Appendix 1

A brief guide to using the PTM Framework to support narratives

These prompts and questions are adapted from the ones used with the project's service user consultation group. They are offered as a possible way to start reflection and discussion about how the PTM Framework might apply, in personal or peer supported use, or between service users and professionals. The same structure could be adapted for family or groupwork, or for staff training, consultation, supervision or team formulation. It is best used in conjunction with educational material about the impacts of various forms of threat on the mind, brain and body, such as http://cwmtaf.wales/services/mental-health/stabilisation-pack/. It may also be helpful to use the 'Identities' template (see end of this appendix) as a starting point. At the end, there is an option to compare the emerging story with the broader patterns described under 'Provisional General Patterns.' This may help to provide validation and reassurance, as well as placing stories in a wider societal context.

The prompts and questions below are very much open to development and adaption. The project team welcomes feedback, especially from those working in services such as Child and Adolescent or Intellectual Disability settings, where modifications will be needed.

The Power Threat Meaning Framework: Guided Discussion

'What has happened to you?' (How is **Power** operating in your life?)

'How did it affect you?' (What kind of **Threats** does this pose?)

'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the **Meaning** of these situations and experiences to you?)

'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of **Threat Response** are you using?)

'What are your strengths?' (What access to **Power resources** do you have?)

'What is your story?' (How does all this fit together?)

Introduction to the discussion

The PTM Framework is an alternative way of understanding why people sometimes experience a whole range of forms of distress, confusion, fear and despair, from mild to severe. This is often called 'mental illness.' The PTM Framework is based on a great deal of evidence which suggests that if we know enough about people's relationships, social situations and life stories, and the struggles they have faced or are still facing, it is possible to make sense of these experiences. If we also think about people's strengths and supports, we may be able to come up with new ways forward.

Power Threat Meaning Framework Template

Impact of POWER	Core THREATS	MEANING and discourses

What made things better or worse?

Bodily reactions and THREAT RESPONSES and their functions
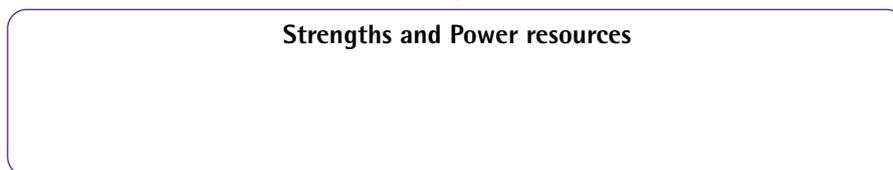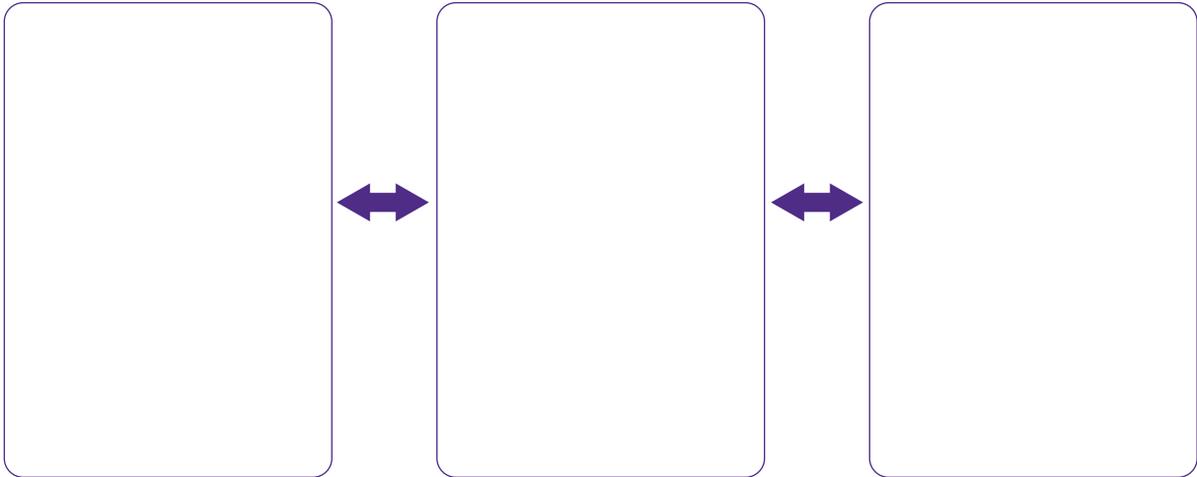
Strengths and Power resources

My story

Figure 1: Power Threat Meaning Framework Template

The PTM Framework is based on the first four questions above. The fifth question is about skills, strengths and supports. The responses to all the questions can be summarised in the form of a personal narrative or story (sometimes called a 'formulation' in services.)

