

Attitudes, Biases & Distortions

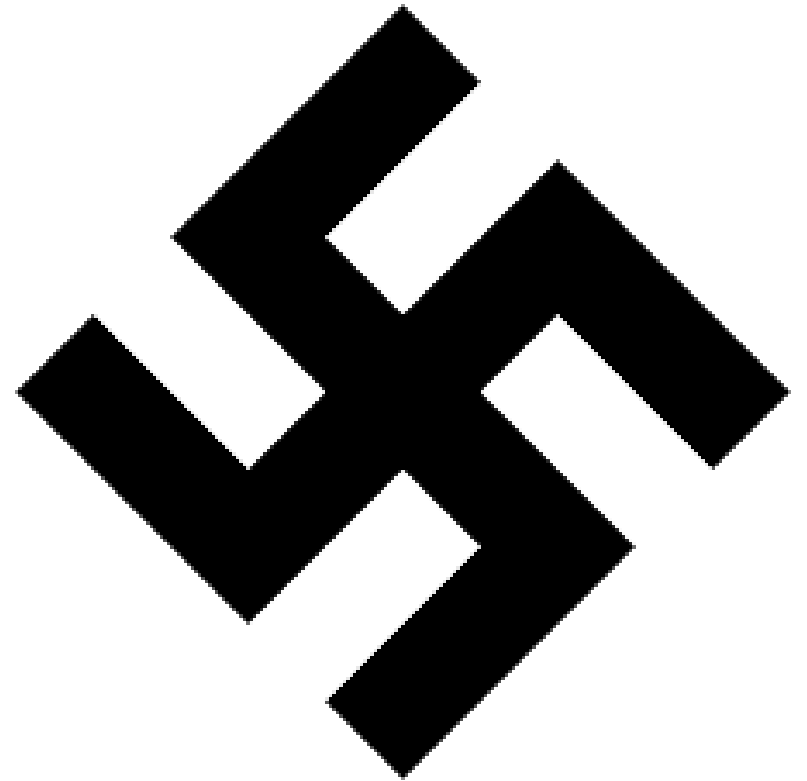
Disha Counseling Center

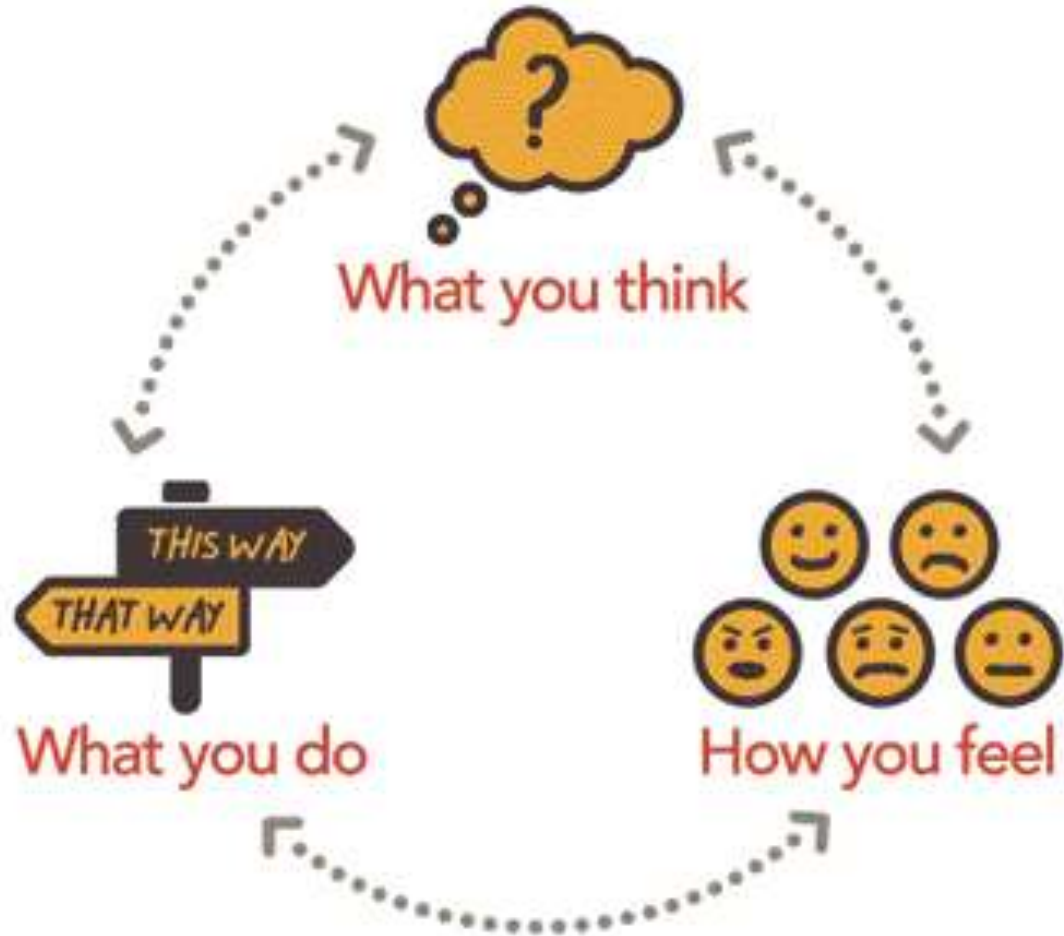


Make note of your first thought or feeling



Attitudes



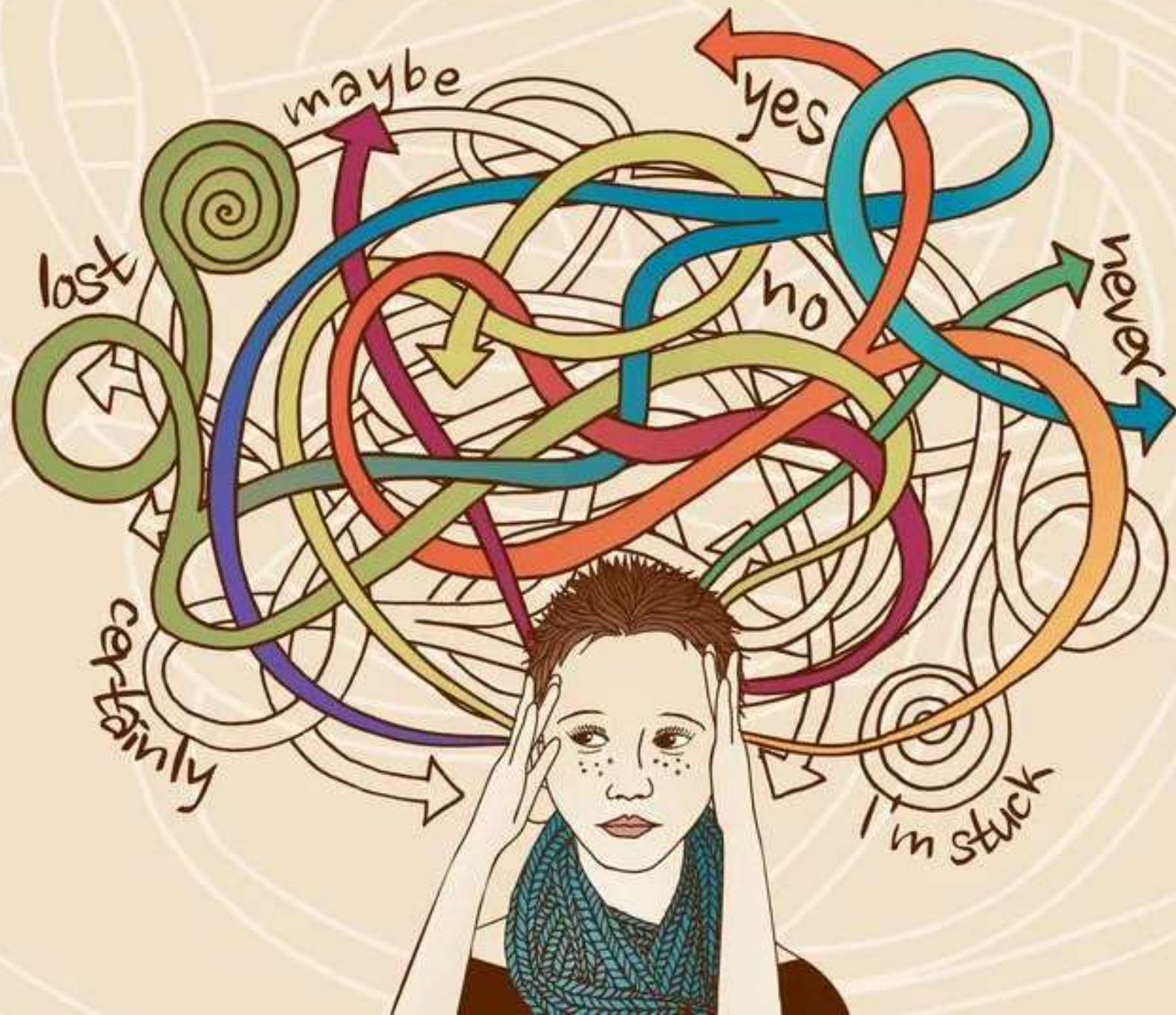




YOU MAINLY FEEL THE WAY YOU THINK

ALBERT ELLIS

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Errors in Thinking

- Our thinking falls on a spectrum – from completely rational to completely irrational.
- Thinking errors are when you think and believe things which have no basis in reality.
- Your thinking is not accurate about events, yourself, or others.
