

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to support children with their thoughts, feelings and behaviour



Why you should read this:

- When people are anxious they tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.
- CBT focuses on building resilience. Resilience is what we do in the face of life's difficulties and challenges.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction to CBT

At any time people are having thoughts.



Like happy thoughts.

"I love my new video game."

"Pancakes for breakfast. Yum!"

"Grandma is coming today."

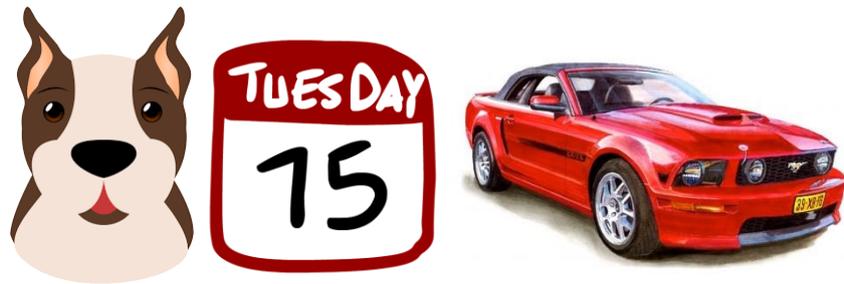


Like regular thoughts.

"I see a dog."

"Today is Tuesday."

"I hear a car going by."



Minds are busy places where people are always having thoughts.

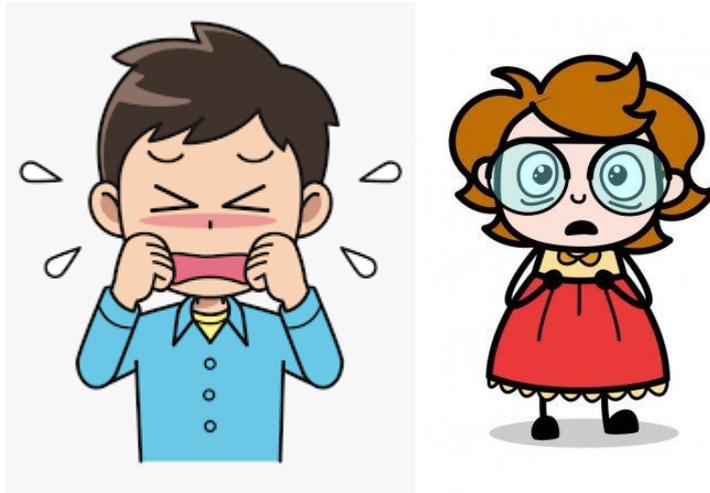
Thoughts compete with each other...to be the ones "on top"...to be the ones that are on your mind the most.

If happier thoughts get on top, you feel better.

Happy Children's Day



If upsetting thoughts get on top and stay there, you feel worse.



Sometimes thoughts like this...

"I'll always be lonely!"

"Must be something wrong with me!"

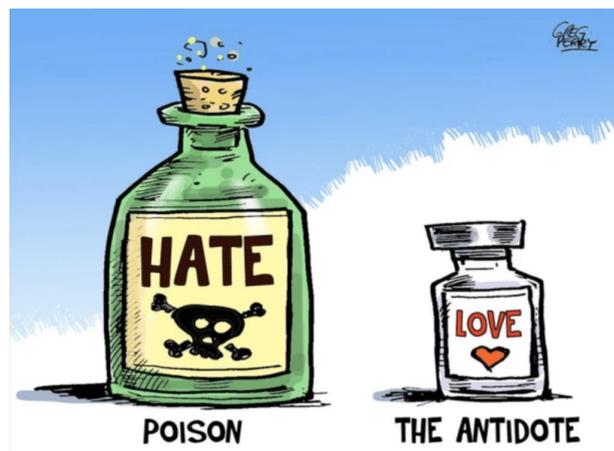
"I'm rubbish!"

...get on top and stay on top too often.

Certain thoughts keep us sad, angry and worried.



Some psychologists give them a special name: **poison thoughts**. They can make your mind feel sick almost like poison makes your body sick. But there are special thoughts to fight poison thoughts so you feel better: **antidote thoughts**. Antidote thoughts are like medicines that help protect you from poison thoughts so you feel better. They help you to look at things in a more balanced way.



Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shaul's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

Chapter 2 - Winning Battles in your Mind

Many times, people think that feelings just happen. But feelings don't just come out of nowhere.

Thoughts happen first. Feelings happen second.

Poison thoughts can pop into your mind quickly. This can cause bad feelings. This can happen hundreds of times a day.

"My brother bumped me on purpose!"

"They won't play with me because I am stupid!"

"This new school will be even worse than the old one!"

Antidote or medicine thoughts can really help to fight the poison thoughts and then the upsetting feelings don't hurt as much.

"My brother bumped me on purpose!"

"Maybe it was an accident."

"They won't play with me because I am stupid!"

"I'm not stupid. There are good things about me that kids might like."

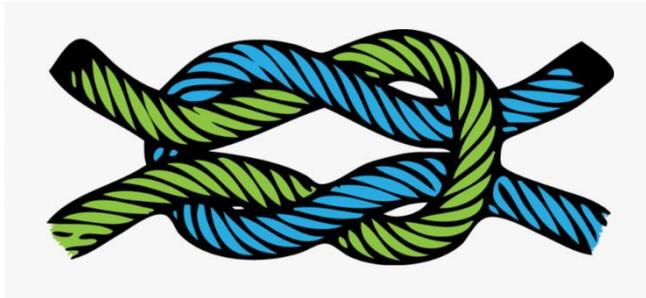
"This new school will be even worse than the old one!"

"It's a new start. This new school might be okay."

Chapter 3 - Fighting Upsetting Thoughts

Now, to learn more about how people get upset, we are going to pretend that we can go into their minds. Here in their minds, we'll see what thoughts are making them feel bad and what thoughts they need to feel better.

Here we are in the mind of Connor. A boy at a Boy Scout meeting.



He's trying to tie this knot over and over and he can't do it. He thinks, *"I'll never be a good boy scout!"*

Think now for a minute about Connor and this poison thought that he will never be a good boy scout. If we could change Connor's thinking and give him an antidote thought what might that be?

Now think about yourself for a minute. Have you ever been quite discouraged like Connor? When that happened, what poison thoughts did you get? What antidote thoughts did you need at that time to feel better?

Now we're in the mind of Olivia who is in her classroom. The teacher has left the room for two minutes and Olivia and five other children are out of their seats misbehaving when the teacher comes back in.



Olivia gets sent to the office. *“The teacher is always picking on ME!”* thinks Olivia.

Think for a moment about Olivia and her poison thought. Can you think of any antidote thoughts that might help her?

Now think about yourself again for a moment. Have you ever felt that the grown-ups who are in charge are picking on you and blaming you for everything? What poison thoughts did you have? What antidote thoughts did you need to stop feeling so upset?

Now we're in the mind of Laura who is with her dad in the car on the way to pick up her friend Reeva to go bowling. Laura always likes to sit in the front seat of the car. When Laura and her dad arrive at Reeva's house her dad says, *“Go sit in the back with Reeva.”* Laura gets annoyed with her father and says, *“That's not where I sit!”*



Can you think of an antidote thought that might be helpful for Laura?

Think about yourself now. Sometimes people get into habits they don't like to change. Like Laura not wanting to sit in the back seat. Try to remember a time when some habit of yours turned out annoying in some way to your family or to a friend.

What were your poison thoughts and what antidote thoughts did you need at that time?

Now we're in the mind of Ben who is getting ready to play Connect 4 with Demi. Ben likes to use the red coins when he plays. Demi says, "I'll be red this time." Ben says, "No, I am always red when we play Connect 4!"



Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shawl's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

When Ben says this, how is Demi going to feel? What are some antidote thoughts that Ben can use next time he plays Connect 4?

Ben likes to play Connect 4 but only when he can force his friend to do it the way Ben wants. Think about yourself for a moment. Try to think of an example of when you were playing with someone and you got a little too pushy about making things go your way. What were your poison thoughts at that time? And what antidote thoughts did you need?

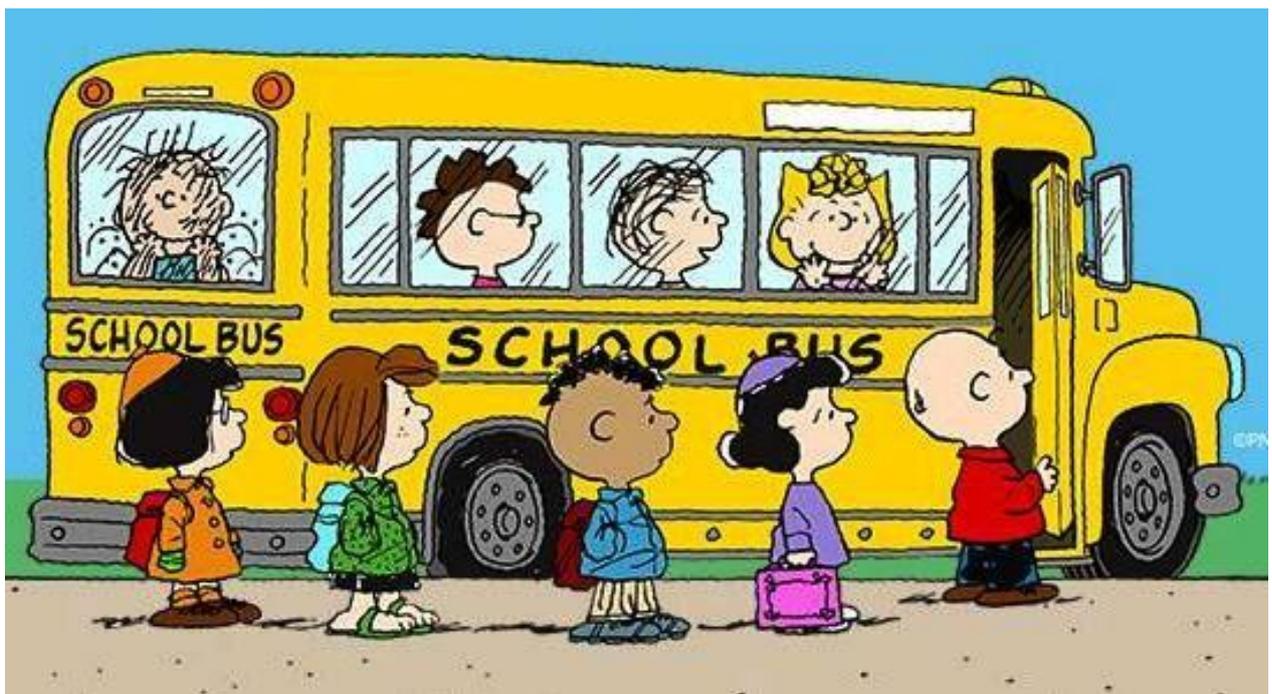
We are now in the mind of a boy called Roberto. Roberto's football team has just lost the tournament. As he begins to cry he thinks, "Winning is great and losing is awful!"



