



Understanding Low Mood and Depression

Information Session for Parents / Carers

PILOT SLIDES



Housekeeping



- Please mute yourself while the team are presenting
- Please ask questions using the chat box or raise your hand
- This is a universal workshop and we may not be able to answer questions about individual children and young people (CYP)
- Please be mindful of confidentiality
 - Consider what you are sharing in a group setting
 - Please don't repeat out with the session.

Looking after Ourselves



- We will touch on topics which can be difficult to think about (e.g. distress in CYP, self-harm, suicidality).
- Mental health difficulties including depression are common for CYP and adults.
- The workshops may therefore bring up difficult feelings or memories, sometimes unexpectedly.
- Please do what you need to look after yourself today.
 - Take a comfort break away from the screen if you need to
 - Go for a walk
 - Have a cup of tea
 - Take time to chat to someone you trust

Aims of the workshops

To provide information that can help you to:

- Recognise depression/concerning levels of low mood in your child
- Understand treatment approaches for low mood and depression
- Learn some tools you can use to support a CYP who experiences low mood/depression

To provide slides as a resource for supporting your child

Overview of Workshop 1



Introductions



What is low mood and depression?



The cognitive behavioural model of depression



Treatment and self-help approaches for depression

Overview of Workshop 2



Introductions



Recap: The CBT model of Depression



What can I do to support my child?



Keeping your child safe: self-harm and suicide risk management



Taking care of yourself

Sadness vs Depression



- It is **normal** to feel sad, unhappy or irritable at certain times in life. This may be especially the case for children and young people faced with the many challenges of growing up and making sense of the world.
- Like other emotions, sadness is temporary
- Sadness is often viewed as an unwanted emotion that should be avoided.
- However, there are no ‘bad’ emotions. Emotions are our brain and body’s way of letting us know what we need or want (or don’t want).

“The main function of sadness is focused on evoking empathy as a means of obtaining social support and strengthening of bonds, as well as a motivational function to search for better future situations”

Most sadness is normal and doesn’t require any intervention.



When does mood become a problem?

- Everyone experiences periods of low or irritable mood and ordinarily this does not indicate ill mental health like depression
- If your child's mood is **frequently or persistently** low or irritable and this **interferes with their day-to-day functioning**, they may be experiencing symptoms of depression and may benefit from specific interventions to support them.
- The strategies and supports we will be covering in our workshops can be helpful for CYP who struggle with frequent or persistent mood difficulties

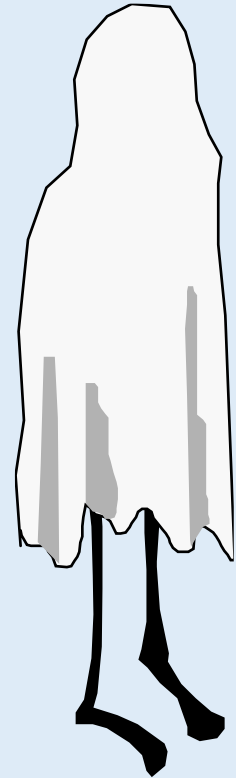
What is Depression?

The term depression refers to a **group** of symptoms and behaviours:

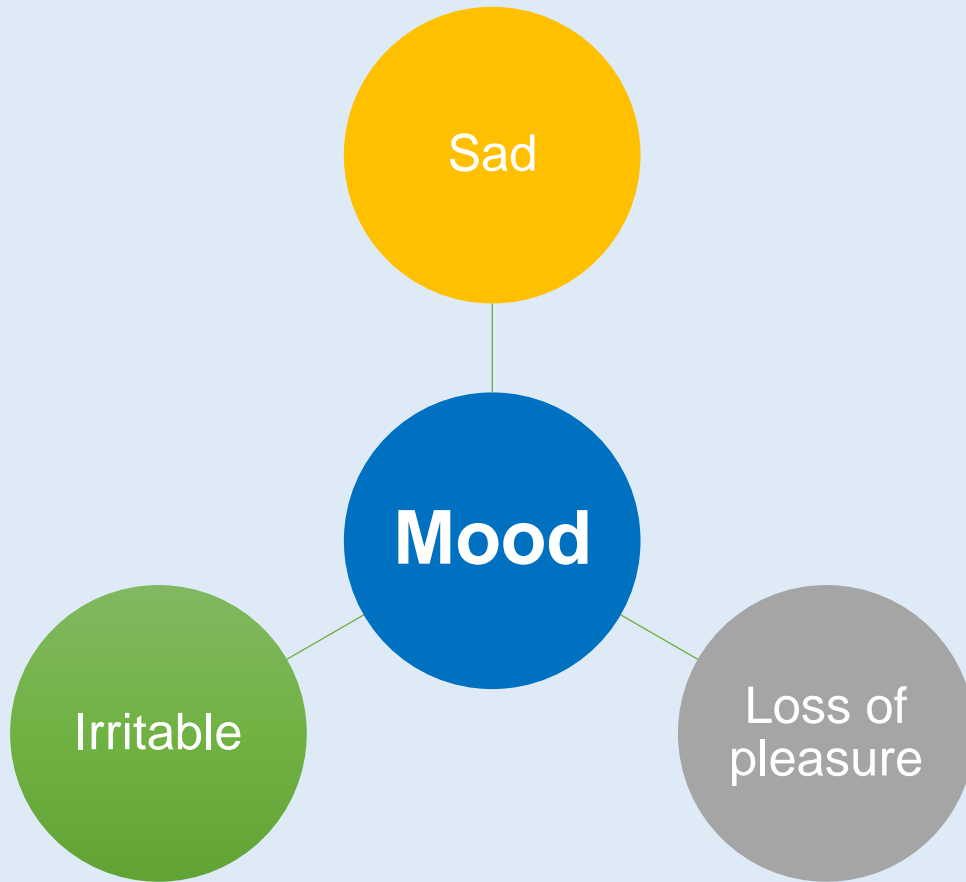
Changes in **mood**
in **thinking**
and in **activity**



