

Week 8: Managing feelings & thoughts 1

▶ OUTLINE

- Quiz (5 mins)
- P2P mentoring (5 mins)
- Pre-practical Tasks for Week 8
- Managing feelings = Emotional regulation (10 mins)
- Managing feelings and thoughts = Psychological Flexibility (10 mins)
- CBT (50 mins)
- ACT (20 mins)
- Pre-practical tasks for Week 10
- Possible Group work
- PLUS Student Minds (5 mins) some time during the class

▶ OBJECTIVES:

- ▶ Gain an appreciation of the psychological science of how emotion, cognition and behaviour can interact
 - ▶ Engage with opportunities to develop psychological flexibility skills to deal with feelings and thoughts that can distract from acting on values and pursuing goals.
 - ▶ Gain an appreciation of how CBT skills can be developed and used by everyone to better self-manage to achieve goals and increase well-being.
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Pre-practical tasks for Week 8

1. Week 8 Quiz on Weeks 1-7 (NB Testing effect, formative, no marks!).
 2. Read Edelman (2013) pp 27-41 "Discovering Faulty Thinking". We will be referring to these reasoning errors in the Week 8 tutorial.
 3. Submission of Week 8 Progress Report
 4. Groupwork Moodle Submission: How might a student's identity influence the way in which they seek help on campus? What are some of the challenges faced by students who have a "minority" background.
 5. Undertake a Google search of the Reivich et al. (2011) article (from Week 2). Find at least one "article" criticising the work. Post a copy on Moodle and access in class in Week 8.
 6. Think of a problem that you are currently trying to deal with (or make up a plausible one). Use the problem solving sheet on Moodle to work through the problem in a structured way. Upload the completed sheet to Moodle, and access in class in Week 8.
 7. (end Week 8) Journal 2 due 21/9 at 11pm
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Quiz

- ▶ Take out a piece of paper and a pen...
 - ▶ 8 questions, some have several parts
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P2P Mentoring (5 mins)

- ▶ Spend 5 mins with your P2P mentor discussing the progress you have made on your goals for this month.
 - ▶ Ensure you each have a turn being mentor and mentee (eg 2 min each)
 - ▶ Remember to use **constructive** ways of communicating...
 - ▶ Ensure you make a few notes as to what you have committed to do over the next week.
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Managing your feelings and thoughts: Develop emotional regulation & psychological flexibility

Managing your mindset in a manner that equips you to handle stressors and challenges

- ▶ you can't change that highly stressful situations will sometimes happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to the situations.
 - ▶ the ability to identify what you are feeling and, when necessary, the ability to manage strong feelings and impulses.
 - ▶ if appropriate, act on the situation, rather than avoiding it
 - ▶ develop the capacity to tolerate ambiguity so you don't rush to make decisions
 - ▶ self-reflect, but don't ruminate
 - ▶ keep things in perspective. Even when facing very painful events, try to consider the stressful situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective, rather than blowing the event out of proportion
 - ▶ CBT and ACT can assist in enhancing self-regulation
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Your best possible self (2 mins)

- ▶ Think of something important that is coming up in your life
 - ▶ Think about the best possible way that that could turn out
 - ▶ Focus on all of the potential virtues and merit of that situation and outcome
 - ▶ Jot down some points about how that looks and feels
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Worst Possible Outcome (2 mins)

- ▶ Now, think about someone else in that same circumstance.
 - ▶ Imagine the worst possible outcome, one that is almost beyond imagining.
 - ▶ Focus on the risks and dangers that could happen.
 - ▶ How does that image make you feel?
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- ▶ Which one of these outcomes are you most likely to have naturally thought up?
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Back to the best possible outcome (2 mins)

- ▶ Return to your best possible outcome – share it with the person sitting next to you (remember Capitalisation)

Mindsets

One way to thrive under pressure and minimise negative stress is to **interpret external stressors** in a way that makes you **less emotionally vulnerable** to them.

Your thoughts, feelings, learning and performance in **response to external stressors** is largely governed by whether you handle them from an **enabling or restrictive mindset**:

- ▶ **“Enabling mindsets** lead to feeling strong, to thinking in a focused, open-minded, and flexible manner, and to acting effectively”.