Everyone prefers winning over losing and sometimes losing can be very, very disappointing but can you think of any antidote thoughts that Roberto can use at this time?

Think about yourself now. Can you think about a time when you were so disappointed about losing that you had a very hard time getting over it? What were your poison thoughts at that time? And what antidote thoughts did you need?

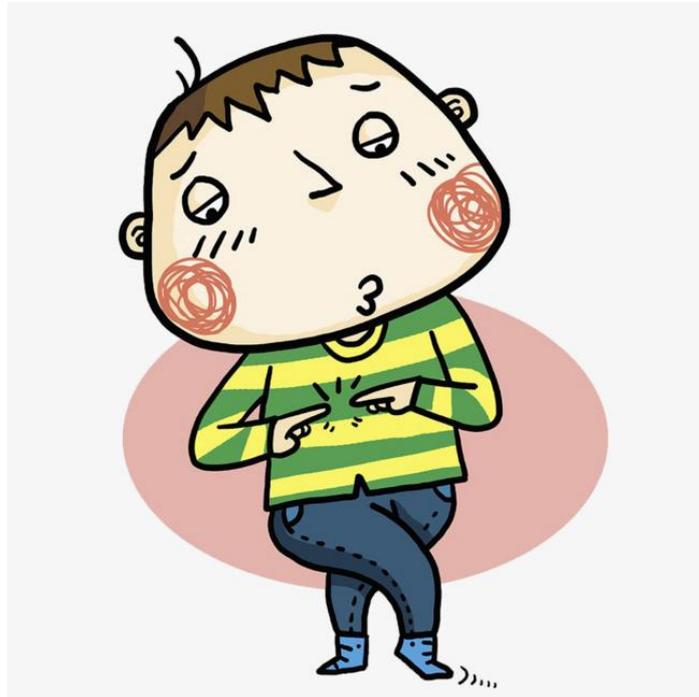
Now, we're in the mind of Ryan who is getting on the bus for the first day of Year 7. He sees Alice. A pupil he has not seen in over ten years. Ryan feels nervous and he starts to think to himself, "Alice is thinking about when I peed my pants in Flying Start!"



Ryan's mind is making him think that he knows that other people are thinking bad things about him. What antidote thoughts does he need?

Think about Ryan for a moment and then think about yourself. Have you ever felt quite worried that other people are thinking bad things about you? At that time, what were your poison thoughts? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now, we're in the mind of Theo who is getting ready to give a speech in class. When it is Theo's turn to give his speech in class he stands in front of the class but he cannot remember a single word. As he sits down he thinks, "I am a complete fool!"



What are some antidote thoughts that might help Theo at this time?

Can you think of anything that made you feel as nervous and embarrassed as Theo feels?

When you felt that way what poison thoughts were you getting?

What antidote thoughts did you need to help you?

Now, we are in the mind of Jenna. At lunchtime Jenna notices Jack staring at her. Back in Year 2, four years ago, Jack was really mean to Jenna. Jenna thinks, "Jack's planning ways to be mean to me again!"



What do you think? What is going on between Jenna and Jack?

Can you think of an antidote thought to help Jenna?

People often try, like Jenna, to guess what someone else is thinking. Often people make the wrong guess.

Can you think of a time when you thought that someone was thinking bad things about you? At that time what was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

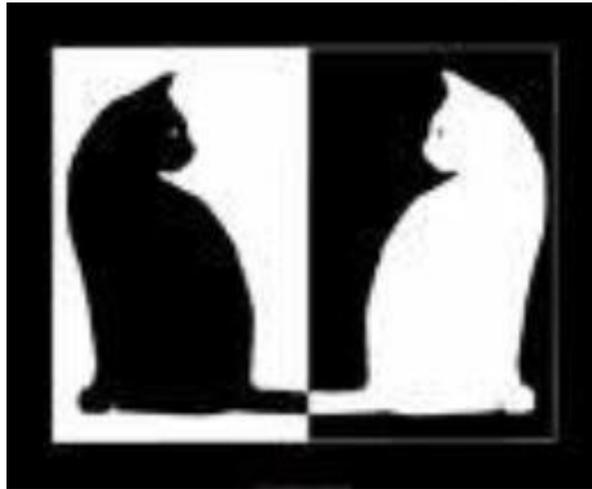
Chapter 4 - Five Kinds of Upsetting Thoughts

We have learned how upsetting feelings don't just happen but are caused by quick thoughts called poison thoughts that pop into our head. We have learned about antidote thoughts. Thoughts that we give ourselves to fight poison thoughts. By going into other people's minds to look at their thoughts we can learn how to fix our own upsetting thoughts and feelings.

There are five main kinds of poison thoughts:

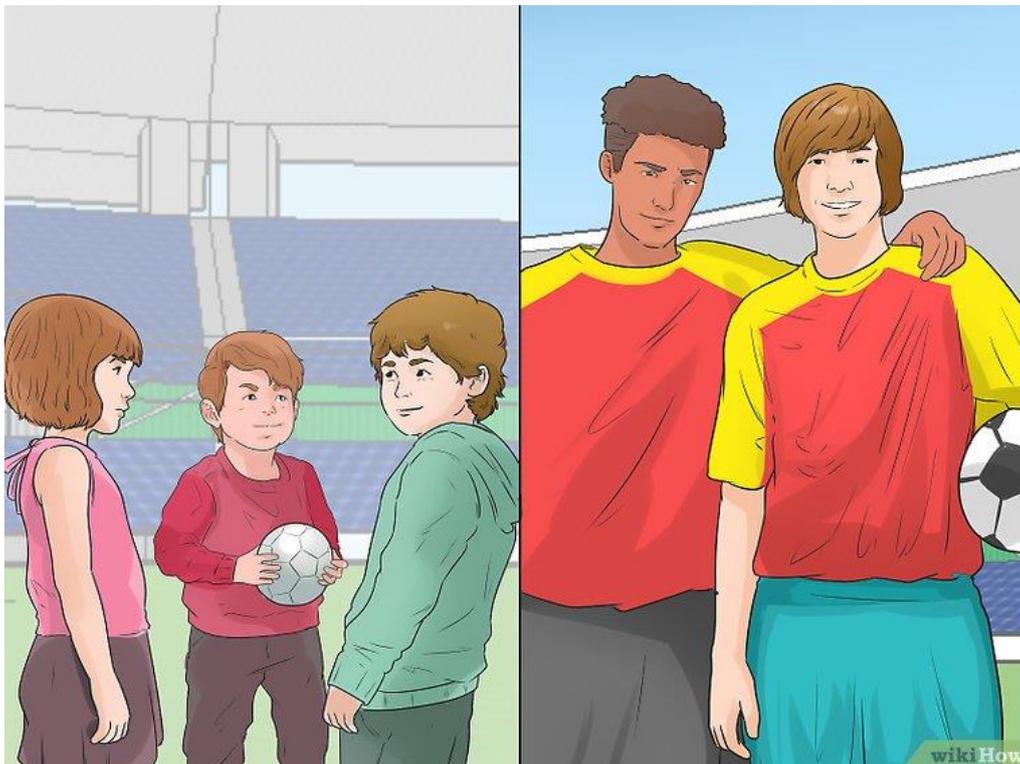
1. Black and white thinking
2. Predicting without proof
3. Searching for the bad, ignoring the good
4. Blaming others or blaming yourself
5. Rigid thinking

Black and white thinking



When your mind thinks that someone or something is completely bad or completely good with nothing in between.

We are now in the mind of Chris who is in Year 7 and waiting for his dad to pick him up after football training. Two football players from Year 11 walk closer to Chris and say, “Hey, we’ve got a question.” Chris turns and walks away quickly. Chris thinks, “Never trust a Year 11. They bullied me once!”



Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shaul's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

Think of yourself now. Can you think of a time when your mind was making you think someone or something was completely good or completely bad? If so, can you think of an antidote thought to fix that poison thought?

Predicting without proof



***When your mind predicts it can see the future like a crystal ball.
When your mind quickly decides that bad things are going to happen.
When your mind quickly decides that people are thinking bad things about you.***

In the playground of her school Eve hears some children laughing. She thinks, “I know they’re laughing at me again – just like yesterday!”



What is that bad thing that Eve's mind is predicting as if it is something she is sure is true? What are some antidote thoughts that could help Eve?

