

PHOTOCOPIABLE MATERIALS

BELIEVING YOU CAN IS THE FIRST STEP TO ACHIEVING

A CBT and Attribution
Retraining Programme
to Improve Self-Belief
in Students aged 8-12



ALICIA R CHODKIEWICZ AND CHRISTOPHER BOYLE

THOUGHTS–FEELINGS–ACTIONS

Session aims

This introductory session is aimed at showing students how thoughts, feelings and actions are interlinked and demonstrates how changing one's thoughts can have a big impact on feelings and behaviour.

What you need for the session

- Emotion Face Cards (see Section 4, Extra Material)
- Emotion Labels (see Section 4, Extra Material)
- Bluetac, Velcro, magnets or similar

Outline of Session 1

1. Introduction to the programme
2. Make a list of group rules
3. Getting to know you
4. Setting goals
5. Identifying feelings
6. Placing emotions on the spectrum
7. Matching thoughts and feelings
8. The link between thoughts, feelings and actions
9. Activities to practise at home

1.1 Introduction to the programme

The important points to cover in the first address to the students are as follows:

- Explain that the programme is to learn new skills about thoughts and feelings.
- Outline why the students were chosen for the programme (this will be dependent on your selection methods).

- Describe what students can achieve at the end of the programme (for example, being able to use new thinking skills to be more positive and happy learners).
- Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers in the activities.
- Explain the importance of completing home activities and their sticker chart (optional).
- Provide information about how long the programme will run for.

1.2 Make a list of group rules

Talk through the three rules already in the workbook found in Section 4 at the end of the book. Allow students to brainstorm ideas about other important rules that will foster a happy learning environment as a class, and have each student write the new rules on the lines provided. Try to fill up all the lines in the book. Good examples from past programs include: no put downs, be kind to one another, and don't make fun of others.

GROUP RULES:

- ⇒ Listen to others when they are talking
- ⇒ Respect one another
- ⇒ What is said stays confidential



.....



.....



.....



.....



1.3 Getting to know you

This is a fun activity to allow the students and instructor to get to know one another. Each student is asked to write three statements down about themselves in their workbook (Three things about yourself), but only two of these are completely truthful and one is to be an exaggeration or a fib. Each student takes turns in reading out their statements and then the rest of the group guesses which statement is not (completely) true.

1.4 Setting goals

Ask each student to complete their goals for learning in the workbook (Setting Goals for My Learning). Students should be instructed to draw themselves on the staircase to represent where they are with their learning. The first staircase represents where they currently are, and the second one represents where they want to be in the future.

1.5 Identifying feelings

Place the emotion face cards (Section 4, Extra Material) on the board or the wall. As a class, match the emotion labels (Section 4, Extra Material) with the emotion cards (Blu-Tac, Velcro strips and so forth can be used). Emphasise that there are no right or wrong answers; one emotion card could match lots of emotion labels and vice versa. Then ask the students to complete Worksheet 2 (What Am I Feeling?) in their workbook. Encourage discussion about any differences between students' answers.

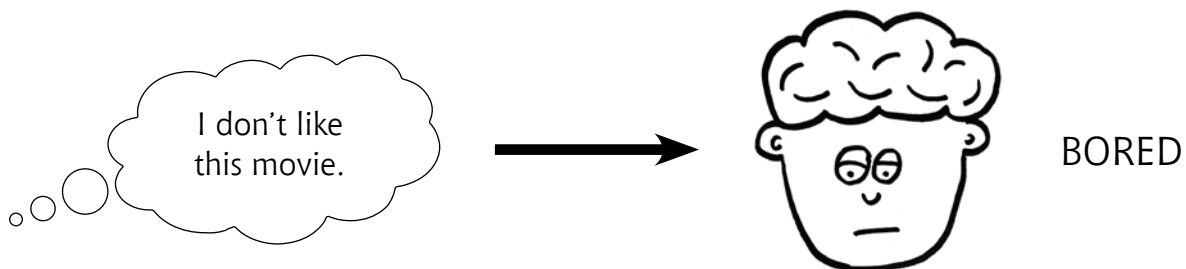
Many students use a very limited vocabulary when talking about their feelings, typically responding with happy or sad. This activity is both a nice warm up and prompts students to use a wider range of words when talking about their feelings. If a student is struggling to identify his own feelings in future activities or sessions he should be referred back to Worksheet 1 (Setting Goals for My Learning) in his workbook for inspiration.