The prompt questions below are a starting point for reflecting, either on your own or with support from a friend, peer worker or professional, about how all of this may apply to you or your family/group/social network. Since the questions are closely related to each other, the responses may overlap. For example, talking about the way Power has influenced your life will be very likely to lead to naming some of the Threats that have resulted, and perhaps also some of the ways you have been affected by those threats and how you cope with them. It may be helpful to jot down these thoughts in the relevant boxes in the template below as you work through the prompts, rather than following the order of the questions too rigidly.

There is no right or wrong way to use the prompts and the template. Most people will need to take this process in stages. They may wish to come back to it and add in new thoughts and ideas over time.

> The first part of the guided discussion invites you to think about the various ways in which power has affected you. The various types of power are described below. You may wish to jot down examples of how this may apply to you and your life.

POWER

'What has happened to you?' (How is Power operating in your life?)

'Power' can have several meanings. Generally it means being able to gain advantages or privileges, to arrange things to meet your own interests; or being able to gain advantages or privileges for others, to arrange things to meet their interests.

Power can operate through our partners, families, friends, communities, schools, work, health services, the police, government and the media. Power can be used negatively; for example when people are hurt, excluded or silenced by others. It can also be used positively, such as when others protect and care for us.

There is a great deal of evidence that the negative use of power, both in the past and in the present, can lead to mental health problems. There is also evidence that we can be helped and protected by positive and supportive power. Examples of the various kinds of power and the difficult events and circumstances that they can lead to, are given below. Some of them may apply to you.

Biological or embodied power is about our bodies and physical attributes. For example, we may enjoy strength, physical health, attractive appearance, sporting ability, and so on. On the other hand, we may experience physical limitations such as pain, disease, brain injury, disfigurement or disability.

Coercive power or power by force. Coercive power includes using aggression, violence or intimidation to make someone do things they don't want to do or to frighten or control them. Examples include being beaten as a child, bullying in school, domestic abuse, forced psychiatric interventions, or being mugged or attacked. On a wider scale, power by force happens in unsafe neighbourhoods, in systematic violence against certain groups

of people, and in political conflict and war. Used positively, power by force can protect us from threats or dangers.

Legal power The law is needed so that we can all live in a fair and peaceful society where our rights are protected. The law is also used to prosecute or imprison people or otherwise restrict their freedom, in order to protect the rest of society. On the other hand, sectioning or coercion by Mental Health Law may be experienced as damaging, and sometimes the law fails to prosecute someone who has harmed you, or may not give equal rights to certain people or groups. The welfare system is backed by legal power so that people can get the benefits they are entitled to. However, the law can also be used to impose unfair or harmful policies on vulnerable people.

Economic and material power Having enough money to live on, with good housing and enough to eat, is essential to our wellbeing. It also makes it easier to escape or change things we are unhappy with, to protect our families, and to access help and support when we need it. Sometimes our financial security is at risk from others such as parents, partners, landlords, public officials, or employers, who may have control over your finances, income, housing and possessions. Welfare systems and wider social and economic policies and structures can also create and maintain poverty and inequality.

Social or cultural capital refers to whether or not we have access to socially valued educational, job training and leisure opportunities. It is also about whether we have, or know how to get, the knowledge and information we need to in order to live the life we want, and whether we benefit from social connections and a sense of social confidence and belonging in the society we live in. All of these benefits can be passed on to the next generation. Without them, we may feel we are excluded from or don't deserve various forms of influence and opportunity, such as jobs, education, healthcare and so on.

Interpersonal power – All of the other kinds of power can operate through relationships. In addition, our relationships offer important sources of security, support, protection, validation, love and connection. This helps to build a sense of identity about who we are, as individuals, and as members of families, social networks and wider communities. Relationships with others, including family, colleagues, teachers, friends, neighbours, employers, healthcare staff, and public officials can also have negative aspects such as neglect, bullying, abuse, abandonment, invalidation, shame, humiliation, discrimination and so on. These experiences can impact on us and our sense of ourselves and our identities very negatively, especially if they occur in childhood.