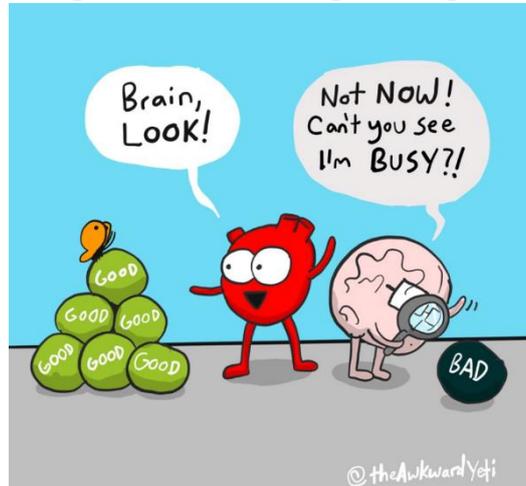
We are now inside the mind of Matthew who is with his class on a school trip to the museum. They are picking teams for the quiz and he gets picked last. He thinks, "I am always going to get picked last, forever!"



What is the thing that Matthew's poison thought is predicting? Can you think of antidote thoughts that could help him? Think about yourself now. When you get worried it is because your mind is predicting that bad things are definitely going to happen. Think about

a time when you were worried. What were your poison thoughts?
What antidote thoughts did you need?

Searching for the bad, ignoring the good



***When your mind takes a problem and makes it seem really huge.
When your mind makes you ignore something good.***

We are now in the mind of Natalie who just got her braces off. Her teeth are straight now but she thinks, “That doesn’t matter! Now everyone just notices how fat I am!”



Now what is the bad thing that Natalie’s mind is looking at very closely and what is the good thing that her mind is ignoring?

Now we are in the mind of Billy who has been at a Halloween Party. At the party the food and games were okay at first but at the end of the party two girls kept trying to steal his wizard hat and as he tried to run away from them he accidentally fell against the family's fish bowl. As Billy leaves the party he thinks, "That was a terrible party!"

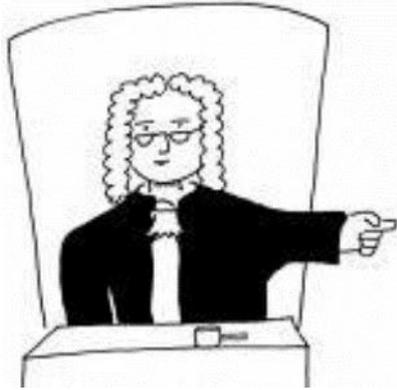


What is the bad thing that Billy is looking at very closely and what is the good thing that he is ignoring?

When people are sad or discouraged it is often because their minds are stuck searching for bad things and ignoring good things.

Think now about yourself. When was a time that your own mind got stuck and you kept thinking about something bad while you were ignoring some good things? At that time what antidote thought did you need?

Blaming others or blaming yourself



When your mind decides that somebody else is to blame, when maybe they aren't. When your mind blames you for problems that might not really be your fault.

Now, we are in the mind of Dominik who is standing in the school cafeteria line. He feels really angry at his mother. She was supposed to pack him a lunch today because Mondays at school they have pizza and the cheese they use stinks like smelly feet! "It's my mum's fault I have nothing good to eat!" thinks Dominik.



Dominik's mind is acting like a mean judge that likes to always decide who is guilty. Can you think of some antidote thoughts for Dominik?

Now we are in the mind of David who is in his bedroom at night. He can't sleep because of the distant sound of his parents arguing. "They're arguing again and I know it is all because of me!" thinks David.



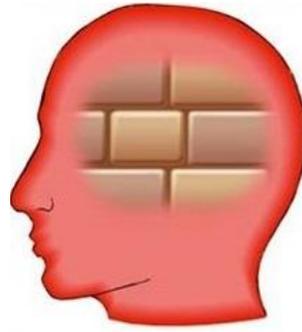
David's mind is acting like a judge who is deciding that David himself is guilty. Can you think of any antidote thoughts for David?

It's only natural for your mind to try and figure out who is to blame for something and for you to think that you or somebody else is responsible for something bad. But sometimes a person's mind can get stuck acting like a judge.

Think about a time when your mind was acting like a judge and making you feel way too guilty about something. What antidote thoughts did you need at that time?

Think about another time now when you were blaming someone else way too much for something. At that time what antidote thoughts did you need?

Rigid thinking



When your mind makes you demand that things go just the way you expect.

Now we are in the mind of Francesca who is upset because her friends want to try playing tag a different way – with a blindfold! She yells at her friends while thinking, “People are always changing the rules to games!”



How is Francesca’s mind being stubborn and unchanging? What antidote thoughts does she need?

Now, we are in the mind of Jason who is looking in his school planner and noticing that he has homework to do again. Last year they only had homework sometimes but now it is almost every day. He thinks, “School is for work and home is for relaxing and that’s final!”

Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shawl’s Autism Teaching Strategies website.



Think about how Jason expects that things must be a certain way that he wants them to be.

Everyone's mind can get stubborn sometimes but with some people this can really happen a lot. This can make them unhappy and it can make the people around them pretty annoyed. Think about a time when you became upset because you just had to have your way or make something come out the way you wanted. What was your poison thought and what antidote thoughts did you need?

Chapter 5 - Black and White Thinking

Today we are going to learn more about black and white thinking.

Think of some things that to **your mind** seem **completely good**.

Think of some things that to **your mind** seem **completely bad**.

If your thoughts get stuck on things that seem completely bad, or alternatively over on the other side things that seem completely good, it can make you confused and unhappy.

Here are some examples of black and white thinking:

“I failed, so I’m a total loser!”

“She let me down. I’ll never forgive her!”

“If he’s not for me, he’s against me!”

Antidote thoughts for black and white thinking:

“Everyone loses sometimes.”

“No one’s perfect. She’s been good to me other times.”

“Just because he disagrees – that doesn’t make him an enemy.”

RECAP

Black and white thinking: When your mind thinks that someone or something is completely bad or completely good with nothing in between.

Here are some people with black and white thinking. Try to help them fix their problems. Try to help yourself, too.

We are in the mind of Jenny. Jenny loaned her friend Zoe a pencil and later on that day Zoe broke it. Jenny thinks, “She is my enemy from now on!”



Jenny is thinking that Zoe is completely bad forever because Zoe did something bad. Jenny needs antidote thoughts to calm her down. Can you think of any?

People’s minds make decisions too quickly sometimes about how bad something is. Has anything like this ever happened to you? Have you held a grudge against somebody for too long after they did something that made you feel mad? What was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

Now we are in the mind of Victoria. In Year 2 she was assigned to a special English class where she could get some extra help. She thinks to herself, “I’m just one of the losers in special English! I wanted to be one of the clever ones but now I am just one of the losers in special English!”



What antidote thoughts does Victoria need?

Sometimes people's minds put people into completely separate categories. Victoria has put everyone into two separate categories in her mind. The cool people who do regular English and the losers who do special English. Has your mind ever played this same trick on you? Have you ever thought that you are completely bad because of something about you that is a problem or something different? What was your poison thought and what antidote thought did you need?

Now we are inside the mind of Monique. After Youth Club one evening when Monique is waiting to get picked up she sees the Youth Club Leader trying to fix a flat tyre on his motorbike. She hears the leader say a very bad word. She decides that this is the worst leader ever!



Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shawi's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

Monique's black and white thinking has decided that a Youth Leader who says a very bad word turns automatically into a bad Youth Club Leader. What do you think? What antidote thoughts does Monique need?

Think about a time that your own black and white thinking took over your brain putting someone forever into the bad category. At that time what was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

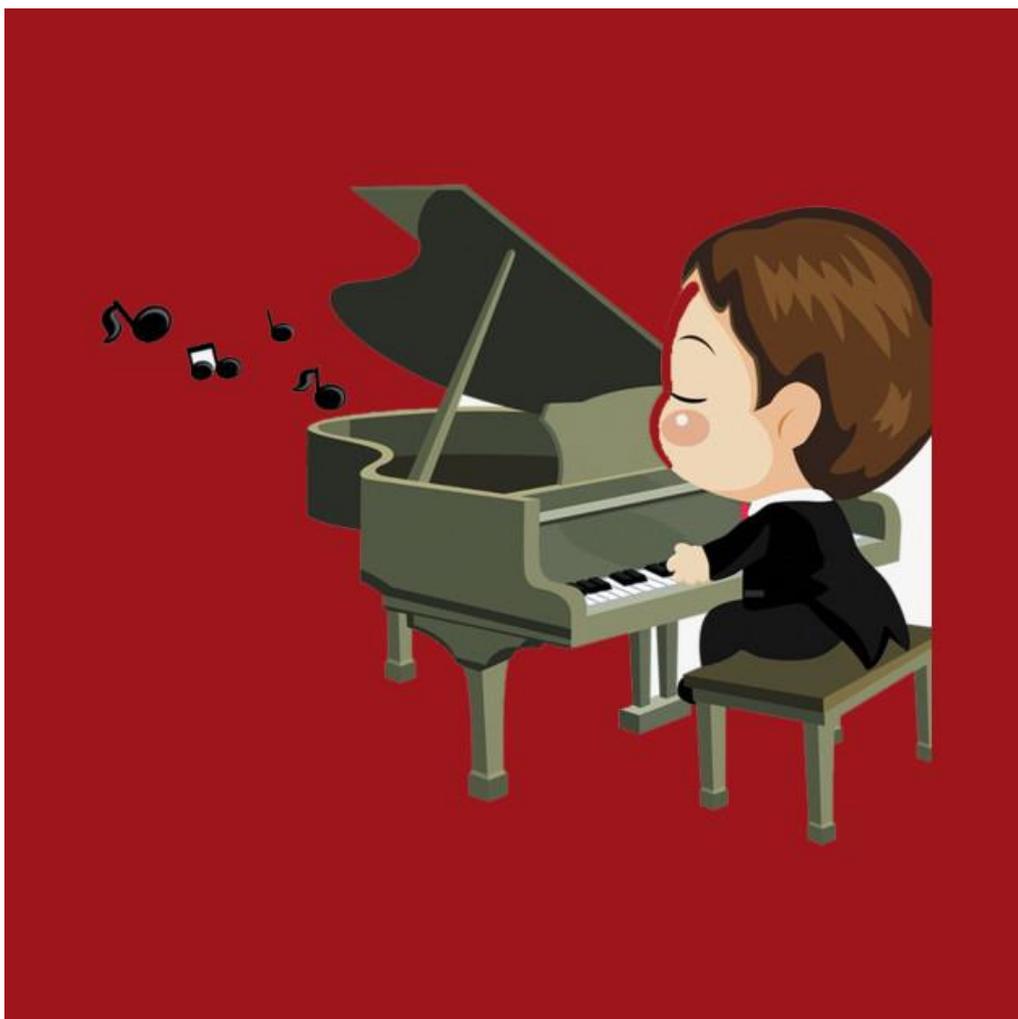
We are now in the mind of Vincent who is at his first fencing class. Vincent thought fencing would be cool like light sabres in Star Wars. The first lesson though is hard. He decides, "This isn't fun. It's killing me!" What antidote thoughts does Vincent need at this time?