1.6 Placing emotions on the spectrum

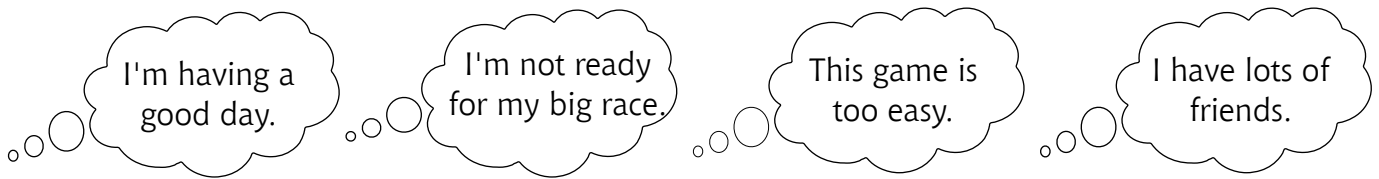
Discuss emotions in terms of whether they make you feel positive or negative, highlighting how some emotions can be stronger than others. Draw a spectrum on the board ranging from 'NEGATIVE → NEUTRAL → POSITIVE'. Invite the students to place the emotions cards along the spectrum. Discuss the results as a group, looking particularly at the emotions placed at the ends of the spectrum.

1.7 Matching thoughts and feelings

Begin this activity by explaining that our feelings do not just come out of nowhere, but are influenced by our thoughts. Go through the example in Worksheet 3 (Matching Thoughts and Feelings) and then, as a class, or individually, get the students to fill out the faces, drawing an appropriate expression each time, and name the emotion that would match each thought on the page.



Then ask all the students to put their heads down. The instructor then reads out one of the thoughts from the workbook and asks the students to raise their heads and show, using facial expressions, the emotion that the thought would make them feel.



1.8 The link between thoughts, feelings and actions

This activity is the pivotal component of this session. It extends the previous activity to demonstrate how our thoughts and feelings are important in shaping our behaviour. Demonstrate that there is a pathway between having a thought, the way we feel because of the thought, and then the way we act by reading through the example in Worksheet 4 (Thoughts–Feelings–Actions) in the workbook. Students should then complete the blank pathways on the page, noting that in the last exercise students have to write their own thought.

The pathway: our thoughts cause our feelings, which then make us act in a certain way. Let's have a look at how this works.

THOUGHTS

I am a
good
painter.



FEELINGS

Confident



ACTIONS



Next get the students to act out some of their pathways. Have them first say the thought, show the emotion through a facial expression and act out the behaviour that follows.

1.9 Activities to practise at home

Students are instructed to guess other people's thoughts by applying the thought–feeling–action chain backwards, using the Can You Guess the Thought? worksheet (in Section 4, Home-Learning Worksheets). First, the students need to record an action they have seen someone else (such as a parent, a carer or a friend) do. Then they write down what emotion they thought the person was experiencing, getting clues from facial expressions. Lastly, the students need to imagine a thought that could make the person feel and act that way. The students then ask the person for his real thought and record if the guess was correct.

HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL PATHWAYS

Session aims

This session aims to teach students the importance of thoughts by demonstrating how helpful and unhelpful thought pathways can lead to positive and negative behaviour.