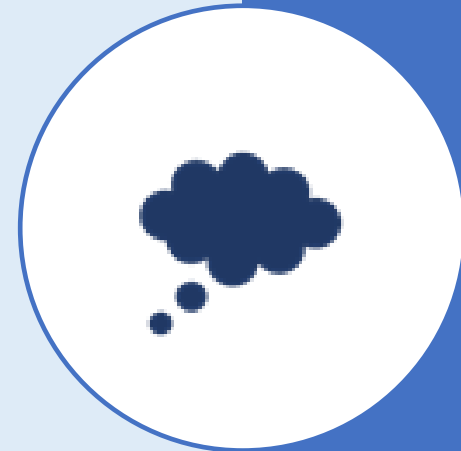
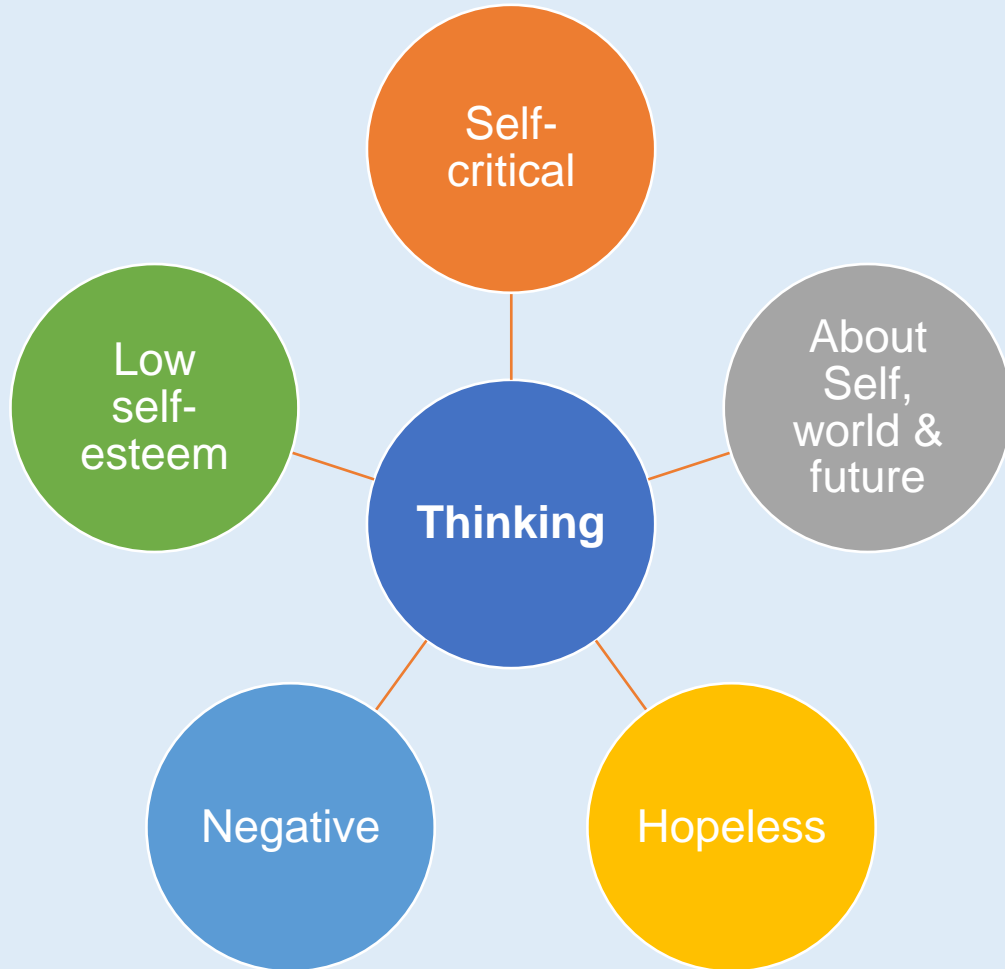
which cause **impairment** in personal and/or social functioning.



Changes in Mood



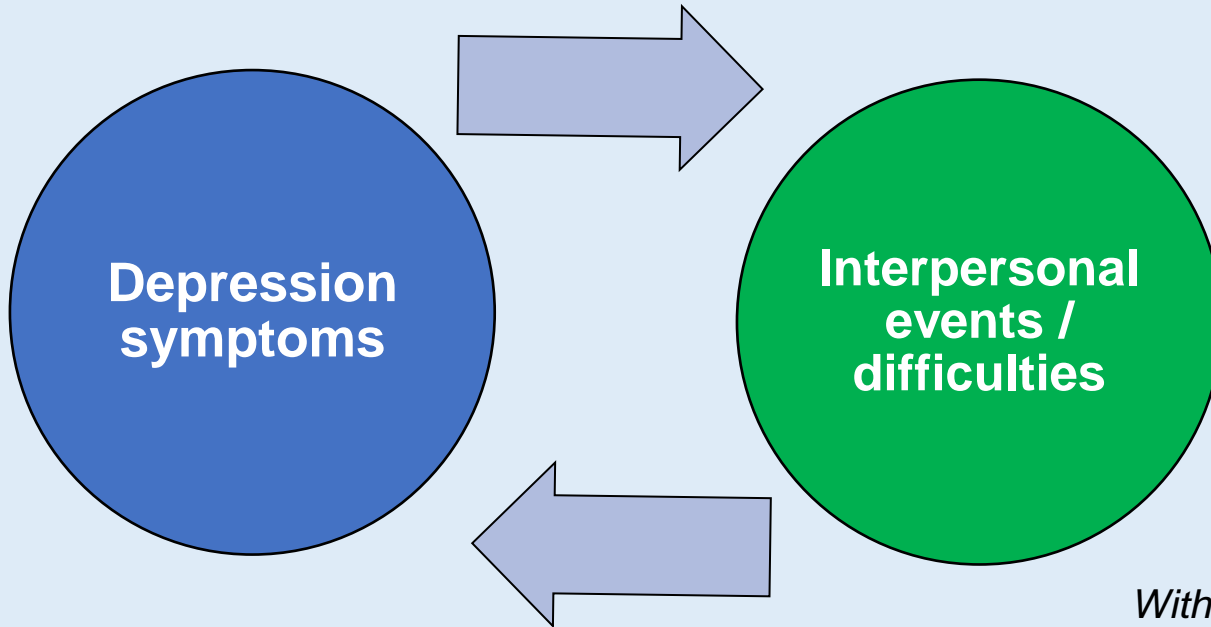
Changes in Thinking



Changes in Behaviour/Activity



Changes in Relationships



No energy
No motivation
Irritability
Hopelessness

Withdraw from others
Cancel social plans
Conflicts
Reduced support network

Video - I had a black dog, his name was depression



(World Health Organisation, WHO)

<https://youtu.be/XiCrniLQGYc>

Depression in Young People is Common

- Depression is a mental health problem that is experienced by many people of all ages.
- Research tells us that depression in teenagers is very common.
- One study found that 2% of 5–19 year olds in England had experienced at least one depressive episode. Another study found that this number is pretty much the same around the world.
- Depression is more common in older adolescents and girls.

What does depression feel like?

