

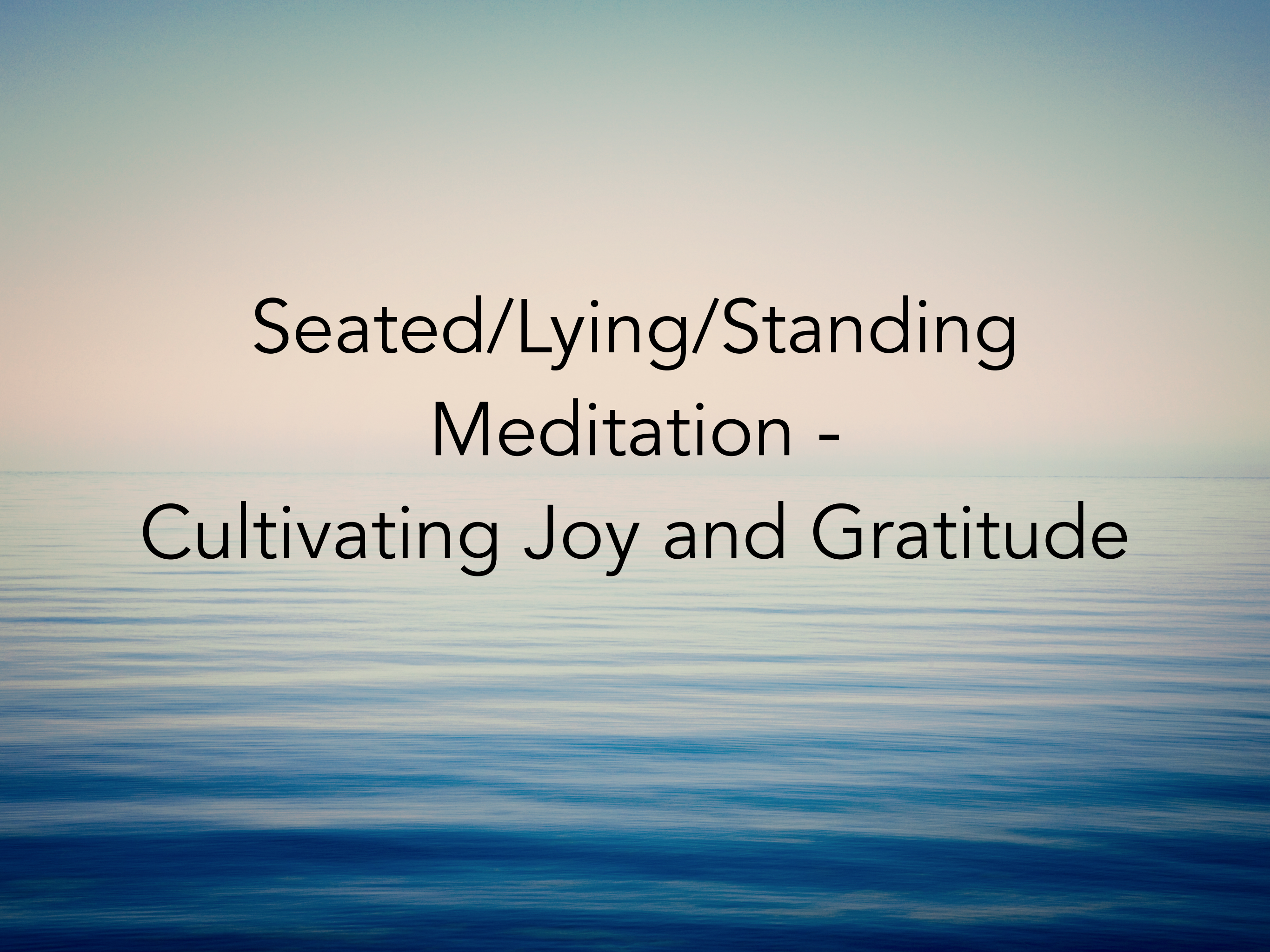
# Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Chronic Pain

Session 7: Taking Care of Myself

# Theme

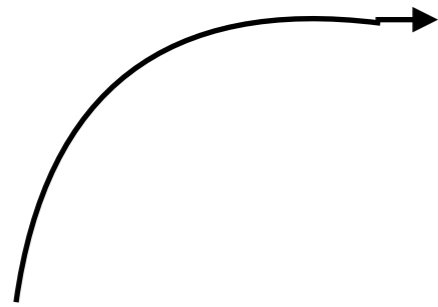
- Becoming **aware of unique warning signs or red flags** that pain or an emotional flare up
- If caught **earlier**, more **options to respond**
- Each individual can take **unique actions to better manage pain**





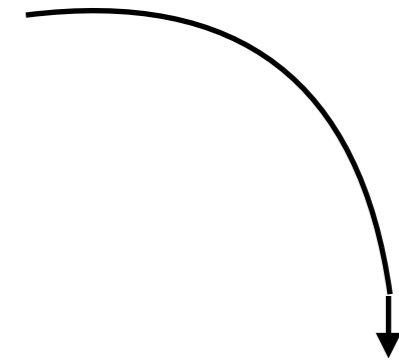
Seated/Lying/Standing  
Meditation -  
Cultivating Joy and Gratitude

