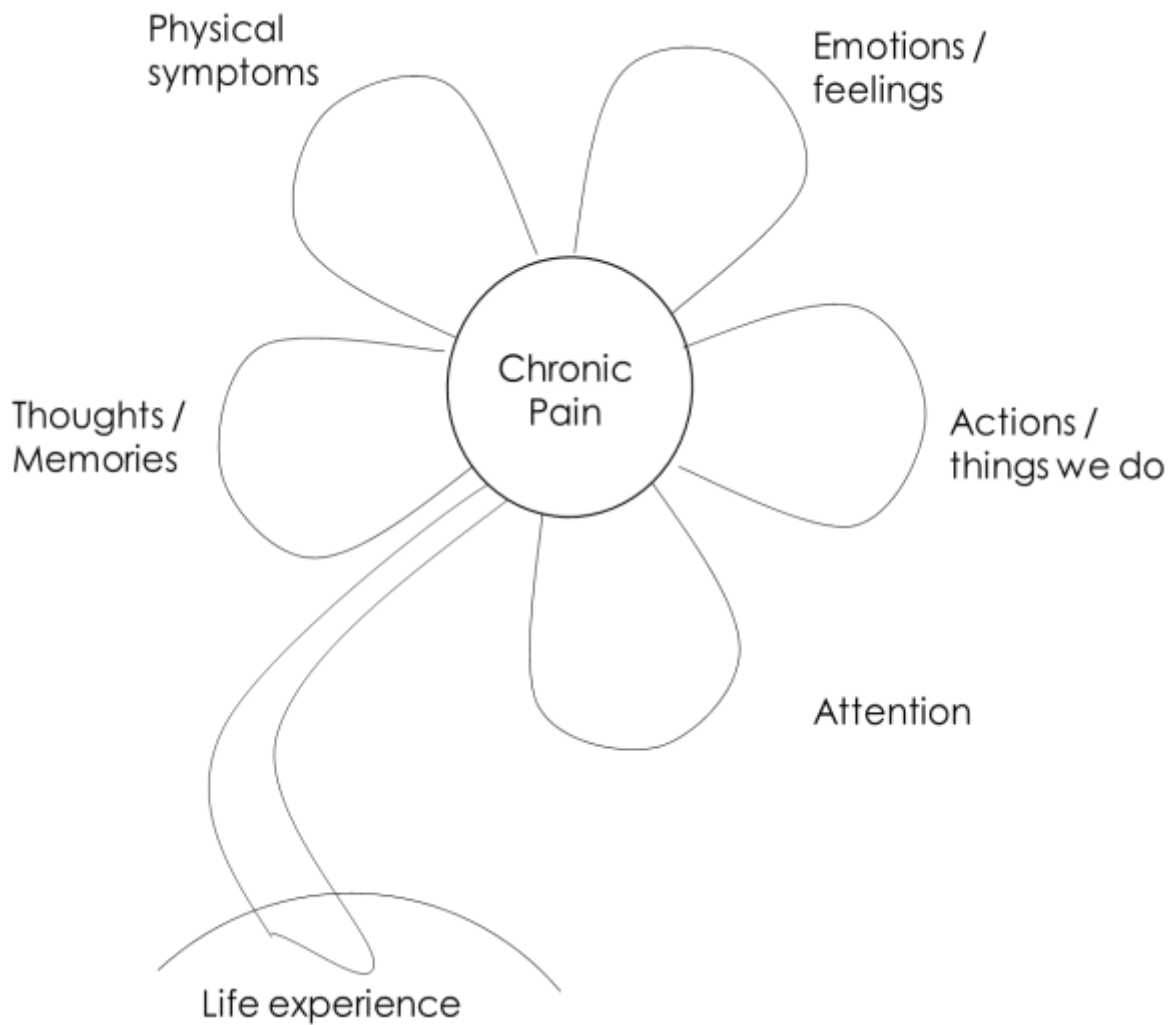
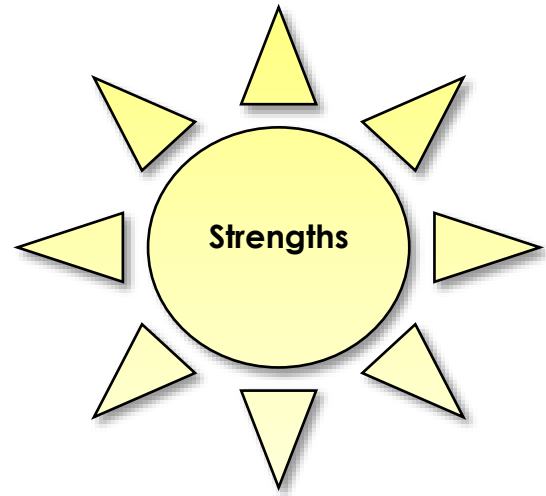


# The Vicious Flower Model



## How to use the vicious flower model

The vicious flower model can help make sense of our experience of living with chronic pain. It shows how our thoughts/memories, physical symptoms, emotions/feelings, actions and attention can all impact on our experience of chronic pain. For example:

### Thoughts

It is only natural that our physical pain conveys a signal of “danger” to our brains, influencing our thoughts or triggering memories. When we expect physical pain to mean something bad for our physical health this can negatively impact our feelings (e.g. causing fear) and actions (e.g. not going out).

### Physical symptoms

When we experience pain and we feel anxious or worried about this, it can cause our bodies to become more tense. This can lead to further pain and then feelings of sadness or frustration.

### Feelings

The experience of chronic pain can cause feelings of anxiety and low mood. It can also influence our feelings through the way it impacts our lives e.g., we might feel sad if we cannot do the things we used to be able to do.

### Behaviours/Actions

When living with chronic pain we often don't have enough energy to attend social events or do things we used to enjoy. We might observe ourselves avoiding meeting with friends, going out less, avoiding daily personal care regimes etc.

### Attention

When we experience pain we naturally pay more attention to the pain. We can become overly focused on the sensations, which means we are more likely to notice any changes, which can lead to an increase in worry about the pain getting worse.

### Strengths

This model also emphasises the role that our individual strengths can have on how we make sense of or handle our pain. For example, personal qualities like being kind or being a good listener can help us to build positive relationships with others which can lead to positive feelings and help us through difficult times.

When we understand these aspects of our own experience, we can identify which are helpful and which are not so helpful. Then we can make changes, by replacing any unhelpful aspects with more useful ways of coping, thereby breaking the vicious cycles.