- All of us, from time to time, tend to think in ways that maybe irrational, distorted, or faulty.

Errors in Thinking

They pose a problem when:

- We use them to make hurtful actions or words seem okay in our mind; when we justify things in our minds.
- We use them to avoid taking full responsibility for ourselves and our actions
- We use them to avoid looking at the negative impact our behavior has on other people

We use them almost all of the time – when our main style of thinking is distorted and flawed.

Errors in Thinking

- Our thinking can misguide us through:
- Some **Attitudes** that we have developed
- Some **Biases** that we have formed
- Some **Cognitive Distortions**

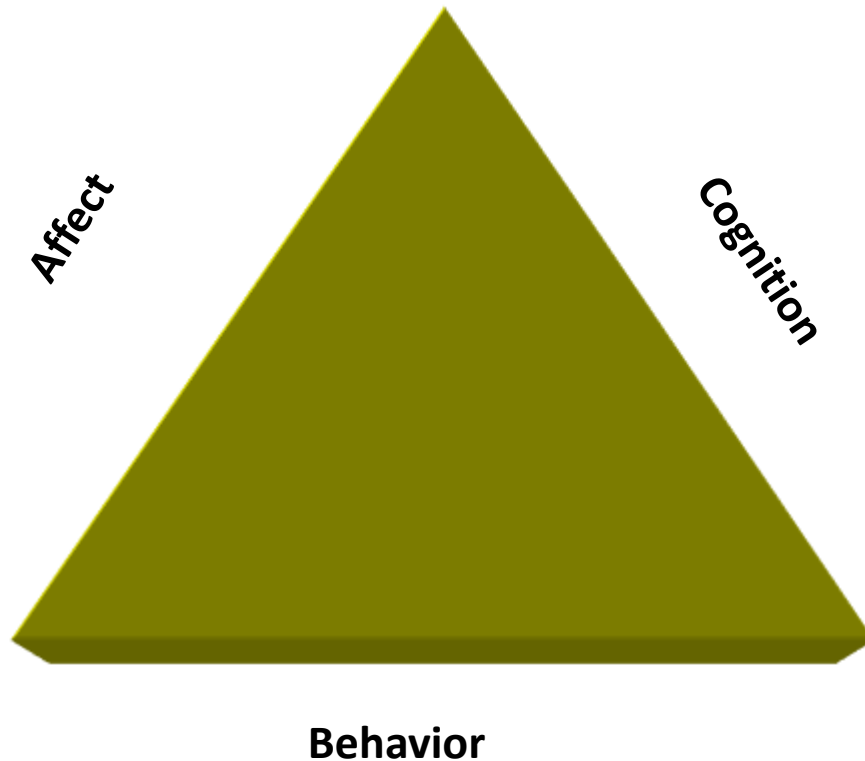
Attitudes

- A thought that we accept as true
- An emotional readiness to behave in a particular way
- Leads one to think, feel or act positively or negatively toward a person, idea or event
- Deeply ingrained in our personalities as we learn and grow

Attitudes

- Attitudes are hard to change
- Knowing how to change attitudes in yourself and others can be essential to effective human relations