# Relationship Between Activity and Pain

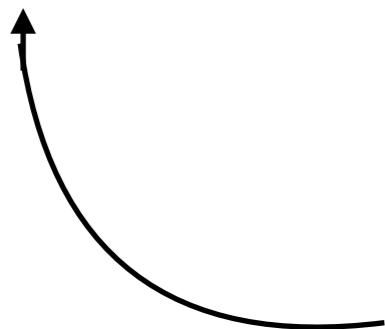


## Overactivity (Boom)

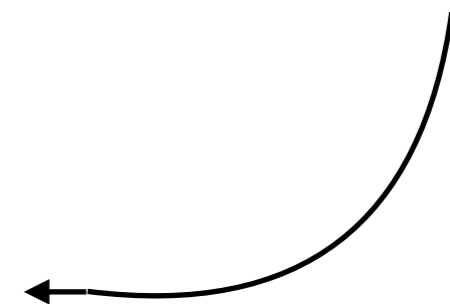
You start to feel better so you do more to try to make up for lost time, leading to ...



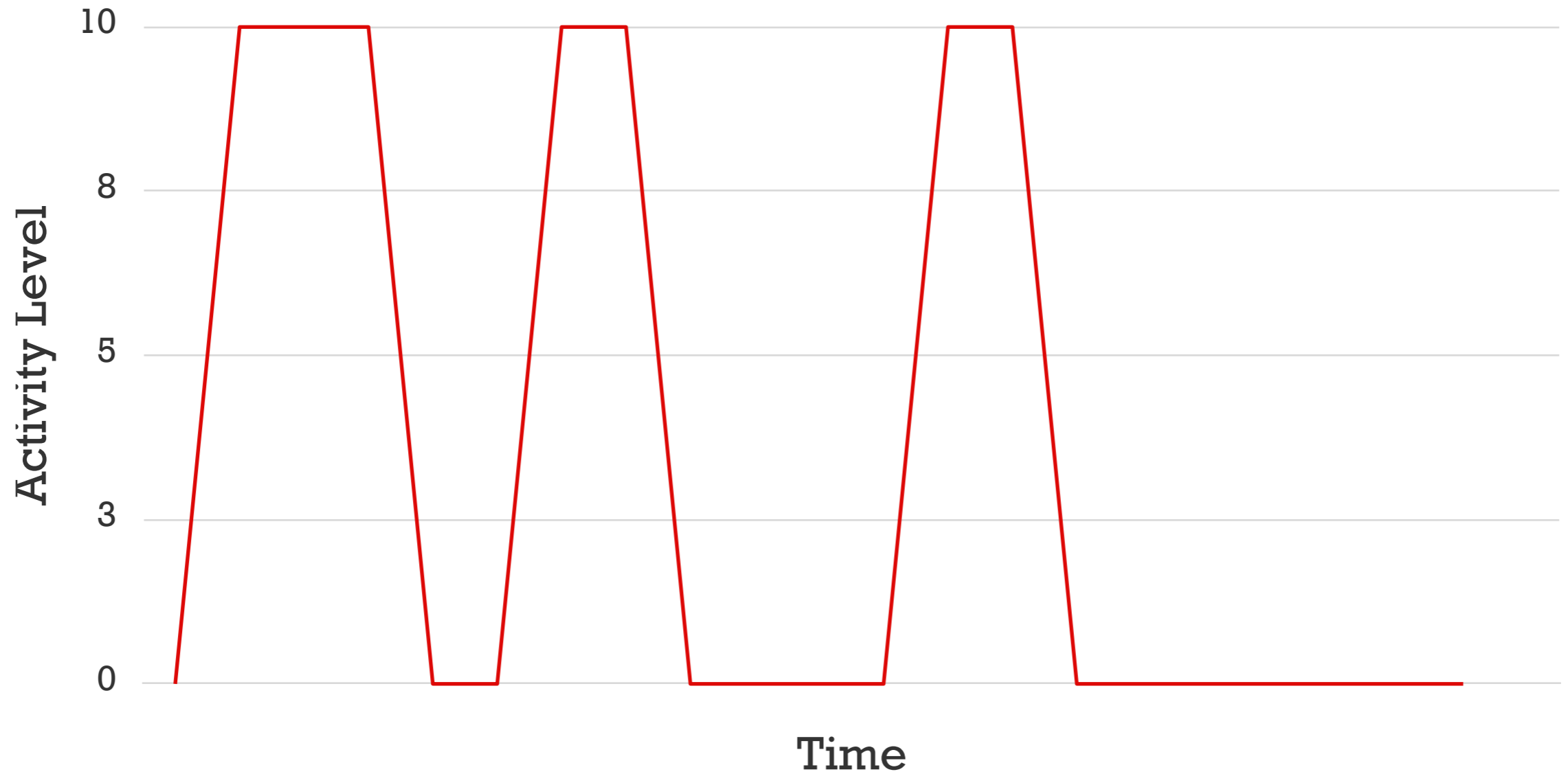
Pain flares so you decrease activity, leading to ...



