

HEALTHY MINDS – Parent Supplement

Module 5 – Learning Helpful Thinking

Key Concepts

- This week builds on principles we have discussed earlier – that thoughts affect the way we feel, but they are not always accurate or helpful.
- If we can learn to think in ways that are **balanced**, **realistic**, and **helpful** then our emotional lives will be more balanced.
- Another important part of helpful thinking is in choosing helpful behaviours regardless of the resulting emotion and urges.
- Helpful thinking involves
 - i) Looking at many possible explanations
 - ii) Figuring out a balanced way of thinking about the situation (as opposed to accepting our automatic thoughts, which often include thinking errors)
 - iii) Choosing a helpful behaviour
- We can use various writing templates to help us practice helpful thinking. Remember – in order to write something down, we need to think it first. So structured writing tasks are actually also structured *thinking* tasks. That is why we recommend people write out their thinking when learning new (helpful) thinking skills.
- See the Helpful Thinking Template (in the Appendix) as an example of how to train one's thinking.

Key Student Activities

- Students complete the 'Types of Thoughts' worksheet, exploring the multitude of possible ways in which thinking – rather than events themselves – affect our emotional reactions and subsequent behaviours.
- Students work through the examples of Jane at the choir, and Joseph after football training. They need to identify automatic thoughts, thinking errors and

then create a more balanced, realistic and/or helpful way of thinking about the things that are bothering Jane and Joseph.

Discussion Points

- Ask your child to talk you through how they were able to help Jane and Joseph resolve their concerns.

Parent Self-reflection Questions

- Why might 'positive thinking' not always be the most helpful kind of thinking?
- Try the Helpful Thinking Template (in the Appendix below) using an example of a situation (either current or past) from your own life.



The Helpful Thinking Process

Step 1. 'What is my automatic thought?'	Write it down:	What is the feeling?
		How strong is it out of 10?
Step 2. 'What are three other possible outcomes or explanations?'	Write them down:	
Step 3. 'What has happened in the past in this situation, and what is most likely to happen now?'	Write it down:	

<p>Step 4. ‘What would my thinking brain say, compared to my emotional brain?’</p>	<p>Write it down:</p>	
<p>Step 5. ‘How would I advise a friend in this situation?’</p>	<p>Write it down:</p>	
<p>Step 6. ‘Given what I’ve written above, how could I re-write my original thought (from Step 1), to make it more: ✓ Balanced ✓ Realistic ✓ Helpful?’</p>	<p>Write your more balanced, realistic, and helpful thought here:</p>	<p>What is your feeling now?</p> <hr/> <p>How strong is your feeling now, out of 10?</p>
<p>My helpful course of action is:</p>		