



CBT For Me – Part 1: Starting with Thinking – VIDEO INTRO: <https://youtu.be/HLBOpgHBqoc>

Introduction: One thing that everyone should get out of a substance use or mental health program is a basic understanding of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). CBT is one of the easiest to understand ways to change behaviors, for anyone who is motivated to make those changes. This worksheet focuses on starting a discussion on Thinking, Feelings and Behaviors, the core elements of CBT with emphasis on Thinking first

As an icebreaker, try the following exercise as a group. On the next page are some common thoughts, feelings and behaviors that may be associated with substance use and mental health. Of course, there are many more than this, but this list is enough to start a discussion and to start the group talking about **thoughts, feelings and behaviors**. Notice that some of the thoughts, feelings and behaviors are more positive and others not so positive.

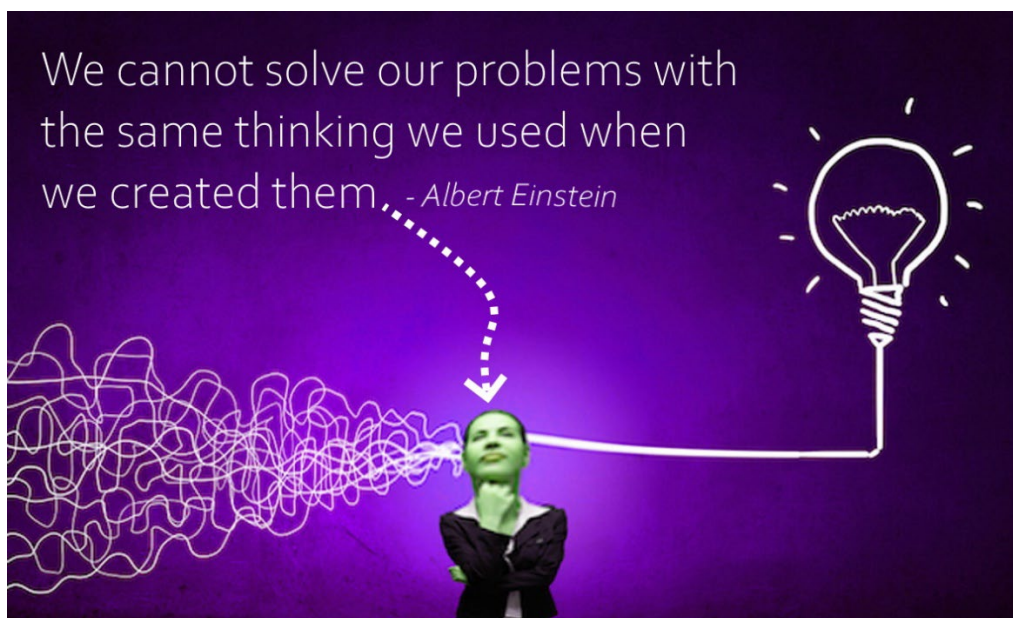
Directions: Everyone in the group should get a copy of the list. Take turns and when it's your turn simply pick a Thought, Feeling, or Behavior on the list that stands out to you and tell a brief story related to it. If you are up to the challenge, you can pick two items from the list: a thought and a feeling or try to use all three: a thought, a feeling and a behavior for your story. It's up to you

Examples

Group member 1 picks the Thought: "**It could be worse**" and tells a story: "When I was in detox for heroin last month I honestly felt like I was going to die because I was so sick, but I kept remembering that I was telling myself at the time: "**It could be worse – I could be in jail or dead right now**"

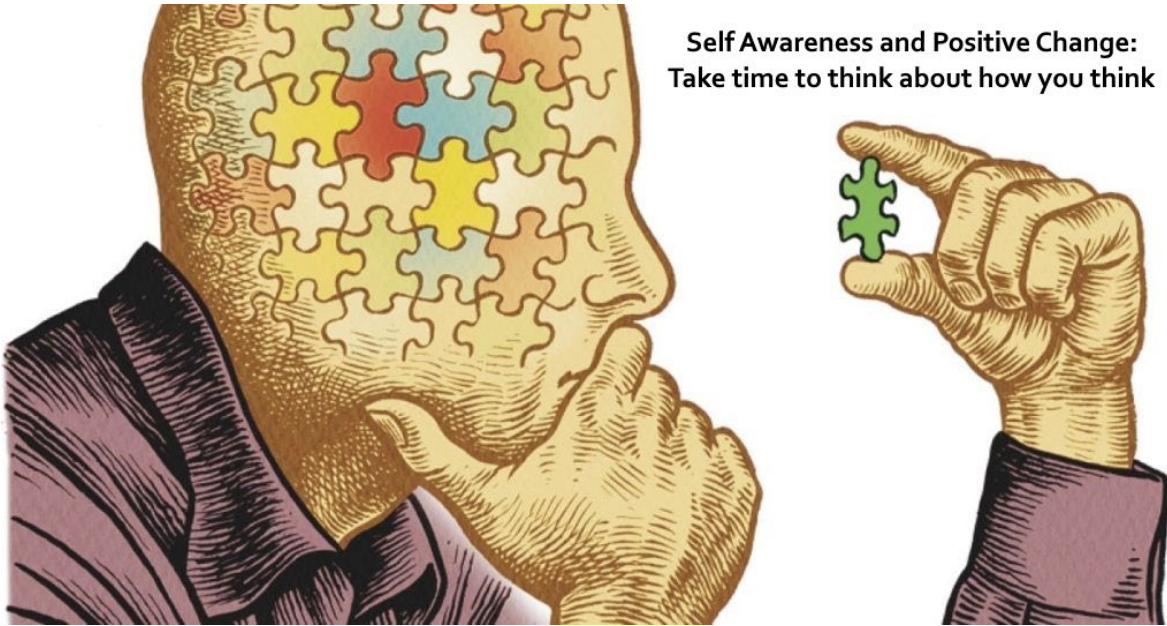
Group member 2 feels up to the challenge and picks two items: a Thought – "**I've got skills and talents**" and a Feeling "**Blessed**" and tells the story: "I nearly lost everything because of my substance use and mental health issues until I got help. Now I am feeling so **blessed** because **I've got skills and talents** doing carpentry and I have been able to get a business started up again since I have been in recovery.