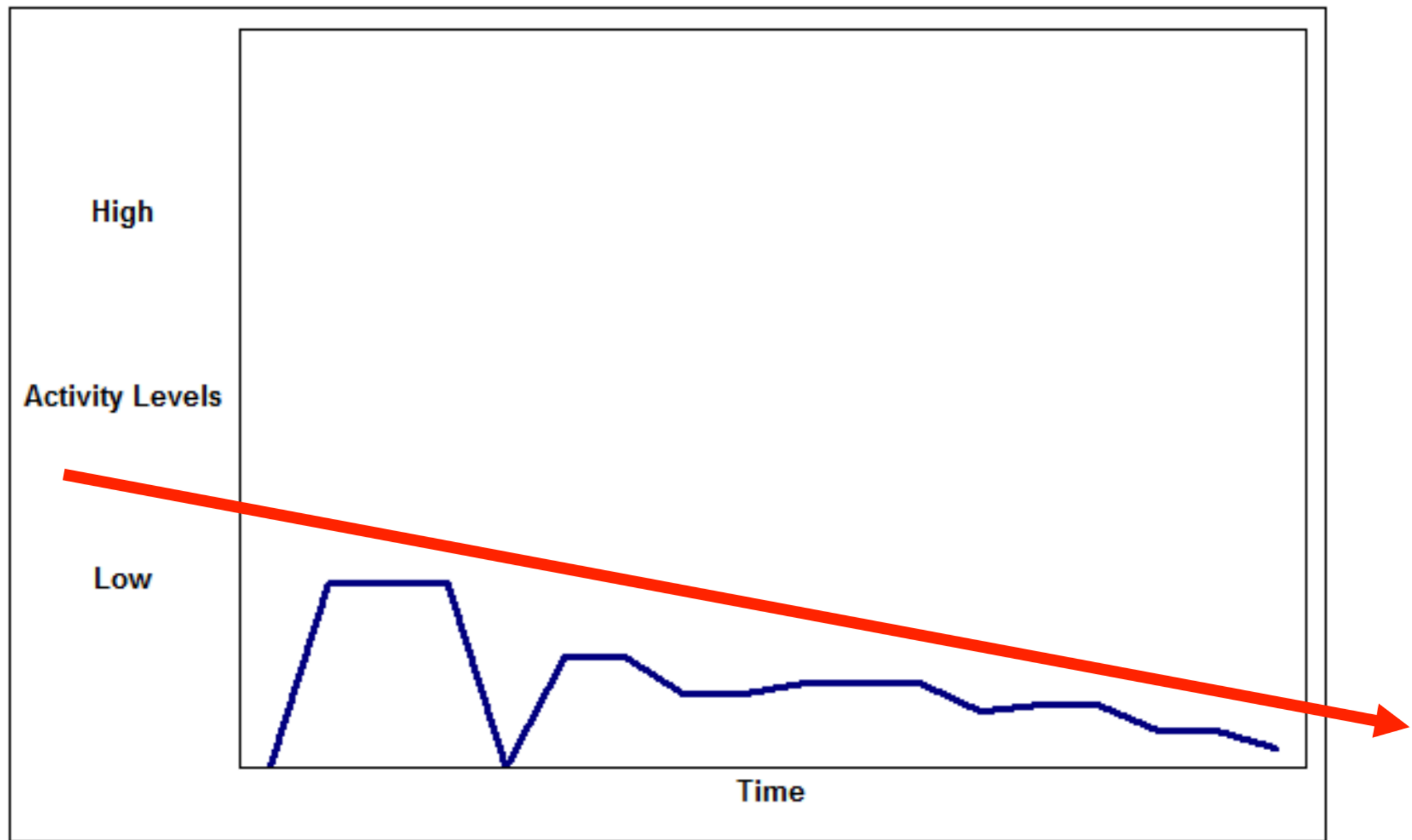
## Underactivity (Bust)



“Boom and Bust” or “Give it what you Got” or  
“Overactivity Underactivity”



# "Pain as Guide" or "Underactivity"



# Relationship Between Activity and Pain

- There can be **anxiety** not knowing how much pain may be present day to day -> may be **harder to commit** to something "**just in case**" there is a pain flare up
- Living with pain, stress, and whole spectrum of emotion can lead to "**not wanting**" to do anything
- Perhaps can't do things "**like I used to**" so think "**what's the point?**"
- **Self care is not selfish**, can be important to **do enjoyable things**, rather than letting pain be the dictator