Anger & Irritability

'Little things that get me irritable and then if they keep repeating them, then I'll go like literally go mad...'

Isolation and Loneliness

'Even when I'm with people, I still feel alone'

Sadness

'I feel like my heart is broken ... but somehow I was the one who broke it'

Other common problems

- Most common symptom is sleep problems (not low mood)
- Most common associated problem is anxiety

DEPRESSION IS FEELING LIKE
YOU'VE LOST SOMETHING BUT
HAVING NO CLUE WHEN OR
WHERE YOU LAST HAD IT.
THEN ONE DAY YOU REALIZE
WHAT YOU LOST IS YOURSELF.



HealthyPlace.com

*It's a bit like
walking down a long,
dark corridor, never knowing
when the light will go on.*
-Neil Lennon



HealthyPlace.com

Young People's Experiences of Depression

I go to bed at night hoping I don't wake up in the morning

Every day is the same - grey

I hate myself. I feel I deserve to be like this

I can get so angry it scares me



Life is too much for me

I find myself brooding on the past a lot of the time

I cry a lot – it can happen anywhere

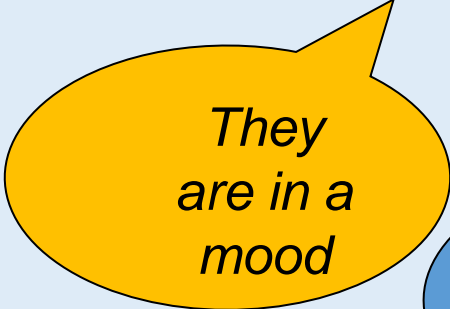
I've no energy, drive or motivation. It's not like me

Depression in Young People

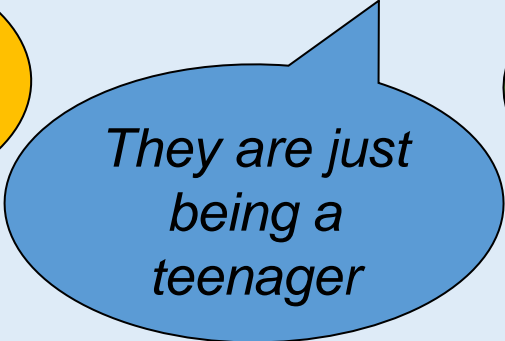
| Symptoms (K-SADS) | Person A | Person B |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Sleep | X | |
| Low Mood | X | |
| Anhedonia | | X |
| Fatigue | X | |
| Worthlessness | | X |
| Cognitive problems | | X |
| Irritable | | X |
| Suicidal ideation | | X |
| Appetite | X | |
| Psychomotor | X | |

Depression in Young People


Depression in young people is easily misunderstood and overlooked... some common myths and misconceptions are:



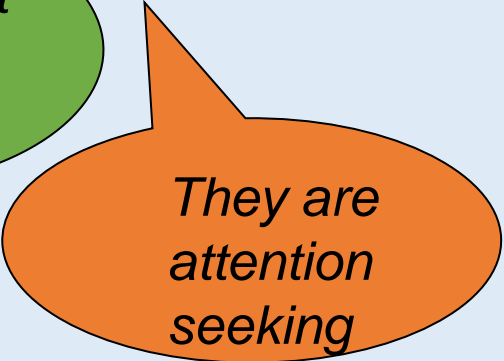
They are in a mood



They are just being a teenager



They are just being hormonal



They are attention seeking

Only 1 in 5 teenagers seek help

Parents are hugely important for the other 4/5 to support recovery.

Video – Emma's Mum



<https://youtu.be/JBxS4Q3g6a4>

What parents tell us...

- *“Where did I go wrong?”*
- *“What did I do / could have done differently?”*
- *“If only I”*

**GUILT
RESPONSIBILITY
SELF BLAME**

- *“I just need to keep going”..*
- *“They need me now.”*
- *“I need to fix this..”*

**TIREDNESS
EXHAUSTION
RESCUE MODE**

- *Irritable*
- *Mood Swings*
- *Tearful / Angry / Overwhelmed*

**RISK TO OWN MENTAL /
PHYSICAL HEALTH**

The Adolescent Brain



Teenagers are not mini adults. They are working with brains that are still **‘under construction’** until the mid-20s. Some brain areas develop faster than others:

- Our instinctual **‘emotional brain’** (*the limbic system*) develops first. This part is associated with emotions, impulses and instinctive behaviour.
- The **‘logical brain’** (*the prefrontal cortex*) develops last. This part takes care of problem-solving, controlling emotions, decision-making, and impulse control.
- Because the ‘logical brain’ is still developing, adolescents might rely more on their ‘emotional brain’ (specifically the **amygdala**) to make decisions and to solve problems.
- Your child’s thinking and behaviour can therefore seem illogical, impulsive or emotional at times

The Adolescent Brain (cont.)

During adolescence, your child's brain is undergoing remodelling:



1. Pruning

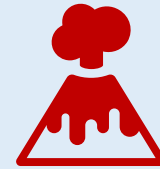
- The brain is pruning itself to specialise
- During childhood the child learns everything they can
- With pruning the young person begins to find their passion, what they really like and to drive their development in that way

2. Myelin formation

- Myelin is a healthy sheath that allows connected neurons to communicate more effectively

These changes result in a more integrated brain

“Typical teenager”



Essential features of adolescence happen because of these natural changes in the brain:

- Seeking new experiences
- Social engagement
- Creativity
- ***Increased emotional intensity***
 - Intense emotion may rule the day, leading to impulsivity, moodiness and extreme, sometimes unhelpful reactivity
 - On the upside, increased emotional intensity can enhance vitality to life

Video – Brain Development in Teenagers



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dISmdb5zfiQ>

Adolescent Development and Depression

Depression interferes with young peoples **cognitive**, **emotional**, and **social** development - because it affects their:

- *Self-view*
- *Decision making*
- *Future planning*
- *Motivation*
- *Friendships*
- *Engagement with activities and responsibilities*

Depression also interferes with young people's 'executive functioning':

- *Impaired working memory*
- *Ability to concentrate*

Environmental factors

e.g. stressful life events,
grief and loss, difficult
transitions

Interpersonal factors

e.g. conflict, interpersonal
difficulties, bullying

Causes of Depression

Individual factors

e.g. thinking patterns,
sense of failure

Biological Factors

e.g. genes, hormones

Do we need to know what causes the depression?

While it can be helpful to understand what has caused the depression, this is not essential.

It is not always clear what may have 'caused' or triggered the young person's depression.