Vincent's black and white thinking forced him to decide that all activities are either fun or awful. Has your own black and white

thinking ever played this trick on you? Have you ever suddenly decided that an activity was completely bad when maybe it wasn't actually as bad as all that? What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Zack who is performing a hard piece of music at a school concert. He makes a mistake, then a second mistake and then a third one. He thinks to himself, "This is the worst day of my life!"



What are some antidote thoughts that might help Zack at this time? Zack thinks he is having the worst day of his life because he made three mistakes at his school concert. Have you ever focused so much on a mistake that you have made that you just couldn't get it out of

your mind? What was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

Now we're in the mind of Victor who has just had his turn reading his report in front of the class. He notices that his report has lots of big words compared to the other children. He thinks to himself, "I'm different from the other children. I'm smart and they're not!"



Victor is dividing all of the children into two categories. What are these two categories? What is the problem with Victor's thinking and how might it cause problems for him?

In his mind Victor put himself in a higher, better category than the other children. Is this something that you have ever done in your own

Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shaul's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

mind? What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we're in the mind of Bryony who is trying to do her History homework. Even though she can't understand the task she won't ask her dad for help. She thinks, "If I admit that I need help that means I'm an idiot!" What antidote thoughts does Bryony need?



Bryony is thinking that if she is not completely smart then she is the complete opposite – an idiot! She won't ask for help. What about you? Have you ever avoided asking for help when you needed it out of fear that this would make you look foolish or stupid? What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Verity. She is having a hard time in Year 7. The harder it gets the more she thinks about her private, fantasy world where there are unicorns and rainbows. "My imaginary world is good

and soothing. The real world is bad and hard!” What is an antidote thought that could help Verity at this time?



Verity’s black and white thinking is putting her imaginary world and the real world into two separate categories – one good and one bad. Has your mind ever done anything like this? At that time what was your own poison thought and what antidote thought did you need?

We are now in the mind of Trevor who just loves dinosaurs and begins to tell his friend Tom the names of every dinosaur that he can think of. When Tom shouts, “Stop, enough dinosaurs!” Trevor walks away. He decides, “Trevor is not really my friend! He’s my enemy!”



What antidote thoughts does Trevor need?

Trevor got mad at Tom and decided that Tom is not his friend anymore. Have you ever decided suddenly that someone is your enemy because of something they did or said? Was it the right thing to do? What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Chapter 6 - Dealing with Worries

Now we are going to learn more about predicting without proof.

People's minds can often predict what will happen. For example:

"Rain's coming. Tennis court will be wet."

"6 o'clock. Dad will be home soon."

Sometimes people's minds predict too many bad things. This makes people feel worried and discouraged.

"Rain and no tennis! I'm going to be bored. Dad's just going to be play with the baby again and ignore me!"

Examples of predicting without proof:

"It's going to be too hard!"

"Same bad thing is going to happen over and over!"

"I know they're thinking bad things about me!"

Antidote thoughts for predicting without proof:

"It might be okay. I can ask for help."

"It might be okay this time. I'm getting better at dealing with stuff."

"You can't be sure what someone is thinking."

RECAP

Predicting without proof: When your mind predicts it can see the future like a crystal ball. When your mind quickly decides that bad

things are going to happen. When your mind quickly decides that people are thinking bad things about you.

Here are some people's minds that predict without proof. Try to help them fix their problems. Try to help yourself, too.

Let's go into the mind of Yolanda who is dealing with some upsetting things. First Yolanda's favourite TV show got cancelled and then the internet stopped working in her home. She thinks to herself, "I have bad luck! Bad things are just going to keep happening to me!"



What is Yolanda predicting will keep happening to her? Does she have proof that her luck will keep being bad? What are some antidote thoughts Yolanda can use to help herself?

Yolanda thinks she has bad luck and she is predicting that bad things will just keep happening. Think about a time when you had a poison thought, something like this, when bad things happened to you and you thought that you were going to keep having bad luck. What was your poison thought? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we are in the mind of Leonard. Leonard's mother is trying to get him to come with the family to the park but all Leonard can think

about is the time one year ago when he got stung by a wasp in that same park. He thinks, “There’s no way I’m going back there! I know I’ll get stung again!”



What is the bad thing that Leonard is predicting? What are some antidote thoughts that he can use?

Sometimes your mind can predict dangers too much and too often. What about you? Think of a time when your own mind was too fearful something bad would happen. What was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

We are now in the mind of Andrew who is at home with his babysitter. Looking out the window he sees that it is beginning to snow. Suddenly he gets a terrible thought about his parents. “Their car is going to crash on the way home!”



What are some antidote thoughts that Andrew can use at this time?

Andrew's mind is predicting that his parents will get hurt. Has your own mind ever got stuck with thoughts like this? That something bad was going to happen. What was your poison thought? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of an eleven year old boy called Mark. He's supposed to sleep in his own bed at night but he hears the wind howling outside and does not feel quite safe somehow. He walks towards his parents' room for the third time that week. He thinks, "I can't be sure my own room is safe!"



What is it that Mark's mind is predicting and what antidote thoughts does he need?

It is normal for younger kids to have fears like Mark has but this is supposed to go away as kids get older. Do you have any fears that keep coming into your own mind even though the fearful thoughts don't really make any sense? When this happens to you what antidote thoughts do you need?

We are now in the mind of a girl called Henrietta. She is in the car with her mother on the way to her first art lesson and Henrietta is having very bad feelings about it. "They won't let me draw what I want", she thinks. "I'll feel tense. I'll miss my home." Henrietta grips the door handle of her mum's car and thinks, "This is going to be awful!"



What are the bad feelings Henrietta is predicting about her new Art class? What antidote thoughts does she need?

Getting ready to try something new can make a person get worried thoughts. Think about a time when you were getting ready to try a new activity. What kind of worried thoughts did you get? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Jeremy who is on the playground calling out to another boy called Stephen but Stephen doesn't answer Jeremy. Jeremy thinks, "Stephen won't ever be my friend!"



What are some possible reasons why Stephen does not answer Jeremy? What are some antidote thoughts that Jeremy can use?

Our minds are always busy making guesses about what is happening and what other people might do; sometimes our minds make poor guesses.

Think about a time when your mind made the wrong guess about what somebody was doing or thinking. What was your poison thought? What antidote thought did you need?

Now we are in the mind of a girl called Mia who is at her karate class. As she watches an older child doing kicks Mia thinks, “There’s no way I’ll ever be able to do this!”



What are some antidote thoughts that Mia can use at this time?

Sometimes your mind can predict that something will be too hard and you won’t be able to do it. Often, however, your mind is wrong when it tells you these things. Think about a time when your own mind predicted that you would fail at something. What was your poison thought? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Sarah who is at a party. She notices that some girls are looking at her. She thinks, “People think I’m ugly and that my clothes don’t look right and my teeth are crooked!”



Sarah is predicting that other girls think she is ugly. What are some antidote thoughts that Sarah can use?

This kind of predicting without proof is called mind-reading, when your mind makes wild guesses about what someone is thinking about you. Often your mind gets it completely wrong. Think about a time when your mind was sure people were thinking bad things about you and you were wrong. What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Chapter 7 - Getting Stuck on Sad Things

Now we are going to learn more about searching for the bad, ignoring the good.

People's minds search for information, to learn important things, both good and bad.

'I'm better in Maths now. Must be all the studying.'

'I am rubbish at P.E. Must be because I am fat.'

Sometimes something goes wrong in our minds and we search too hard for unhappy thoughts. Another problem is when we ignore good things.

Examples of searching for the bad:

"Looking back on my life I see many failures."

"There's more bad stuff than good in my life."

"This day has been terrible."

Antidote thoughts for searching for the bad, ignoring the good:

"You can't ignore the good parts."

"Don't believe it. Your bad mood is making you think that."

"You can wreck your day just by thinking that."

RECAP

Searching for the bad, ignoring the good: When your mind takes a problem and makes it seem really huge. When your mind makes you ignore something good.

Here are some people whose minds search for too many bad things. Try to help them fix their problems. Try to help yourself, too.

We are now in the mind of a boy called Jimmy. Jimmy is at home because of the coronavirus and he doesn't feel happy. He keeps thinking to himself, "Everyone I love will die from this virus and who will look after me!"



What is the bad thing that Jimmy's mind keeps concentrating on? What is the good thing that his mind is ignoring? What are some antidote thoughts that Jimmy needs at this time?

"Actually, most people who get the coronavirus make a full recovery and that's assuming mum, dad and my little sister will even catch it at all."

"The vast majority of people only experience relatively mild symptoms. Coronavirus is fatal in only about two to three percent of cases."

“It’s normal to feel all sorts of feelings in response to the pandemic, including fear, sadness, anger, to feel ‘cut off’, or to feel a mix of these things. Continually checking the news is making me feel more anxious. I will limit how often I look and avoid checking repeatedly for symptoms of illness.”

