

Chapter 15: Preventing damage and boosting your coping skills

CARE test: downloadable chart

Purpose of this chart: Use this CARE chart to carefully test out your ideas, schemes or projects that may be risky and influenced by your elevated mood.

Tips for using this chart:

- Follow the steps in the CARE acronym detailed on the top of the chart
- Ask those whose opinions you trust and value in the step where you ask the opinion of others.

For more detailed instructions and explanations about using this chart see pp. 186 of *Living with Bipolar*.

The CARE test

My idea, project or scheme is:

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Consequences <i>Weigh up the risks and potential negative consequences versus possible benefits. Get someone to assist you if you find it hard to see any risks.</i>	Ask others <i>Ask at least two other people in your support circle and note down their views. If their opinion is different from yours, do not do what you have planned until your mood has time to settle and you can reconsider your plans</i>	Realistic? <i>Look to see if you currently have mood symptoms, assess if your thinking is distorted. Examine if you have the experience, skills, resources and realistic time frame in which to carry out your idea.</i>	Enough time? <i>Plan to postpone deciding about your idea for 48 hours or until you have a few good night's sleep or you are well. If you feel your idea has to be done immediately and there is a chance your mood is an elevated it may be better rather to direct your energy to reducing your warning signs. There will be other opportunities. Write your idea into your ideas list to review when you have recovered.</i>