Group member 3 goes for a combination of all three: Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors from the list and tells the story: "I used to struggle for years with negative thoughts like **I'm not good enough** which left me feeling **discouraged**, however now that I am working on things, I have learned to choose the behavior of **using my support system to** help me work through these negative feelings when they come up.





<u>Thoughts</u>	<u>Feelings</u>	<u>Behaviors</u>
I quit	Angry	Aggression (Verbal)
I'm the greatest	Happy	Reach out for help
I'm not good enough	Sad	Run away
I've got this	Excited	Use support system
No one cares	Disappointed	Pretend everything is fine
I deserve better	Grateful	Practice and learn to improve
I'll figure it out	Calm	Aggression (Physical- Fight)
He/She/They are out to get me	Anxious	Compromise to find peace
I'm not going to quit	Bored	Stay stuck in situation
I can't do it	Amused	Explore new options
Everyone else has it better	Distracted	Repeat the cycle
Things are getting better	Focused	Keep on trying
I'll never get there	Disgusted	Isolate
I have a good shot at this	Relieved	Seek professional help
I have no idea	Afraid	Find a way out
It's starting to work	Courageous	Return to bad situation
I am a fake and a phony	Bitter	Recover
I'm steadily improving	Satisfied	Relapse
This just isn't fair	Resentful	Use coping skills
I'm making the best of it	Appreciative	Sulk and complain
I'm fooling everyone	Horried	Handle my business
I'll survive	Proud	Sit back and wait
I'm not strong enough	Stuck	Take accountability
I'll get through this	Motivated	Blame others
I don't measure up	Apathetic	Accept and move forward
I have a lot to offer	Enthusiastic	Neglect responsibility
The deck is stacked against me	Driven	Try something new
I've got skills and talents	Burned Out	Avoid change
I can't adapt to this	Blessed	Stand up for self
I'm flexible and clever	Stressed	Come up with excuses
I'm not smart enough	Content	Set new goals
I can master this with time	Aggravated	Give up
I'm going to fail	Hopeful	Adjust priorities
I'll win if I stay in the game	Desperate	Stay lost
It's never going to happen	Confident	Remain grounded
I can see it in my future	Discouraged	Strategize new plans
I'm about to break down	Beautiful	Scheme, cheat or lie
I'm resilient and will endure	Ugly	Do some self-searching
I can't do this honestly	Joyful	Shut down
I can face the truth today	Troubled	Find a way to make peace
This is too much for me	Comfortable	Take it out on someone else
I have what it takes	Upset	Patiently endure
I can't handle any more	Pessimistic	Suffer in silence
It could be worse	Optimistic	Rise to the occasion



Change your thinking, change your life - There are several factors that need to be in place in order to change our thinking in a positive way. Discuss each one below and answer the questions:

Self-Awareness – Learning to look inward into our own mind to examine and openly define our own thoughts is a skill that can be learned but takes practice. This comes easier to some people than to others, but anyone can develop this skill. ***How about you, do you feel ready to look deeper into your own thinking?***

Self-Honesty – It can be a challenge to admit to ourselves that we are having negative thoughts, especially fearful or embarrassing thoughts. For example, it can be difficult for some people to openly admit things out loud that may make them seem vulnerable. ***Are you able to get honest about your own thoughts even the difficult to admit or accept ones?***

Courage – Sometimes we may be afraid to face our thoughts. Facing thoughts can mean facing reality and accepting the need to change. ***Are you prepared to face and admit some of your fears and insecurities?***

Break the Habit – Negative thinking can become habitual. Complaining about life, looking at the dark side of things, being pessimistic or self-defeating can all become “comfortable” when it becomes a regular habit. ***If you have the habit of looking at things in a negative way, are you prepared to change?***

Open Mindedness- We have all met someone who ignores facts and experiences in favor of stubbornly holding on to a certain way of thinking. Instead, life is about learning and growing which requires looking at different perspectives and adapting our thinking with new information and experiences. ***Are you working on being open minded about new information instead of stubbornly holding on to old opinions?***

Ability to “Reframe” – When we identify a negative or harmful thought, it is essential to be able to reframe those negative thoughts in a more positive and realistic way. An example would be reframing the negative thought “I’m not good enough” to something like “I am still a work in progress, but I am getting better with time” ***Do I need to learn more about or practice using cognitive reframing?***

Help for More Serious Mental Health Issue – Professional help may be needed when disorders like Major Depressive Disorder or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder are present because negative thinking can be symptomatic of these and other mental health disorders. This does not mean that you cannot work on changing thinking but sometimes some more outside help is needed in therapy or with a psychiatrist/APN. ***Talk to your counselor more about this if you feel that you need more help with negative thinking***