# Nourishing and Depleting Activities

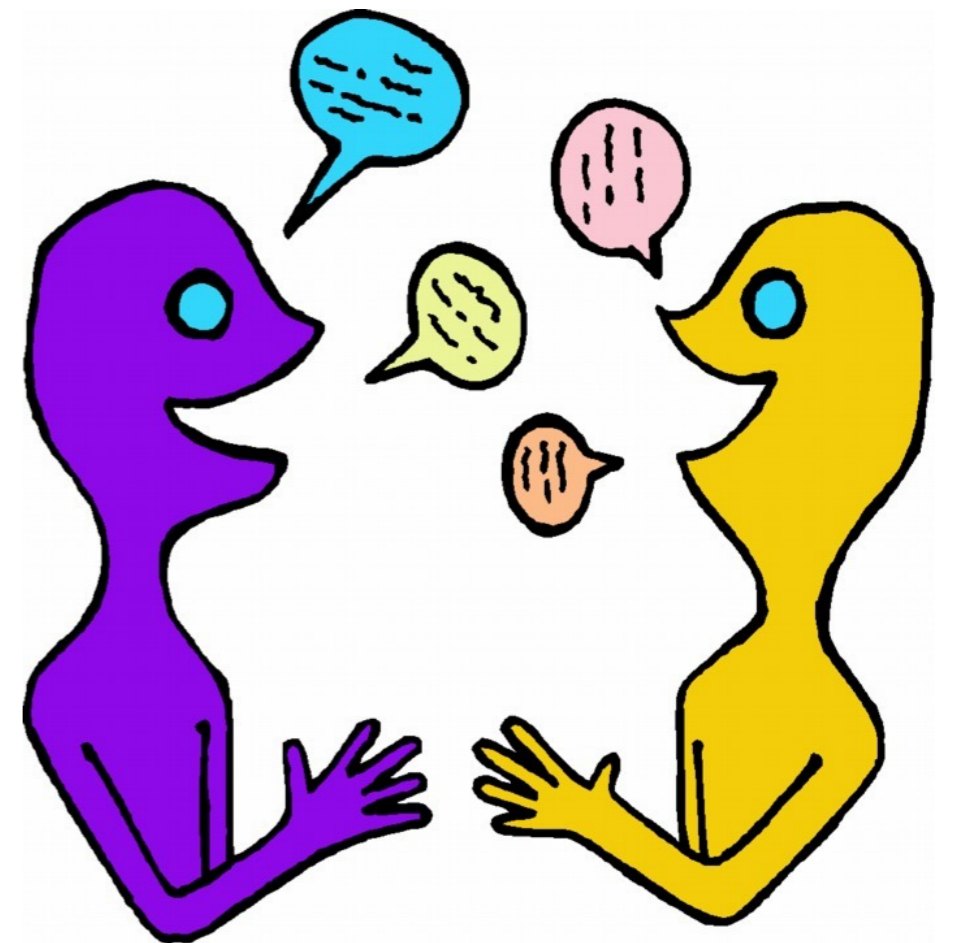
- Write down activities in your typical day from waking until falling asleep, ie. showering/bathing, meals, talking to others etc.
- **Nourishing activities:** put an "N" next to activities you value, energize you, nourish you, rejuvenate you
- **Depleting activities:** put a "D" next to activities that zap energy, leave you feeling emotionally drained, take you out of the moment, or that place a strain on your well-being in some way
- Leave activities that may be "neutral" for now

# Reflection

- Look back over the list and consider: of those activities in daily life that are depleting,
  - ***"What little shifts in my day, or in my approach to my day, might allow me to do these less frequently and/or differently so as they don't drag me down?"***
- And, of those activities you value and find nourishing,
  - ***"What little shifts in my day, or in my approach to my day, might bring more of these into my daily experiences, and/or help me to be more fully present with them when they are happening?"***

# Breakout Room

- What did you notice? Are there more Ns? Or Ds? How balanced?
- Are there ways to do depleting activities less frequently or differently?
- Are there ways to do more nourishing activities or to be more present while doing them?



# Unhelpful Beliefs about Self Care

- May have competing demands and feel "***I should be doing x y, z for others before I can take care of myself***"
- May feel "***locked into patterns of life and days beyond my control***"
- "***Self-care is a luxury, an optional extra if there is time***"
- "***Well, that would be nice, but it's just not possible***"

# Working with Unhelpful Beliefs

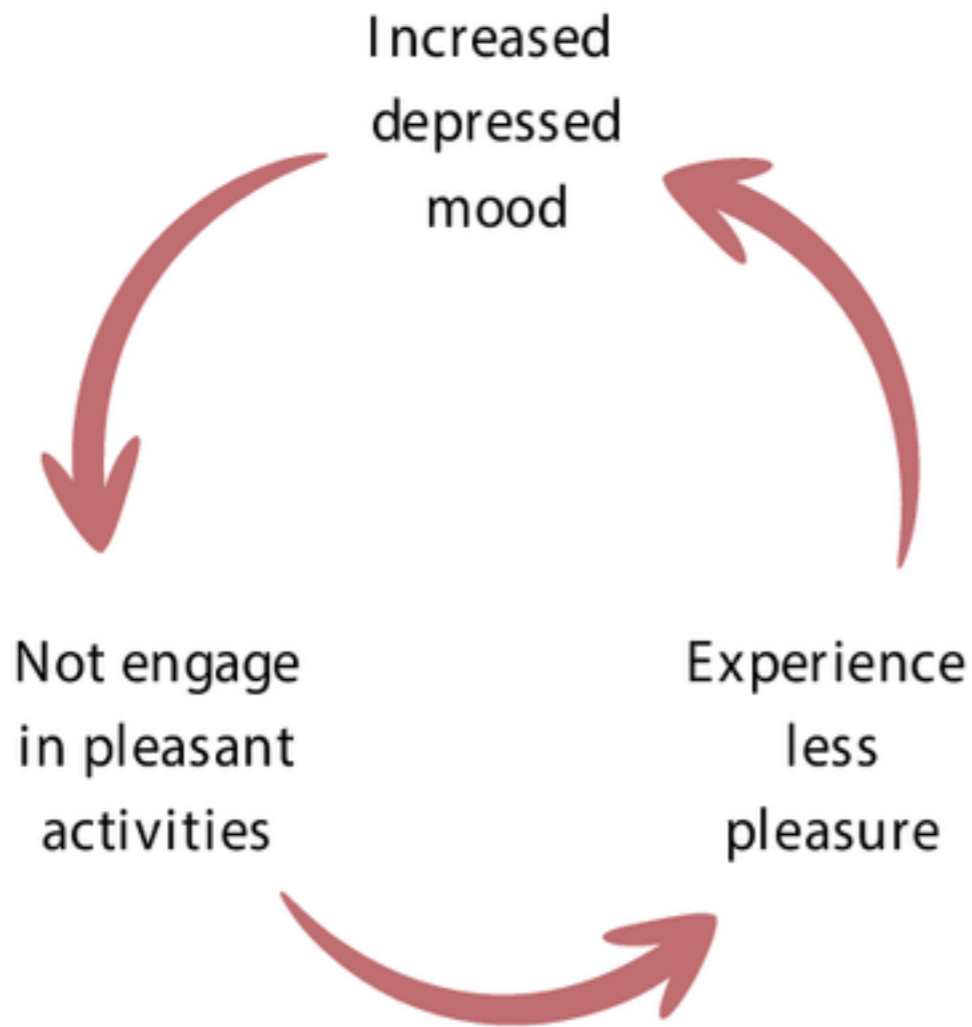
- Start to **notice thoughts**, bring **awareness to how spending time**, and pay attention even when feeling rushed or on autopilot, and may find:
  1. There are **gaps or spaces of time**, or
  2. **Shifts** can be made in approach where **self-care can become the priority**
- Mindfully check in with yourself (multiple times a day), asking yourself "***What do I need to do in this moment to best take care of myself?***"

