



# Wellbeing with Fatigue

Booklet for Participants

Session Four. How Thoughts Affect how We Feel. Thought suppression. Thought diary.

**steps2wellbeing**  
Southampton & Dorset

# Action Plan

- Home practice review
- Thinking
- Thought Suppression
- Thought Diary
- Home Practice

## Questions?

Do you have any questions from last week's session?



## Home Practice Review

How did your home practice go? Did you achieve your goals?

What did you learn from your home practice?

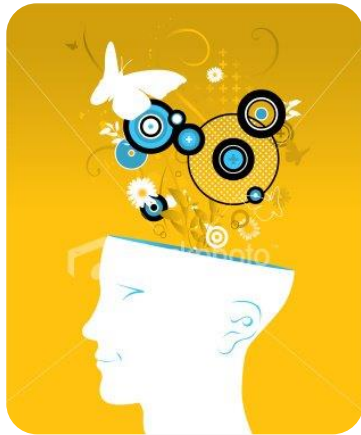


# Thinking

## Thoughts and thinking

“If our thinking is bogged down by distorted symbolic meanings, illogical reasoning and erroneous interpretations, we become, in truth, blind and deaf.”

Arron T. Beck



**What happens to your thoughts when you feel fatigued, sad, anxious?**

***Are they positive?***

***Are they realistic?***

***Are they true?***

***Are they helpful?***

**What we think is crucial in determining how we feel. Ask yourself- when you feel good, what kind of thoughts do you notice? When are you feeling sad, what sorts of thoughts are you having?**

**It is often not the situation itself that determines how we feel, more our interpretation of the situation that impact on our emotions.**

**What do you think about this statement? Do you agree or disagree?**



## Example: Fatigue

Thoughts/Images	Emotions	Physical sensations	Behaviour
My symptoms are uncontrollable and overwhelming.  Images of being bedridden and unable to look after self.	Fear	Heart pounding  Sweating  Feeling nauseous  Head spinning  Butterflies in stomach	Focusing on symptoms  Going to bed
I just had a good meal. I feel fatigued after the meal.	Neutral	No change	Resting on sofa
I spent a day with my best friend. I feel exhausted, but it was worth it.	Happy	No change	Texting my friend  Looking at our old photos

### What do thoughts have to do with chronic fatigue, low mood and anxiety?

Becoming more aware of your thoughts, allows you to consider how helpful they are and if necessary, change them. Learning to replace unhelpful thinking with more helpful, balanced thinking, can in turn, helps us to feel better, and to behave differently.

**“You mainly feel the way you think.”  
Albert Ellis**



# Thought Suppression

**One way to stop experiencing unpleasant thoughts or images is to try to suppress them.**

Unfortunately, this tends to have the consequences of actually increasing the frequency and intensity of these thoughts, sometimes leading to increased anxiety.

**Have you tried this?**

Polar Bear Exercise

**What have you noticed?**



**Most people notice that thoughts were more frequent and disturbing the harder they tried to suppress their thoughts.**

**It is counterproductive to try to suppress thoughts, therefore stop trying so hard not to have the thoughts or images that are distressing you and you will find they bother you much less! This may take practice!!!!**

Take a break.  
**You deserve it!**



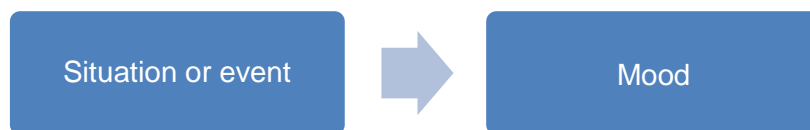


# Don't believe in everything you think!

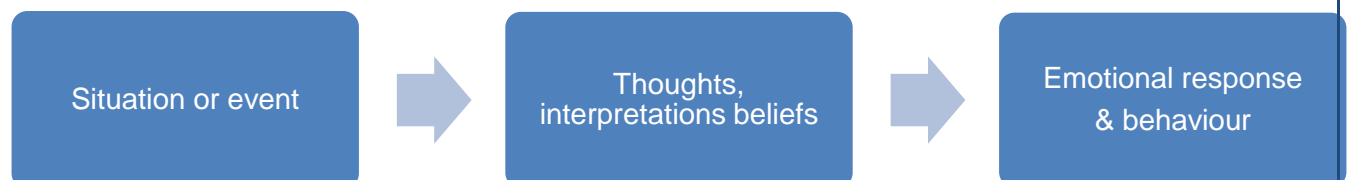
## What can we do instead of thought suppression?