Ideological power This means power over meaning, language and 'agendas.' This is one of the least obvious but most important forms of power, because it is about our thoughts and beliefs. Ideological messages, or ways of looking at ourselves and the world, can come from a whole range of sources. Some examples are parents, social networks, schools, advertisements, healthcare staff, politicians and other public figures, as well as messages from the media, internet and social media. Whether these messages are positive or negative, they are extremely influential, and can feel very difficult to challenge, partly because they are often accepted as normal and unquestionable. Ideological power includes:

● Power to create beliefs or stereotypes about your group. Our sense of identity draws partly on various social identities – for example, as women, men, trans, black or minority ethnic, as an older person, as someone with mental health problems, or

intellectual or physical disabilities and so on. We may also be identified as member of a sub-group, such as people who receive benefits, or lone parents. All these overlapping identities can have both positive and negative aspects.

● Power to tell people, directly or indirectly, how they should think, feel, look and behave in order to be an acceptable member of a group or of society. This can include almost anything, from the 'right' body size and appearance, to the 'right' lifestyle, the correct way to bring up children, express sexuality or religious beliefs, and so on. The further we are from fitting these standards, the harder it will be to develop a sense of confidence and self-worth.

● Power to silence or undermine you and/or your social group, for example through criticism, trivialising, undermining, deliberate misinterpretation of your views, intimidation, or sometimes by labelling you as 'mentally ill.' This can happen in direct contact with others, or indirectly through sources such as the legal system and the media.

● Power to interpret your experiences, behaviour and feelings and tell you what they mean. Ideally, children will be guided to develop their own understandings, beliefs and values. As adults, we may gain support from others who share our beliefs and worldviews. On the other hand, both children and adults can face silencing, invalidation, and having others' views and feelings imposed on them. Telling people that their experiences of distress are due to a 'mental illness', even if they disagree, can be seen as an example. This kind of power can work through many sources, including educational and social media material.

You will almost certainly have some ideas about how the various forms of power have affected you. The following prompts will help you reflect on this in more detail.

THREAT

'How did it affect you?' (What kind of Threats does this pose?)

When power is used in negative ways it often brings about very difficult and threatening situations or challenges. Some additional examples to help you think about threats in your own past or present life are given below.

Relationships: This can include parents, partners, other relatives, friends, colleagues, teachers, healthcare staff, and many others. As described above, relationship threats can include abandonment/rejection by or loss of loved ones or people you depend on; witnessing or experiencing domestic violence or bullying; being undermined or invalidated through criticism, hostility, humiliation, dismissing your feelings or beliefs; confusing communications; having other people's views or meanings imposed on you even if you don't agree with them; lack of love, care and protection; sexual, physical or emotional abuse; emotional, physical or material neglect; intergenerational trauma which is passed down through parents and other relatives.

Emotional: Faced with threats, people can feel unsafe and emotionally overwhelmed by a whole range of feelings which are very hard to manage.

Social/community: In their workplaces or local communities, people may face isolation, exclusion, hostility, bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination, loss of their social or work role, and so on.

Economic/material: This includes poverty, lack of housing, being unable to meet basic physical needs, or to access basic services for oneself and/or dependants.

Environmental: People may live, or have lived in, deprived and unsafe situations, either in their houses and/or in areas of poverty, conflict or war. They may have lost contact with their community, country of origin, and/or the natural world.

Bodily: This could include ill-health, chronic pain, disability, injury, brain injury, other losses of function, physical danger, starvation, exhaustion, having your body attacked or invaded.

Identity: This includes lack of support to develop your own beliefs, values and identity; loss of status; loss of social, cultural or religious identity, such as being a worker, a parent, or a member of a particular social or ethnic group. Without this, people and their social groups may be made to feel ashamed or devalued.

Value base: This includes loss of purpose, values, beliefs and meanings; loss of community histories, culture, rituals and practices.

Knowledge and meaning construction: Some kinds of ideological power may help to deprive people of the opportunity, support or social resources to question or make sense of their own experiences. For example, the internet gives access to huge amount of information, but this can also be manipulated to present certain viewpoints and suppress others. People's own knowledge, understanding and beliefs may be undermined due to unequal power relations between themselves and others. In the field of mental health, mainstream ideas and meanings may be promoted or imposed by family, healthcare staff, academics, media figures, researchers and others, making it hard to get information about alternative views on mental health. These situations may apply to large groups of people (e.g. women; the 'mentally ill'); or to certain individuals (e.g. by labelling them 'uneducated' or 'lacking insight').

Circumstances that make threats easier or harder to survive

These are some of the circumstances that are known to affect the impact of very difficult situations. You may have touched on them already in response to earlier prompts. These prompts may help you to think in more detail about the aspects of threat that were particularly hard for you, and also about some of the ways you managed to survive them.

