

Jennifer – Putting our discussions together

We have talked about a lot of things and I will summarise those aspects that we have identified as really important for you to focus on in MBT.

Strengths

First we need to say how much strength you have shown in very difficult circumstances over a long time – right from the start things were really frightening in your childhood and you had to grow up too quickly and look after yourself. You wobbled at times when you were teenager like anyone would and drugs were the only way to take some of the pain. But later you managed to stop misusing them and rely more on your own strengths just as you did when you stopped cutting yourself even though that is still tempting. In treatment we need to work out what helped you do this build on those just as you did when you managed to not go back to Dylan's father despite being tempted by him. You stood your ground and are rightfully pleased with yourself about that. We need to identify those times that you decide what is best for you compared to those times when you decide on things because someone else wants you to.

Who am I and what do I want?

We worked out that you often have problems working out what you think and what you feel. This is really difficult when you are on your own and also when you are with your boyfriend. You have feelings that are intense and take you over but you couldn't easily say what they were as we talked. We agreed that this needs looking at really carefully as they lead to 'doing mind'. Sometimes, mostly when you feel bad about yourself, you try to work out what is going on in other people's minds and be whatever they want you to be – like with Dylan's dad. It makes you feel better but then you start resenting them.

Doing mind

You have to go out and be with someone at times. You cannot see any other way of looking after yourself. When you are like this you become desperate and want to be told or shown that you are liked and wanted. This is such a problem for you that it has led to you putting yourself at risk of harm. So looking at doing mind is one of the first things to think about in therapy.

Boom mind

Sometimes you become convinced that your boyfriend no longer loves you and you irritate him by asking him more and more about it. We thought that at these times your mind had gone boom and you could not get the thought out of your mind even when sometimes you begin to realise that you have no idea why you think it. It makes you more 'needy' and 'doing' becomes necessary like seeing him straightaway. You want to protect this relationship as you think he is good for you and you feel strongly for him and he gets on well with Dylan.

Boom mind can come on when you feel criticised or diminished and you are always alert to these attitudes when with other people. We need to watch out for how sensitive you can be and check it out when it happens in therapy, perhaps most easily in the individual sessions we talked about but also in the group too.

Relationships

We worked out that with your current boyfriend you want him to look after you and you often try to please him. With Dylan's father you were mostly worried that you were not pleasing him enough and worried that you were always doing something wrong. You said you were 'clingy'. I thought that was a bit rude about yourself and mentioned that this was a pattern that links with not knowing who you are and being anxious so it will be important to look at it in the group therapy when you are with other people to see if you have the same pattern with others there – will you try to be liked for example or find it hard to stand up for yourself?

The good relationship you have with Dylan is important and you 'know you are a good mother'. Sometimes your interaction with his father creates difficulties for you so the interaction between you all should be talked about to make sure you feel his care is safe and supportive.

MBT

Keep all of this in your mind and we will ask the therapists to keep it all in mind too. Then you can both focus on these areas to start with.

You might even worry that you won't do well enough in therapy or that you might have displeased your therapist and want to see them quickly if you panic. So we need to work out what happens if you worry too much between sessions and get 'doing mind'.

Aims at the beginning

Work on being alone and what happens.

Consider your relationship with your boyfriend so you can protect it and allow it to continue.

Keep considering you and Dylan and how things are for you as a mum and how he is getting on.

Watch out for Doing mind and Boom mind and work out what happens to bring them on.

If we do all these things over time in individual and group sessions we aim to help you answer 'who am I' and 'what do I want' as well as support your relationships. We still have to decide how to measure if that is happening.