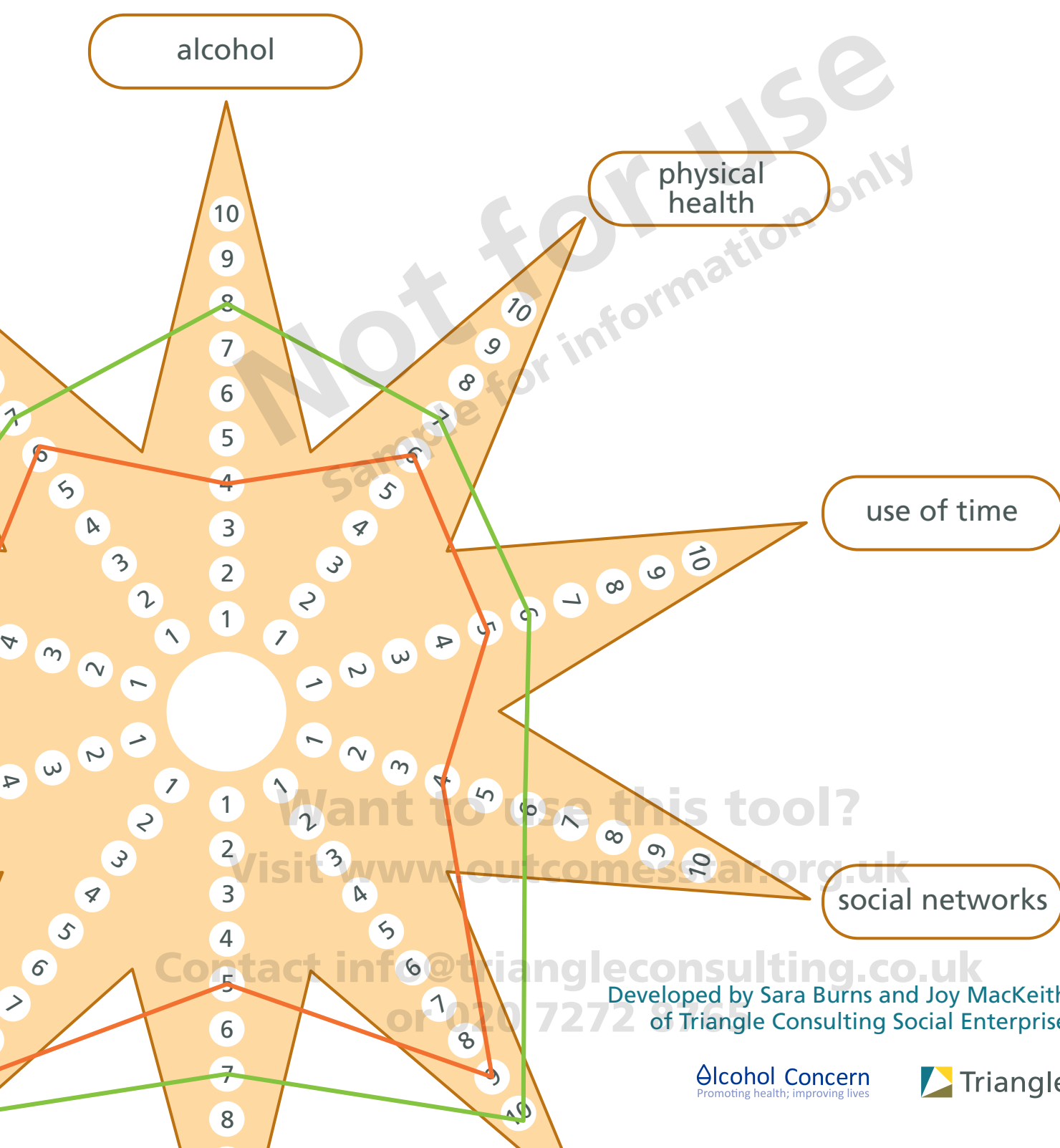


Alcohol Star™

The Outcomes Star for alcohol recovery



Published by

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Please contact info@triangleconsulting.co.uk to enquire about buying a licence and training.

Licences are also available for those wishing to translate the document into other languages.

The Outcomes Star™

This Star is part of a family of Outcomes Star tools. Each tool includes a Star Chart, User Guide or Quiz and guidance on implementation and some have visual and other resources. For other versions of the Outcomes Star, good practice and further information see www.outcomesstar.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of the Outcomes Star over its long evolution and we would like to thank all the clients, workers, managers, funders, academics and commissioners who have generously given their time and expertise.

The original commission for an outcome measurement system came from St Mungo's, with financial support from the London Housing Foundation, and Triangle recognises their vital roles in the development of the Outcomes Star. We would also like to acknowledge Kate Graham's important contribution to the development of the suite of Stars, both as a founding partner of Triangle and as co-author of the original Outcomes Star (now called the Outcomes Star for Homelessness).

We would particularly like to thank the following people and organisations for their contribution to this version of the Star:

- All the alcohol services that participated in the development of the original Alcohol Outcomes Spider on which the Alcohol Star is based
- Aquarius for their enthusiasm and work that made the 2009 test version of the Alcohol Star possible and Birmingham DAAT for funding the development of the test version
- East Midlands DAAT, Derbyshire Drug and Alcohol Service (DAAS), Addaction and Lincolnshire NHS service for testing the Alcohol Star in 2010 and input into this final version.

Want to use this tool?
Visit www.outcomesstar.org.uk

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or 020 7272 8765

Foreword from Alcohol Concern

Welcome to the Outcomes Star™ for Alcohol misuse services

Alcohol Concern has a long history of supporting the sector to take an outcomes approach. We pioneered new approaches to measuring and learning from client outcomes in the 1990s – work which won us the first Charity Award in 2000. Later we developed the Alcohol Outcomes Spider, in response to calls from the sector for a standard tool. Forty organisations contributed to the development of the Spider, during the period of one year. We know that many organisations use and appreciate the tool.

This version of the Outcomes Star brings up to date the Alcohol Outcomes Spider, benefiting from the work of Triangle developing the Star in the homelessness and mental health sectors, among others. It is more user-friendly, better presented and is supported by more comprehensive guidance for managers and workers. It is also available through the Star Online web application.

The Alcohol Star enables workers and clients to measure progress with “softer” outcomes, both holistic and subtle change. It is designed to complement measurement of change in consumption and other hard outcomes. The Alcohol Star is designed with and for alcohol misuse services and clients. We have included separate alcohol and drug scales to meet the needs of clients and services with both alcohol and drug misuse issues.

Widespread use of the Alcohol Star across the alcohol misuse sector will enable us to build a national evidence base, embed a common language, demonstrate the benefits of our work as a sector and continue to deepen our learning about what works and for whom.

Don Shenker, Chief Executive of Alcohol Concern from 2008 to 2011

Foreword from Triangle

We have been delighted and overwhelmed by the level of interest in the Outcomes Star across a range of sectors. We were very pleased to be able to work in partnership with Alcohol Concern to bring the Alcohol Outcomes Spider up to date within a growing family of Outcomes Star tools. We find this process of collaboration mutually beneficial and look forward to further joint working with Alcohol Concern and others.

We believe the Star has enormous potential to support change and develop evidence of effectiveness and are committed to its continuing development and promotion for the benefit of the alcohol misuse sector and ultimately the people who use its services.