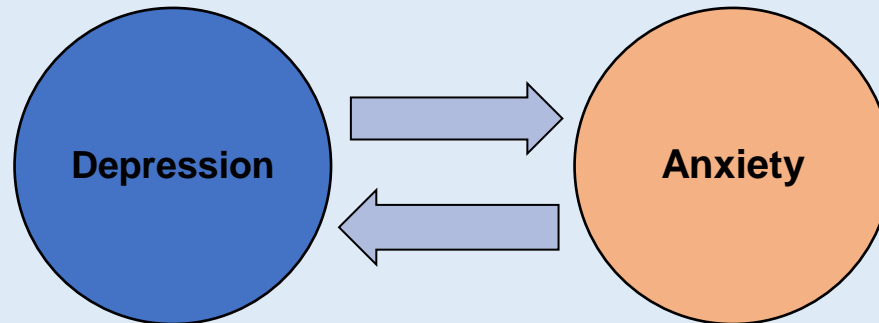
While we cannot change the past, such as the genes we have inherited or life events we experienced, there are things we can do in the present to overcome depression, or prevent us from becoming depressed.

It is more important to think about what is happening in the [here and now](#), and what can be changed to help the young person feel better.

Anxiety

Depression in CYP is often seen alongside anxiety difficulties.

It can be helpful to reflect whether your child is also experiencing anxiety, as depression and anxiety can fuel each other in a vicious cycle.



Depression may lead to increased anxiety.

If a CYP feels low and unmotivated, they may stop doing things. Over time they can start to feel anxious about starting them again.

The depression may therefore need to be tackled first because it severely affects what the CYP can do.

Anxiety problems can also contribute to depression.

If a CYP is anxious, they often start avoiding situations and activities. They become isolated, less confident and get less out of life. This can negatively affect their mood.

Reducing anxiety can therefore have a positive impact on mood.

Depression and Risk

Suicide and Self-harm are different:

Self-Harm

- Self-harm is non-suicidal self-injury
- Serves various functions which can vary over time

Suicide

- An act of self-harm with the intention to die
- Suicidal behaviour may well follow a history of self-harm, BUT most CYP who self-harm do not intend to die

Suicidality

- Depression is a risk factor for suicidality
- Suicide may seem like an option for CYP to regain some control in their life, or as a way to escape a painful situation or experience
- The reasons why people experience thoughts of suicide are complex and differ from person to person. You may never fully understand them and that is OK.
- It can be distressing to learn that your child is feeling suicidal and also frustrating when you are trying to understand what is happening and why they are feeling this way.
- However, knowing that they are struggling gives you the opportunity to support them

Treatment for depression



Self-help

- The young person, their family and their school using evidence-based resources to help manage low mood and depression.

Psychological Therapy or “Talking Treatment”

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Interpersonal Therapy for Adolescents (IPT-A)
- Brief Behavioural Activation (Brief BA)

Medication

- Prescribed by a doctor, often from CAMHS or the GP
- Often alongside therapy

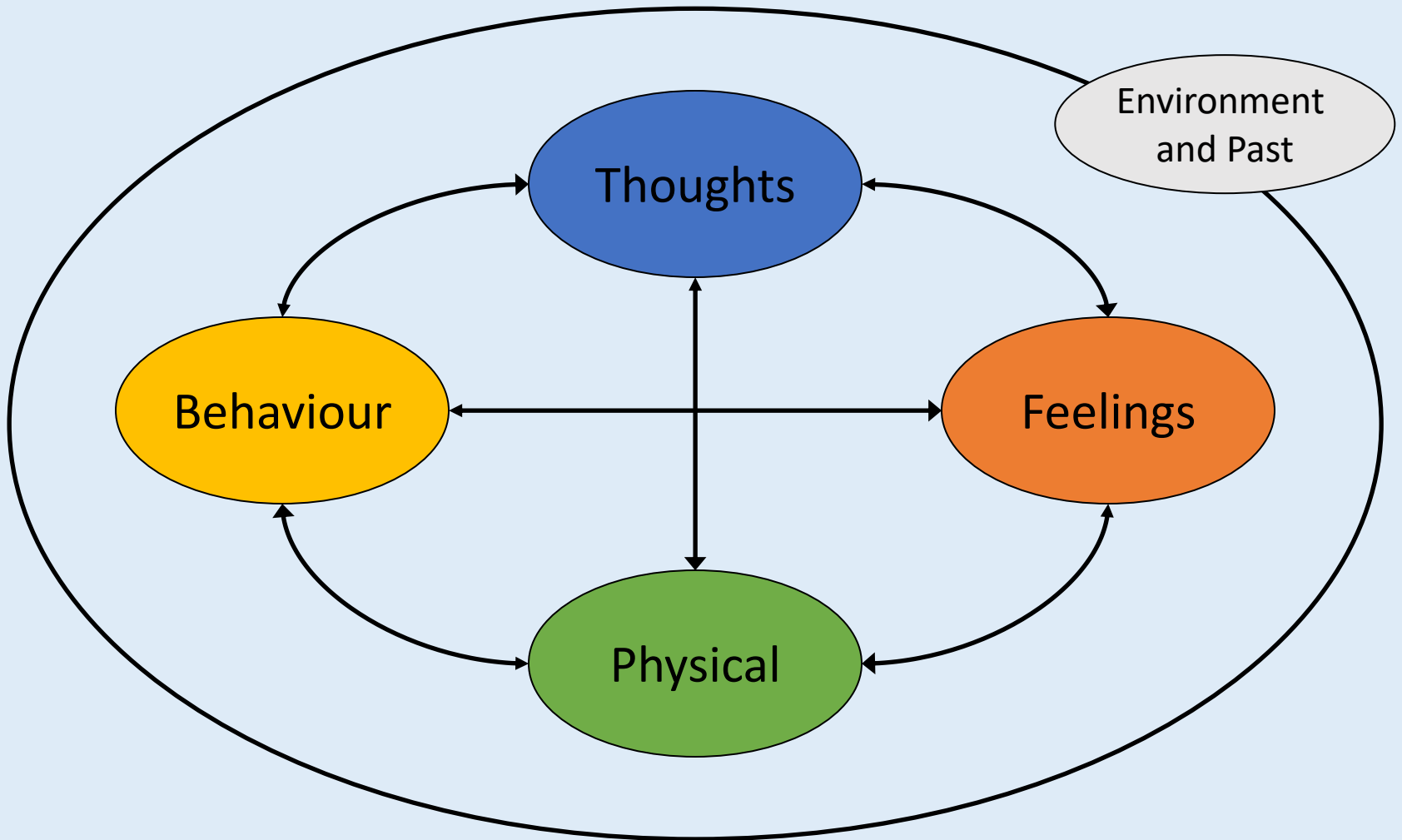
When do we need professional help?



