

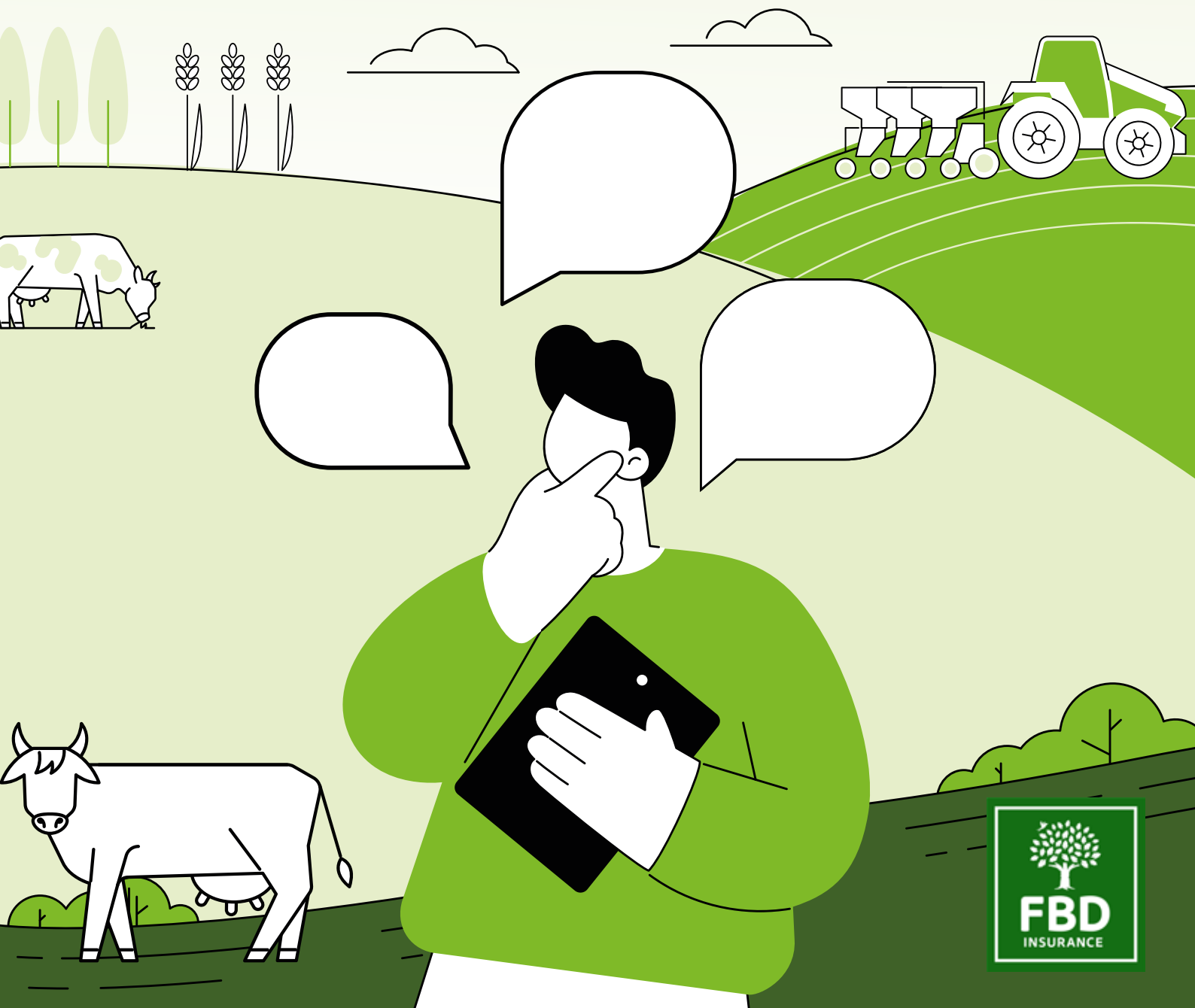


Connecting for Life



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# The Farming Minds



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Farming can be one of the most rewarding and meaningful ways of life, living on the land, connecting with nature and being your own boss. That said, it also can be demanding at times, both physically and mentally.

A skill that has been shown to be protective for farmers in Ireland when facing the mental demands of farming is Psychological Flexibility. This Farming Minds booklet introduces Psychological Flexibility to help Irish Farmers manage stress, overcome challenges, and hopefully live productive and meaningful lives.

## What is Psychological Flexibility?

Psychological Flexibility is about developing a flexible mind. A flexible mind is one that is curious about feelings and thoughts and makes choices in line with personal values. Psychological flexibility is like farming while juggling different weather conditions; you can't control the rain, wind, or sun, but you can choose how to work with them. It's about curiosity about feelings (rather than ignoring them), noticing unhelpful thoughts for what they are (just thoughts), and channeling your energy into the things that matter most to you.