Sara Burns and Joy MacKeith, Triangle

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Introducing the Alcohol Star™

We are here to help you with issues around your drinking or drug use

For many people, controlling how much you drink, stopping drinking or tackling drug misuse is a process. It means understanding the triggers, the effects on you and others and how you can make changes. This isn't easy but it can help to understand how change works.

Many people have found it useful to think about change as a journey with different stages. They find it helps them to think about which stage they are in and to get a picture of where they are on their journey. We use the Alcohol Star to help with this.

How we change things that aren't working for us – the Journey of Change

Everyone makes changes in their own way but the pattern is often similar.

At the beginning we may feel **stuck** – we don't feel able to face the problem or accept help.

From stuck we move to **accepting help**. At this stage we want to get away from the problem. We probably hope that someone else can sort it out for us and we may go along with some of the things they suggest.

Then we start **believing** that we can make a difference ourselves in our life. We look ahead towards how we want to live life. We take the initiative and try new things to achieve our goal in relation to drinking or drugs. This is a tough place to be and it can help to have plenty of support.

The next step is **learning** how to make what we want a reality, building on what works for us and increasing our confidence in a future without alcohol or drug misuse. It can be hard at times so we need support through this process.

As we learn we gradually become more **self-reliant**, until we get to the point when we can manage without help from an alcohol and drug support service.

There is a full-size version of the Journey of Change on page 7.



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The journey isn't necessarily a case of moving from the first to the last stage. People start in different places and you can move forwards or backwards as things change. Wherever you are, placing yourself on the Journey of Change can help you see where you have come from, what your next step is and how we can best help you.

Seeing the big picture – the Star™

Most people who spend time with us in this service want to make changes in one or more of the following areas. These are the areas of your life that the Star will help you look at:

1. Alcohol
2. Physical health
3. Use of time
4. Social networks
5. Drug use
6. Emotional health
7. Offending
8. Accommodation
9. Money
10. Family and relationships.

Recovery isn't necessarily moving from the first stage to the last

Different people will be at different stages and may move forwards or backwards as their circumstances change. Wherever you are in your recovery, placing yourself on the Journey of Change can help you see where you have come from, what your next step is and what support you need to get there.

It's not just down to you

The Alcohol Star focuses primarily on your journey and the things that you and your worker can do to support your recovery. However, it is important to recognise that there may be conditions which affect your recovery but are beyond your control. These may include housing, work opportunities, financial constraints or the right support being available to you. Using the Star may help you clarify areas where there are external factors holding you back and where support can help.

How to complete the Star™

For each of the ten areas there is a scale. Each scale follows the same pattern, or Journey of Change, with five stages.

To complete the Star, look at each of the ten scales one by one and talk them over with your keyworker. Together you can agree where you are in each area. Then mark the number on the Star Chart and connect the points to create a picture of the areas of your life that are working well and the areas that are causing difficulties.

This picture will help you and your worker to agree on what areas to work on together. From there you can start thinking about the actions you want to take and the support that would help you to carry them out.

Your own personal journey

You and your keyworker will come back to the Star at regular intervals. You will look at the scales again with your keyworker, agree where you are and plot a new shape on the Star Chart.

Over time, this will help you to build a picture of your progress. You will see where you have come from and how things have changed for you. This can help you to see things in a new way – to put the ups and downs of each week into a bigger picture.

Looking over your Star Charts and those of other service users also helps the service to build up a picture of how we are doing as a project, where people make most changes and where we may need to provide more help or do things differently.