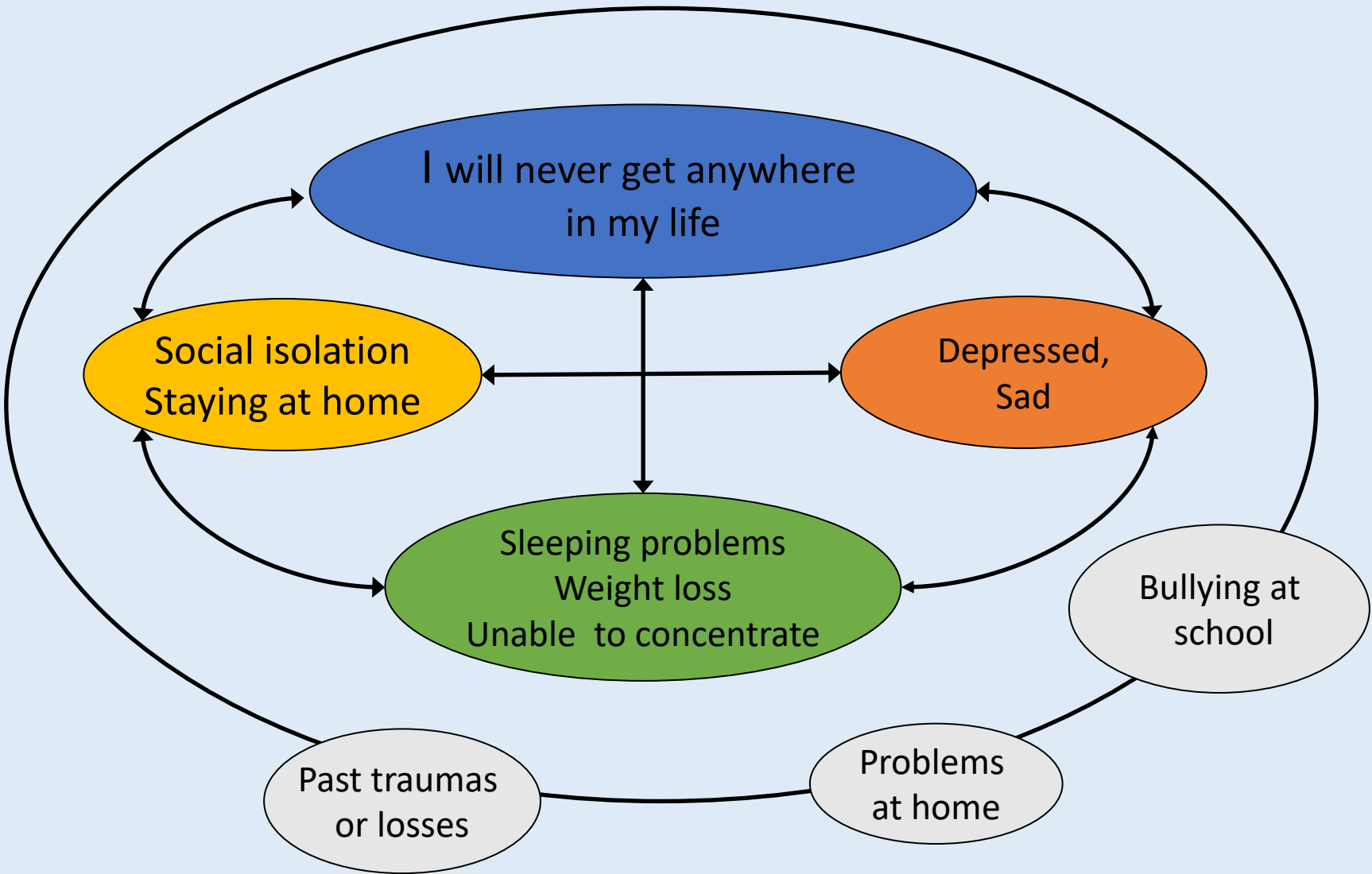
- When there are concerns about the young person's safety, for example, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and eating difficulties.
- When low mood or depression is persistent and is having an ongoing significant impact on a young person's day to day functioning.
- When self-help strategies and parent supports have not improved the young person's mood

Speak to the GP. Use urgent/emergency services if there is immediate concerns about risk.

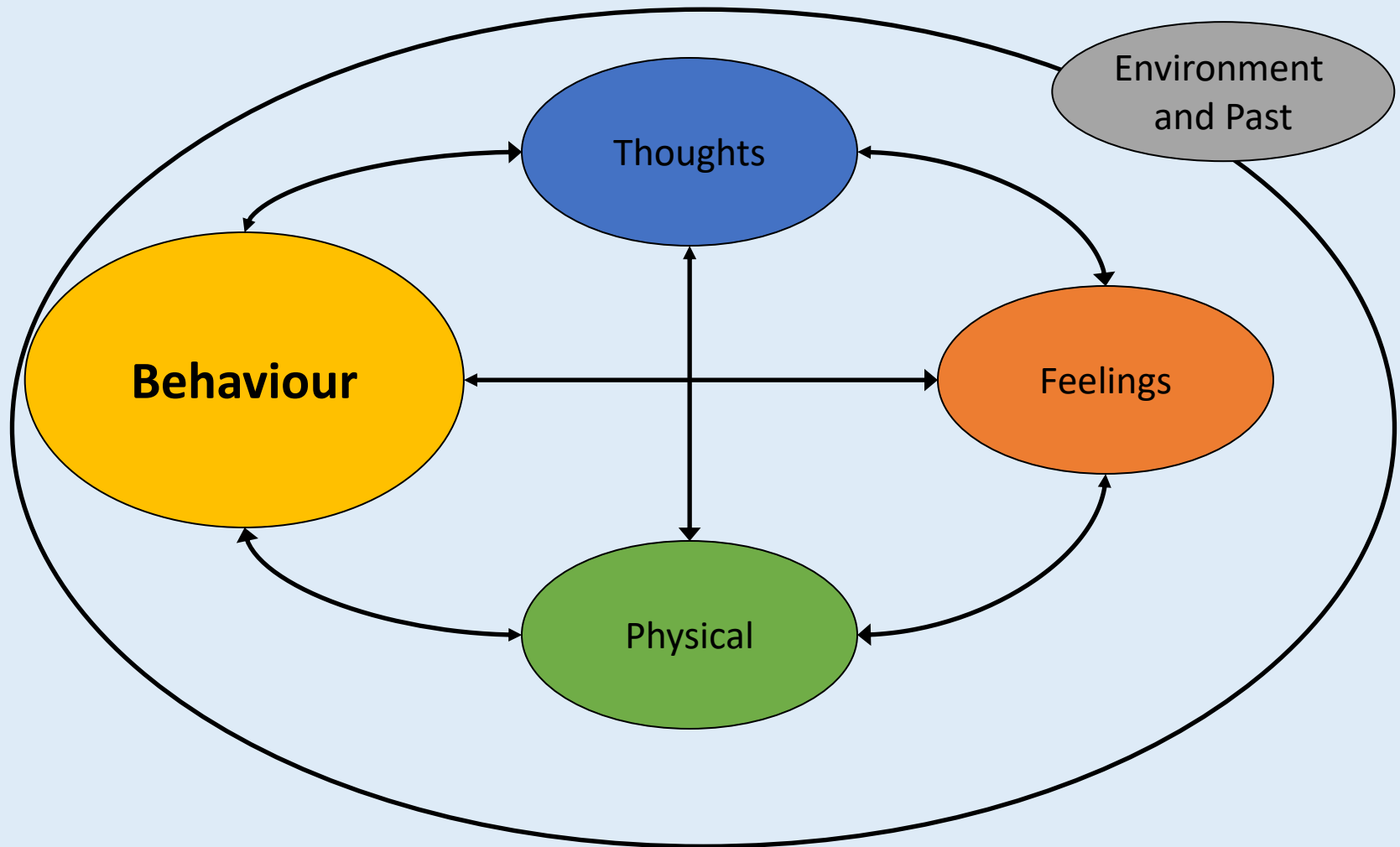
How does CBT work?