# Incorporating Self Care

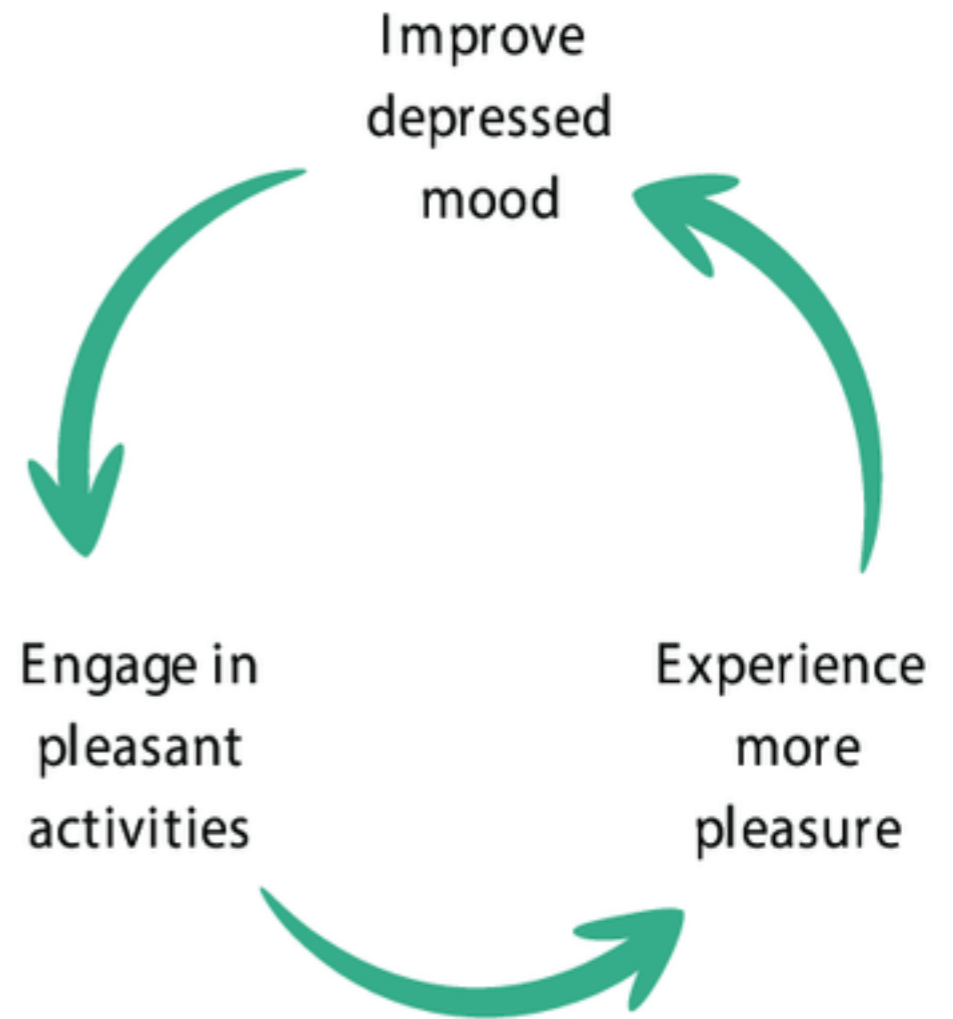
- Sometimes **may not know what we need** to take care of ourselves, perhaps the **pain feels overwhelming** or we just don't know what might give us a sense of **pleasure or mastery/accomplishment, or control**
- Most helpful activities are pleasure or mastery activities:
  - **Pleasure** activities: give enjoyment or pleasure
  - **Mastery** activities: give a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction or control

# Behavioral Activation Helps to Improve Mood

**Circle of depression**



**Circle of behavioral activation**



# Habit Tracking for Behavioral Activation to Improve Mood

	Mon	Tues	Wed
Bathing/showering			
Mindfulness			
Nourishing Food			
Sleep/Rest			
Movement			
Pleasurable activities/hobbies			
Social contact			
Something nice for self or others			
Journaling			

# Self Care Activities

- Create your **unique "go to" list of nourishing activities (or nonactivities) or activities that give a sense of pleasure or mastery/accomplishment, control**
- Use list when **pain is building, mind falling into unhelpful habits, or mood sinking**
- Have **list visible**, and no matter how "good" or "bad" may be feeling, can **proactively choose to do something nurturing**

