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## WEEK FOUR HANDOUT: FINDING A WAY THROUGH FEELINGS

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### How does dementia make you feel?

- Forgetting things can make people feel anxious or stressed.
- Some people have said that dementia makes them feel angry, frustrated, sad, frightened about the future, anxious, embarrassed or stupid.
- Can you remember what you felt like when you were first told about your dementia?
- Were you
  - Angry about how unfair it was?
  - Depressed at the news?
  - Anxious about the future?
  - Relieved to have an answer?
- How have you felt since then?
- Have you felt
  - Embarrassed when you forget something?
  - Frustrated at your memory?
  - Worried about the future?
  - Guilty when other people help you?

### Ups and downs

Most people have times when they are down as well as up. Sadness is a normal reaction to life's struggles, setbacks and disappointments. Many

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people use the word “depression” to explain these kinds of feelings, but depression is much more than just sadness.

There are lots of different ways that people cope with depression:

- Some people may deny having any problems and will play things down.
- Other people may use distractions, so will keep themselves busy to avoid feeling bad.
- Some people find it useful to talk to people for support.
- There are also people who make a joke out of it to try to cope better.



### **Losing confidence**

There is no “right or wrong” way to cope with feelings. However, one trap that it’s important to avoid is that it is easy to put off doing things if you’re worried about making a mistake.

Often, this leads on to people losing confidence and then gradually giving up more and more.

### **Breathing and relaxation exercises**

In last week’s group, we tried some relaxation exercises. Remember to continue to practice these – they will help you to manage your stress!