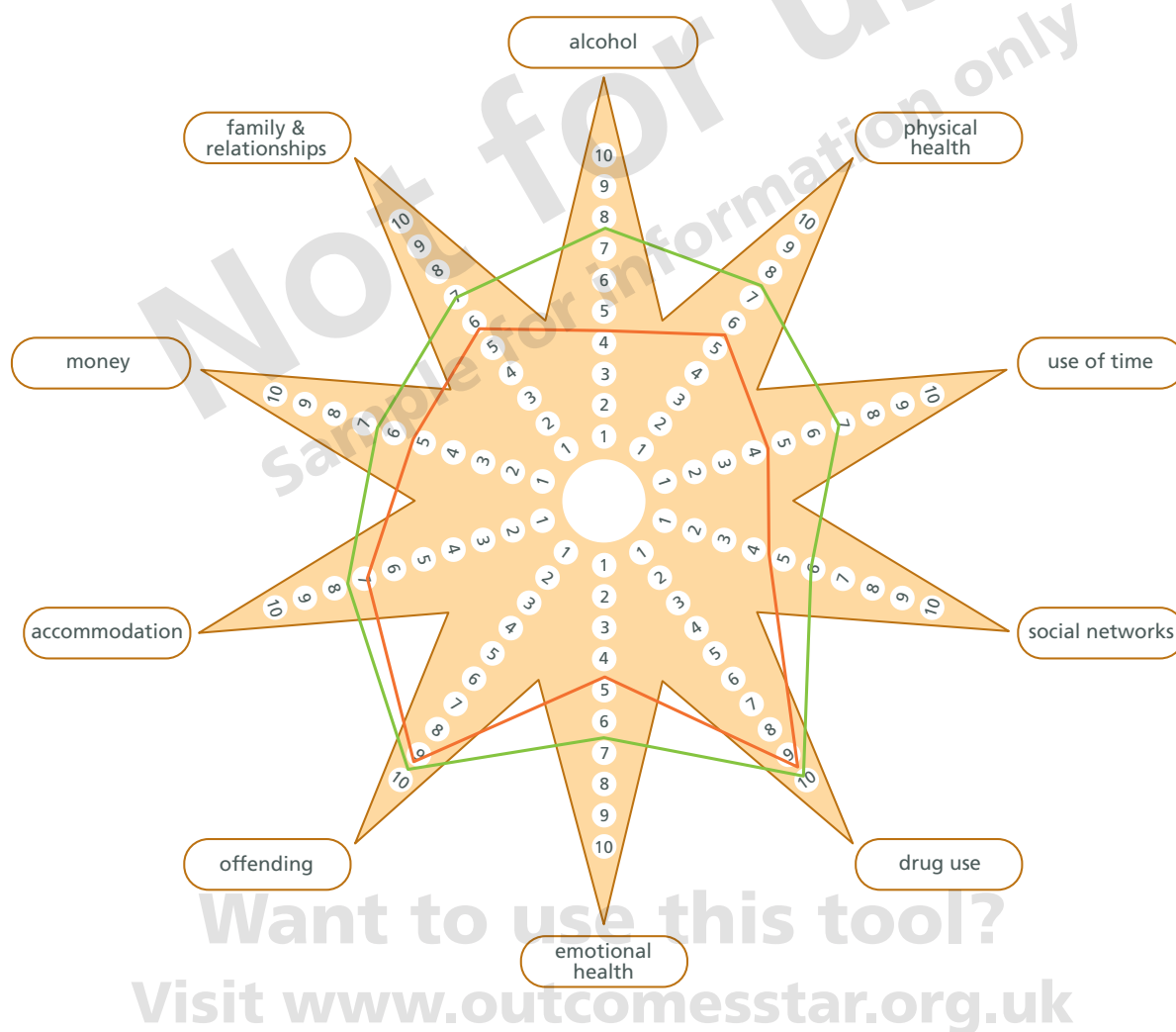


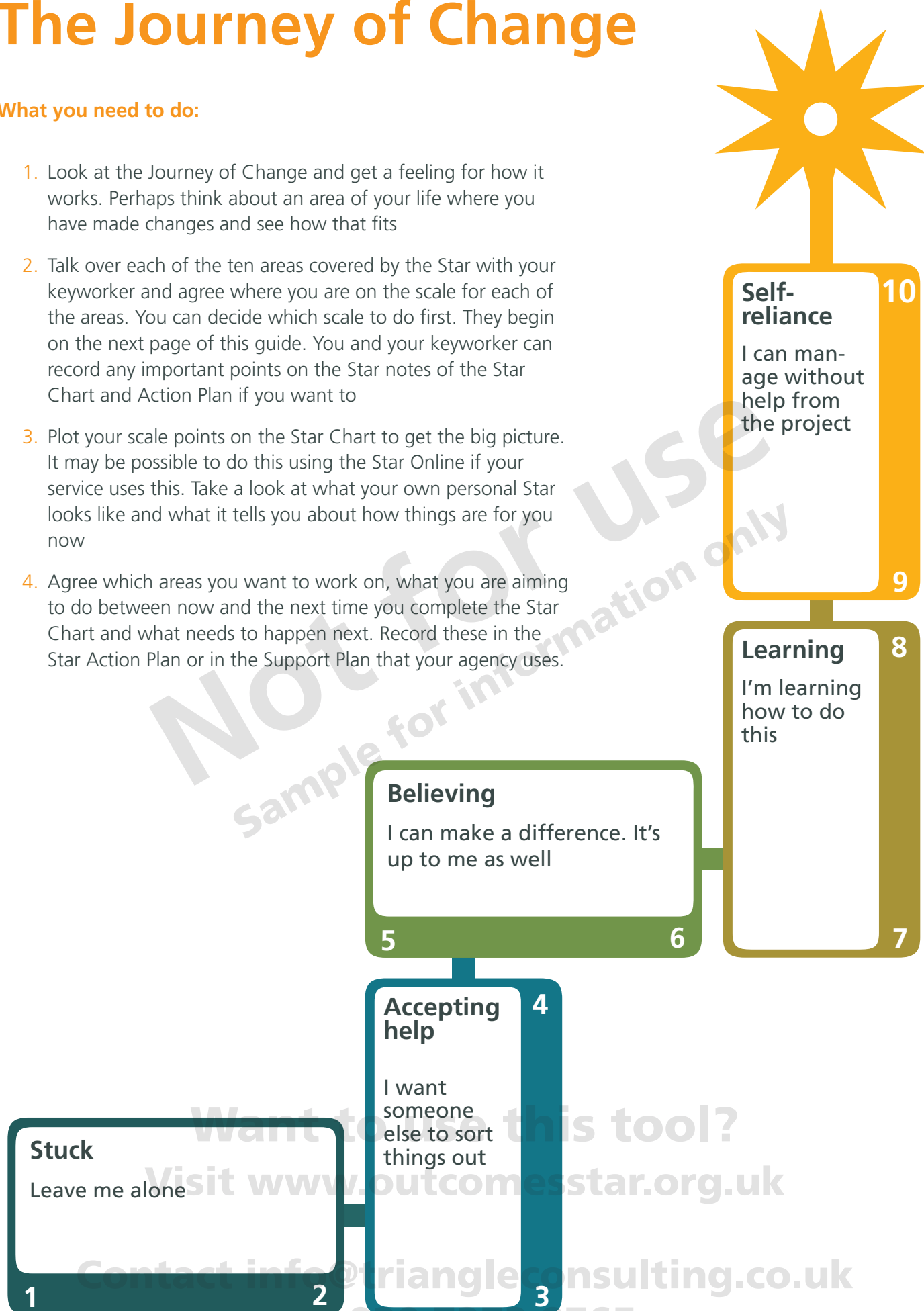
Figure 1: A completed Alcohol Star

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The Journey of Change

What you need to do:

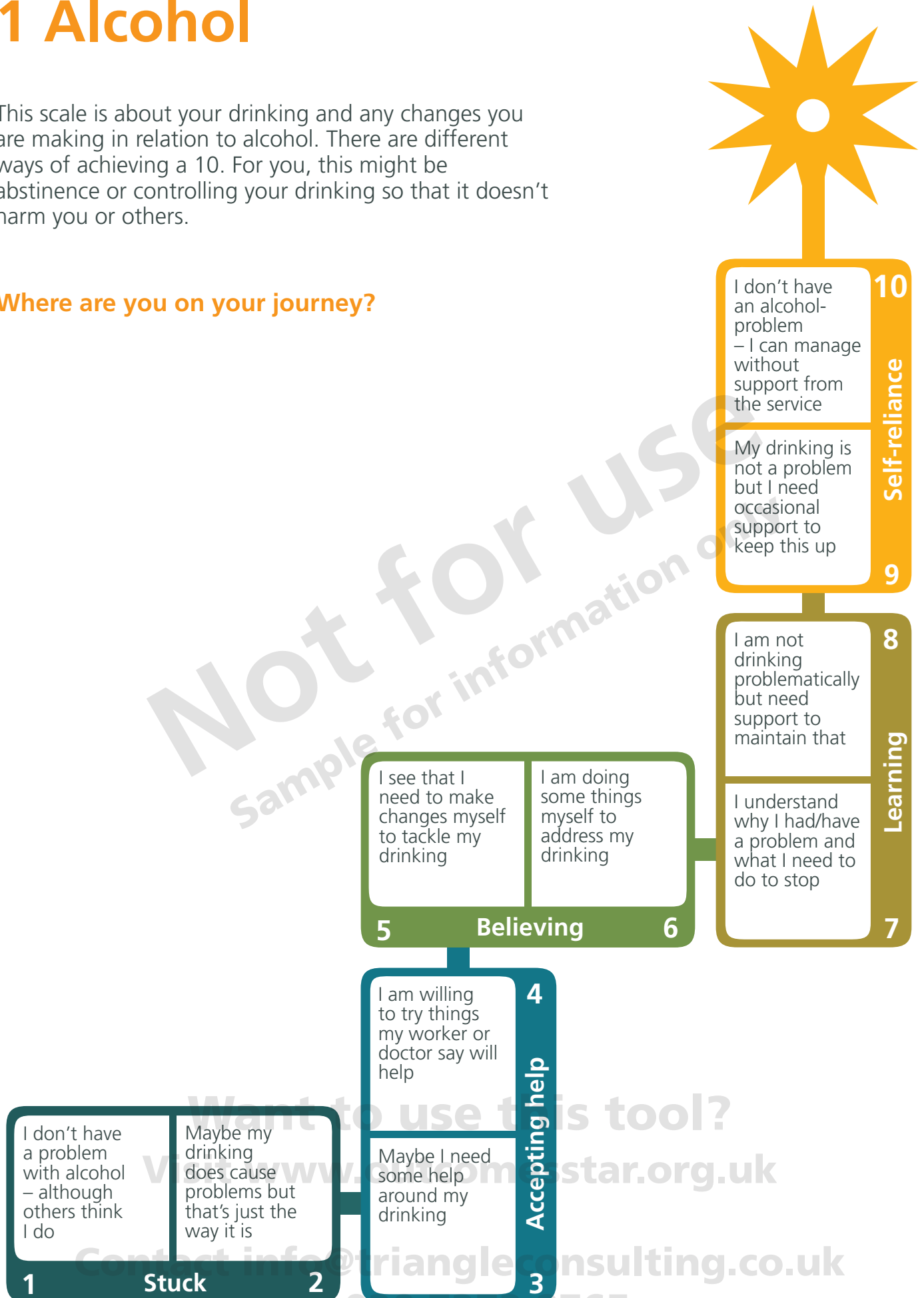
1. Look at the Journey of Change and get a feeling for how it works. Perhaps think about an area of your life where you have made changes and see how that fits
2. Talk over each of the ten areas covered by the Star with your keyworker and agree where you are on the scale for each of the areas. You can decide which scale to do first. They begin on the next page of this guide. You and your keyworker can record any important points on the Star notes of the Star Chart and Action Plan if you want to
3. Plot your scale points on the Star Chart to get the big picture. It may be possible to do this using the Star Online if your service uses this. Take a look at what your own personal Star looks like and what it tells you about how things are for you now
4. Agree which areas you want to work on, what you are aiming to do between now and the next time you complete the Star Chart and what needs to happen next. Record these in the Star Action Plan or in the Support Plan that your agency uses.