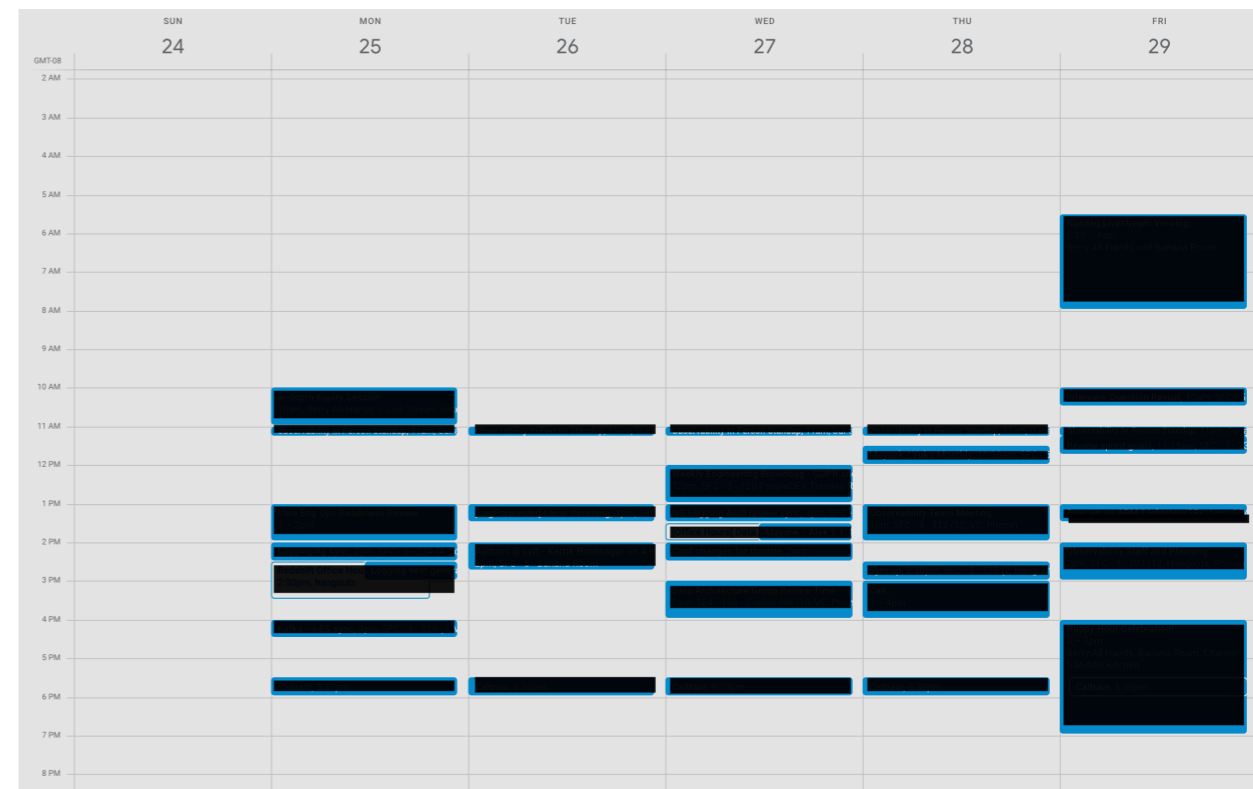
# Self Care Reflection

- Start a list of things that are nourishing or give a **sense of please or mastery-making/ accomplishment or control**
- **Include a variety** - big and small, require more/less effort- **so there is always something small to uplift mood and take care of self**
- If stuck for ideas, may return to **Pleasant Experiences Diary** from Session 2 to see what you found uplifting



# Self Care Reflection - Part 2

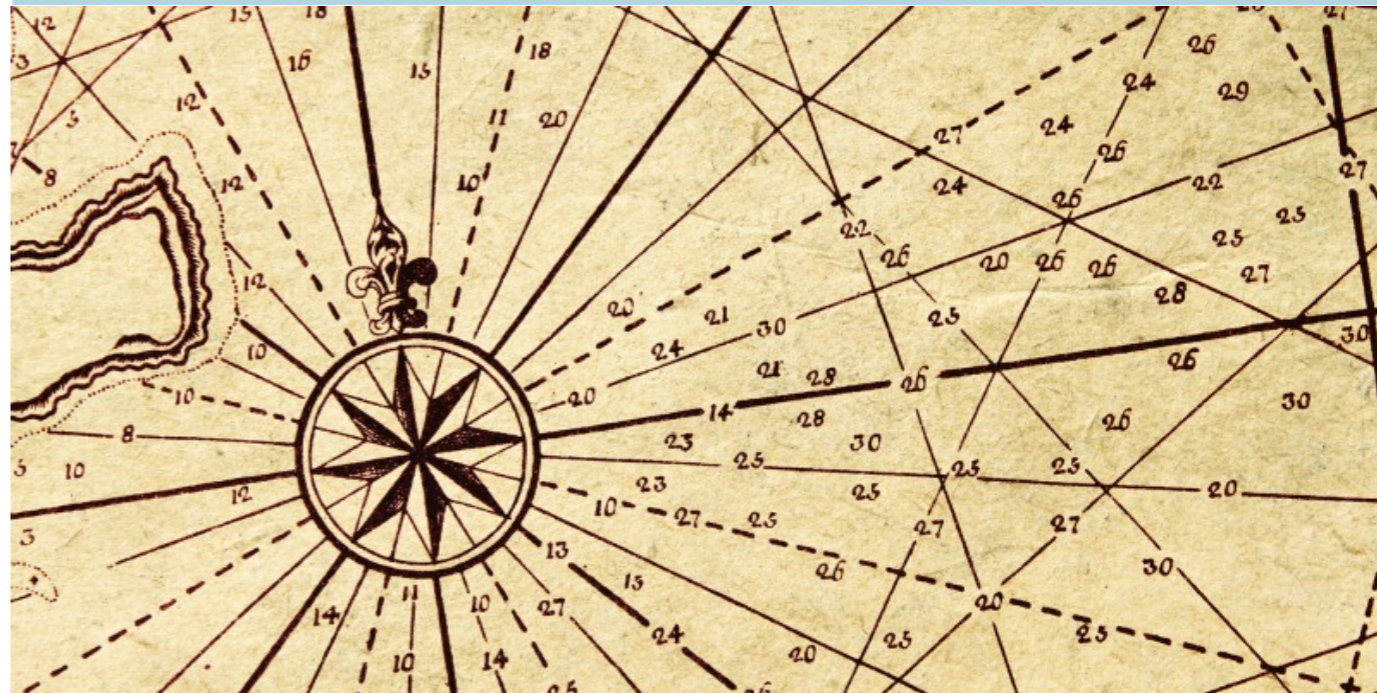
- Look back at your list of daily activities
- What **"gaps"** or windows of time might be present, and where you can schedule in pleasure or mastery/ accomplishment or control activities?
- Look at the list and **try to schedule in nourishing activities**



