

Module 2: Thought Challenging and Worry Management

Wellbeing Team

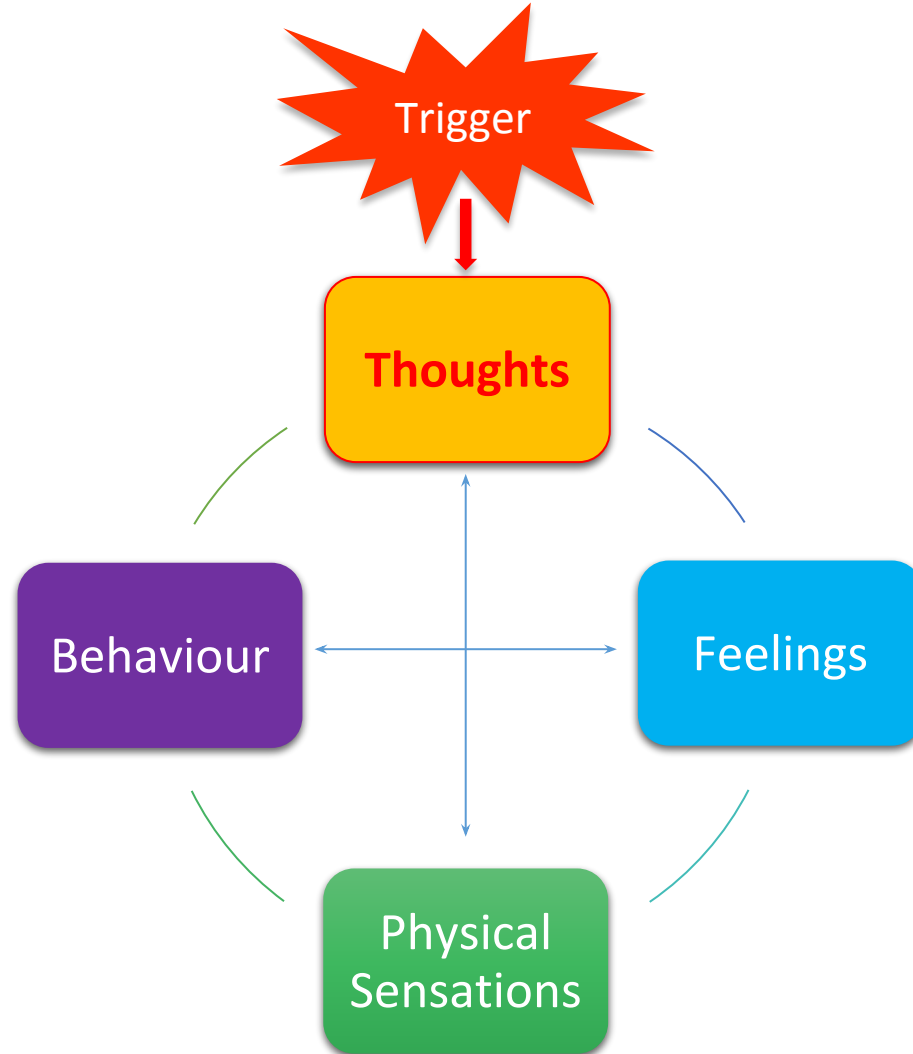
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**achieving
for children**



CBT Model



More on thoughts.....

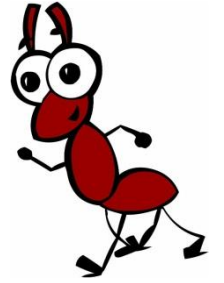


- We experience thousands of thoughts every day which help us to interpret and make sense of the world around us.
- Thoughts are electro- chemical impulses in the brain- they are **NOT** facts- Don't believe everything you think!
- The meaning we give to events, i.e. what we **THINK** about them impacts on our emotions and behaviours.