“I will educate myself with real factual evidence and ignore articles with fake news. Good examples for factual information are gov.uk, NHS111 and the BBC News.”

Sometimes our own minds get stuck on negative thoughts that make us very sad. Can you think of a time when your own mind was acting like Jimmy’s mind? What was the bad thing that you were stuck on? What good things were you ignoring? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Shane who is at home with his mother because of the coronavirus pandemic and he doesn’t feel happy. He thinks, “I can’t socialise anymore with my friends and that makes me feel sad and alone.”



What is the bad thing stuck in Shane's mind? What are some good things he is ignoring? What antidote thoughts does he need?

"I can't socialise the way I'm used to right now, but I can do it virtually."

"We can't spend time physically but we can video call, write, email and stay in touch with loved ones that way."

Think of a time now when your own mind was acting a bit like Shane's. When you wanted something to go your way and you couldn't think of anything else. What were your poison thoughts at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we are in the mind of Stephanie who is going over her day in her mind. Stephanie thinks, "I am having a really bad day. The coronavirus has stopped me from doing everything I like!"



What is Stephanie concentrating on? What good things is she ignoring? What antidote thoughts does she need?

"I can still listen to my favourite music. I can still talk and Skype family and friends. I can still read my favourite book/s. I can still enjoy the outdoors, even if it is just my own garden. I can still sing and dance at home. I can still smile and laugh. I can still watch my favourite laugh

out loud TV show or film. I can still have HOPE for a life without coronavirus.”

Think about a time when your mind was a little bit like Stephanie’s mind. When your whole day seemed ruined because of something bad that happened. At that time what was your poison thought? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we are in the mind of a girl called Ellen who is reading what her class teacher has written about the Maths she submitted via Google classroom. Ellen thinks, “I know my teacher said most of my Maths was great but she also said there were a number of mistakes that had to be corrected...she must think I’m really hopeless.”



Can you think of some antidote thoughts for Ellen?

“Everyone makes mistakes. Mistakes are part of the learning process. I haven’t figured it out yet but I am on the right track and can try again tomorrow.”

“I don’t have to do things perfectly. My teacher says we need to make mistakes to learn and not look for an easy way out. Everything about us as individuals—especially our minds—has the ability to change and grow through perseverance and focused work.”

Often we want our teachers to like everything we do but often it doesn't turn out that way. Can you think of a time when it really bothered you that you did not get full marks? At that time what was your poison thought and what antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called Tim. He has just finished helping his mum do the food shopping and thinks "I might be contaminated because that person by the shop looked like they had a temperature." Tim's heart starts to beat fast in his chest and he says to his mum, "I think I'm having a heart attack!"



What antidote thoughts might help Tim at this time?

"I don't need to worry because I have kept myself safe by following the recommendations of the scientists who know more about the virus that I do. I was at least two metres from that man and washed my hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds when we got in from outside."

"Panic is a horrible feeling but nothing bad is actually happening to me – it is just 'friendly' adrenaline making my heart race and it will pass."

"I learnt in Science that our body's 'fight or flight' response is a physical reaction that can be very physical, including feeling short of breath, having a racing heart, or feeling hot."

“Panic releases ‘friendly’ adrenaline which causes my heart to beat faster to prepare my body for action. My heart is an incredibly strong muscle that can beat rapidly and continuously for a long period of time without causing any damage. People who have actual heart attacks have something wrong with their hearts in the first place. My rapid heartbeat has nothing to do with having a heart attack.”

By this point in the book you have probably learnt quite a lot about how all kinds of people get their minds stuck on bad things sometimes.

Maybe you are also getting good at going into your own mind to learn how your own mind might have this problem sometimes.

Can you think of a time when your own thinking was like Tim’s - “I think I’m having a heart attack!”? What poison thoughts did you have? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a girl called Chelsea who is enjoying playing with her dolls in her bedroom but then something frightening happens. Her mother comes in, bursts into tears, and says, “I think I am going crazy – having a nervous breakdown!” What antidote thoughts does Chelsea need at this time?



“People who are ‘crazy’ don’t wonder if they are ‘going crazy’ or not. The fact that mum is sanely questioning if she is going crazy is proof that she isn’t!”

“Mum is EXPERIENCING very frightening sensations. Fight or Flight is causing her mind to be very agitated and on the lookout for danger. There seems to be no reason for this so she mistakenly but understandably wonders if she may be going ‘mad’ or ‘crazy’.”

“In school we have been learning that our brains are like a house, with an upstairs and downstairs. When we flip our lid we are unable to think clearly because the downstairs brain (the feeling brain) has taken over which means the upstairs brain (the thinking brain) is not working properly so it can be difficult to solve the problem. When this happens it can look like an angry scary reaction or crying or running/hiding from the situation. If my mum takes some slow deep breaths, feeling her chest expand as she breathes in and feeling her shoulders relax as she breathes out, the Feelers in the downstairs brain and the Thinkers in the upstairs brain can work together again. I know we can problem solve this situation together!”

“My school based counsellor told me that in the midst of any overwhelming and seemingly chaotic experience there is always a part of you that is able to watch it all happening. A part of you that wonders what on earth is going on – that doesn’t like what is happening – that just wants it to stop. If my mum shifts her focus from the EXPERIENCE to the EXPERIENCER (the part of her that is fearfully watching it all unfold) she will realise that SHE is OK underneath it all – it is the ‘experience’ that is frightening – that is all.”

Now we are in the mind of Jackson who is walking home following his daily hour of exercise with the people living in his house. He starts to feel hot and through tears asks his mum, “What if I got side tracked today and forgot to wash my hands and touched my mouth?”, “How ill will I get if I catch it?”, “Will I die?”, “I know I’m following all the guidelines, but what if I have spread the virus by accident?”



Can you think of some antidote thoughts for Jackson?

“I am feeling hot because the sun is out and I have taken some exercise.”

“All of the actions that other people in my house have taken - especially washing hands more; and the catch it, bin it, kill it strategy have also helped in protecting me from infection.”

“Children can be infected and can have a severe illness, but based on current data overall illness seems rarer in people under 20 years of age.”

Now we are in the mind of Dylan. Dylan has accomplished a lot this year. He has been in school every day by 9:00am and started listening to his teachers about getting enough sleep (10-11 hours every night) so he can learn new skills and take in information in class but now his worries about the coronavirus pandemic are keeping him awake at night and he can't get the most out of the day ahead because he feels tired and snappy. He thinks, “I should be able to sleep well every night like a normal person. I shouldn't have a problem!”



Can you think of any antidote thoughts for Dylan?

“I don’t know what will happen tonight. Maybe I’ll get to sleep quickly if I use the strategies I’ve learned. For example, replacing watching television or looking at my phone before bed with a warm bath and some relaxing music.”

“Lots of people struggle with sleep from time to time. I will be able to sleep with practice and remembering to avoid bright lights and electronic devices close to bedtime. I will also not eat foods or drinks high in sugar such as chocolate, sweets and biscuits that can negatively affect sleep quality.”

When you experience a big disappointment what are some of the good things about you that you forget about? See if you can think about a time when you felt very let down with yourself like Dylan feels. What were your poison thoughts at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Chapter 8 - When Your Mind Blames Too Much

Now we are going to learn more about blaming. Blaming others too much and blaming yourself too much. It's normal to blame sometimes. All of us have something inside us which is like a little judge to help us decide who is responsible for things that happen.

Examples of blaming too much:

“Other people cause my worst problems.”

“They keep making mistakes and breaking rules!”

“I have done bad things that have ruined everything.”

Antidote thoughts for blaming:

“You can't blame others for everything.”

“It's not your job to be the judge all the time.”

“You are probably making your faults seem too big.”

RECAP

Blaming: When your mind decides that somebody else is to blame, when maybe they aren't. When your mind blames you for problems that might not really be your fault.

Here are some people whose minds blame too much. Try to help them fix their problems. Try to help yourself, too.

We are now inside the mind of Jason a boy who is in his house crying by the back door. Jason was looking forward to going to the fairground in the village but now he is grounded. His parents warned him that he had to clean his room first but Jason couldn't find the time to do it. As

Jason stands by the door crying he thinks, “It’s not fair! My parents are so mean!”



Jason, and the next few people in this chapter, all have poison thoughts about blaming others too much. Can you think of some antidote thoughts that would help Jason now?

When people are angry they often blame other people for their problems and this can make things get even worse. Can you think of a time when you blamed someone too much? What poison thoughts did you get at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called John who is furious at his mother. John’s mother did not remind him to wear trainers to school that day so John is not allowed to play football in the gym with the other children. As John watches the other children in the gym he thinks to himself, “My Mum ruined my day!”



Is John being fair? Can you think of antidote thoughts that might help John?

It feels uncomfortable when we blame ourselves for a problem so people sometimes blame others instead. If you do it a lot it can make you unhappy. What about you? Can you think of a time when you unfairly blamed someone in your family for something? What was your poison thought? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called James. Maria and James sit together on the bus every day but today James sees that Maria is sitting with someone else. James thinks, “Maria is not a real friend to me anymore!”



Who is James blaming and why? What antidote thoughts does he need?

Often we expect a lot out of our friends but if you act like a mean judge with a friend you risk losing the friendship altogether. Can you think of anytime that you might have been too hard on a friend like James

was? What was your poison thought at the time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we're in the mind of a girl called Sandra. Sandra got bumped in the hallway and her books and papers got scattered everywhere. Sandra thinks, "Kids are always bumping me on purpose!"



What are a few different reasons that Sandra might have been bumped? What are some antidote thoughts that she can use now?

When your mind thinks very quickly the part of your brain that acts as a judge can sometimes make wrong decisions. For example, you can end up blaming someone when it was actually an accident. Think about a time when something bad happened to you by accident. Did you blame the other person like a mean judge at the time? What antidote thoughts did you need back then?