# Approaching Self Care

- Thoughts such as **"This isn't going to change anything,"** or **"I am going to feel a thousand times better after this"** may come up
- As best you can, note *thoughts as just thoughts*, lay them aside, and **choose one activity from list to engage in**
- **Bring an open mind, without prejudging how will feel after, and also not waiting until you "feel like" doing it**

- Don't expect miracles right away
- Slowly building a **sense of control** in the face of pain and pain flare-ups
- Over time, **less at the mercy of how pain feels** on a given day
- Can develop a **sense there are "things I can do to manage pain"**



## Three Minute Breathing Space

First step to mindfully observe what would be ***most nourishing in this moment***—


allows our wise mind to see more clearly **what action, if any, is needed to best take care for self**

# Responsive 3 min Breathing Space

1. **Awareness** - Stop, switch from "doing" to "being" mode, notice and acknowledge what is present
  - *"Anger is arising" or "self-critical thoughts are present"*
2. **Anchoring** - to the present moment (breath, sounds, feet)
3. **Opening** - Expand awareness to include breath and body, holding it all in open, spacious awareness
  - Breathe in to and out of the area of greatest intensity
  - Softening and releasing
  - *"It's already here, let me be with it"*

# Steps Towards Self-Care in the Face of a Rising Stress-Pain Thermometer

- Step 1 - Take a 3 minute Breathing Space
- Step 2 - Respond - ***what would be most nourishing to care for self in this moment?***
  - **Activities** which give a sense of pleasure, mastery, or sense of achievement and control
  - **Thoughts** - Session 6 "Tools to Work with Hot Thoughts"
  - **Emotions** - may work with difficulty by opening and softening, allowing

A serene sunset scene over a vast body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky is a deep blue, with wispy white clouds scattered across it. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

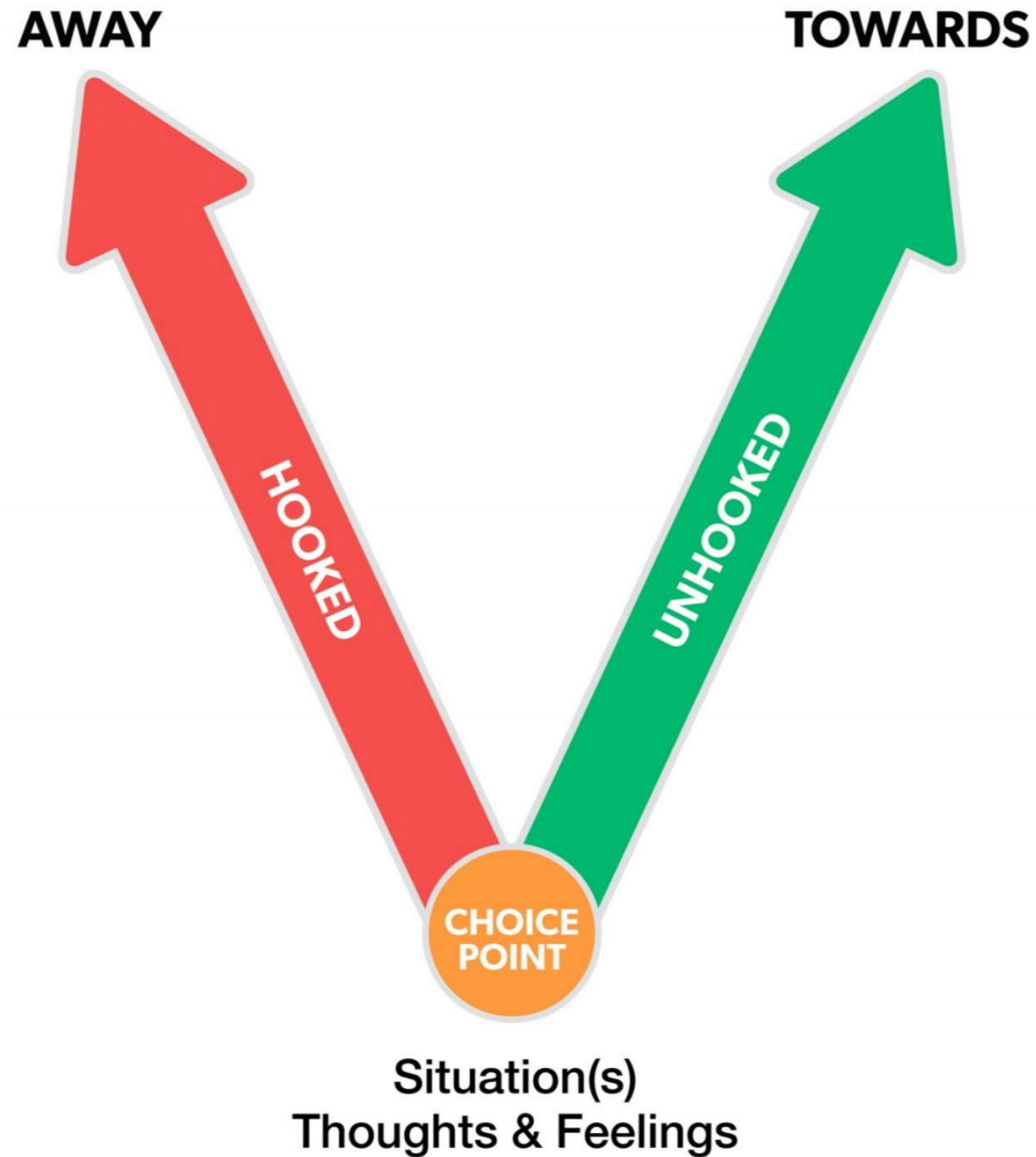
“How we spend our days, is of course,  
how we spend our lives.”