When we have a thought, we tend to just accept it as true without considering how realistic or helpful it is. But sometimes we can “jump to conclusions”, or form a judgement about a situation without having all the facts. The good news is that by becoming more aware of our negative thoughts, we can take steps to change them. We can learn to replace unhelpful thinking with more helpful, balanced thinking, which in turn helps us to feel better, and to behave differently.

Most of us believe that external events, situations and the behaviour of other people cause us to feel emotions like anxiety, sadness or anger.



If this were true then everybody in a particular situation would react the same way, but we know that different people react differently. This suggests that it is the way that we think about, perceive or interpret the situation or others actions that influences how we feel and behave.



The way we think in a situation, and how we make sense of it in our minds, is shaped by our previous experiences, our personality, and our underlying beliefs about ourselves, other people and the world. We tend to interpret new situations in line with beliefs and ideas that we already hold, which may not always be helpful to us.

## Identifying and Recording Your Thoughts

CBT involves helping people to see how their thoughts and behavior interact in helpful or unhelpful ways. The first step is learning to identify what we are thinking. This is easier said than done. Often the feelings seem like they just happen, and therefore we need to learn to be detectives, carefully analysing the situation. The following steps can help with this process.

### 1. Identify the activating event

The situation or trigger which occurred just before we noticed the shift in mood

### 2. Next identify the consequences, in terms of our

- a. Emotional feelings, or mood
- b. Physical sensations
- c. Behaviour- what we did, or avoided doing

Giving our emotion a rating out of 10 can help us judge how strongly we felt that way (0 = low, 10= high)


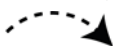






3. Lastly we need to identify what was going through our mind when we started to feel this way. This might be a **specific thought, an image** or even a **memory**.

Situation	Emotions	Physical sensations	Behaviour	Thoughts/Images
Wake up feeling tired and exhausted	Fear	Heart pounding Sweating Feeling nauseous Head spinning Butterflies in stomach	Focusing on symptoms Staying in bed	My symptoms are uncontrollable and overwhelming. Images of being bedridden and unable to look after self.



## Unhelpful thinking styles

Our minds are always interpreting the world around us, trying to make sense of events. Sometimes we see the world accurately – as it really is – but often our minds take ‘short cuts’ and our thinking can become biased. These biases or ‘cognitive distortions’ can have powerful effects upon how we feel.

 All or nothing thinking	Thinking in extremes. For example something is either 100% good or bad
Jumping to conclusion  $2 + 2 = 5$	There are two key types of jumping to conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind reading (imagining we know what others are thinking)</li> <li>• Fortune telling (predicting the future)</li> </ul>
 Catastrophising	Jumping to the worst possible conclusion
“everything is always rubbish” “nothing good ever happens” Overgeneralising	Seeing a pattern based upon a single event
 Mental filter	Only paying attention to certain types of evidence (“ <i>that doesn’t count</i> ”)
<b>MUST</b> Should and Must	Using critical words like ‘should’, ‘must’, or ‘ought’ can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed.
 Disqualifying the positives	Discounting positive information or twisting a positive into a negative
 Minimisation/Magnification	Discounting the importance of something We magnify positive qualities in others but minimise our own
 Emotional reasoning	Assuming that because we feel a certain way our hunch must be true
 Labelling	Assigning labels to ourselves or others (“ <i>I’m rubbish</i> ”)
“ <i>this is my fault</i> ” Personalisation	Taking too much or too little responsibility



# Over to You: Choose and Practice

## Summary Session Four

In this session we looked at how our thoughts affect the way we feel. We learned that it is not the event which causes the emotion (and our behavioural reaction) but the meaning we give that event - or what we think ABOUT that event. We discussed unhelpful thinking styles and introduced the Thought Diary.

**Write down one or more key points that you have learnt today:**

## Suggested Home Practice

You may find useful to read this handbook, reflect upon your thoughts and the psychological techniques discussed.

When you experience a shift in mood this week, use the Thought Diary to record the triggering event, your feelings, thoughts, unhelpful thinking styles and behaviour.

Remember that the **purpose of a thought record** is to get you into the habit of paying attention to your **thoughts** and later working to change them.

**Thought Record Form: Use this form to record examples of your thinking. You can use the form to record more than one example, just draw a line under each one to separate them.**

<b>Situation</b> (what, where, when, who was there)	<b>Emotion</b> (label your feeling and rate intensity out of 10)	<b>Physical Sensations</b> (fatigue, pain)	<b>Thoughts</b> (what was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way)	<b>Thinking Styles</b> (catastrophising, mental filter, shoulds/musts)	<b>Behaviour</b> (what did you do, or avoid doing)

