

Exercise 20.3: Reviewing your good relationships

When you have a list of people to think about, start to build a timeline for each relationship. For each one, think about the questions below and write your thoughts down in your notebook or discuss them with your IPT therapist or team.

- When did the relationship start? What age were you?
- How did you meet? Did you do something to start the relationships or did the other person?
- Was it mainly a one-to-one relationship or were you part of a bigger group?
- How well did that suit you?
- What did you do together? How well did that suit you?
- What did you like most about that relationship?
- What do you think was successful about that relationship?
- What did you do that contributed to the success of the relationship?
- What impact did being in that relationships have on your depressive symptoms?
- Are you still in that relationship?
- If not, why did it end and how did that happen?

If you have added people who were not included in your original interpersonal inventory (see chapter 9), go back to the questions you answered in that chapter about your current relationships and ask the same kinds of questions about these good relationships in the past. Use the table here to note down your answers – or you can copy it into your notebook.

Name of the person					
Relationship with the person					
How much time did you spend together?					
Did the person know about your depression?					
Could you speak to the person about your feelings?					
Did you see each other socially?					

Could you ask the person for practical help and advice?					
Was it a flexible relationship?					
How would you describe the give and take in this relationship?					
Were you satisfied with this relationship?					
Did this relationship change when you became depressed?					

Thinking about each of your successful relationships in this way will produce a series of rich stories for you to draw on. Start by looking for repeating themes. Make a note of any similarities you notice across these successful relationships – for example, you chose the relationship and took the initiative to get it started; or you shared common interests, which gave you something to talk about; or you were part a bigger group,

which kept the momentum going. Most people find certain social situations easier than others, and this is an opportunity to focus carefully on what has helped you to be in relationships with other people.