- Whether you felt secure, protected and loved by your parents and carers during childhood.
- How old you were when any of these difficult events were happening.
- Whether the threat was a deliberate act by another person.
- Whether you felt betrayed or let down, by a person and/or an organisation.
- Whether you were faced with just one or several threats, and one or several perpetrators.
- Whether the threat happened once or was repeated or ongoing.
- How predictable the threat(s) were, and how much control you had over them.
- The severity of the threat(s) and whether or not there was any escape.
- Whether the threat was physically invasive.
- Whether the threats happened close together or at the same time.
- Whether the threat(s) were chronic and ongoing (environmental or personal).
- Whether there was a threat to your sense of self and who you are as a person.
- Whether the threat was from someone you were close to or depended on emotionally.
- Whether you had someone to confide in about the threats, who believed and protected you.

> *While thinking about threats, you will probably have been aware of the particular meanings that the threats had for you. For example, you may have felt afraid or ashamed. The following prompts will help you to reflect on this in more detail.*

MEANINGS

'What sense did you make of it?' (What is the Meaning of these situations and experiences to you?)

Meanings in this sense include beliefs, feelings and bodily reactions. We all attach meanings to the things that happen to us. Often, but not always, we are well aware of these meanings. Sometimes the meanings tend to leave us feeling even worse – for example 'It was all my fault' or 'I am unlovable' or 'No one can be trusted' This is a list of meanings that are often relevant to people who have experienced threats. They may apply to you, at different times and in different situations. You might also want to think about positive meanings that have helped keep you going. For example, people in your past or present life may have helped you to feel loved, valued, and protected.

Box 1: Meanings.

Unsafe, afraid, attacked	Trapped
Abandoned, rejected	Defeated
Helpless, powerless	Failed, inferior
Hopeless	Guilty, blameworthy, responsible
Invaded	Betrayed
Controlled	Shamed, humiliated
Emotionally overwhelmed	Sense of injustice/unfairness
Emotionally 'empty'	Sense of meaninglessness
Bad, unworthy	Contaminated, evil
Isolated, lonely	Alien, dangerous
Excluded, alienated	Different, 'abnormal'

Box 2: Threat Responses

Preparing to 'fight' or attack

Preparing to 'flee', escape, seek safety

Freeze response

Hypervigilance, startle responses, insomnia

Panic, phobias

Fragmented memory encoding

Memory suppression (amnesia)

Hearing voices

Dissociating (losing track of time/place; various degrees of splitting of awareness)

Depersonalisation, derealisation

Flashbacks

Nightmares

NEAD ('non-epileptic attack disorder')

Emotional numbing, flattening, indifference

Bodily numbing

Submitting, appeasing

Giving up, 'learned helplessness', low mood

Protesting, weeping, clinging

Suspicious thoughts

Emotional regression, withdrawal

'High' or extreme moods; rapid mood changes ('emotional dysregulation')

Holding unusual beliefs

Having unusual visual, olfactory, tactile sensations

Physical sensations – tension, dizziness, physical pain, tinnitus, sensations of heat or cold, exhaustion, skin irritation, gastrointestinal problems and many other bodily reactions

Emotional defences: denying what has happened, idealising people, and so on.

Intellectualisation (avoiding feelings and bodily sensations)

Attention/concentration problems

Confused/unstable self-image/sense of self

Confused/confusing speech and communication

Self-injury of various types

Self-neglect

Dieting, self-starvation

Bingeing, over-eating

Self-silencing

Mourning, grieving

Self-blame and self-punishment

Body hatred

Compulsive thoughts

Carrying out rituals and other 'safety behaviours'

Collecting, hoarding

Avoidance of/compulsive use of sexuality

Impulsivity

Anger, rage

Aggression and violence

Suicidal thinking and actions

Distrust of others

Feeling entitled

Reduced empathy

Distrust

Avoiding threat triggers

Striving, perfectionism, 'drive' response

Using drugs, alcohol, smoking

Overworking, over-exercising, etc.

Giving up hope/loss of faith in the world

Relational strategies: rejection and maintaining emotional distance; seeking care and attachments; taking on caring roles; isolation/avoidance of others; dominance, seeking control over others; and so on

Ruminating, reflecting, anticipating, imagining, interpreting, meaning-making

THREAT RESPONSES

'What did you have to do to survive?' (What kinds of Threat Response are you using?)