CBT Cycle for Depression



CBT – Changing Behaviour

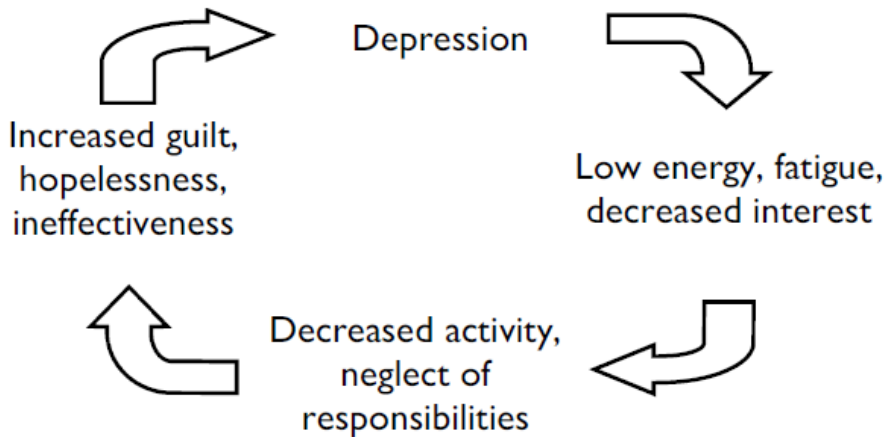




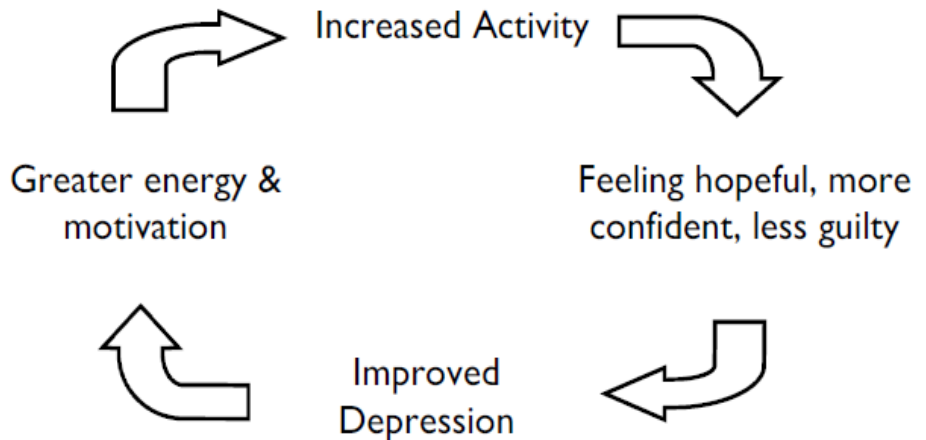
CBT – Changing Behaviour



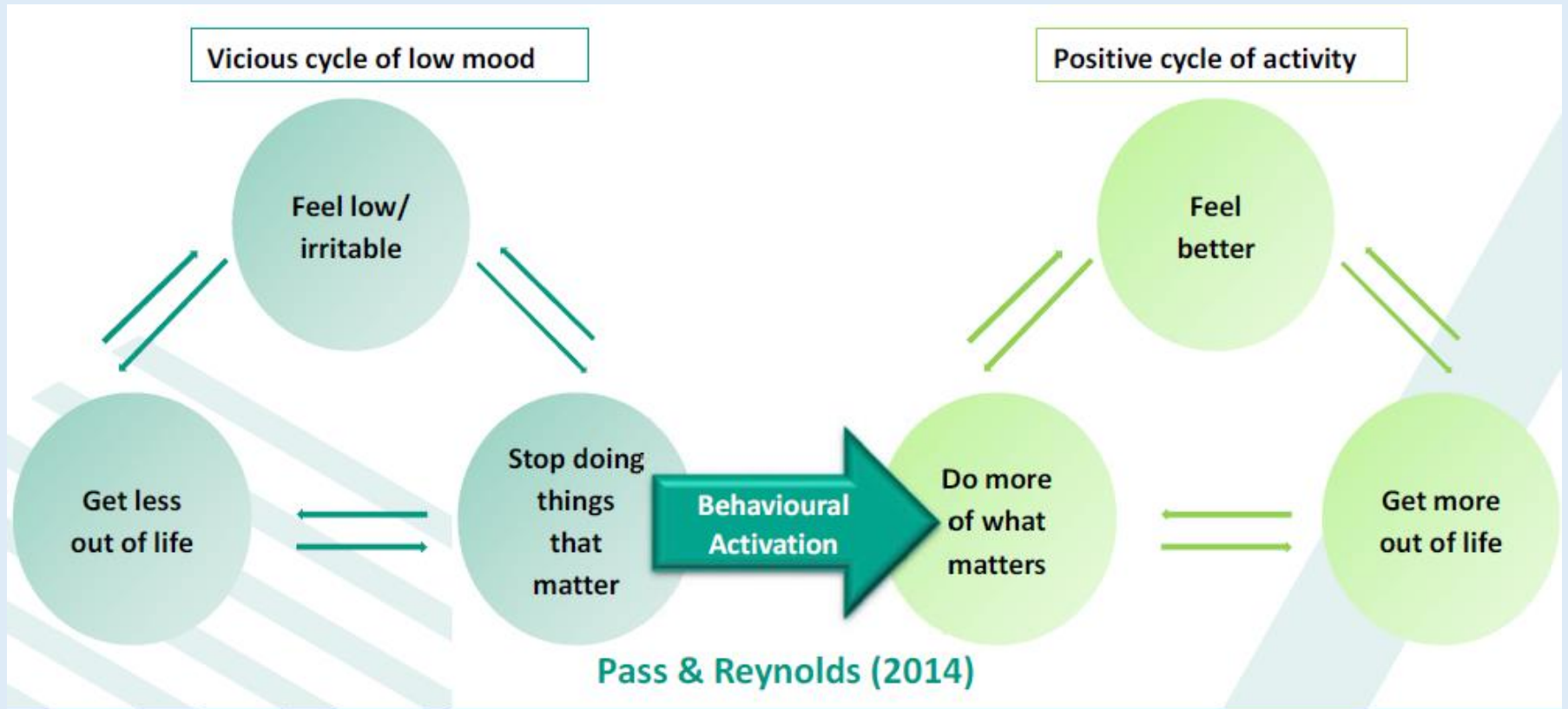
The Vicious Cycle of Depression



Reversing The Vicious Cycle of Depression



Behavioural Activation



**Doing things
differently**

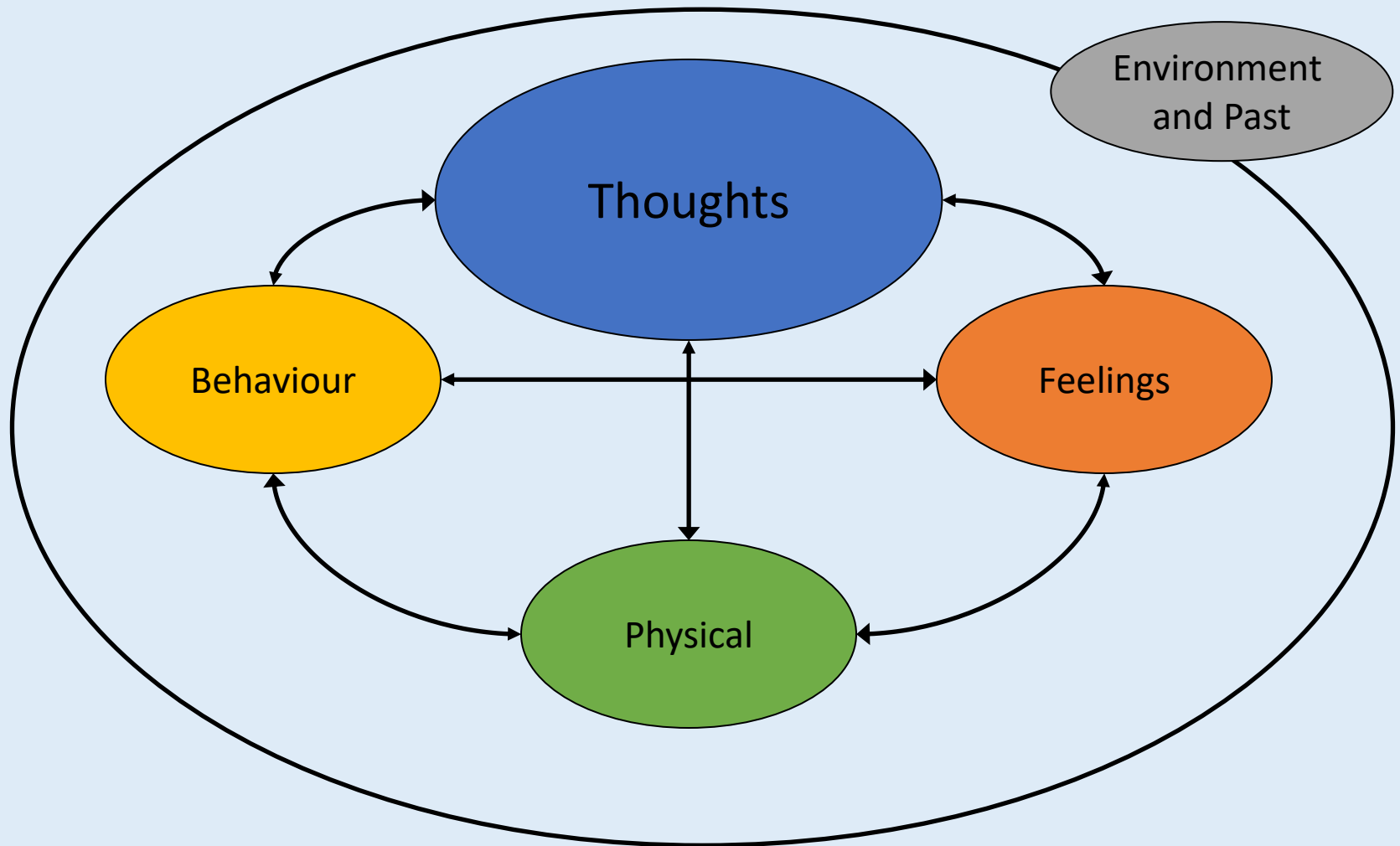


**Thinking
and Feeling
differently**

We want support the CYP to with increasing activities that are helpful and important to them and reducing unhelpful activities.



CBT – Managing Thoughts



What are Negative Thoughts?

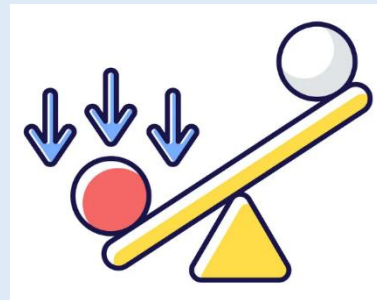


- **Automatic** – They just happen
- **Continuous** – They can't easily be turned off
- **Distorted** – They don't really fit the facts
- **Seem true** – They make sense so we accept them. We don't stop and question them.

The more we hear them the more we believe they are true.