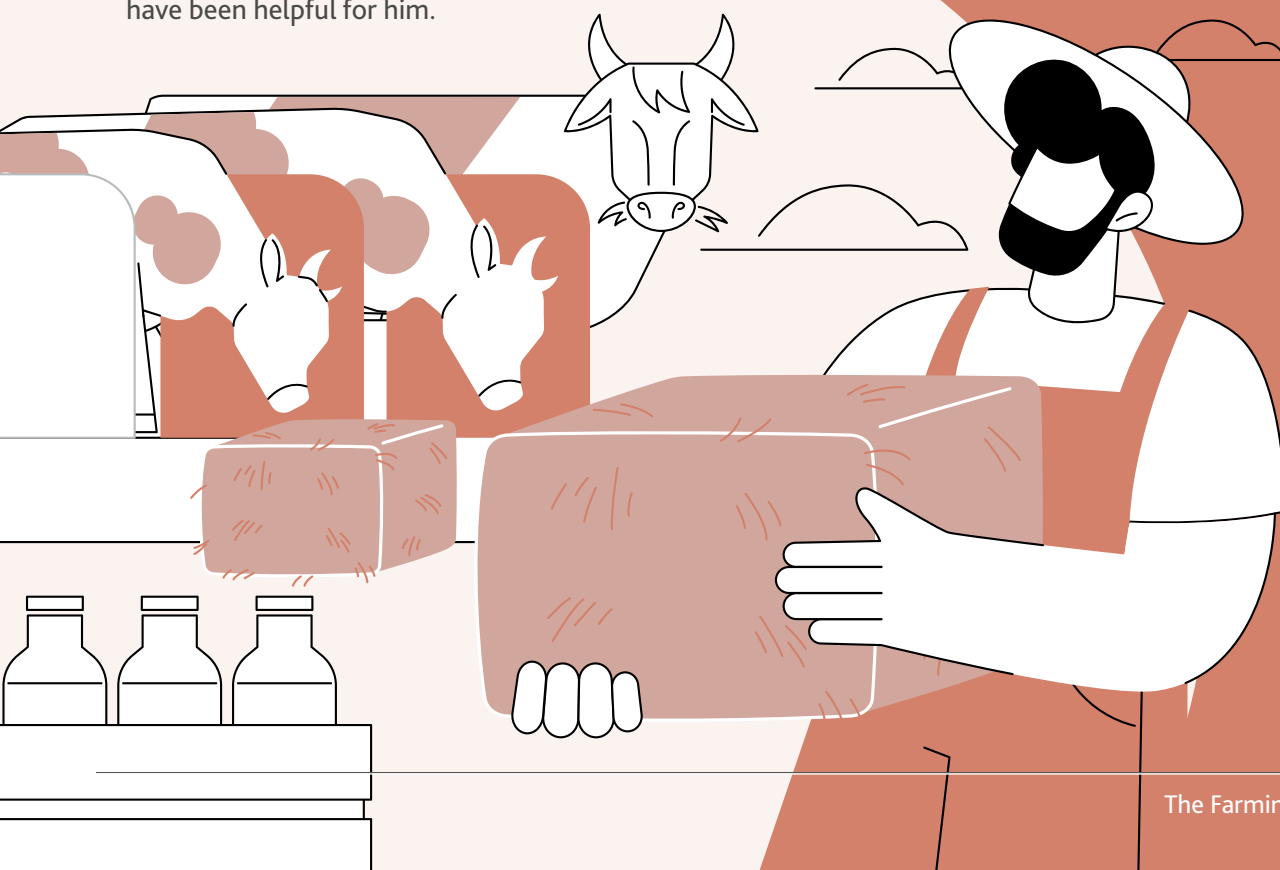
## How to use this booklet

This booklet is designed to provide practical tools and ideas to support your mental wellbeing and resilience as a farmer. It is not intended to replace professional medical or psychological advice.

If you are currently experiencing significant distress, overwhelming feelings, or finding it hard to cope day to day, it is very important to seek support from a GP, mental health professional, or one of the helplines listed at the end of this booklet. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

You can use this booklet alongside professional support, or as a way to build wellbeing skills in your everyday life. If at any time working through these exercises feels too difficult or upsetting, it is okay to pause and seek support.

To help you through the booklet each section looks at the example of John a farmer that has worked on psychological flexibility skills in his own life and how they have been helpful for him.



# 1

## Understanding Your Thoughts and Emotions

Welcome to the first section of this guide, where we'll dive into **Psychological Flexibility** and explore how it can help you manage stress, worries, and life's challenges as a farmer.

### What is Psychological Flexibility?

Psychological Flexibility is a psychological science-based approach that's particularly useful for

handling tough thoughts, emotions, and stress. It doesn't try to 'fix' you or eliminate all your struggles but teaches you to focus your mind in a way that helps you live a more meaningful life.