What you need for the session

- Thought Pathways printed on half-A4 sheets (see Section 4, Extra Material)
- Helpful Target and Unhelpful Target (see Section 4, Extra Material).
- Bluetac, velcro, magnets or similar
- Scissors
- Glue

Outline of Session 2

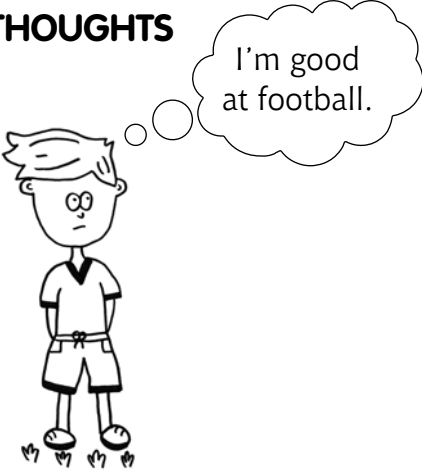
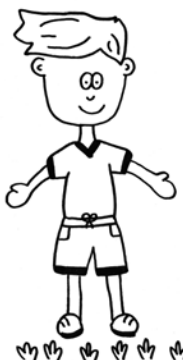



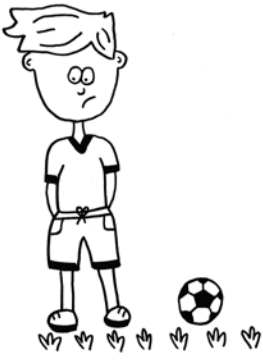
1. Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
2. Categorising helpful and unhelpful thought–feelings–action sequences
3. Helpful and unhelpful thoughts targets game
4. The importance of helpful thoughts
5. Activities to practise at home

2.1 Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Start the session off by asking the students if they enjoyed the first session and revise the topics covered (labelling feelings and the link between thoughts, feelings and actions). Go over the home-learning sheet, allowing students to read examples to the class and have a discussion about what students may have found difficult when trying to guess other people's thoughts.

2.2 Categorising helpful and unhelpful thought-feelings-action sequences

At this stage we begin to look at how some thoughts can be more helpful than others. But what makes something a 'helpful thought'? Helpful thoughts are those that lead to positive emotions and actions that help us achieve our goals and do better in the future. It is also important that helpful thoughts are realistic, as believing falsely that 'I can win every game' will inevitably lead to disappointment. A more helpful thought would be: 'I think I have the ability to win this game, but I can't win all the time and I can still have fun even if I don't win.' Unhelpful thoughts, on the other hand, cause us to feel negative emotions and lead to unhelpful behaviour, such as giving up or missing out on activities. Go through the examples in the workbook, Worksheet 5 (Acting in Helpful and Unhelpful Ways), and ask the students to independently complete Worksheet 6 in the workbook by indicating whether each pathway is helpful or unhelpful.

HELPFUL		
THOUGHTS	FEELINGS	ACTIONS
 <p>I'm good at football.</p>	<p>Confident</p> 	<p>Trying hard and have fun</p> 
UNHELPFUL		
THOUGHTS	FEELINGS	ACTIONS
 <p>We will never win this game.</p>	<p>Disappointed</p> 	<p>Don't try your best</p> 

2.3 Helpful and unhelpful thoughts targets game

This activity uses the thought pathways provided in the Extra Materials section in Section 4 and two targets labelled 'helpful thoughts' and 'unhelpful thoughts'. Students form a line, approximately one metre in front of the targets. Each student should read aloud the pathway written on his piece of paper and decide if the pathway is helpful or unhelpful. The student should then scrunch the piece of paper into a ball and throw it at the corresponding target. Each student should have two turns each. Next give each student an A4 piece of paper cut into two parts. On one half the student should write a helpful thought–feelings–action and, on the other, an unhelpful pathway. The instructor then collects these pieces of paper and randomly divides them between the students (making sure that no student receives a pathway they have themselves written). The students are then given the opportunity to play the game again with the new pathways. If desired, students can earn points and the winner of the game can receive a bonus sticker for his sticker chart.