1 Alcohol

This scale is about your drinking and any changes you are making in relation to alcohol. There are different ways of achieving a 10. For you, this might be abstinence or controlling your drinking so that it doesn't harm you or others.

Where are you on your journey?



1 Alcohol (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I don't have an alcohol-problem – I can manage without support from the service

- You have reached your drinking goal and have strategies to maintain it effectively
- If you drink alcohol, it is in moderation and does not damage your health, well-being or relationships
- Family, friends, your GP, self-help groups (e.g. AA) provide any ongoing support that you need
- If you need extra help at any time, you are aware of this and know how to access support

9 My drinking is not a problem but I need occasional support to keep this up

- You are using strategies to avoid relapse, with occasional difficulties
- You don't need much support from the service but appreciate knowing it's there

Learning

8 I am not drinking problematically but need support to maintain that

- You have new ways of coping with the feelings and situations that led to drinking and are not drinking problematically
- This is not easy and you are not totally confident, so you need regular support from the service to maintain this

7 I understand why I had/have a problem and what I need to do to stop

- You are exploring your triggers for excessive drinking, reflecting on the causes and have come up with ways of dealing with triggers
- You have probably reduced your drinking substantially and are able to learn from lapses with support
- You have ways to maintain your progress and are increasingly confident in your ability to do so

Believing

6 I am doing some things myself to address my drinking

- You are reducing how much you drink or are stopping completely for periods
- You are making other changes to avoid drinking triggers and support your recovery

5 I see that I need to make changes myself to tackle my drinking

- You have taken on board that controlling or stopping drinking means that you need to make changes
- There is a sense that you are 'up for it'
- You are able to make choices about your drinking goal and the support you need to achieve it

Accepting help

4 I am willing to try things my worker or doctor say will help

- You agree to try harm-reduction measures but it can be hard to stick to them
- You may agree to a plan of support but your workers or advisors are taking the lead. Without them you could slip back
- You attend most appointments

3 Maybe I need some help around my drinking

- You are fed up with the negative consequences of your drinking
- You want change but do not believe it is possible
- It may seem like there are good reasons for your drinking or others are to blame
- You often miss appointments
- You may have just come out of detox and doubt you can keep it up

Stuck

2 Maybe my drinking does cause problems but that's just the way it is

- As 1, but every now and then you are worried about your drinking
- You are not ready to make changes and don't engage with support

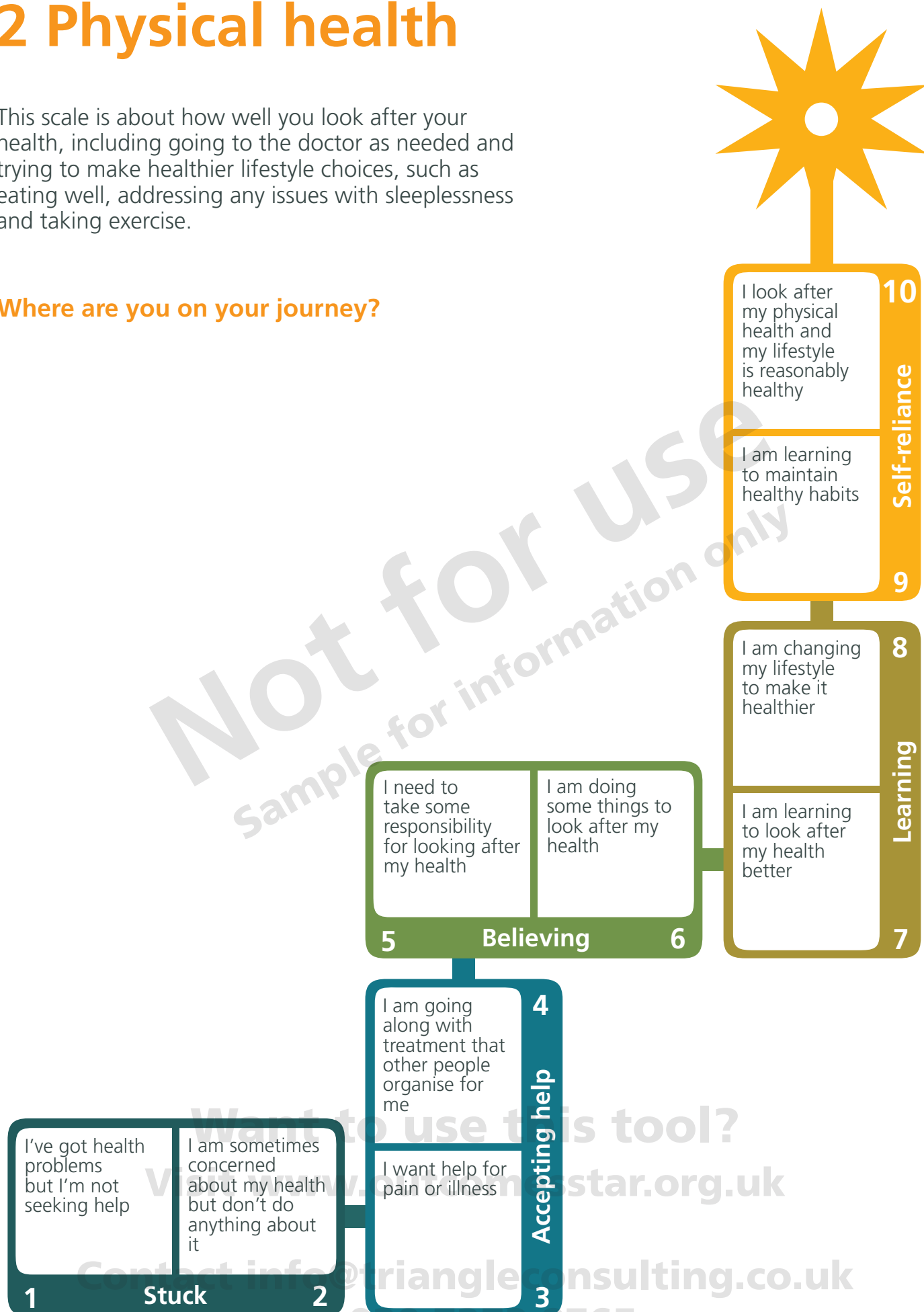
1 I don't have a problem with alcohol – although others think I do

- Your life is orientated around drinking but you don't want to talk about it
- Or, other people say your drinking is a problem, but you don't think it is
- Drinking may be seriously damaging your health

2 Physical health

This scale is about how well you look after your health, including going to the doctor as needed and trying to make healthier lifestyle choices, such as eating well, addressing any issues with sleeplessness and taking exercise.