Think of farming: you can't control the weather, but you can adjust your plans to make the best of it. Psychological Flexibility helps you do the same with your thoughts and emotions working with them instead of fighting against them.

### Rethinking How You Deal with Difficulties

Let's start by considering the following question. Which is true for you in the way you live your life:

- a. Do you believe unwanted feelings and thoughts will hurt you if you don't get rid of them?
- OR
- b. Do you believe that unwanted feelings and thoughts can't harm you, even if they feel bad?

From a young age, we're often taught to control our emotions: 'Cheer up!' or 'Don't worry about it.' This makes us believe that we must always suppress or 'fix' difficult thoughts or feelings. But research shows that trying to force thoughts or feelings away by telling yourself to 'just forget about it' only works briefly, if at all, and makes them come back stronger. For example, imagine I said to you now 'Don't think about a tractor. Suppress all thoughts about wheels, engines, steering wheel and anything to do with a tractor. It is very important that you manage to not think about tractors.' What do you notice? The harder we try not to think about something, the more we end up thinking about it!

You might recognise this in your own life, the harder you try to push away stress or anxiety, the more it seems to linger and fester. That's where Psychological Flexibility comes in, offering a new way to approach these challenges.



John had always been a proud farmer, but after a year of bad weather, falling crop prices, and mounting debts, he felt like a failure. The anger he felt toward the world and himself simmered constantly and depression weighed him down. 'What's the point?' he often thought, isolating himself from friends and family.

In his first session learning about psychological flexibility with a psychologist, John realized how much energy he spent fighting feelings of anger, like trying to stop a raging bull with his bare hands. The idea of exploring what really mattered to him, not focusing on trying to fix his emotions but working with them was a whole new way of looking at the world.

## Let's try an exercise called 'What Have You Tried?'

**Warning** – this exercise will involve thinking of emotions. Choose an emotion that supports your personal growth, while still feeling manageable and within your comfort zone to think about.

Now take a moment to think about an emotion you dislike having maybe stress, frustration, or sadness.

### 1 Write It Down

On a piece of paper, write the name of that emotion.

### 2 List What You've already Tried To 'Fix' It

Make a list of all the strategies you've used to get rid of this emotion. Have you avoided situations, distracted yourself, or talked to someone about it? Be specific.

Examples of strategies other people have said they use are: Opting out of situations, arguing with people, mediating, going for a run, drinking alcohol, trying not to think about it...

### 3 Evaluate Each Strategy

For each strategy, rate how effective it's been:

- Short-term: Did it help immediately? Rate it 1–5 (1 = not effective, 5 = very effective).
- Long-term: Did it solve the issue for good? Rate it 1–5.



## Reflection

Look at your list. What do you notice? Many strategies might work in the short term but fail to create long-term change. Some might even have negative side effects, like avoiding important tasks or not dealing with relationship difficulties. It is important to note that some strategies on the face of it look more adaptive than others (such as going for a run). But what we are looking at here are whatever strategies you use to try to avoid your feelings. All of the examples mentioned by others above such as drinking alcohol or mediating are not problematic in and of themselves. The strategies are only a problem if we use them to *not feel*.

## A New Way Forward

Now that you've reflected on what hasn't worked, are you open to trying something new? Psychological Flexibility isn't about getting rid of difficult feelings but helps you to carry on living a productive life even when those feelings show up. The first step is to understand what really matters to you. Let's explore your values.

By focusing on the things that really matter to you, you're beginning to invest your time and energy into areas that bring meaning to your life. This is like tending to the parts of your farm that produce the best results instead of wasting resources on barren soil.

In the next section, we'll explore how to step back from difficult thoughts and see them for what they are, just thoughts, not truths. For now, spend some time reflecting on your values and completing the Values Assessment Exercise below.

## Values Assessment Exercise

Write down your thoughts for each of these areas:

### 1 Family

What kind of parent, sibling, or child do you want to be? What qualities do you want to bring to these relationships?

### 2 Work (Farming or Beyond)

What kind of farmer or professional do you dream of being? What motivates you in your work?

### 3 Friendships

What does being a good friend mean to you?

### 4 Health and Well-Being

What kind of lifestyle do you pursue that supports your physical and mental health?

Just as you can't control the weather, you can't always control your thoughts and feelings. But by focusing on what truly matters and taking small, meaningful steps in that direction, you can create a life that feels more fulfilling, rain or shine.

# 2

## Unhooking from Negative Thoughts

In this section, we'll focus on how to manage your thoughts when they start getting in the way of the life you want to lead. You'll learn new techniques to 'unhook' from unhelpful thoughts and make space for what truly matters.