- **Example:**



Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTS)



ANTS have 4 main characteristics:

- **Automatic:** They pop in to your head without any warning, you can't stop them
- **Plausible:** They appear to be based on evidence and are believable
- **Distorted:** They are not based on fact and can be distorted in various ways
- **Unhelpful:** Impact on how you think as well as your mood and behaviour

Using Logic to Challenge Thoughts

| WHAT IS HAPPENING | WHAT IS HE OR SHE THINKING | EVIDENCE AND ALTERNATIVES | WHAT HAPPENED IN THE END |
|-------------------|---|---|---|
| | <p><i>Why are you worried?</i> <i>What do you think will happen?</i> <i>What is it about [this situation] that is making you worried?</i></p> | <p><i>What makes you think that [this situation] will happen?</i> <i>Has that ever happened to you before?</i> <i>Have you ever seen that happen to someone else?</i> <i>How likely is it that [this situation] will happen?</i> <i>Can you imagine that anything else will happen?</i> <i>If [this situation] did happen, could there be any other reasons for it?</i> <i>What would you think was happening if someone else was in the same boat?</i> <i>What would [another child] think if they were in this situation?</i> <i>How could you test out this thought?</i></p> | <p><i>What did your child think?</i> <i>What did your child do?</i> <i>How did your child feel?</i></p> |

Experiments for testing negative thoughts

Make a plan to test out a thought and agree with your child when, where and with whom this will happen: E.g. your child is feeling anxious about going to a friend's party.

| Thought to test out (% belief) | Alternatives? | What actually happened? | What have I learned? | Alternative thought (% belief) |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| E.g. "I will embarrass myself and everyone will laugh at me." | "I will go to the party and it will be fine." | I went to the party and I had a good time. | Just because I think something will happen doesn't mean it will. | "Usually when I go to parties everything is fine." "I may enjoy myself." |

Worries....



- Worrying is something we are all familiar with and can sometimes be helpful, i.e. crossing a road.
- However sometimes, worries can spiral out of control and keep going round and round in our heads without reaching a resolution.
- If your child feels that their worries are uncontrollable and they are spending a large portion of their day worrying, then some strategies can be put in place to:
 - 1) Limit time spent worrying and
 - 2) Turn worrying into finding solutions.

Strategies for limiting worry

- 1) **“Worry Time”**- having a designated time in the day for discussing worries. This will be for no more than 30 minutes.
- 2) **Worry List**- keeping a record of worries so you and your child can write down any worries that come up between worry times.
- 3) **Cutting out reassurance**- reassurance is a natural response but only provides temporary relief from worrying- the worries still come back!
- 4) **Distraction**- once the worry is written down to discuss at worry time, distraction can help your child move on from their worry and redirect their mind, i.e. create a game that will get your child’s full attention.

From worries to solutions.....

- **Problem solving-** can be helpful for coming up for solutions to practical worries, i.e. my computer isn't working. What are the possible solutions to solve this problem?
- **Combining thought challenging with problem solving-** i.e. when you have challenged thoughts with your child and they may acknowledge there is only a slight chance of something bad happening, but are still very frightened at the thought that it could happen at all. E.g. encourage your child to think about what they could do in the event that it did happen.

Problem Solving

There are 6 steps to problem solving:

Step 1: What is the problem?

Step 2: What are the possible solutions?

Step 3: What are the possible consequences?

Step 4: Decide the best solution

Step 5: Try the solution

Step 6: Did it work?

Accepting Uncertainty

- **Helpful thoughts-** E.g. Worrying about my parents dying does not stop it from happening and it makes me feel really sad and not want to do anything. My parents are alive so I should make the most of it and get out to do things that I enjoy.
- **Focus on “here and now”-** to think about and fully concentrate on what is happening right now, not what happened in the past or what will happen in the future.
- **Mindfulness-** can be a good technique for training our attention to remain in the present moment when we are having unhelpful thoughts/ images.

Homework tasks this week.....

- Read Chapter 11- Step 5: Learning about Solving Problems.
- Read Chapter 12- Additional Principles 1: Overcoming Worry.
- Have a go at completing a thought record with your child (you may wish to use the template provided in resources). Possibly plan an experiment to test out your child's unhelpful thought/prediction.
- Have a go at implementing worry management strategies if you notice your child is worrying a lot.
- Complete the problem solving worksheet with your child to help them find their own solutions.

Remember these are all suggestions and it is helpful to focus on one strategy with your child at a time!