Environment



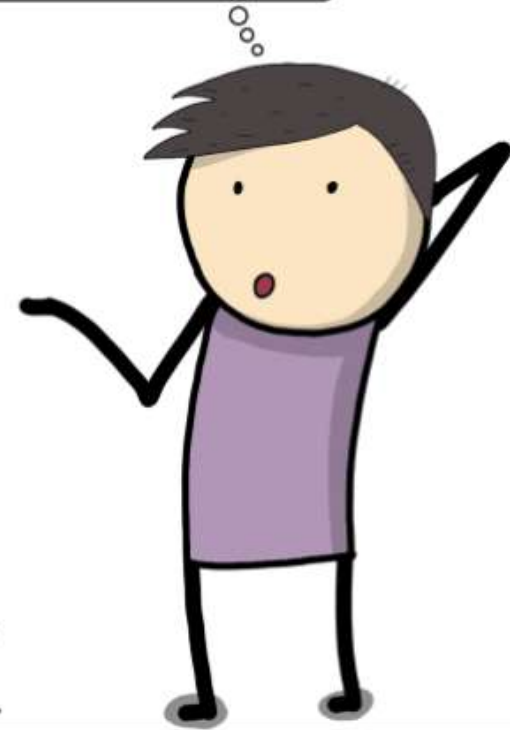
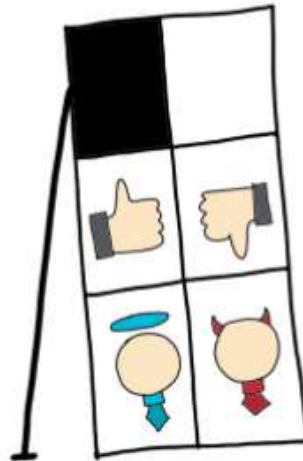
- **Affect:** I feel very angry about the effects of global warming
- **Cognition:** Deforestation will result in increase in global warming.
- **Behaviour:** I protest against cutting down green zone for building highways



HOW MANY DIFFERENT WAYS COULD OTHER PEOPLE INTERPRET THIS?

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BLACK
AND WHITE
THINKING



THE TENDENCY TO SEE THINGS AS ALL-OR-NOTHING.
THINGS ARE EITHER GOOD OR BAD, RIGHT OR WRONG.

Black or White Thinking

- Either I am perfect, or I am a complete failure.
- No middle ground, no shades of grey.
- Things are 'All' or 'None'
- May result in extreme emotions and extreme actions.



I am a terrible cricketer, I didn't score a century. I should just give up.

Black or White Thinking

Overcoming Black or White Thinking

- Realistic expectations – from self, others, and the world.
- Learn to live with your shortcomings.
- Perfection – a moving target!
- Learn to look at the entire spectrum of possibilities.

HOW DO THE POSITIVES OUTWEIGH
THE NEGATIVES IN THIS INSTANCE?

MENTAL FILTERING



THE TENDENCY TO FOCUS ON NEGATIVE
EVENTS WHILE NEGLECTING THE POSITIVES.

Filtering

- Focus on a specific kind of information, that is negative in nature.
- Tunnel Vision – through which only negative information reaches us, positive information gets filtered out.
- These mental filters colour our world view.
- Limits our capacity to see reality in the right context – biased view of reality

Nothing comes easily to me.