### Recap of Section 1

In section 1, we looked at how trying to control or suppress difficult thoughts and feelings like 'I'm not good enough' or 'I can't cope' often backfires. The more we try to push those thoughts away, the stronger they seem to return, much like trying to hold a beach ball underwater.

We also explored strategies you've used to deal with stress and anxiety. Many of these strategies might work in the short term but can create long-term challenges. Finally, we started identifying what really matters to you and how your values can guide your actions.

### Why Does the Mind Seem So Negative?

Believe it or not, the human mind evolved to be a 'don't get killed machine.' Our ancestors needed to stay hyper-aware of threats, like predators or dangerous situations. This constant scanning for danger helped them survive, but in today's world, it means our minds are often on the lookout for problems, even when none exist.

Thoughts like 'What if I fail?' or 'I'm not good enough' are our brain's way of trying to protect us from perceived threats. While they can sometimes be useful, they often become a barrier when we believe them as absolute truths.

### Learning to Work with Thoughts

Trying to fight or control your thoughts is like wrestling a muddy pig you'll just end up exhausted and covered in mud. Instead, what if you could let those thoughts be, without letting them control your life?

The goal isn't to decide whether your thoughts are true or false, but to focus on whether they help you move toward the life you want.

John's mind often felt like a battleground, with relentless thoughts telling him he wasn't good enough and that things would never improve. The anger he directed at himself and others was exhausting. When he learned that thoughts are not facts, it was like stepping back from a heated argument and realizing he didn't have to fight every thought to prove it wrong.

The 'clouds in the sky' exercise helped him see his thoughts as transient or passing, rather than truths he had to wrestle with. It didn't solve his problems overnight, but it gave him breathing room to take a step back and to think about what really mattered.





### Exercise: **The Paper Push**

- **Grab a Piece of Paper**

Imagine this paper represents a thought you don't want to have, like "I'll never get it all done" or "I'm a failure."

- **Hold the Paper Out**

Push it away from you as far as you can, straightening your arms. Keep holding it out there.

While you're doing this, notice:

- How tiring it is.
- How distracting it is from what's happening around you.
- How hard it is to focus on anything else.

- **Rest the Paper on Your Lap**

Now, let the paper rest on your lap. Notice:

- How much less effort this takes.
- How much easier it is to engage with other things.
- How the thought hasn't disappeared, but it's no longer in your way.

This exercise demonstrates how much energy we waste trying to push away unwanted thoughts. By allowing the thought to 'sit on your lap,' you free yourself to focus on living with them and on the things that matter most to you.

### Exercise: **Clouds in the Sky**

- **Find a Comfortable Spot**

Sit somewhere quiet where you won't be disturbed.

- **Read down through these instructions and then try it.**

- **Close Your Eyes**

Picture a vast, clear blue sky with a few fluffy clouds drifting by.

- **Imagine Your Thoughts as Clouds**

Each time a thought pops into your mind, imagine it as a cloud forming in the sky. Watch it float by at its own pace.

- **Let the Clouds Drift**

Don't try to speed them up, stop them, or change them. If your mind wanders or you get caught up in a thought, gently bring your focus back to the clouds.

This exercise helps you see your thoughts for what they are—temporary mental events that come and go.

- **Practice Letting Thoughts Drift**

Over the next week, try practicing unhooking by writing down your own thoughts as they arise and practice saying, "I'm having the thought that..." before each one.

### **Unhooking from Thoughts**

When we get caught up in unhelpful thoughts, it's like being 'fused' to them, they become part of our reality. For example, believing 'I can't cope' as if it were an undeniable fact.

Unhooking is the process of unhooking from those thoughts. Instead of seeing them as truths, you learn to see them as just thoughts, words or images your brain creates.

### **Moving Forward**

In the next section, we'll build on these skills by focusing on how to stay present in the moment, even when your mind is racing or emotions are overwhelming. By practicing these techniques, you're already planting seeds for a more focused and fulfilling life. Let them grow.

# 3

## Mindfulness – Connecting to the Present Moment

In this section, we focus on mindfulness learning to bring your attention to the present moment with openness and curiosity. Mindfulness helps you increase awareness of your thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations, providing a powerful tool to manage stress and move toward the life you want.

### Recap of Section 2

In Section 2 we explored how believing our thoughts as absolute truths can create problems. We practiced viewing thoughts as just thoughts, observing them, and deciding if they're helpful for moving toward what matters most to us. We also practiced the 'Clouds in the Sky' exercise to notice and unhook from thoughts.