Now we are in the mind of a boy called Angelo who is at a youth group party. In the back of the room Angelo is playing a video game by himself. Then two girls sneak up and they put their hands over his eyes and say, "Come play tag with us!" This makes Angelo get a low score on the game he is playing. Angelo yells at the girls. He thinks, "Girls are always mean to me at this youth group!"



Is Angelo fair with the two girls at the party? What antidote thoughts does he need? What can he do and say differently?

Again rushing to blame and judge can cause bad problems in friendships. If you were a friend of Angelo what kind of advice would you give to him and has anything like this ever happened to you? What were your own thoughts and how did you react? What could you say and do which might be different and better?

Now we are inside the mind of Kayla who is having some troubling thoughts. Kayla is beginning to notice that other young people don't like to hang out with her. She thinks to herself, "There is something terribly wrong with me."



What are some antidote thoughts that might help Kayla when she feels this way?

The next few people in the chapter are doing a different kind of blaming. Instead of unfairly blaming others, they are unfairly judging themselves. Thinking about yourself in this way can make you feel very sad and discouraged. Have you ever gone through a time when you felt like Kayla? Lonely and blaming yourself for it. What were your poison thoughts? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called Richard. He is the second slowest boy in the school athletics team. The team has not won yet. He thinks, “Because of me, my team loses every time!”



What are some antidote thoughts that might help Richard? Richard holds himself entirely responsible for his athletic team losing all the time. Have you ever blamed yourself too much for something bad that happened to your family or your class? Your school or your team? What were your poison thoughts? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Denise who is thinking about what happened at the school dance competition. A week later Denise still

feels terrible about it. "I tripped and fell. I let down my teacher, the audience and my family."



What are some antidote thoughts that might be helpful to Denise at this time?

There are not many people that are good at everything. What about you? Are there some things that are quite hard for you? Do you sometimes put yourself down because of this? What poison thoughts do you get sometimes? What antidote thoughts do you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called Danny. Danny is waiting out in the car while his mother is in the school having a meeting with his teacher. As Danny's mother walks towards the car Danny sees that she is crying. Danny thinks to himself, "I always make my mother cry."



What do you think about the way Danny is blaming himself? Can you think of any antidote thoughts that could be helpful to him now?

It's good to try hard to make your family proud of you and it is normal to feel bad if you let them down but if you feel as guilty as Danny that is taking it too far. Can you think of a time when your feelings of guilt were much stronger than they should have been? What were your poison thoughts? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Chapter 9 - Rigid Thinking

We have learnt all about how upsetting feelings are caused by sudden thoughts called poison thoughts. We have learned about antidote thoughts which we give ourselves to fight the poison thoughts. We have learnt that by going into to other people's mind to solve their problems we learn how to fix our own upsetting thoughts and feelings.

Now we are going to learn more about rigid thinking. Rigid means stubborn. Some kinds of stubborn are good. "That kid said to smoke a cigarette. I don't do that." Some kinds of stubborn are not good. "That kid wants to play tag a new way. No way!"

Rigid means not wanting change. It's normal to like some things to stay the same. "I do enjoy take-out pizza with the family on Saturdays."

Rigid can also be mean and selfish. That's why people should usually try to be flexible instead. "What do you mean that you want take-out Chinese instead? This is Saturday!!"

Examples of rigid thinking:

"I can't stand this change!"

"I need to get my way!"

"There's just one way to do it!"

Antidote thoughts for rigid thinking:

"Change can be hard; sometimes you have to deal with it!"

"Other people deserve to have their way too!"

"There's usually more than one way to do something."

RECAP

Rigid thinking: When your mind makes you demand that things go just the way you expect.

Here are some people's minds that are too rigid. Try to help them fix their problems. Try to help yourself, too.

We are going into the mind of James a boy playing rounders in the park with some friends. Some of the kids want to try playing rounders with five bases instead of four. James thinks, "But that's against the rules!"



In what way is James' mind being stubborn? Do you agree with him? Can you think of any antidote thoughts that might help him?

It is important to follow rules but sometimes people take it too far. That is one way to be rigid. Can you think of some time when you yourself got too carried away at making other people follow certain rules? What were your poison thoughts at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we're in the mind of Hannah who is at her Primary School graduation party. Hannah has picked out the party music carefully. Megan brings in some other music and asks if she can play it later.

Hannah says, “No, this is my party and that is why we need to hear my music!”



It's only natural that people want to have their way but if you try to have your way all the time you can really annoy people and lose friends. Try to think of a time when you wanting to have things your way made you too bossy. What were your poison thoughts then? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we are in the mind of Rita a pupil at school. There are no assigned seats at Rita's school but Rita sits in the same seat every day in her class. A new girl walks in and sits right in Rita's place. As Rita walks over to tell the girl to move she thinks, "That's my seat!"



Many people have habits that they don't like to change but if you push other people around too much to make them deal with your habits it's not fair and they can get angry with you.

Try now to think about some part of your routine or schedule that you would really hate to change. Does your habit affect other people in a bad way? If so, are there antidote thoughts that might help you to change?

We are now in the mind of Noah. He and his family are getting ready for a party where they will have nice food and watch his favourite football team play on TV. For Noah's party the icing on the cupcakes was supposed to be black and gold because those are the colours of Noah's football team's kit but the bakery made a mistake with the colour of the icing. Noah closes the cupcake box and thinks, "No one is going to eat these cupcakes!"



Think of some antidote thoughts that might help out Noah. It can feel really awful to have a sudden bad surprise. To get better at sudden unpleasant surprises like this you have to learn how to answer poison thoughts with antidote thoughts.

Think about a time when something happened to you that you were not expecting at all. What poison thoughts did you get and what antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Sam who is with his dad in the kitchen. Sam's dad asks Sam to help make mum coffee and croissants in bed because it is Mother's Day. Sam refuses to help. He says, "But Sunday morning we have pancakes. Sunday is Pancake Day!" In Sam's mind he keeps thinking, "Sunday is Pancake Day!"



What are some antidote thoughts that would help Sam at this time?

When people think too much about doing things the same all the time this can often hurt other people and cause other people not to get what they want. Can you think of a time in your home when your thinking was a little bit like Sam's? At that time what were your poison thoughts and what antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of Caroline. Caroline and her friend Liz are planning their next sleepover at Liz's house. Caroline and Liz are best friends and they do sleepovers often. Liz has an idea to invite a third friend to the sleepover. Caroline feels herself getting very upset. She thinks, "No! That's not what we do for our sleepovers!"



Can you think of some antidote thoughts that might be helpful for Caroline? Friendships are kind of fragile and they need to be taken care of carefully. Being stubborn and bossy like Caroline can damage a friendship. Think of a time that you had a disagreement with a friend. Try to think of a time when you were being the one that was too bossy. At that time what were your poison thoughts? What antidote thoughts did you need?

We are now in the mind of a boy called Joey. Joey listens as the teacher talks about jobs that teenagers can get as their first job. He thinks, "No way! I'm going to be a video game designer, and that's that!"

Try to think of some antidote thoughts that might help Joey.



When people are too rigid about what they expect will happen they can end up very disappointed. Have there ever been times in your own life when your own mind was assuming that some good thing would just have to happen because you wanted it and expected it? What kind of poison thoughts did you have at that time? What antidote thoughts did you need?

Now we are in the mind of Tyson who is learning all about clean up chores at camp. The camp grown-ups ask Tyson to help clean the dishes in the kitchen. He says, “I hate this camp!” He thinks, “They make me do work that mums do!” How should Tyson think differently? What should Tyson do differently?



The word that is the opposite of rigid is flexible. Behaving in a flexible way means that you try to deal with changes in other people’s ideas.

Try to think of a way that your mind has become more flexible over time?

We are in the mind of Ezekiel. It is the first day of Hanukkah and he is playing with a dreidel. Suddenly he hears some kids singing the dreidel song but they have changed all the words to the song and they have added a few words that are a little bit naughty. As he runs to tell the teacher he thinks, “They can’t mess with the dreidel song!”



Can you think of an antidote thought for Ezekiel at this time? What should he say? What should he do?

People like Ezekiel who tell tales a lot usually feel like they know the rules and that they are doing the right thing. But telling tales is often just a bad way of acting rigid.

Often, telling tales is the best thing to do but try now to think of a time when you told a tale and it was not the right thing to do. What was your poison thought at that time? What antidote thought did you need?

We are in the mind of Anya now. Anya is calling up a friend to invite her to see the latest hobbit movie. The friend says that she doesn't

want to see that movie. Anya ends the phone call. Anya thinks, “I’ll keep calling people until I find someone who wants to see the movies that I want.”

What is the problem with what Anya is doing in her phone calls? If you were Anya’s friend what kind of advice would you give to her? Anya is being rigid about the way she invites people to go and see a movie. She ought to be more flexible and allow other people to have some say in what movie they go to see together. Tell about a time when your being too stubborn caused a friend to get upset with you. What was your poison thought at that time and what antidote thoughts did you need?



Chapter 10 - Activity Monitoring: Track Your Mood!

Now we are going to learn more about how changing our behaviour (activities) can also affect our mood and feelings.

When you're feeling unhappy you tend to be less active than normal and you might stop doing things that lift your spirits. This can be a vicious circle and make you feel even worse.

It can help hugely to do things which you get pleasure from, or things which give you a sense of achievement. Persistent feelings of sadness can also be helped by doing some exercise, which can help boost your self-esteem, or by doing something sociable.

Step 1 – Think about activities you could do which fit into the following four groups:

- **Pleasurable activities**

When we are struggling with anxiety and worry, we can lose touch with things that used to give us pleasure. Plan to do some activities each day that are pleasurable and make you feel joyful. For example, reading a good book, watching a comedy, dancing or singing to your favourite songs, taking a relaxing bath, or eating your favourite food.

