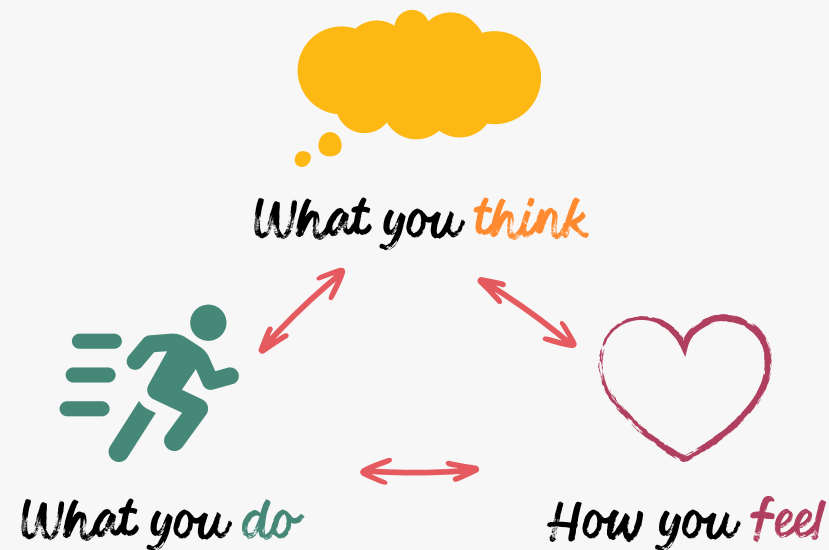


What are thoughts?

Thoughts are the statements or sentences we say to ourselves in our mind. Sometimes we don't pay attention to our thoughts, they just come to us automatically. Other times we can become fixated on our thoughts.



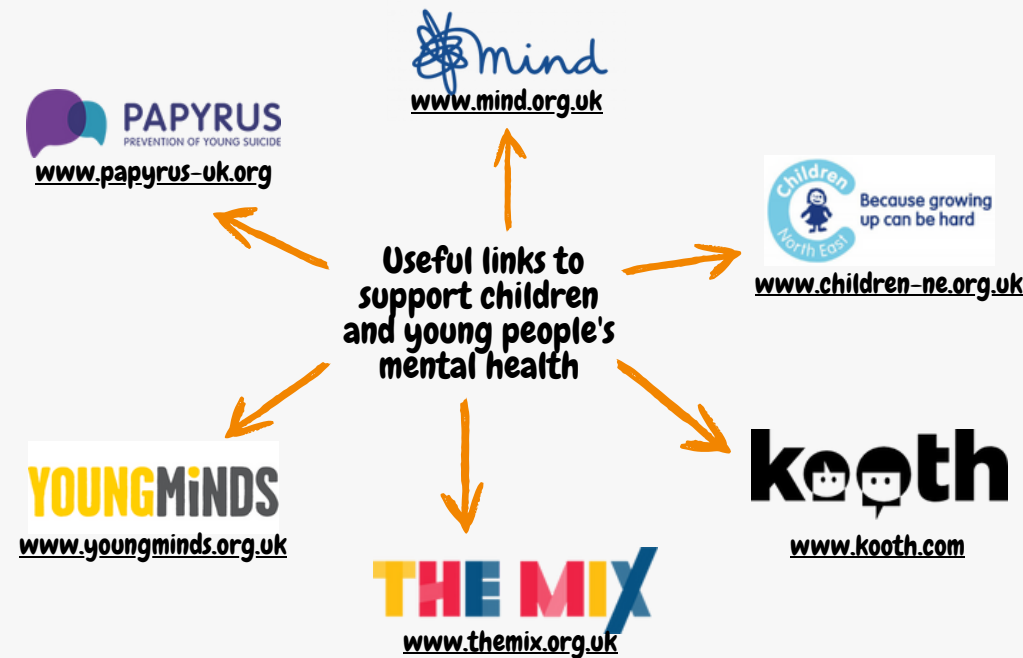
When we worry it usually starts with a thought. These thoughts are often unhelpful, negative thoughts.

When our thoughts take over, they can grow and make our emotions feel very big.

This can lead to physical sensations in our body such as tummy aches, butterflies, tenseness, dizziness, a racing heart beat and feeling like we can't breathe.

The way we feel can then change how we behave or what we do, and our behaviour is often in response to these thoughts and emotions.

Further Support/Information



Helpful Apps



Headspace
A meditation app that acts as a personal guide to health and happiness.



MoodGym
An online cognitive behaviour therapy program for depression and anxiety.



Smiling Mind
A meditation program to help bring mindfulness into your life



Calm Harm
An app that helps young people manage the urge to self-harm.



ThinkNinja
Designed for children and young people (10-18 years old) to help with anxiety and low mood.



Clear Fear
An app that helps you face your fears and reduce the physical responses to anxiety.

A Guide to Thought Challenging

Tips for supporting children and young people to recognise, understand and challenge their negative, unhelpful thoughts.

Information for Parents, Carers and Staff

Find us online...



@rise.ne



@rise_mhst



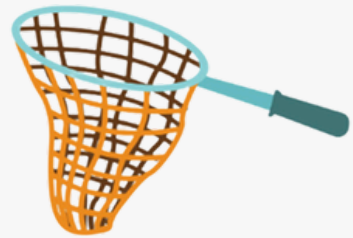
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Thought Challenging

1



Catch it

Work with your young person to identify the negative thought and the thinking trap they have fallen into. You can write the thoughts down to aid this process.

2



Check it

Use the questions on the next page to check the negative thought and explore whether there could be a different way of thinking in this situation.

3



Change it

Now, try to find an alternative thought that the young person could have based on the questions you have asked. This thought should be more balanced.

Open Questioning

Try using some of these questions to explore the thought with the young person and support them to recognise that it is possible to think a little differently.

Is this thought a fact or an opinion?

What would you tell a friend if they told you this worry?

How might someone else see this?

What evidence do you have that this thought is true?

If it is true, how will you cope?

Is there another way to look at this?

Distraction

If a child or young person is finding it really difficult to think differently, especially if they are having lots of worries that are making them feel anxious, worried or scared, try using a distraction technique to take their mind off their worries...

5, 4, 3, 2, 1

5 things I can see



4 things I can hear



3 things I can smell



2 things I can touch



1 thing I can taste



Happy Memories

When times are tough, think of a time when you felt happy.

Research shows we can boost our mood by reflecting on a positive memory.

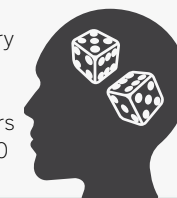


Mind Games

When we cannot do anything about our thoughts and worries, then it is sometimes useful to distract ourselves.

You could play:

- What would you do if...: you had a superpower, won the lottery?
- A-Z: Find 5 things for every letter of the alphabet.
- 10s - 10 colours in the room, 10 Disney films...



Count the Colours

Pick a colour to focus on, e.g., purple.

How many purple things can you see?

Close your eyes, how many purple things can you imagine?

Why not count the rainbow colours?



You can find more of these strategies cards on our website under 'Emotional Regulation' in the resources section.

Distraction can also include flow activities. Flow is a state of mind that occurs when a person is totally immersed in an activity they enjoy e.g., reading, drawing, crafts, music, colouring or exercise.