These ways of reacting to threat are sometimes called 'symptoms' but within this PTM Framework they are seen as 'threat responses'. They were necessary survival strategies when the threat(s) happened, and they may still be protective if the situation has not changed. In other words, they are there for a good reason. These reasons may include helping to manage overwhelming feelings; protection from physical danger; keeping a sense of control; protecting yourself from loss, hurt, rejection or abandonment; seeking or holding onto safe relationships; holding on to a sense of yourself and your identity; finding a place for yourself in social groups; meeting your emotional needs; communicating a need for care and help; and finding meaning and purpose in your life. However, some of these threat responses may no longer be needed or useful. In fact they may be causing you problems in their own right.

Threat responses lie on a spectrum from automatic bodily reactions, such as flashbacks or panic or the urge to fight or flee from danger, to more deliberate strategies, such as restricting your eating, or avoiding relationships, or using alcohol. Unusual experiences such as hearing voices or having mood swings or being overwhelmed by suspicious thoughts can also be seen as threat responses. The list in Box 2 may help you to identify some of your commonest or most troublesome reactions to threat.

(See Chapter 6 of the main publication for threat responses that may be more characteristic of children, older adults with cognitive impairments, people with intellectual disabilities, and people with neurological difficulties.)

STRENGTHS

'What are your strengths?' (What access to Power resources do you have?)

This may include people who care for you, aspects of your identity that you feel good about, skills and beliefs, and so on. Other possible strengths in your life, past and present, are:

- Loving and secure early relationships.
- Supportive partners, family and friends.
- Social support and a sense of belonging.
- Having the chance to enjoy material, leisure and educational opportunities.
- Having access to information/knowledge/alternative views (e.g. on mental health).
- Positive/socially valued aspects of your identity.
- Skills/abilities – such as intelligence, resourcefulness, determination, talents.

- Bodily resources – appearance, strength, health.
- Belief systems – faiths, community values and so on.
- Community practices and rituals.
- Connections to nature and the natural world.

You might want to think about some of these ways of building on your resources and strengths:

- Managing your emotions by releasing/expressing/processing feelings (e.g. writing, exercise, talking therapies, body therapies, creativity and the arts, compassion-focused approaches, mindfulness, meditation).
- Self-care – e.g. nutrition, exercise, rest, alternative therapies.
- Using or finding relationships for emotional support, protection, validation.
- Finding meaningful social roles and activities.
- Other cultural rituals, ceremonies and interventions.
- Getting involved in campaigning, activism.
- Creating/finding new narratives/meanings/beliefs/values.

What is your story?

When you have worked through all the prompts, it may be helpful to pull all this information together in the form of a narrative or story about your life, the difficulties you have faced, the effects all this has had on you, what it all meant to you, the ways you have coped, and the strengths that have enabled you to survive. The story is never final or complete and you will probably want to re-visit it.

Do other people have similar stories?

As well as offering a way to explore your own story, the PTM Framework summarises common patterns that can be found in many people's stories. These are called General Patterns, and they are based on a great deal of evidence about the impact of power, threat, meaning and threat response in people's lives. Sometimes it is helpful and reassuring to realise that other people have been through similar experiences and have reacted in similar ways. The General Patterns are described at www.bps.org.uk/PTM-Overview

It is important to note that:

- The General Patterns are not simple replacements for particular psychiatric diagnoses. They cut across diagnoses, and also include people with no diagnosis at all.
- Often there is no neat fit between a particular person and a particular General Pattern. Many people will recognise parts of their story in several patterns.
- The General Patterns are on a spectrum. The effects of power and threat on a particular person depends on many factors which make the impact either worse or better. Some people will have much milder difficulties, others will have greater struggles.
- The General Patterns will be amended and changed over time as more evidence emerges. In particular, we know less about typical patterns in non-Western cultures and settings, in the UK and across the world.

Identities

A person's sense of identity shapes every other aspect of their life and the way they respond to threats and difficulties. It may be helpful to think about how various aspects of your identity have influenced you. This is likely to include positive and supportive ways, such as feeling confident and being part of a group, as well as negative ways, such as being subjected to discrimination. You may wish to think about your ethnicity, class, age, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability or being defined as 'mentally ill'.

The invented example in the diagram below describes a young, heterosexual woman from a working class background who has been involved in a serious accident which has left her partially disabled. She has overcome early disadvantage and built a successful career, but she is now signed off sick. She is having flashbacks to the accident, and is also coping with many changes to her life and ambitions. At the moment she feels trapped and hopeless about her future. She has taken part in a guided discussion about the PTM Framework and realises that her reactions are described by two of the General Patterns, 'Surviving defeat, entrapment, disconnection and loss' and 'Surviving single threats'.

Identity: Female, heterosexual, working class, disabled

Surviving defeat, entrapment, disconnection and loss

Surviving single threats