- **Activities which give you a sense of achievement**

We feel good when we have achieved or accomplished something, so it's helpful to include activities each day that give you a sense of achievement. For example, doing a painting, gardening, a school work task, cooking a new recipe, completing an exercise routine, or completing 'life admin' such as tidying your room.

- **Activities which make you physically active**

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by: raising your self-esteem; helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them; and causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood.

- **Social activities**

We are social beings, so we need and naturally crave closeness and connection with other people. With the current health crisis many of us may be physically isolated or distant from others, so it's important that we consider creative ways to connect in order that we don't become socially isolated and lonely. How can you continue to connect with family and friends and have social time in a virtual way? Perhaps using social media, phone and video calls, you could set up shared online activities e.g., a virtual book or film club. You could also explore local online neighbourhood groups, and see if there are ways to be involved in helping your local community.

It's important to do a balance of activities from each group. So, for example, each day try scheduling in an activity from a different group to the day before. Of course, each activity might fit into more than one group – a milkshake and cake with friends over Zoom can be both pleasurable and sociable.

Step 2 – Schedule your activities:

Print or copy the diary below, and then fill in what you plan to do for the next week. Mark on the diary whether you managed to do the activity or not and how you felt about it, or why you didn't manage to do it.

Step 3 – Practice makes perfect:

It might take practice to find the combination that works for you. Just remember to try to keep a good balance of activities from across the four, and keep it realistic – don't overstretch yourself.

	Pleasurable activity	Activity with a sense of achievement	Physical activity	Social activity
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

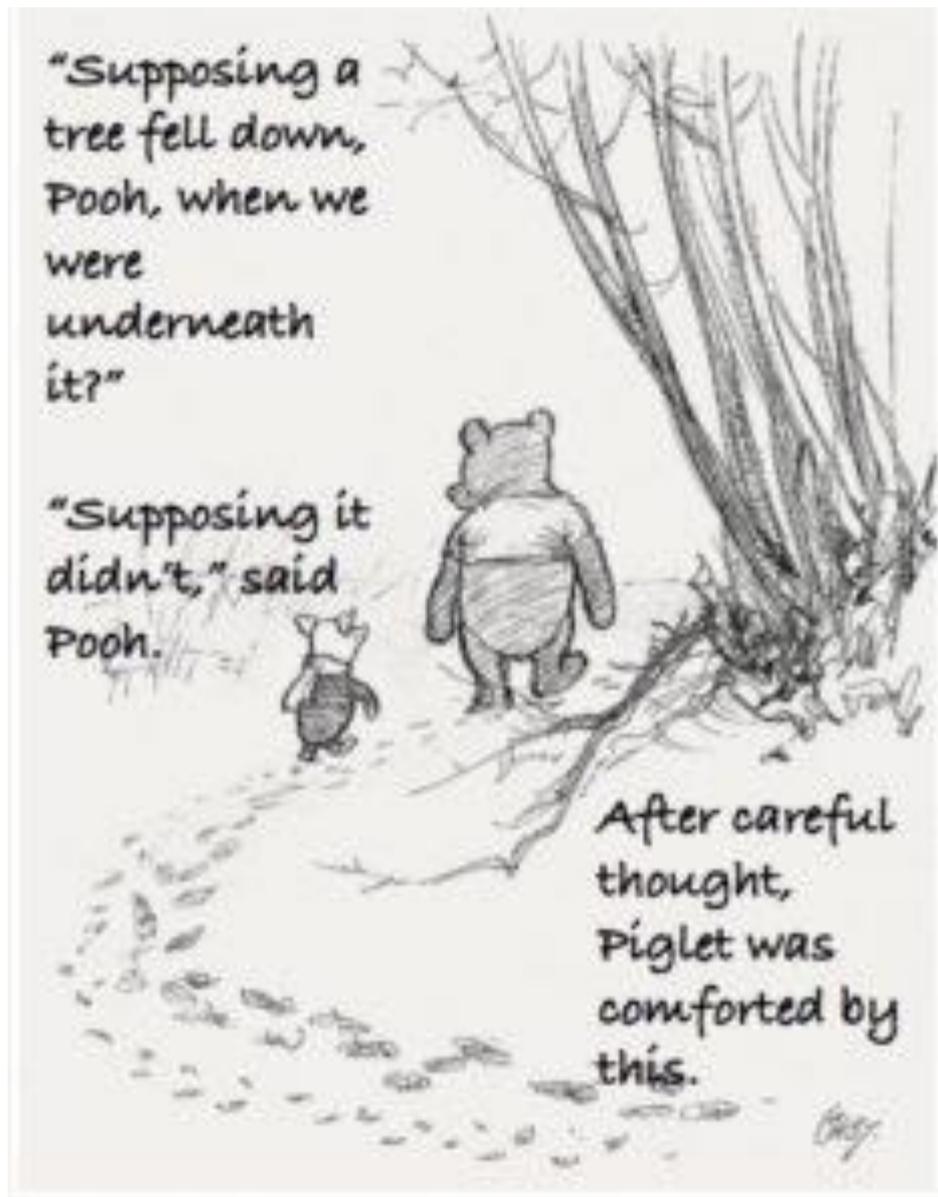
Well done for completing all ten chapters of this workbook.

May your thoughts surprise you kindly today!

With best wishes to you all,

Dr. Naomi Erasmus (Educational Psychologist, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council)

Addendum



For those children who attend a church school and are missing meeting together in the School Hall for Bible stories, a song to join in with and opportunities for reflection it turns out Pooh's advice is very similar to the sound advice offered by the apostle Paul when speaking of worrisome things: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Phil. 4:8, NIV).

Do you have a Brain Bully?

A Brain Bully is a bully that lives in our minds and tells us negative and nasty things which can make us feel sad, worried and distressed. This can stop us doing certain things or getting the most from life. Just like any bully, you shouldn't have to put up with a Brain Bully!



Thought bubbles around the brain bully:

- You're stupid
- You're not good enough
- Those people are talking about you
- You will fail
- Others are better than you
- If you don't move that thing, something bad will happen

Text box on the right:

Everyone's Brain Bully is different and will tell us different things.

What does your Brain Bully look like and what does it tell you?



Stand up to your Brain Bully

The things Brain Bullies say to us are usually negative **OPINIONS** and are not based on facts or evidence. We can therefore stand up to our Brain Bully by thinking about the **FACTS**.



Opinions

- You will fail
- Others are better than you
- They looked at you funny

Facts

- I have revised and will do my best
- Everyone is good at different things
- They were just looking in my direction and if they did look at me, why does it matter?



Challenge your Brain Bully

We can also challenge our Brain Bully by testing out whether the things it says to us are true or not. We can do this using **EXPERIMENTS**.



- Brain Bully: If you don't put that pencil straight, something bad will happen.
- Experiment: I left the pencil where it was and didn't do what my Bully told me to.
- Results: Nothing bad happened.
- Use the results to challenge the Bully in the future: I don't need to move the pencil because nothing bad happened last time. Brain Bully, you're wrong!

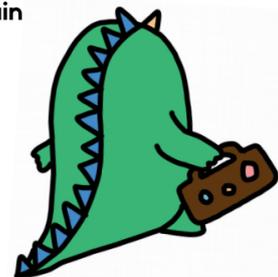
Plan your own experiments to challenge your Brain Bully.

It's all linked

Stand up to and challenge the Brain Bully and think more positive thoughts



Stand up to your Brain Bully's opinions by thinking about the **facts** and use **experiments** to challenge your Brain Bully. By doing this, you can send your Brain Bully packing!





Feeling Anxious about Coronavirus?



In these uncertain times, we are all feeling a certain amount of anxiety and worry around the coronavirus. This is a totally normal reaction to a difficult situation however, this anxiety can become a problem when it's stopping you from doing and enjoying certain things. Here are some helpful things you can do to help reduce your anxiety.

challenge unhelpful thoughts

Having lots of negative or unhelpful thoughts about the coronavirus can make us feel even more anxious, worried or distressed.

Are you making **predictions**?



I'm making predictions about the future even though I have no way of knowing what will actually happen.

Are you making **judgements**?



I'm making judgements about the coronavirus which aren't based on facts or evidence.

Are you **catastrophising**?



I keep thinking about the worst possible outcomes.

If you notice these unhelpful thoughts, try to challenge them and change them to something more positive. Ask yourself, are my thoughts actually based on any real facts? If not, then your thoughts are probably untrue!

do more to feel better

It might be difficult to do a lot of things that would usually help you feel happy and calm but there are still things you should try and **do** which can help you **feel better**. **Don't** just do nothing.

Go for a walk/jog.



Read a book.

Watch your favourite movie/TV show.



Do some yoga.

Draw or create something.



Make a healthy meal.

Play a game.



Listen to music.

Take a relaxing bath.



Video call friends /family.

Or create your own list...

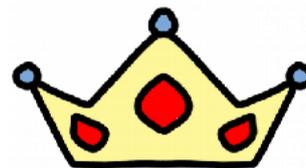
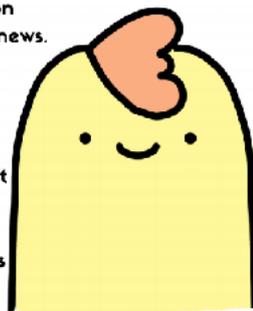
reduce your anxiety

Reduce the time you spend on social media/listening to the news.

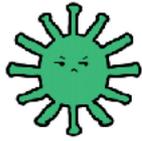
Talk about how you feel with friends/family.

Only listen to the facts - don't listen to those spreading fear.

Keep to a routine as much as possible.



Keep Calm and Follow Official Advice



Managing Coronavirus Worries



Young people can find it difficult to manage their worries and, during this uncertain time, they might be struggling with worries even more than usual. This guide can help young people to manage their worries in a structured way to help them to feel better.