Filtering

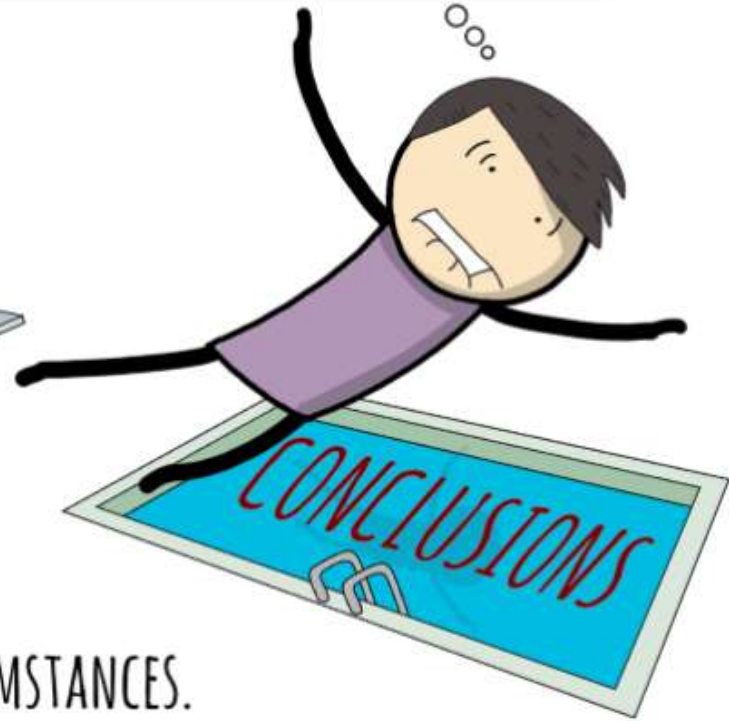
Overcoming Filtering

- Become aware of your filters!
- Once you identify your filter, make an objective attempt to collect evidence against this filter.
- With time, your filters will stop getting automatically activated.



WHAT IF THERE IS ANOTHER EXPLANATION FOR THIS?

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS



THE TENDENCY TO MAKE IRRATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

Jumping to Conclusions

- Making a negative interpretation or prediction even when there is no real evidence supporting your conclusion

Mind Reading: Making negative assumptions about how people see you without evidence or factual support.

Everyone is ignoring me.

Fortune Telling: Making negative predictions about the future without evidence or factual support.

I just know this project is going to fail!



Jumping to Conclusions

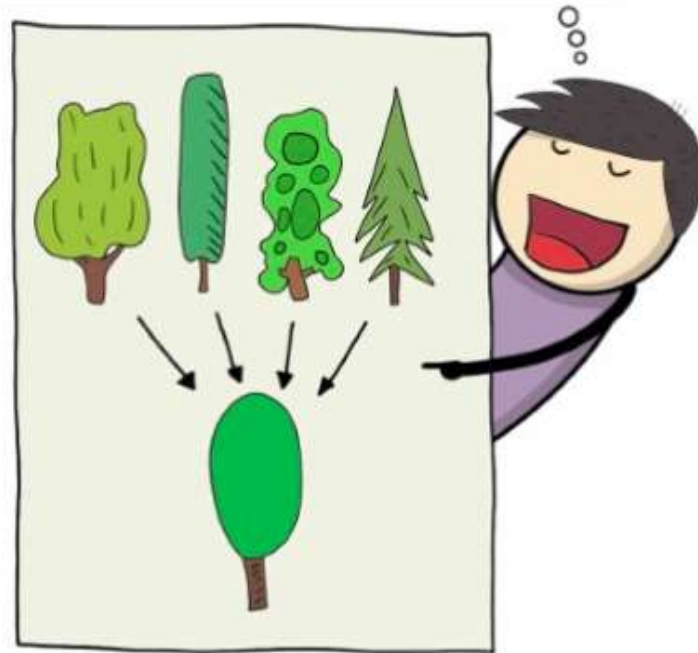
Overcoming Jumping to Conclusions

- Start questioning your assumptions about other people.
- Make a habit of looking for evidence, or proof that your assumption is valid.
- Look for alternative explanations for the situation.

WHAT EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT THINGS COULD NOW BE DIFFERENT?

OVERGENERALIZING

THE TENDENCY TO MAKE BROAD GENERALIZATIONS BASED UPON A SINGLE EVENT AND MINIMAL EVIDENCE.



Overgeneralising

- Based on a single incidence, you conclude that all future incidences are going to result in the same outcome.
- Taking selective experiences and making them universal.
- A single event becomes part of a never-ending pattern of experiences.

Chinese products are of poor quality

Overgeneralising

Overcoming Overgeneralising

- Focus on the specific situation, and that alone!
- Sweeping generalisations can become deeply embedded beliefs.
- Look at every experience as a stand-alone one, rather than clubbing it in a series.
- Weed out absolutes like always and never from your vocabulary.



WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS TRUE IN ALL SITUATIONS?

