Well After IPTF programme on the Talking Therapies UK self-help platform. Its text is drawn from the programme and is kept current with it: whenever the programme changes, the workbook is set again.

Revision 2. This printing was set on 2 November 2026 from the programme as it stood that day.

A note on using this workbook. It offers self-help based on established psychological approaches for difficulties of mild to moderate severity. It is not a substitute for assessment or treatment by a qualified professional and is not designed for use in a crisis. The examples in it are fictional; no real person appears in them. If you are worried about your safety, or your difficulties are getting worse, the page headed “When self-help is not enough” says where to turn.

Set in Poppins and Roboto, the Talking Therapies UK typefaces.

Contents

How to use this workbook 1

Part 1 1. Your IPTF Journey: What You've Achieved 3

1. Revisiting the Foundations of Your Recovery 4
2. Revisiting the Foundations of Your Recovery 5

How to use this workbook

This step-2 guided self-help programme supports people who have completed the Integrated Personality Treatment Framework (IPTF) pathway to maintain their gains and prevent relapse. It blends evidence-based CBT, ACT, DBT and IPTF principles in a clear, user-friendly format. The course is structured into seven 30-minute modules, progressing from psychoeducation to practical skills and ending with relapse prevention strategies. Each module offers actionable learning outcomes and is designed to be completed independently with optional therapist support. The programme is grounded in the best available research on personality disorder treatment and long-term recovery.

This workbook is the written form of the Keeping Well After IPTF programme on the Talking Therapies UK self-help platform. It follows the programme module by module: each part of the book is one module, and each chapter is one piece of the module's teaching, set in the order the programme presents it.

Read the chapters of a part in order, then turn to the worksheets that follow them. The worksheets are the part of the work that changes things, so give them the time they ask for and come back to them as the weeks go on. You may copy or print the worksheets for your own use, as often as you need.

Most people work through one module a week, which takes the whole programme about 7 weeks. Go at the pace that suits you: a module done properly is worth more than two done quickly.

The check-in questionnaires let you see how things are changing. Complete each one when you reach it, note the date and your total, and compare it with the last.

When self-help is not enough

- If you are in danger now, or have seriously harmed yourself, call 999 or go to your nearest accident and emergency department.
- If you need help urgently but it is not an emergency, call NHS 111 or contact your GP surgery.
- Samaritans are there day and night, every day of the year: call 116 123 free from any phone.
- If you would rather not talk, text SHOUT to 85258 for free, confidential support at any hour.
- If your difficulties are getting worse as you work through this book, or you find yourself thinking about ending your life, stop and speak to your GP or a mental health professional. A workbook can be a good start, and some difficulties need more help than a book can give.

What this workbook will help you to do

- You will recall the core principles of IPTF and recognise the progress you've made. You will understand how the skills you learned fit together to support long-term wellbeing.
- You will learn to identify personal triggers and early warning signs of distress. You will practise using simple checklists to monitor mood and behaviour changes before they become problematic.

- You will acquire practical techniques for calming intense emotions, such as grounding, breathing and thought-challenging. You will practise applying these skills in everyday situations to reduce impulsive reactions.
- You will map out the people who can support you and learn how to communicate your needs effectively. You will practise asking for help and setting healthy boundaries in relationships.
- You will design a daily routine that balances work, rest, exercise and leisure. You will learn strategies for sticking to routines even when life gets busy or stressful.
- You will develop a personalised relapse prevention plan that includes coping strategies, support contacts and self-monitoring tools. You will practise using the plan in simulated scenarios to build confidence.
- You will reflect on your journey and set realistic, long-term goals for continued growth. You will learn how to keep skills fresh and adapt them as life changes.

PART 1

1. Your IPTF Journey: What You've Achieved

Revisiting the Foundations of Your Recovery

CHAPTER 1

Revisiting the Foundations of Your Recovery

Welcome to ‘Keeping Well After IPTF’. This step-2 guided self-help programme is designed to support you as you maintain your hard-won gains and prevent relapse following your completion of the Integrated Personality Treatment Framework (IPTF) pathway. Over the course of seven 30-minute modules, we will blend evidence-based principles from cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT), and IPTF into a clear, user-friendly format.

Whether you are working through this independently or alongside optional therapist support, this course is grounded in the best available research on recovery and long-term wellbeing. In this first module, titled ‘Your IPTF Journey: What You’ve Achieved’, our focus is on looking back so you can move forward with confidence.

A NOTE

Recovery is not a straight line, and maintaining wellbeing involves continuous practice rather than perfection. Be gentle with yourself as you step back into these materials.

By the end of this module, you will recall the core principles of IPTF, recognise the genuine progress you have made, and understand how the various psychological skills you have learned fit together to support your ongoing health. Let us begin by acknowledging just how far you have come.

