

4. IT'S ALL IN THE MIND: DEALING WITH FEELINGS

How do you Deal with your feelings?

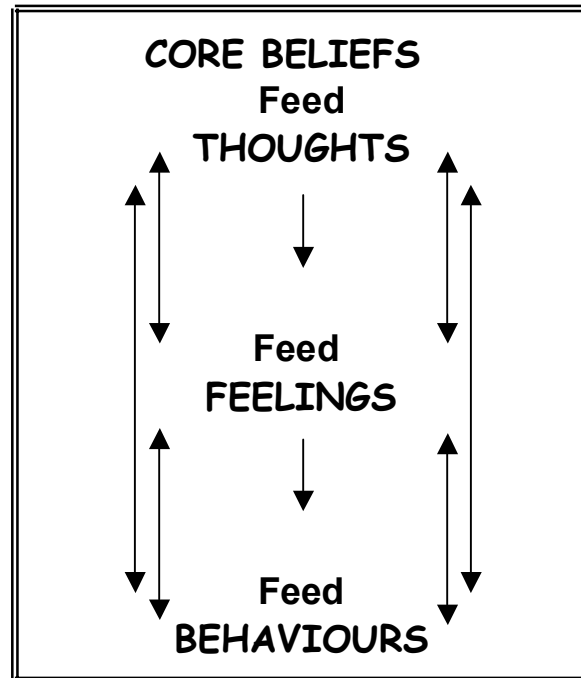


DIAGRAM 3: Feedback loops are created between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that can intensify the process to a point where you will act (behave) based on the way you feel, hence a positive or negative outcome is determined by your core beliefs and resulting thoughts

HOW DO YOU CHANGE YOUR FEELINGS?

- Emotions are your barometer, so the type and intensity of your feelings, and whether they are positive or negative, is a precursor to how low or high your stress levels are. **Rate these feelings out of 10 to get a reality check.** Ten being the most intense feelings you might have
- Take a couple of deep, slow, even breaths to calm the adrenaline surge and help slow the down your thinking – count 3 or 4 on your in breath and 3 or 4 on your out breath for a few minutes, this will calm you down

- Identify your thoughts (does not have to be word for word but can be a thought pattern) and write them down to help get them out of your mind and be able to look at them more objectively (see the attached recording sheet to help you do this process)
- Assess the thoughts you have identified to see if they are rational or irrational.
- Now start challenging the irrational thoughts and replace them with more rational types of thinking (see example below)
- Start to focus on the solution not the problem, look at the half full not the half empty
- As you change the focus of your thinking then you will effectively deal with the emotions that your thoughts are feeding. This means that your behaviors will also change and you will have more control over them
- Once you are back in control emotionally, spend some time working out the underlying belief(s) that were driving your thoughts and feelings – see example below
- Remember that just like any other habit, thinking habits take time to change so be patient and persevere. If you identify a number of irrational beliefs that are underlying your thinking, start working on them one at a time. Thinking has a ripple effect so this will help to modify other irrational beliefs
- This change process will effectively help to reprogram the brain, because when you stop using an old habit (use it or lose it principle) the new habit strengthens and takes over then becomes your new autopilot
- Remember that old habits are never totally eradicated, some of that program remains in the brain but will not be active unless you use it again



EXAMPLE OF HOW TO CHANGE YOUR BELIEFS, THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

EVENT: You are walking down the street and someone you know comes towards you then walks straight past

THOUGHTS:

- * They have deliberately ignored me
- * They walked straight past me
- * What have I done wrong?
- * Who do they think they are?
- * Wait until I see them again!

BELIEFS:

- * I need love and acceptance from all the significant people in my life
- * If people don't do the right thing by me then they are unfair and deserve to be punished

FEELINGS: * Hurt, rejected and angry – 9/10

BEHAVIOURS:

- * Glare back at them
- * Ignore them next time you see them or be rude to them (passive aggressive responses)

PROBLEM

NEGATIVE REACTION: * You rapidly assessed the situation, took it personally, saw them as the problem and reacted with an aggressive response

RESOLUTION

CHANGE THOUGHTS:

- * Maybe they didn't deliberately ignore me
- * Maybe they were preoccupied with a problem, weren't feeling very well, or were in a hurry and not concentrating on who was around
- * I am not aware of having done anything wrong
- * I hope that they are okay
- * I will give them a call when I get home

- MODIFY BELIEFS:**
- * I don't need to have a display of acceptance by everyone and it doesn't mean that they don't care about me
 - * Even if people do the wrong thing or are unfair, I can check out their reasons for this or accept them as they are
 - * I don't have to take things personally
 - * It's not always about me

- NEW FEELINGS:**
- * feelings of emotional pain, rejection and anger subside – 2/10. Start to feel positive again

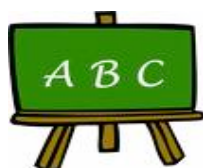
- BETTER BEHAVIOURS:** * Go home and phone them to see if they are okay

PROBLEM RESOLVED

- NEW OUTCOME:**
- * Stress levels decrease
 - * You can start focusing on the solution instead of the problem
 - * You might feel concerned instead of angry, hurt and rejected
 - * Thoughts are more rational and feelings are much more positive

See the ABC Worksheets below to work on your own thoughts, feelings and behaviors to change your perspective from unhealthy or irrational, to healthy and rational and get off that emotional rollercoaster





Worksheet

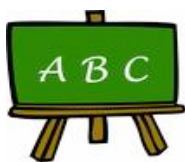
To identify your thoughts and beliefs

Activating Event A What happened?	Beliefs B What were you thinking?	Consequences C How did you feel & behave?

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Do my thoughts in 'B' make sense and sound realistic and rational?
- What sort of feelings and behaviours did I have?
- Were they healthy or unhealthy?

If the consequences were negative then complete the next worksheet to change the outcome to a positive



Worksheet

To help change your thoughts and beliefs

<p>Activating Event A You can't change the event</p>	<p>CHANGE Beliefs B What are your new thoughts?</p>	<p>OUTCOME Consequences C How did this change your feelings & behaviours</p>

CHECK THIS OUT:

- Your thoughts & beliefs in 'B' need to make sense and sound realistic or rational
- Notice how your feelings and behaviors have changed
- Remember, it's not 'A' the event that causes the consequences, it's the 'B' in the middle – what you believe and think is what you feel and that determines how you behave!