Where are you on your journey?



2 Physical health (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I look after my physical health and my lifestyle is reasonably healthy

- You have an independent and responsible approach to your physical health
- Your diet is mostly OK, you take exercise, do what you need to do to sleep well enough and keep unhealthy habits to a minimum
- You may or may not actually be in good health or feel physically well but you are managing any conditions as well as possible to maximise your health

9 I am learning to maintain healthy habits

- As 10, but you need occasional support to reinforce and maintain healthy habits

Learning

8 I am changing my lifestyle to make it healthier

- You consistently access healthcare and take prescribed medication by this point, if not before
- You are making positive changes in your lifestyle with support, for example changing your diet, exercising more consistently or stopping smoking

7 I am learning to look after my health better

- You see the link between getting treatment, healthier choices and feeling better
- As a result, your motivation to care for your health is increasing
- You may be feeling physically healthier or sleeping better
- Change is difficult, so you need support

Believing

6 I am doing some things to look after my health

- You attend health appointments on your own (or with friends or family)
- You may try out changing diet, exercise, addressing sleep problems or other lifestyle changes
- You don't keep up changes for long but begin to sense what might work for you

5 I need to take some responsibility for looking after my health

- You actively want to look after your health, though not sure how to put that into practice
- You engage in discussions about health and actively explore options

Accepting help

4 I am going along with treatment that other people organise for me

- You see a doctor regularly, if needed, but only if someone else organises it
- You may be feeling better as a result of the treatment you are receiving

3 I want help for pain or illness

- You want to do something about any pain or discomfort you are in
- You will see a doctor or nurse but only if someone else takes you – you probably wouldn't go alone
- Although you are getting help with major problems, you are not very interested in addressing less severe or less obvious ones

Stuck

2 I am sometimes concerned about my health but don't do anything about it

- You occasionally discuss health briefly or ask for help but then refuse support when offered
- You don't believe it is possible to feel better

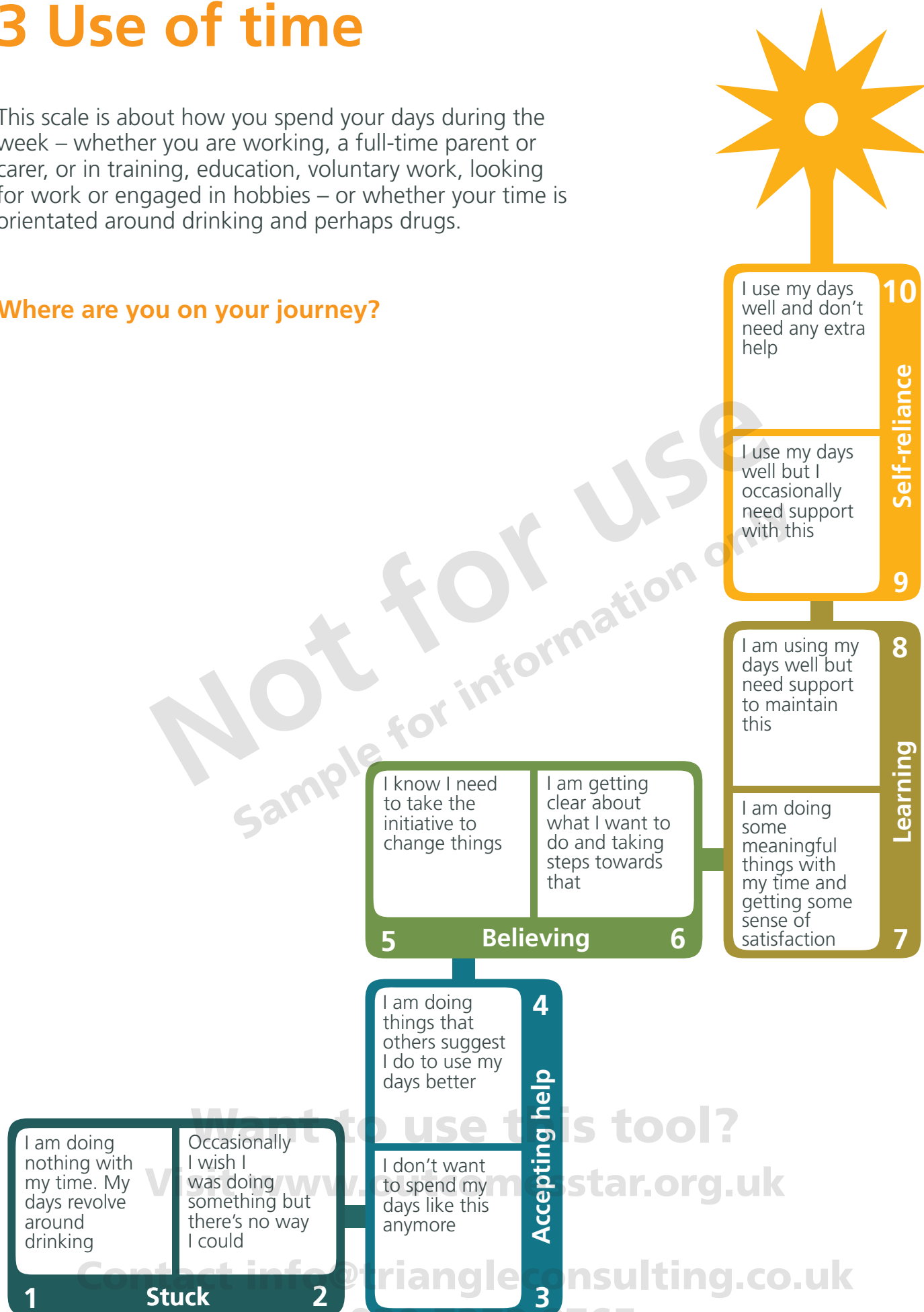
1 I've got health problems but I'm not seeking help

- You don't go to the doctor or seek help even for pressing health problems, for instance ulcers or liver disease
- You may be neglecting your health to the point of self-harm
- In your sex life and relationships, you may be behaving in ways that put you at risk, for instance of violence, infections or unwanted pregnancy
- You don't want to discuss your health, or it feels too hard to even think about it

3 Use of time

This scale is about how you spend your days during the week – whether you are working, a full-time parent or carer, or in training, education, voluntary work, looking for work or engaged in hobbies – or whether your time is orientated around drinking and perhaps drugs.

Where are you on your journey?