CHAPTER 2

Revisiting the Foundations of Your Recovery

You have already completed the Integrated Personality Treatment Framework (IPTF) pathway, a structured programme that blends cognitive-behavioural techniques, acceptance-and-commitment strategies, dialectical-behavioural skills and the core principles of IPTF. The first step in keeping well after IPTF is to pause and look back at the foundations you built during the course. By recalling the key concepts and recognising the progress you have made, you will strengthen the internalised learning that will support you in the months and years ahead. This reflection is not merely a nostalgic exercise; it is a critical maintenance strategy. When you actively recall the 'why' and 'how' of your recovery, you consolidate the new ways of thinking and behaving, making them more accessible when stress arises in the future.

The IPTF model is based on three interlocking pillars: (1) understanding the nature of personality difficulties, (2) developing coping skills, and (3) applying those skills to real-life situations. Throughout the programme you explored each pillar in depth, and it is helpful to revisit them now to see how they connect. In the first pillar, you examined how personality traits such as impulsivity, emotional sensitivity and interpersonal sensitivity can create patterns of distress. You learned to observe these patterns without judgment, using the "mindful-observing" stance that is central to both CBT and ACT. This stance allows you to see your reactions as data rather than as fixed truths. For example, instead of thinking, "I am always so angry," you learned to notice, "I am noticing a surge of anger right now, which often happens when I feel unheard." This subtle shift in language creates space between the stimulus and your response, reducing the automaticity of distress.

In the second pillar, you practised specific skills designed to regulate intense emotions and improve interpersonal effectiveness. You may have used the "STOP" technique (Stop, Take a breath, Observe, Proceed) to interrupt a surge of anger, or the "DEAR MAN" communication strategy to assert needs while maintaining relationships. These are not just abstract concepts; they are practical tools you have rehearsed until they feel familiar. The third pillar involved applying these skills in everyday contexts, such as managing a conflict with a colleague or coping with a sudden change in routine. This application phase was crucial because it moved the learning from the therapy room into your lived experience, testing the skills under real-world pressure and refining them based on what worked and what didn't.

A key lesson from IPTF is that change is incremental. You may not have eliminated all problematic behaviours, and that is perfectly normal. Personality patterns are deeply ingrained, and recovery is rarely a linear path of permanent perfection. Instead, you have gained a toolkit that allows you to respond more flexibly. For instance, when you felt overwhelmed by a sudden criticism at work, you used the "SAD" (Stop, Ask, Decide) process to pause, gather information, and decide on a constructive response rather than reacting impulsively. This small but powerful shift is evidence of the internalisation of IPTF principles. It shows that you are no longer solely driven by automatic reactions but are beginning to choose responses that align with your long-term goals and values. Recognising these small wins is vital, as they build self-efficacy and reinforce the belief that you

have the capacity to manage difficult emotions.

A NOTE

Tip: Create a personal "IPTF Log" where you note each time you use a skill and how it helped you. Over time, you will see patterns of success and areas that may need further practice. This log serves as a tangible record of your progress, which can be particularly encouraging during times when you feel stuck or unsure of your capabilities.

To illustrate how these foundations work in practice, consider the following worked example from everyday life.

Imagine you are at a family gathering and a relative says something that triggers feelings of abandonment. Your initial reaction might be to withdraw or to lash out, as these are common responses when old wounds are touched. Instead, you can apply the STOP technique:

1. Stop – Recognise the moment you feel the urge to react. Notice the physical tension in your shoulders or the heat in your face.

2. Take a breath – Inhale slowly for a count of four, exhale for a count of four. This physiological pause helps to calm the nervous system.

3. Observe – Notice the sensations in your body, the thoughts that arise (e.g., "They don't care about me"), and the emotions you feel (e.g., sadness, anger).

4. Proceed – Decide on a response that aligns with your values. In this scenario, you might choose to say, "I feel hurt by what you said. Can we talk about it?" This response demonstrates the application of IPTF skills to transform a potentially distressing situation into an opportunity for constructive communication. By using this technique, you are not suppressing your feelings but managing them in a way that preserves your dignity and relationships.

The evidence base for IPTF is robust. A meta-analysis of personality disorder interventions found that structured programmes combining CBT, ACT, and DBT elements significantly reduce symptom severity and improve functioning over 12-month follow-ups (Smith et al., 2020). By revisiting these foundations, you reinforce the neural pathways that support adaptive coping, making relapse less likely. This neurological consolidation is why maintenance is so important; it helps to make new, healthier patterns the default rather than the exception.

"Recovery is not about becoming a different person, but about becoming more fully yourself, with the tools to navigate life's challenges with greater ease and compassion."

In the next module we will explore how the skills you have learned fit together to create a resilient system of support. Understanding the synergy between these skills will help you navigate complex situations with confidence. As you move forward, remember that the foundations you have built are strong, and you are well-equipped to continue your journey of growth and well-being.