Rumination and Biased Thinking

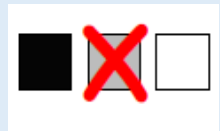
- Rumination is a common problem in depression
- Thoughts go round and round in the CYP's head and get stuck
- The thoughts of a depressed person can be biased
- As thoughts are automatic, your child may not notice their thoughts are biased



Unhelpful Thinking Styles



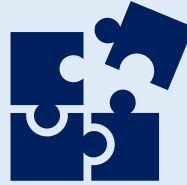
- **Negative glasses** - Only seeing the negative part
- **Discounting the Positive** - Anything positive is dismissed
- **Fortune-telling** - Predicting failure and negative outcomes
- **Mind reading** - *'They don't like me' - 'I won't be able to do this'*
- **Dustbin labels** - *'I'm rubbish' or 'It's me, I'm hopeless'*
- **Overgeneralising** - A single event or upset snowballs into overall defeat - *'I just can't do anything'*
- **Catastrophising** - Blowing something out of proportion
- **All or Nothing Thinking** - Seeing things in only two categories - *'If I don't get an A I'm a failure'*
- **Should and Must** – Setting impossible targets or standards



CBT Strategies for Managing Negative Thoughts

• Distraction

- Thinking puzzles
- Absorbing activities



• Kind Self-talk

- *'I'm a failure at math' → 'I am learning at my own level and doing my personal best'*



• Coping self-talk

- *'I can't do this' → 'I have done this before, I can do it again'*



CBT Strategies for Managing Negative Thoughts (cont.)

• Thought Challenging & Balanced Thinking



- Consider facts
- Look for new information that the YP might otherwise overlook
- See the whole picture



- *Are there any positive things I might be ignoring?*
- *Are there any other ways to view this situation?*
- *What would I tell a friend if she had that thought?*
- *What is the evidence that this thought is true/not true?*
- *If it did happen, what can I do to cope or handle it?*

Brief Behavioural Activation (BA)

- Brief BA is an intervention available in some schools for YP with low mood/depression.
- It is a structured approach where a young person works through workbooks with someone in school. Parents are expected to attend some of the Brief BA sessions as well.
- It helps young people to learn:
 1. How they are **spending their time**?
 2. What is **important** to them? What are their values?
 3. How they can **spend time doing things that are important to them**?
- Brief BA work (referrals and progress) is discussed with a member of the TIPS-EIC team.



Self-help Resources

Online Resources

- Moodjuice - NHS Inform Self Help Guide - [Depression self-help guide | NHS inform](#)
- Centre for Clinical Interventions – Back from the Bluez - <https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Depression>
- Get Self Help - [Depression Self Help | Get.gg - Getselfhelp.co.uk](#)

Books

- Overcoming teenage low mood and depression: A five areas approach by N. Dummet and C. Williams
- Am I depressed and what can I do about it? A CBT self-help guide for teenagers experiencing low mood and depression by S. Reynolds and M. Parkinson
- Defeating Teenage Depression: Getting there together, by Roslyn Law
- Think good feel good: A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook for children and young people by P. Stallard
- Teenage Depression: A CBT Guide For Parents: Help your child beat their low mood by S. Reynolds and M. Parkinson

Self-help resources

Apps



What's Up? - App to help with breathing, recognising thinking patterns, keeping thought diaries and includes positive quotes



Mood Tools - Provides guided meditations, an activity tracker and information about depression

Other online resources

- World Health Organisation – Black Dog video
<http://bit.ly/healthreading>
- Defeating teenage depression free IPT worksheets -
[Defeating Teenage Depression - Law | Overcoming](#)
- Raising Teens with Confidence – Six week parenting course for parents/carers of teens
<https://www.joininedinburgh.org/parenting-programmes/raising-teens-confidence/>
- The mysterious workings of the adolescent brain – TED talk by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore <https://youtu.be/6zVS8HIPUng>
- The Adolescent Brain by Dan Siegel
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1u5OEc5eY>
- A more constructive way of viewing stress
http://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en
- www.stepsforstress.org – Free relaxation CD available plus other self help guides

Suicide and Self-harm resources

- Papyrus – Prevention of Young Suicide <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>
- Papyrus Parent Guide: Supporting your child with self-harm and suicidality <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Supporting-Your-Child-A-Guide-for-Parents.pdf>
- Harmless – Includes a range of information and support for people who self-harm www.harmless.org.uk
- National Self Harm Network (section for parents) <http://www.nshn.co.uk/downloads.html>
- Edinburgh Self Harm Project (Penumbra) – For people aged 16 years old and over and who self-harm <https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/services/edinburgh-self-harm-project-penumbra/>

Services to reach out to in a crisis

Services available 24/7

- **NHS 24 Mental Health Hub** – The 111 service provides urgent mental health assessment and support 24/7
- **Samaritans** - A helpline for anyone feeling low or considering suicide - Call: 116 123 - Website: samaritans.org
- **Childline** - A service for young people under 19 struggling with mental health issues, or any other problem - Call: 0800 1111 - Webchat: childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/ - Website: www.childline.org.uk
- **YoungMinds Crisis Messenger** - A 24/7 text messaging service for young people in crisis - **Text:** Text YM to 85258 - **Website:** youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger/

Services to reach out to in a crisis

- Other Services

- **Hopeline UK** – Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 07860 039 967
Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org - 9am - 10pm weekdays 2pm - 10pm weekends and bank holidays
- **Breathing Space** - “We're here to listen” - Call: 0800838587
- Webchat: [breathingspace.scot](https://www.breathingspace.scot) - Service open: Mo - Thur: 6pm to 2am and Weekends Friday 6pm to Monday 6am
- **Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention** - <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/> - Supporting Your Child: A Guide for Parents

Parent Anxiety Resources

- Parent Anxiety Workshops (by the TIPS EIC team) - A two part recorded information session:
 - Part 1: Understanding Anxiety <https://vimeo.com/637899585/a4a632bd0c>
 - Part 2: Understanding Anxiety <https://vimeo.com/637889751/e2d94cf5d5>
- Supporting Children With Anxiety: Computerised CBT
 - <https://cyplthian.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>
 - Access Code: Lothian
- Websites
 - Hands On: <http://handsonscotland.co.uk/>
 - Anxiety Canada: Online: <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>
 - Anxiety UK: <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
- Apps for 16+
 - For Sleep: Sleepio: www.sleepio.com/nhs
 - For Anxiety: Daylight: www.trydaylight.com/nhs
- Books
 - Helping Your Child with Fears and Worries: A Self-help Guide for Parents (2019) by Cathy Creswell and Lucy Willetts
 - The Huge Bag of Worries (2004) by Virginia Ironside
 - How to Stop Worrying (2009) by Frank Tallis