3 Use of time (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I use my days well and don't need any extra help

- You are engaged in a regular activity which works for you, for instance paid employment, full-time parenting, voluntary work or training
- You are able to change jobs, advance and progress, organise training or activities, or address changes affecting your days, such as your children getting older, without the support of the service – friends, family and colleagues give you any support you need

9 I use my days well but I occasionally need support with this

- As 10, but you need help occasionally, for instance if circumstances change or a course comes to an end and you need to make new arrangements

Learning

8 I am using my days well but need support to maintain this

- You are engaged in a regular activity that works for you, for instance paid employment, full-time parenting, voluntary work or training
- You may encounter difficulties but with support you can learn from these

7 I am doing some meaningful things with my time and getting some sense of satisfaction

- You are learning what sorts of activities you enjoy and getting closer to doing the things you want to do
- You run into problems at times and you need help to get through them
- If you are working, you are not at significant risk of losing your job due to alcohol or drugs and are learning how to manage work stress and other triggers

Believing

6 I am getting clear about what I want to do and taking steps towards that

- You have some sense of the direction you might want to go in but it's hard to put that into practice so you need support
- You are setting and meeting short-term goals
- You are trying new training courses, work or volunteering with support

5 I know I need to take the initiative to change things

- You are actively considering the future and your options for work, training, education or other activities
- If you are in work and this is contributing to your problem drinking, you are aware of that and talking about how to make changes

Accepting help

4 I am doing things that others suggest I do to use my days better

- If you are working, you are at high risk of losing your job due to drinking or drugs
- If you have other responsibilities, such as parenting, you are at high risk of neglecting those responsibilities
- You follow through on actions agreed with your worker but need lots of encouragement to do this

3 I don't want to spend my days like this anymore

- You are doing very little or nothing with your time but are fed up with living like this and want to change
- You want help but don't have a sense of what else is possible
- You agree with your worker to do things but after the meeting you lose motivation and don't follow through

Stuck

2 Occasionally I wish I was doing something but there's no way I could

- As 1, but you are occasionally fed up with doing nothing and may talk about this, though not for long and you refuse any offers of help with how to use your time
- Your daily life is too chaotic to manage a routine or to fulfil what responsibilities you have

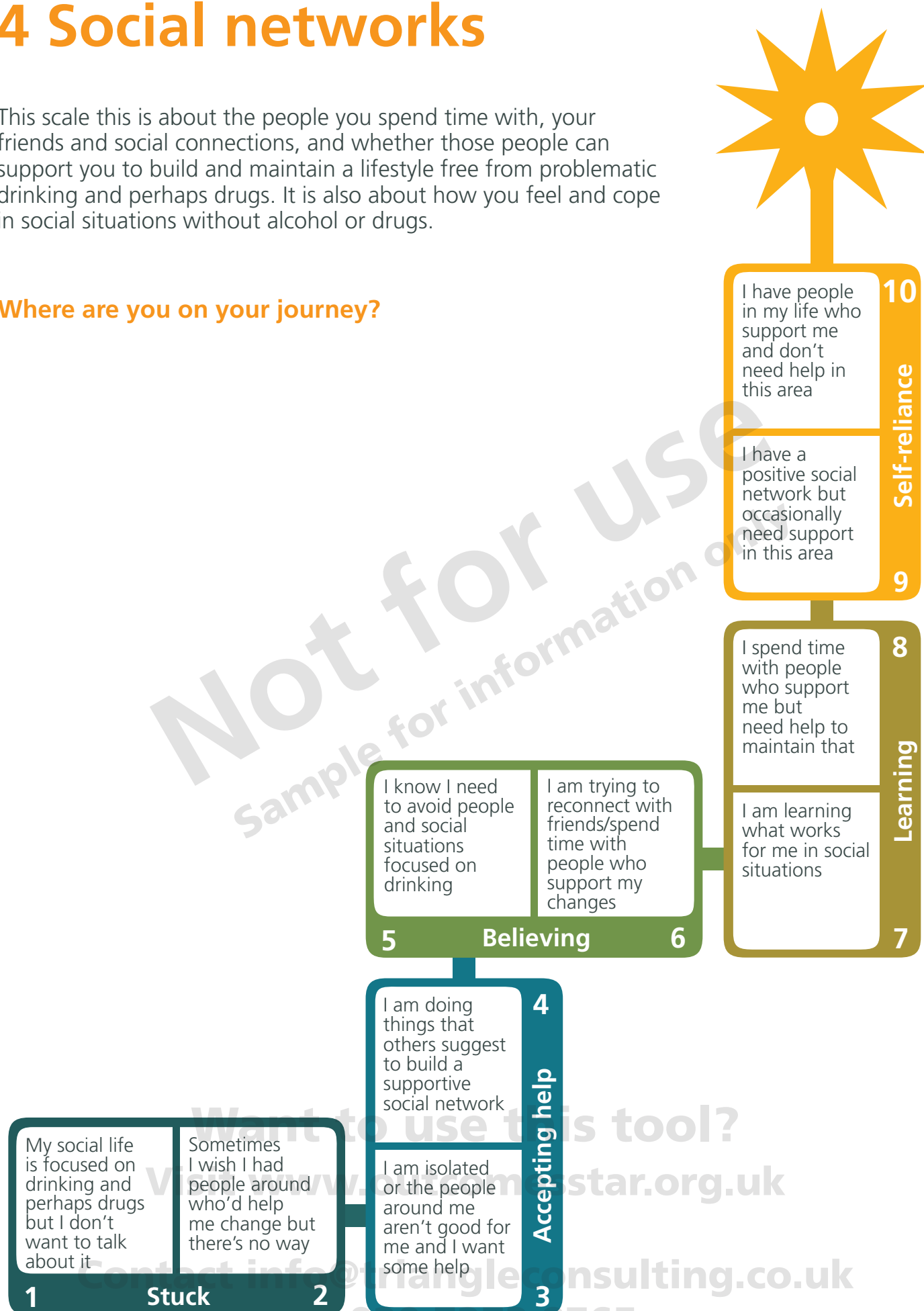
1 I am doing nothing with my time. My days revolve around drinking

- You are not working or in training, education or doing another activity, for instance as a full-time parent, and you don't want to talk about how you use your days
- You regularly drink and perhaps take drugs in the daytime, including weekdays
- Your life is too chaotic to manage a routine or to fulfil the responsibilities you have
- You are not able – or don't want – to think about how you are using your time in the day

4 Social networks

This scale is about the people you spend time with, your friends and social connections, and whether those people can support you to build and maintain a lifestyle free from problematic drinking and perhaps drugs. It is also about how you feel and cope in social situations without alcohol or drugs.

Where are you on your journey?