There are two different types of worry and it's important to know the difference because we can deal with them in different ways. The first are **Hypothetical Worries** which are worries we don't currently have control over and can't do anything about. The second are **Practical Worries** which are worries we can do something about.



Hypothetical Worries

- What if we all get ill?
- What if we never go back to school?
- What if my holiday is cancelled?
- What if I infect my family?

Practical Worries

- I haven't seen my Gran in ages.
- I have nothing to do.
- I've been eating lots of junk food.
- I'm stuck on the work that school sent home.



As you notice worries during the day, write them down so that you can come back to them later at **Worry Time**. You could also **make a worry box** to put your worries in.

Once you've written the worry down, it's important to **refocus your attention**. Pay attention to whatever it is you're doing at that moment OR do something totally different. You can also refocus by noticing 5 things you see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste (the 5,4,3,2,1 method).



Use **Worry Time** to go back and address all of the worries you have written down that day. Worry time should be at the same time everyday and should last for a maximum of 30 minutes. Make sure it's not too close to bed time and that you're not distracted when doing it.

For each worry, decide whether it is a **Practical Worry** or **Hypothetical Worry**.

for the hypothetical worries:

For hypothetical worries, **let the worries go**. You can do this by ripping up, scribbling out or scrumpling up and throwing away the worry. Once you've done this, use the 5,4,3,2,1 method to refocus your attention from the worries which you have let go.

for the practical worries:

- For practical worries, use **problem solving** to find a solution:
- 1) write the problem in 1 or 2 sentences.
- 2) think of all of the solutions you can.
- 3) for each idea you came up with, write down all the good things and bad things for each solution.
- 4) choose the solution that looks the most likely to help.
- 5) make a plan to put your solution in place and DO IT.
- 6) review how it went - did it solve the problem or do you need to change and/or try a different solution?



**Keep Calm
and
Follow Official Advice**

Unhelpful Thinking

Unhelpful and negative thinking habits can lead to negative feelings without us even noticing. The first step in changing negative thoughts to more positive ones is to become more aware of what we think. Everyone has unhelpful thoughts sometimes but it's when they happen all of the time that they can have a negative impact on our mental health.

Which unhelpful thoughts do you recognise?



predictions



I make negative predictions about what might happen in the future even though I have no way of knowing this.



judgements



I make judgements about things even though there is no evidence or facts to back this up.



catastrophising



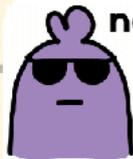
I always think that the worst thing or that something really bad is going to happen.



perfectionist



I put a lot of pressure on myself to do well and set unrealistically high expectations for myself.



negative glasses



When I have my negative glasses on, I only see the bad things and don't notice any of the good things.



feelings



If I notice negative feelings in myself or by body, I automatically think that it means something bad is happening.



mountains & molehills



I tend to take more notice of the negative things in a situation and down play the positive things.



memories



Some things trigger my negative memories which makes me think something bad will happen again now.



black&white thoughts



I usually think things are either really good or really bad with nothing in between.



mind reading



I assume I know what other people are thinking and this is usually negative things about me.



compare & despair



I notice positive things about other people but then compare myself negatively to them.



self critical



I am very critical of my own abilities and about myself.

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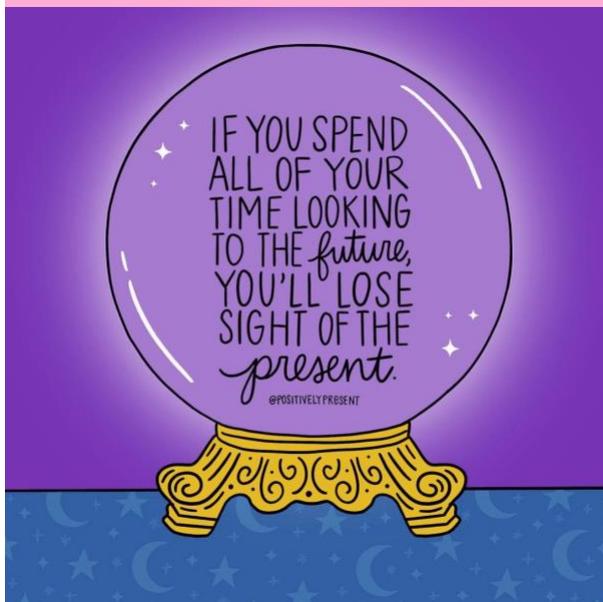
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Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shaw's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

Our brains were not designed for constant notifications, endless channels, multiple apps, 40 hour weeks (plus 5 social events), texts, messages, emails and whatsapps. No wonder we feel overwhelmed, frazzled and on high alert. Let's slow down, turn off, reschedule and delete whenever we can. It's time to give our minds the quiet and the rest they need.



mellow doodles

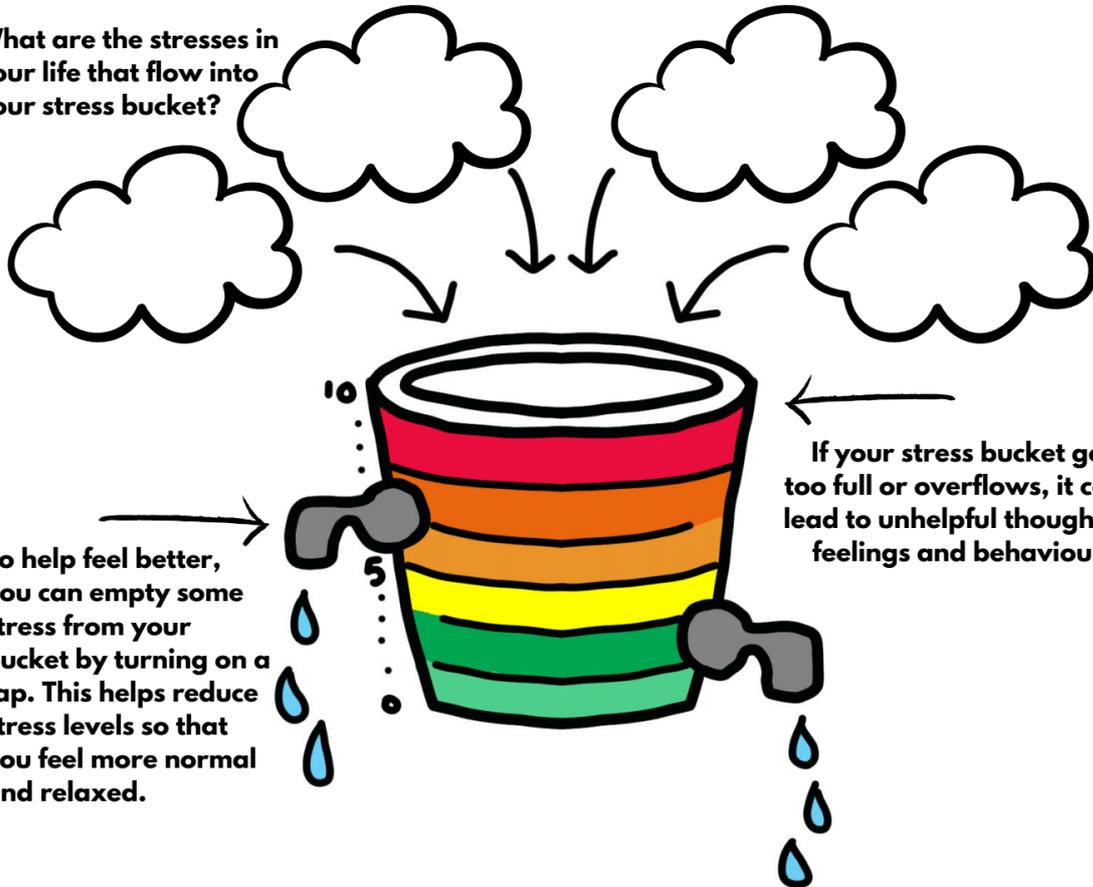


Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shaw's Autism Teaching Strategies website.

Stress Bucket

We all experience stress in our lives but it can become difficult if we don't know how to manage this stress and that's when problems can start to happen.

What are the stresses in your life that flow into your stress bucket?



What are some of the ways you can turn on your taps to reduce your stress?

By doing some of these things to help manage your stress levels, you will feel calmer, think clearer and feel more motivated to do things. Remember, we all feel stressed at times but it's about finding **balance** between feeling stressed and calm. The more balance we have, the better we feel.

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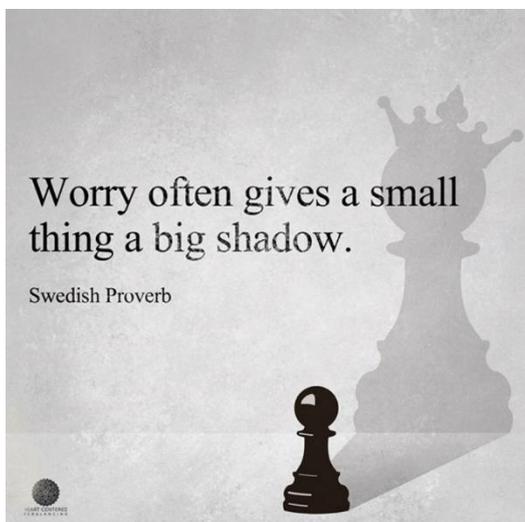


"I'm an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them have never happened."

~ Mark Twain

Sketches in Stillness .com

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YOU WOULDN'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR PHONE.



DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU EITHER.



SELF-CARE IS A PRIORITY. NOT A LUXURY.

WE CAN'T SOLVE
PROBLEMS
by using the same kind
OF
THINKING
WE USED WHEN WE
CREATED THEM

ALBERT EINSTEIN

You don't have to be a CBT therapist to help someone to start to shift their thinking.

Poison and Antidote Thought concept taken from Joel Shawl's Autism Teaching Strategies website.