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LABELING

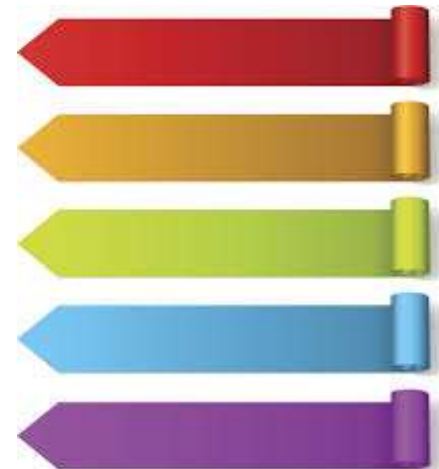


THE TENDENCY TO MAKE GLOBAL STATEMENTS ABOUT YOURSELF OR OTHERS BASED UPON SITUATION SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR.

Labelling

- Labels we give ourselves.
- Like over generalisations, but more personalized.
- Narrow our vision, prevent us from seeing reality.
- Blinkers on horse's eyes.

I am always easily stressed.



Labelling

Overcoming Labelling

- Allow yourself to see the complexity in people and situations, rather than stamping them with a simplistic tag or label.
- See the uniqueness in each person, each situation.
- Keep your experiences free of labels, so you can experience reality in totality.

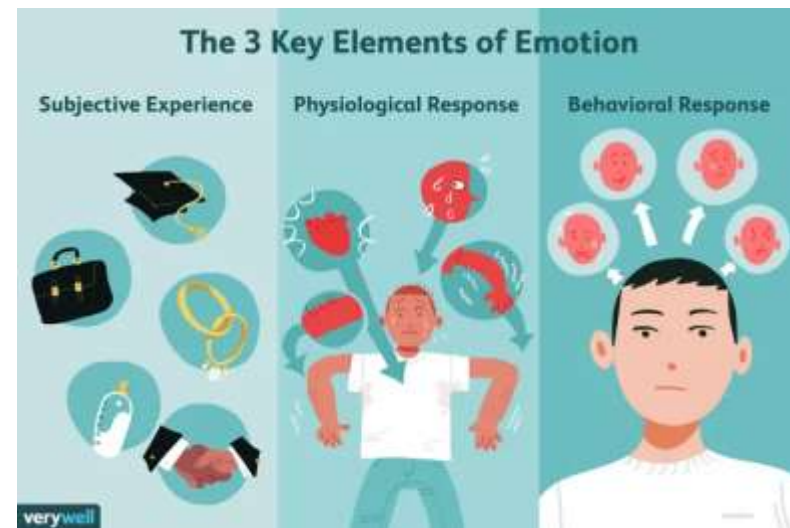
Overcoming Cognitive Distortions

Three Step Process

- Identify your thinking errors.
- Generate counter-evidence to refute your thought.
- See your distortions more objectively by putting distance between yourself and the thought.

The A-B-C Model

- A = Adversity (Something Happens)
- B = Beliefs (You have a belief about the situation)
- C = You react to the belief (emotionally and/or behaviourally)



A-B-C Model

A

SITUATION

I have to give a presentation to the class.

B

MY THOUGHTS

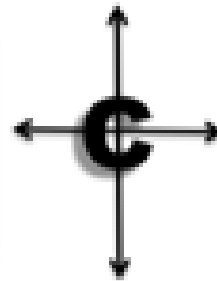
"I'm going to mess it up. It'll be awful. They'll see my nervousness, and that will make it worse. I'll be in bits, shaking and tongue tied. I'll make a show of myself! They'll all laugh at me. I can't cope."

BEHAVIOUR

How does this make me behave ?

I can't prepare properly.

I pretend I'm sick and avoid it.



EMOTIONS

How does that make me feel ?

Very scared. Very anxious.

Very worried

PHYSICAL

What is my body doing ?

Heart racing. Feel sick. Hyperventilating.

Overheating. Blushing. Trembling.

Three Insights

- **Beliefs, not events, cause disturbance.** We remain disturbed by adhering to irrational beliefs.
- We **perpetuate these beliefs by using them repeatedly.** We make the same connections again and again, thereby strengthening our irrational beliefs.
- We will have to work hard to restructure the beliefs that create unhappiness.



Eureka!



Change your Self Talk

Self-talk refers to the way a person's inner voice describes situations. It determines a person's reactions to situations.

Negative self talk is the negative things that you tell yourself.





Cognitive Dissonance

- Disparity between our belief and our behaviour
- Makes us uncomfortable
 - Change the attitude / belief
 - Change the behaviour
 - Seek more information to reduce dissonance