### Mindfulness: A New Way to Respond to Stress

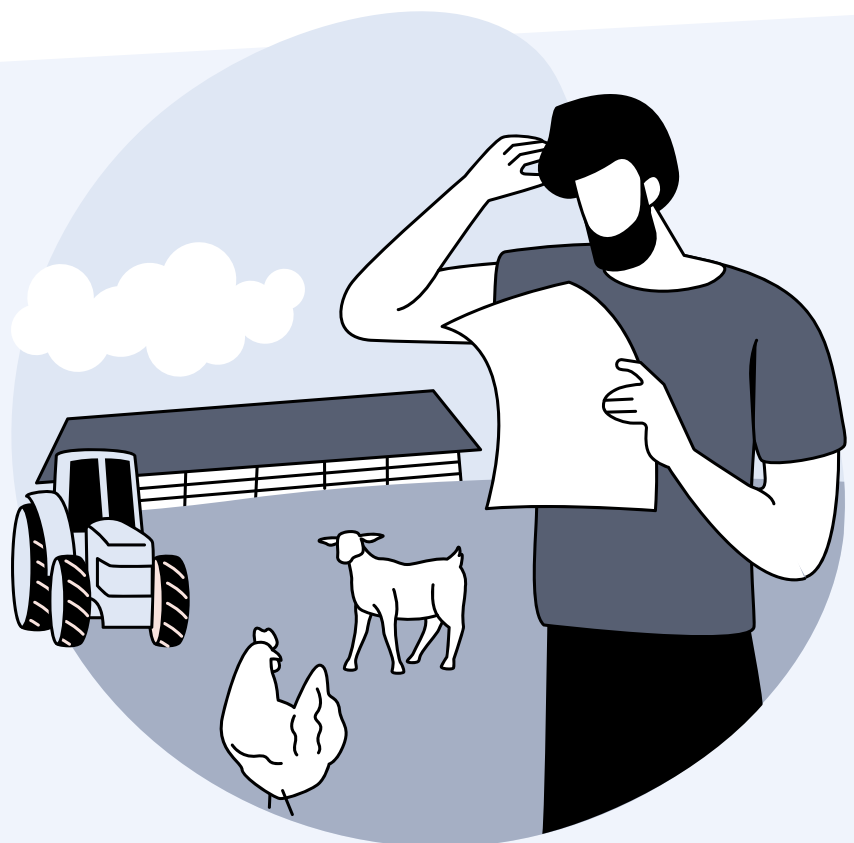
Mindfulness helps you:

- Notice thoughts and feelings without judgment.
- Respond intentionally or purposefully rather than reacting automatically or impulsively.
- Ground yourself in the present moment, reducing the risk of becoming overwhelmed.

Mindfulness involves paying attention to things we often overlook. Let's begin with a simple mindfulness exercise to focus on your breathing.

The mornings were the worst for John. He'd sit with his coffee, in his mind replaying arguments and failures from the past, or catastrophizing about the future. The present moment felt like something he could never grasp.

Learning the mindfulness exercises, like focusing on his breath and noticing the simple sensations of his daily chores, brought unexpected but welcome relief. Whether it was the warmth of the sun on his back while checking fences or the rhythm of his boots on the dirt path, these moments grounded him in the here and now. For the first time in ages, he felt a flicker of calm amidst the storm in his mind.





**Exercise: Mindfulness of Breathing**  
(this can be done in your house or jeep or tractor)

- **Get Comfortable**

Sit in a chair in your house or jeep or tractor with your back straight, feet flat on the ground, and shoulders relaxed. Take a moment to simply be present, there's nowhere you need to be, nothing you need to do for the next two minutes.

- **Notice Your Breath**

Observe the sensation of air entering your nostrils cool on the way in, warm on the way out. Feel the rise and fall of your chest and stomach as you breathe. Notice if your breathing is fast or slow, deep or shallow no need to change it.

- **Redirect Attention**

When your mind wanders (as it naturally will), gently notice what distracted you and bring your focus back to your breath.

- **Return to the Room**

When ready, open your eyes and notice your surroundings. When practicing this exercise in the future close your eyes (if comfortable) Take a moment to reflect on this exercise. How did it feel to simply notice your breath?

**Exercise: Three-Step Noticing what is present**

You can use this exercise anytime to connect with the present moment:

- **Three Things**

**See:** Name three things you can see in your environment.

**Hear:** Identify three distinct sounds.

**Sense:** Notice three physical sensations (e.g., the seat under you, the warmth of your hands).

- **Two Things**

**See:** Focus on two objects.

**Hear:** Notice two sounds.

**Sense:** Be aware of two sensations.

- **One Thing**

**See:** Pick one object to focus on.

**Hear:** Tune into one sound.

**Sense:** Pay attention to one sensation in your body.

Reflect on this exercise. What did you notice as you narrowed your focus?

**Exploring Emotions:**

Mindfulness allows us to be aware of our emotions rather than avoiding them. Often, we resist unpleasant feelings like stress or anxiety, which only makes them stronger. Let's explore a different approach.