4 Social networks (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I have people in my life who support me and don't need help in this area

- You have the level of social contact that you need and want
- The people you spend time with mostly support you to maintain a lifestyle free from problem drinking and drugs
- You feel confident enough in social situations without drinking problematically or using drugs
- You don't need any help from the service in this area

9 I have a positive social network but occasionally need support in this area

- As 10, but you occasionally need support when particular difficulties arise

Learning

8 I spend time with people who support me but need help to maintain that

- You have relationships with colleagues and friends that are not based on drinking or drugs
- You have a social support network in place so that you don't become isolated
- You may feel uncertain in social situations or encounter difficulties but you can learn from these with support

7 I am learning what works for me in social situations

- You have a sense of who your friends are and who you can trust and you are choosing to spend time with them
- You are learning how to survive or even enjoy social situations without drinking problematically or using drugs
- You run into problems at times and need help to get through them

Believing

6 I am trying to reconnect with friends/spend time with people who support my changes

- You have social contact with people outside a drinking network
- You may be getting to know other people through the service or trying to rebuild past friendships
- At times you actively avoid people and situations that revolve around alcohol or drugs but this is hard and sometimes you go back to those networks

5 I know I need to avoid people and social situations focused on drinking

- You know that the people you spend time with make a difference in either holding you back or supporting you to change
- You want to make positive choices about who you spend time with but it might seem frightening to let go of some people or you don't know how to find new people who will support you not drinking or reducing your drinking

Accepting help

4 I am doing things that others suggest to build a supportive social network

- You follow through on actions agreed in case work, with lots of encouragement
- If you have helpful friends or colleagues, you are at high risk of losing them due to drinking and perhaps drugs

3 I am isolated or the people around me aren't good for me and I want some help

- You recognise that the people you spend time with are not a helpful influence or, if you are isolated, you feel you want more social contact
- You would like things to be different and are open to talking about your social circle (or lack of it) but don't have a sense of what else is possible
- You agree to do things with your worker but lose motivation and don't follow through

Stuck

2 Sometimes I wish I had people around who'd help me change but there's no way

- You are occasionally fed up with your social networks or with being alone but not for long
- When workers try to help you with this you find it hard to talk about and don't feel ready to make changes yet

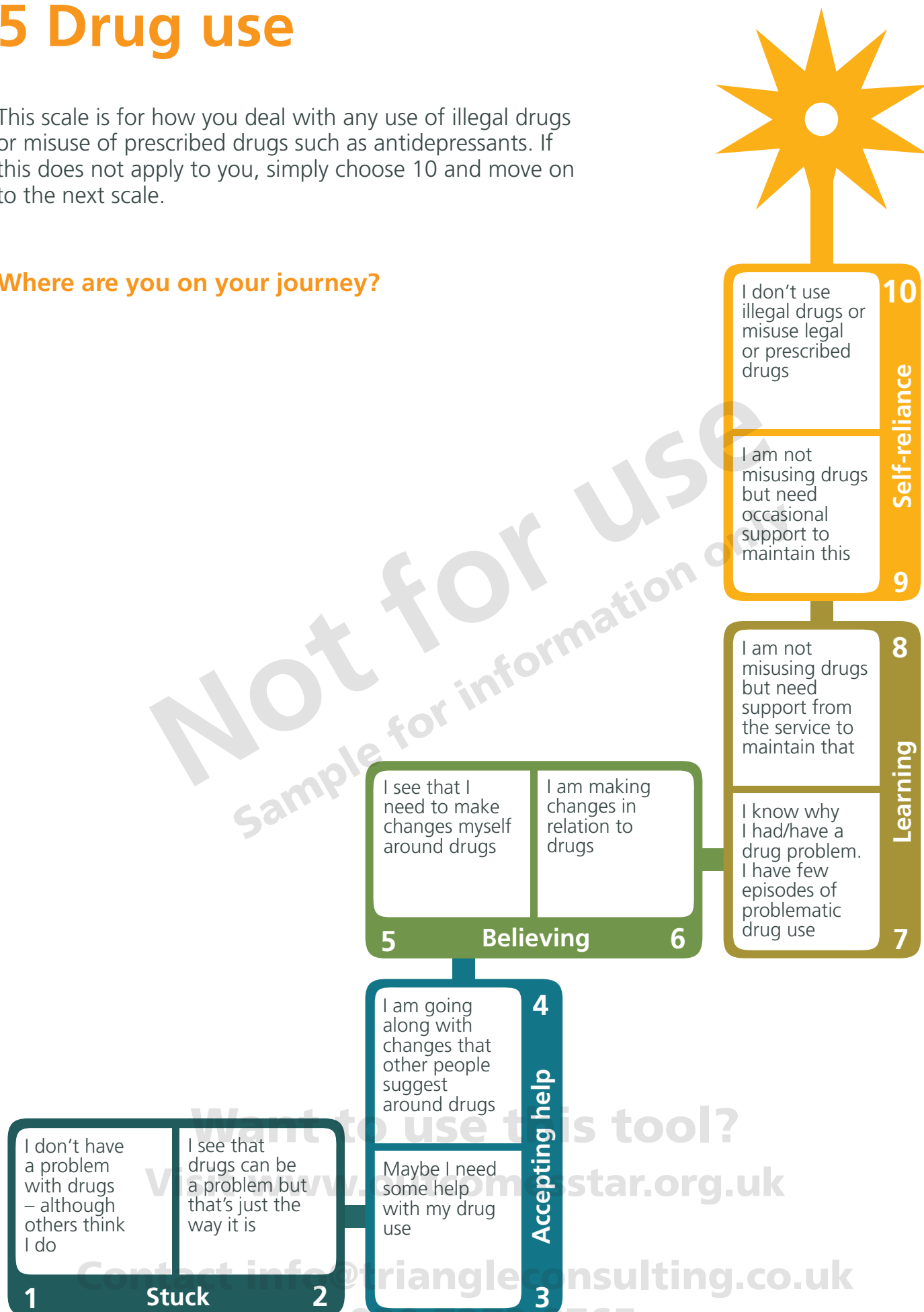
1 My social life is focused on drinking and perhaps drugs but I don't want to talk about it

- Either you are isolated or any friendships or social contact are focused on alcohol and perhaps drugs
- You may not feel confident with other people unless you have been drinking
- You don't see a problem with how things are or don't want to talk about it with workers

5 Drug use

This scale is for how you deal with any use of illegal drugs or misuse of prescribed drugs such as antidepressants. If this does not apply to you, simply choose 10 and move on to the next scale.

Where are you on your journey?



5 Drug use (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I don't use illegal drugs or misuse legal or prescribed drugs

- You don't use any illegal drugs and any use of prescribed drugs, including methadone, is as directed by a doctor and does not damage your health, well-being or relationships
- If drugs have been an issue in the past, your family, friends, GP or self-help groups (for instance NA) provide any ongoing support you need and you can access extra help in the future, if needed

9 I am not misusing drugs but need occasional support to maintain this

- You are using strategies to avoid relapse
- You don't need much support but appreciate knowing it's there

Learning

8 I am not misusing drugs but need support from the service to maintain that

- You have new ways of coping with feelings and situations that have led to drug use in the past
- You have few or no episodes of problematic drug use
- You need regular support from the service to maintain this

7 I know why I had/have a drug problem. I have few episodes of problematic drug use

- You are learning for yourself how to deal with triggers and high-risk situations and your confidence is growing
- Any problematic drug use is infrequent or moderate and you are able to learn from lapses, with support

Believing

6 I am making changes in relation to drugs

- There is a sense that you are 'up for it' in relation to addressing drugs issues
- You are reducing your use of drugs or may stop completely for periods
- Occasionally, you actively avoid certain situations or people that could trigger or are associated with your use of drugs

5 I see that I need to make changes myself around drugs

- You recognise that addressing drugs will require change on your part
- You are actively exploring and considering options to help you with this

Accepting help

4 I am going along with changes that other people suggest around drugs

- You agree to try harm-reduction measures but it can be hard to stick to them
- You may agree to a plan of support but your workers or advisors are taking the lead and without them you could slip back
- You attend appointments around drug issues fairly regularly