2.4 The importance of *helpful* thoughts

After highlighting the link between helpful thoughts and helpful behaviour, have a discussion on how helpful thoughts may be advantageous. Point out that it is not always easy to think of helpful thoughts, especially when something bad has happened, and that is why it is good to have some helpful thoughts already prepared. Ask the students to cut out the thoughts from Worksheet 7 (Helpful Thoughts) and stick the helpful thoughts in the thought bubbles. Warn the students to watch out, as not all the thoughts are helpful. There will be two empty thought bubbles for students to write in helpful thoughts of their own.

Here is a list of the helpful thoughts students should stick on their helpful thoughts page:

- I have fun even if I don't win.
- I will do better next time.
- I have friends who care about me.
- I have lots of good qualities.
- It is OK to ask for help.
- If I put my mind to it, I can do it.
- I am a good person.

2.5 Activities to practise at home

The activity Is My Thinking Helpful? (Home-Learning Worksheets) gives students the chance to search for thought pathways in their own lives and to practise identifying when helpful and unhelpful thoughts may be leading to helpful and unhelpful consequences. Suggest that the students also try to think of more helpful thoughts to go with their list in Worksheet 7 in the workbook.

WHERE DO WE HAVE HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS?

Session aims

This session aims to help students identify unhelpful thoughts in their own lives and to encourage helpful thoughts in response to success through self-congratulations.

What you need for the session

- A ball (optional)

Outline of Session 3

1. Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
2. Looking at where unhelpful thoughts occur when we learn
3. Helpful/Unhelpful thoughts charades
4. Helpful/Unhelpful thoughts piggy in the middle
5. Promotion of self-congratulations
6. Activities to practise at home

3.1 Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Start the session by asking the students if they remember the difference between a helpful and an unhelpful thought pathway. Which one is better and why? Go through the home-learning allowing students to share any thought pathways that they have observed since the previous session. Moving onto our list of helpful thoughts, ask if the students can remember some of the helpful thoughts from last week and if anyone has any new helpful thoughts.

3.2 Looking at where unhelpful thoughts occur when we learn

The workbook activity looks at where unhelpful thoughts can occur. With the class brainstorm some places where students have helpful and unhelpful thoughts. Ask the students to think of two places where they personally have unhelpful thoughts and to write those places in the two houses provided in Worksheet 8 (Identifying Where Unhelpful Thoughts Happen). Students then have to identify an unhelpful thought that they may have in that location and replace it with a more helpful thought.

3.3 Helpful/Unhelpful thoughts charades

Play a charades-style game, where students act out (without words) a place and an action where they have a helpful or unhelpful thought, while the rest of the group tries to guess them.

3.4 Helpful/Unhelpful thoughts piggy in the middle

This game uses a similar premise as piggy in the middle, with a circle of students and one in the middle. A ball is thrown from student to student around the circle. The first student with the ball says a location (such as music class), the second student then says an activity that would match this location (such as singing a song), and the third student says an unhelpful thought ('I have a bad voice; everyone else can sing better than me'). The person in the middle then has to replace that thought with a helpful one. If the person in the middle catches the ball the person who threw the ball has to swap with them and go in the middle.

3.5 Promotion of self-congratulations

This activity is encouraging students to take more responsibility and pride in positive events and moments of success. Students are invited to create their own form of self-congratulations and identify three times when it would be appropriate to use it. This is accompanied by a worksheet for students to complete independently Worksheet 9 (Congratulate Yourself). As a class, read out a number of their scenarios, the students responding with their self-congratulations in each instance, for example, 'You completed a really difficult puzzle'.

3.6 Activities to practise at home

The activity Where Do I Have Helpful and Unhelpful Thoughts? (Home-Learning Worksheets, Section 4) asks students to identify unhelpful thoughts in their own lives and report: what the unhelpful thought was (thought), where the unhelpful thought occurred (location) and what the student was doing when he had the thought (event). Students are also given the chance to practise their self-congratulations.