**Exercise: Saying "Yes" to Emotions**

- Choose an object in your sight (e.g., a cup, phone, tractor).
- Say 'no' to the object, imagining how you'd resist it: 'This shouldn't be here. It's in the way.'
- Now say 'yes' to the object: 'It's here, and that's okay. I don't need to change it.'
- Notice the difference between resisting and accepting the object. We often bring the same resistance to our emotions.

**Exercise: Physicalizing Emotions**

Think of a mildly stressful situation.

- Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and focus on your body.
- Notice where you feel the stress physically (e.g., tension in your shoulders).
- Imagine the feeling as a physical object with shape, colour, and texture.
- Observe the object, then allow it to 'return' to your body.

What did you notice? For some people this exercise can help to experience emotions as sensations, not threats.

**Mindful Routine Practice**

Choose a routine activity from your daily life and each day make a conscious decision to bring moment by moment awareness to that activity. Possibilities for this could include: drinking tea or coffee, milking the cows, counting the livestock, servicing the machinery, having a shower, brushing your teeth, going for a walk etc. Let your awareness focus on the sensations and movements of your body and use your breath to help you to stay anchored in the present moment.

# 4

## Handling Stress and Taking Direction

Section 4 helps build on what we've already discussed about mindfulness and emotional openness, exploring new skills to handle your thoughts and move forward in a way that makes your life better. What could possibly go wrong ;-)

### Recap of Section 3

Last section, we focused on mindfulness as a tool to manage stress and build awareness helping us notice our experiences without judging them.

We also explored how trying to avoid uncomfortable feelings, like stress or anxiety, often backfires, trapping us in patterns that are not helpful. Instead, we practiced being open to these feelings through exercises like Seeing and Feeling as an Object. The key takeaway: when we're willing to stay present with our emotions, we gain the freedom to move toward what matters most.

Take a few moments to reflect on how practicing mindfulness in everyday activities went for you. Did you notice moments where you resisted unpleasant emotions? Were there times you allowed yourself to feel them instead?

In this section we'll learn how to handle our thoughts more effectively when they start ramping up stress. Instead of being ruled by the mind's chatter, we'll explore how to choose actions that help—not hinder—your life as a farmer and beyond.

### Understanding the Mind: The Problem with Reasons

Our minds are excellent at coming up with reasons for doing things—both helpful and unhelpful. For instance, you might choose one supermarket over another because it's closer, cheaper, or has better stock. These reasons make sense and guide your decision.

But what about the reasons we give ourselves when we want to avoid something uncomfortable? Imagine deciding to quit smoking. As the day approaches, your mind might say, "Life will be boring without cigarettes," or "I have great willpower; I can quit another time." While logical, these reasons don't help—they keep you stuck.

Instead of focusing on whether a reason is true, ask yourself: Does believing this reason make my life better or worse?



John hated feeling 'weak'. To him, emotions like sadness or fear were signs he was failing as a man and a farmer. He avoided them at all costs, turning to angry outbursts or spending long hours in the fields to drown them out.

The concept of allowing his feelings rather than fighting them felt unnatural at first, but the 'physicalising' exercise helped him see an alternative to avoiding his feelings. Imagining his anger as a heavy, jagged rock helped him see it for what it was – a burden he could choose not to keep carrying. He began to practice making space for his emotions, like making room for a storm to pass, instead of fighting it.

## The Chessboard Metaphor

Imagine your mind as a chessboard, with black pieces representing negative thoughts and emotions (e.g., anxiety, self-doubt) and white pieces representing positive ones (e.g., confidence, joy). Often, we align with the white pieces, fighting to eliminate the black ones. But what if you're not the pieces at all?

You are the chessboard—the space where all these thoughts and emotions play out. Without you, they wouldn't exist. Instead of getting caught in the battle, what happens when you step back and observe the game?

### Exercise 1: "Is This the Whole Story?"

1. Write down a characteristic you believe about yourself (e.g., "I'm impulsive" or "I lack confidence").
2. Note a reason why you think this is true (e.g., "I'm impulsive because I was spoiled as a child").
3. Now, write a completely different reason for the same belief (e.g., "I'm impulsive because I have an anxious temperament").

This exercise helps you see that the stories we tell about ourselves are just one version of many possible truths.

### Exercise 2: Rules of the Game

Reflect on the "rules" that guide your farming life. These might show up as sayings or beliefs you've absorbed over time. Here are some areas to explore:

- Relationships with other farmers and community members (e.g., trust, loyalty, competition).
- Managing stress and disappointment (e.g., "Push through, no matter what").
- Overcoming challenges (e.g., "If you work hard enough, you'll succeed").
- Fairness in the farming community (e.g., "Everyone should pull their weight").
- Your relationship with yourself as a farmer (e.g., "I must never show weakness").

Ask yourself: Are these rules helping or hindering me? What might change if I challenged them?