3 Maybe I need some help with my drug use

- You are concerned about the harm caused by your drug use, at least sometimes
- You want to make changes in relation to drugs but do not believe it is possible
- You often miss appointments that relate to your use of drugs

Stuck

2 I see that drugs can be a problem but that's just the way it is

- As 1, but you have glimmers of awareness about the harm caused by drugs
- You do not engage with support or consider change

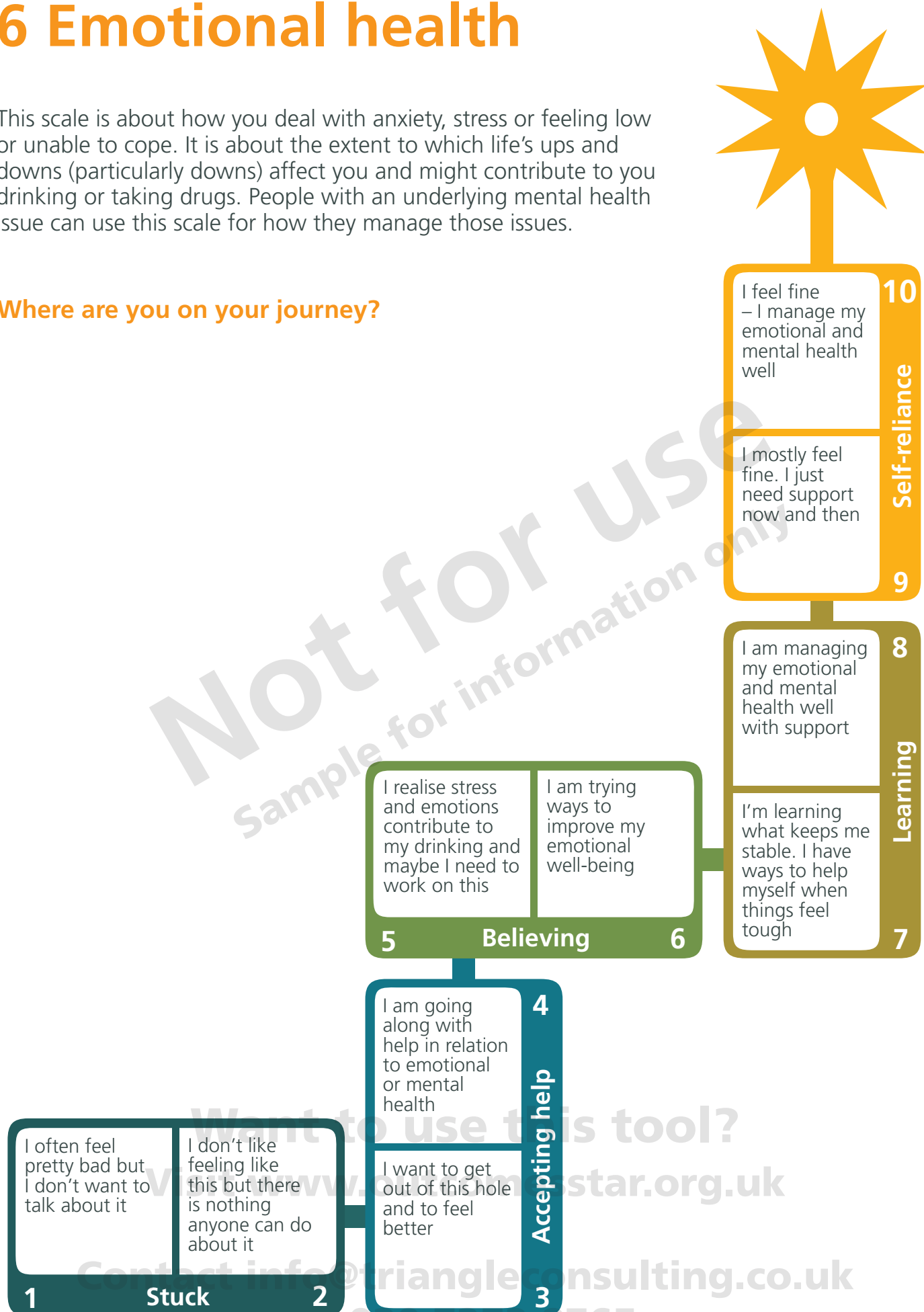
1 I don't have a problem with drugs – although others think I do

- Your drug use is at harmful or risky levels
- Your life may be orientated around drugs and alcohol or your use is seriously affecting other people
- You don't think this is a problem or you are not ready to talk about it

6 Emotional health

This scale is about how you deal with anxiety, stress or feeling low or unable to cope. It is about the extent to which life's ups and downs (particularly downs) affect you and might contribute to you drinking or taking drugs. People with an underlying mental health issue can use this scale for how they manage those issues.

Where are you on your journey?



6 Emotional health (detail)

Self-reliance

10 I feel fine – I manage my emotional and mental health well

- You feel reasonably resilient and positive emotionally, within the inevitable ups and downs and stresses that are part of life
- Strong emotions do not cause you to drink
- Your family and/or friends provide you with enough emotional support when things feel hard so you don't need help from an alcohol service
- If you have a diagnosed mental health problem, you may have symptoms but you are managing them well

9 I mostly feel fine. I just need support now and then

- As 10, but you may find the idea of letting go of support frightening
- You are comfortable with your ways of coping

Learning

8 I am managing my emotional and mental health well with support

- You are using strategies to feel OK and deal with stress but it can be difficult so it helps to have ongoing support
- Strong emotions or any underlying mental health issues are unlikely to trigger your drinking
- You take any prescribed medication without support

7 I'm learning what keeps me stable. I have ways to help myself when things feel tough

- You understand how stress and emotions can trigger drinking and perhaps using drugs
- You are starting to make better choices and can see the effect of this on how you feel
- If you have a mental health problem, you understand the symptoms, what triggers relapse and what helps you feel better

Believing

6 I am trying ways to improve my emotional well-being

- You may be doing things to lift your mood, work with stress or stabilise your emotions and avoiding things that have a negative effect
- If you are on medication, you are taking it as prescribed
- You are likely to need good support

5 I realise stress and emotions contribute to my drinking and maybe I need to work on this

- You can see there is a link between your drinking and how you feel emotionally
- You believe you can find ways to feel better emotionally to reduce the effect of any mental health problem but you are not sure how

Accepting help

4 I am going along with help in relation to emotional or mental health

- You feel very anxious, stressed, depressed or up and down and it is hard to believe you could feel different
- You don't believe this is linked to alcohol or drugs but you accept help most of the time and go along with suggestions to feel better

3 I want to get out of this hole and to feel better

- Your symptoms of anxiety, stress or depression are severe
- You will discuss this and/or make appointments but often do not attend or follow through
- If you are on medication for a mental health issue, you may take it but erratically

Stuck

2 I don't like feeling like this but there is nothing anyone can do about it

- As 1 but you will occasionally talk about symptoms
- You don't see the link between how you feel and your drinking or drug misuse
- If help is offered, you do not engage meaningfully

1 I often feel pretty bad but I don't want to talk about it

- Symptoms such as high anxiety, stress, depression, insomnia, panic attacks, low self-worth or suicidal thoughts are causing you distress and have a severe effect on your daily life but you don't want to talk about it
- There may be an underlying mental health problem that is not being addressed