- Annie Dillard

# Choice Point

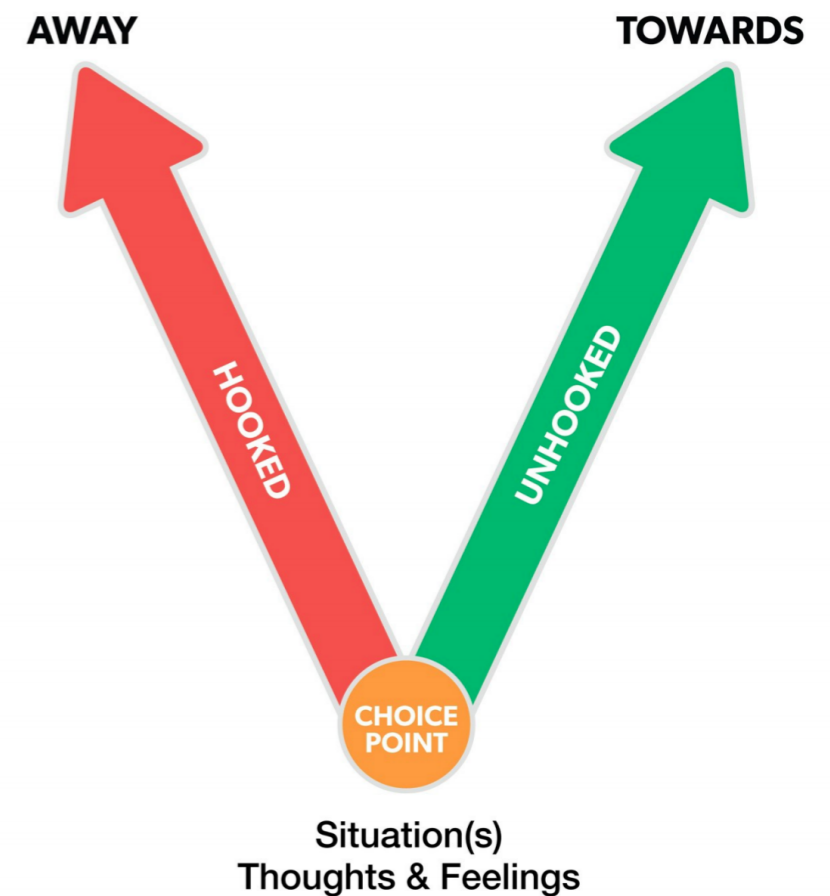
[https://www.youtube.com/  
watch?v=OV15x8LvwAQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OV15x8LvwAQ)

# Choice Point



# Session 7 Summary: Taking Care of Myself

- Each moment is really all we have
- **How we respond** and **what we do** in each moment accumulates, and has a powerful influence on thoughts, emotions, pain, and overall sense of self-worth and lovability
- Goal to live a rich, full meaningful life in line with our values



# Suggested Home Practice Week 7

- Develop **own personal practice** aiming to practice **45 min daily**
- **Regular and Responsive 3-Minute Breathing Spaces.** After the 3-Minute Responsive Breathing Space, **engage in one small nourishing activity or nonactivity that makes you feel energized**
- Develop your own **personalized action plan** with nourishing activities (or nonactivities) to use **when noticing a red flag**
- **Schedule activities proactively** for own self-care
- Ensure there are **options** of nourishing activities with varying degrees of planning, time and "effort", so there is something you can do, even when mind telling you "*There is nothing I can do to manage this pain*"

# Please see handout on activity pacing on the drive