### Exercise 3: Observing Yourself

Let's practice seeing yourself as the observer of your thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Follow these steps:

- Recall a recent memory and notice the sights, sounds, and emotions present at that time. Observe that you were there, noticing it all.
- Now recall a memory from years ago, perhaps your teenage years. Notice that the same "you" was there, witnessing.
- Finally, recall a childhood memory. Again, recognize that you were present then, just as you are now.

Throughout all these changes, the 'you' who observes has remained constant. This is your observer self the part of you that isn't defined by your thoughts, emotions, or roles.

### Exercise 4: Self-Story Awareness

Write down statements you use to describe yourself, such as:

- Judgments (e.g., 'I'm bad at managing stress').
- Beliefs (e.g., 'I can't succeed because of [X]').
- Predictions (e.g., 'The farm will never recover').

Now ask yourself: Are these stories the whole truth? What might happen if you let go of your attachment to them? Notice when your mind comes up with unhelpful reasons or rigid rules. Pause, reflect, and ask: Does this thought help me live the life I want?

In this section, you've explored new ways to untangle yourself from unhelpful thoughts and stories. By stepping into the role of observer, you can approach life's challenges with more clarity and flexibility. See you next week!

# 5

## Setting Goals to Move Toward Your Values

Section 5 focuses on taking meaningful action aligned with your values. By setting clear goals, you'll make progress toward the kind of life you want, one step at a time.

### Recap of Section 4

Last section, we explored how detaching from difficult thoughts is like untangling barbed wire, you free yourself to act more flexibly and effectively. We also discussed how rigid rules, like 'the way it's always been done,' can limit your ability to respond to the realities of farming or life. Instead, we aim to make choices based on what matters most to us in the present moment.

### Commitment: Taking Small Steps Daily

When we think of 'commitment,' it often feels like a big promise for the future. But in Psychological Flexibility, commitment is about taking small, present-moment actions that align with your values. It's not about being perfect but about returning to what matters, one step at a time, even when life pulls you off course.

### Exercise: Clarify Your Values

- **Reconnect with Your Values**

Reflect on the values you identified in the first section. If they've shifted or evolved, note any changes.

- **Values as Your Compass**

Values are ongoing directions, like traveling west—you can always go further. Goals, however, are specific destinations, like reaching a particular town. Both work together: values guide your goals, and goals bring your values to life.

Despite some progress, John often felt stuck, spinning his wheels but going nowhere. When he sat down to set SMART goals, it was like pulling out a map after years of wandering. By focusing on what truly mattered being a supportive father and improving his health he broke down his ambitions into manageable steps.

Instead of trying to fix everything at once, he committed to a single action: taking a walk each evening with his wife. It wasn't easy at first, but each small step made him feel a little stronger and more in control of his life.



### Exercise: Set a SMART Goal

- **Specific:** Choose a clear action. Example: Instead of "be healthier," try "walk for 20 minutes to check the livestock instead of using the jeep or tractor."
- **Meaningful:** Ensure the goal aligns with your values.
- **Adaptive:** Focus on something that improves your life.
- **Realistic:** Make it achievable within your resources.
- **Time-Framed:** Set a deadline.

#### Example of a SMART Goal

- Area of life: Health
- Value in that area: Longevity via self-care  
SMART Goal: 'Walk for 20 minutes , three times this week.'

### Reflecting on values exercise:

- **Choose a Valued Action**  
Pick one action you can take this week that aligns with your values.
- **Rate Your Confidence**  
On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to follow through? If it's less than 7, break the goal into a smaller step.
- **Reflect on Barriers**  
Notice any thoughts or feelings that arise while completing the action, and how you respond to them.

### Exercise: Benefits and Obstacles

- **Identify Benefits**  
What positive outcomes would achieving this goal bring? For example: "I'll feel more energetic and less stressed."
- **Identify Obstacles**  
Consider internal barriers (e.g., self-doubt, procrastination) and external ones (e.g., lack of time). Write these down.
- **Plan for Obstacles**  
What strategies can you use to overcome these challenges? For example:

**Internal:** Practice unhooking from thoughts that are about self-doubt.

**External:** Rearrange your schedule or ask for help.

# 6

## Bringing It All Together

This final section ties together everything you've learned. We'll reflect on your progress and create a plan to continue building a meaningful, value-driven life.

### Recap of Section 5

In section 5 we explored setting SMART goals that align with your values and taking small, actionable steps toward them. How did your goals go? What thoughts or feelings came up as you worked toward them?

### Psychological Flexibility

Psychological flexibility is the ability to stay open to experiences, act in line with your values, and adapt to challenges. It's the 'engine' that keeps your tractor moving in the right direction, no matter the weather.

