

Thrive 365

Dragonfly: Impact Education



Did you know?

Our thoughts are extremely powerful and can actually impact our health, with people who report persistent negative thoughts having a significant reduction in cells crucial to the immune system. [1]

Depression doesn't only affect our behaviour, it affects our thoughts too. This can then create a vicious cycle as our depressive thoughts perpetuate and even worsen our low mood. It can be common to accept negative thoughts about ourselves or the world as facts.

Thoughts such as 'I'm lazy'/'I'm useless'/'the world is an awful place' are common, but healthy people are able to dismiss them. People with depression often get stuck in these thoughts.

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A, B, C

A - What happens, B - Our thoughts, C - Our feelings

People usually notice A: what happens and C: how they feel about it. It's important to focus on noticing B.

For example, A: They miss a deadline; C: They feel upset and embarrassed. They don't normally notice B: what they think. In this example B: 'I'm useless and incompetent and now everyone will know'. When you take B into account C makes much more sense! Not noticing 'B' gives the impression that your feelings are created by things that happen to you or around you and are therefore out of your control. In reality our feelings are created by our thoughts.

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Balance

Try to form a habit of balancing every negative thought out with a positive one. For example if you think 'I'm lazy' you might balance it out with 'I've done 5 tasks from my list today, it's natural to need a rest'.

To begin with, writing these down can help. You can: write down the negative thought and then the more rational counter-statement, OR write down the trigger (what caused the thought) followed by the automatic thought you tend to have and the new thought you want to replace this with, OR you can write down your negative thought and make a list of evidence for/against it. We've included some resources to support these exercises in our resources section. [2]

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Disagree

Sometimes people have very critical views of themselves ('I'm not clever'; 'I'm not loveable') that are often the product of past experience and bear no resemblance to reality. It's important to challenge these thoughts and disagree with yourself!

If you hold a negative belief about yourself, look for evidence that disproves it. You could also think about what you would say to a friend who held that belief and apply that to yourself. Writing things down can be a useful part of this process.

If these are long standing beliefs about yourself, it can be difficult to change these and you may wish to seek support from a counsellor.

[1]<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15250815/>

[2] <https://www.dragonflyimpact.com/our-resources>

Our training: www.dragonflyimpact.com/link-tree

Email: info@dragonflyimpact.co.uk

   @dragonflyimpact