The four Core Skills of Psychological Flexibility can be summarised as LEGS:

1. **Let Feelings Be:** Just as you can't control the weather on your farm, you can't always control your feelings. Be curious about them as they are, without trying to change them.
2. **Expand Perspective:** Look at the bigger picture of your life. Broaden your perspective on your thoughts. Recognize that they are only part of your overall experience.
3. **Go Forward:** Keep moving forward with purpose, even when conditions are tough. Take actions that align with what matters to you, even when faced with challenging thoughts and feelings.
4. **Stay in Touch:** Make time to connect with family, friends, or your advisor. Staying connected helps build a support network that can provide support and advice when needed.

Looking back over his time in therapy John felt a sense of pride he hadn't felt in years. He wasn't 'fixed,' and the challenges of farming life hadn't disappeared, but he felt more in control and equipped to handle them. Using the skills he had learnt he saw how his anger and depression had often driven him to avoid important parts of his life, like connecting with his family.

By refocusing on his values, being a good father and a reliable community member, he could make choices that aligned with the person he wanted to be. The tools he'd learned weren't just concepts; they were practical ways to keep his life moving toward what mattered, even on the hardest days.





## Ending Resources

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Your journey doesn't end here! Below are some resources to help you continue developing these skills:

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### Helplines & Immediate Support

- **Pieta 24/7 Crisis Helpline**  
Free therapeutic support for people in suicidal distress or engaging in self-harm.  
1800 247 247 | Text HELP to 51444 | [pieta.ie](https://pieta.ie)
  - **Samaritans**  
24/7 confidential listening support.  
116 123 | [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) | [samaritans.org](https://samaritans.org)
  - **Text About It (50808)**  
Free, anonymous 24/7 text support for mental health issues.  
Text HELLO to 50808 | [text50808.ie](https://text50808.ie)
- 

### Mental Health & Farming Initiatives

- **On Feirm Ground**  
A training programme delivered to Teagasc and other agricultural advisors, equipping them to recognise and respond to signs of mental health distress in farmers and provide signposting to supports | <https://mensnetwork.ie/ofg>
  - **Mental Health Ireland – Farming Resilience**  
Offers guidance and resources for stress management and resilience-building.  
Farming Resilience
  - **IFA Mental Health Hub**  
Information and contacts for mental health services and supports, including bereavement resources | [ifa.ie/mental-health](https://ifa.ie/mental-health)
  - **Farm Well Hub**  
Centralised support for farmers' mental wellbeing | [farmwellhub.ie](https://farmwellhub.ie)
  - **Make the Moove**  
A farmer-focused wellbeing campaign promoting peer support, physical activity, and conversations about mental health in rural communities | [makethemoove.ie](https://makethemoove.ie)
  - **FARMRes Project**  
An EU initiative to promote farmer mental health awareness and prevention | [farmres.eu](https://farmres.eu)
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### Educational & Support Resources

- **"Minding Your Mental Health in Farming Life"**  
A guide from St. Patrick's Mental Health Services with tips on managing stress.  
[www.stpatricks.ie/media/2625/minding-your-mental-health-in-farming-life.pdf](https://www.stpatricks.ie/media/2625/minding-your-mental-health-in-farming-life.pdf)
  - **YourMentalHealth.ie (HSE)**  
National directory of mental health services and resources | [yourmentalhealth.ie](https://yourmentalhealth.ie)
  - **Aware**  
Supports individuals experiencing depression and bipolar disorder.  
1800 80 48 48 | [supportmail@aware.ie](mailto:supportmail@aware.ie) | [aware.ie](https://aware.ie)
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### Recommended Self-Help Books on Psychological Flexibility

- **A Liberated Mind by Dr. Steven C. Hayes**  
A science-based and compassionate guide to psychological flexibility, values, and transforming mental health struggles into personal growth.
  - **The Happiness Trap by Dr. Russ Harris**  
A practical guide to reducing stress and increasing wellbeing using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) tools. Especially accessible for those new to psychological approaches.
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### Community & Peer Support

- **Embrace FARM**  
Support for families affected by farm accidents and fatalities | [embracefarm.com](https://embracefarm.com)
  - **Clann Resource Centre (Galway)**  
Local family and mental health support | 091 557633 | [clannrescentre.com](https://clannrescentre.com)
  - **Elm Tree Support Centre (Clifden)**  
HSE mental health assessments and treatment in rural areas | 095 30930
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### Professional Support

- Visit [www.yourmentalhealth.ie](https://www.yourmentalhealth.ie) for information on how to mind your mental health, support others, or to find a support service in your area. You can speak to your GP, or you can also call the Your Mental Health Information Line on 1800 111 888, anytime day or night, for information on mental health services in your area.
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Thank you for taking this journey and for your commitment to creating a life guided by your values.

Keep practicing, stay curious, and be kind to yourself as you continue to grow.



University College Dublin  
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An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

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