They foster an opportunity orientation, focused on the potential virtues and merit of a person or situation.

- ▶ **“Restrictive mindsets** drain our energy, distract our focus, limit our perceived options, and reduce our effectiveness. Mindsets that have these restrictive effects include defensive, angry, hopeless and helpless mindsets.”

Restrictive mindsets encourage a danger-orientation – focusing on the risks and dangers posed by the person or situation.

The outcome that you were likely to focus on in the previous exercise may be determined by your mindset...
(from Heslin, 2014, p. 15: See also the Mindset handout)

Emotional regulation

- ▶ Emotions can involve **initiation of behaviours**, and help us to survive
 - ▶ Feeling pleasant (eg excitement) or unpleasant (eg anxiety, despair)
 1. directs our **attention** to what we perceive to be important and
 2. **motivates** us to respond by **doing** something (approach or avoid)
 - ▶ The desire to avoid negative emotions is a stronger motivator than the desire to experience positive emotions
 - ▶ Acting on negative emotions helps us achieve things that contribute to well-being:
 - ▶ eg anxiety should motivate you to complete an assignment
 - ▶ eg anger may motivate you to communicate assertively (and with practice, not aggressively)
 - ▶ eg guilt may motivate you to visit grandparents
 - ▶ eg grief is normal to help process loss
 - ▶ Problems arise when emotion initiates self-defeating behaviours
 - ▶ eg pursue short-term reward (partying too hard) at expense of long-term benefit (studying to achieve good grades)
 - ▶ Emotional Regulation is when we seek to redirect the flow of emotions
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(Poor) Emotional regulation

Managing Negative Emotions

- ▶ Negative emotions are a common, natural and inevitable part of being human.
- ▶ You don't need to worry about what is wrong with you just because you are experiencing your *fair share* of negative emotions.
- ▶ Common yet generally ineffective ways of dealing with negative emotions are via **suppression** or **ruminaton**
- ▶ Suppression and rumination are psychological quicksand - even if they provide momentary relief, soon afterwards it gets worse!
- ▶ The *Happiness Trap* (Harris, 2008) - striving for enduring happiness by attempting to suppress or eradicate the sources of unhappiness (e.g., negative emotions), often leads people to behave in ways that sabotage the happiness they seek (e.g., worrying, overeating, drinking to excess, zoning out).



(adapted from Heslin, 2014, p.28-29)

(Poor) Emotional Regulation

Suppression = attempt to deny, rationalise, or avoid uncomfortable emotions or thoughts (sitting “on” our emotions).

- ▶ escape activities eg closing down conversations, blocked listening, mindless TV or internet browsing, excessive alcohol consumption, overeating, or procrastination.
- ▶ undermines learning (Boekaerts, 2010) and social connectedness (Srivastava et al., 2009) and can lead to depressive symptoms (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010).

Rumination (sitting “in” our emotions) = dwelling on, analysing, over-valuing, or getting stuck in any uncomfortable emotions or thoughts.

- ▶ Rumination can be about the past, and contribute to depression (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011), or about the future, and contribute to anxiety (Wong & Moulds, 2012)
 - ▶ eg after ruminating on how we might fail at something (eg an assignment), the anticipated failure can seem so real that we come to believe, feel, and act as if it has actually occurred.
 - ▶ Rumination about an “unfair event” may also lead to increased anger, aggression, passive-aggression (e.g., **Denson xxxx**)
 - ▶ Rumination is unconstructive in that it undermines effective problem solving and acting to address the source of distress. It also undermines interpersonal effectiveness (Takano, Sakamoto & Tanno, 2011).
 - ▶ **Successful emotional regulation is about choosing the right strategy for the right occasion – ie Psychological Flexibility**
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Psychological Flexibility (PF)

Kashdan & Rottenberg (2010, pp. 865-866)

Psychological flexibility refers to a number of **dynamic processes** that **unfold over time**. Includes how an individual:

- (1) recognises and **adapts** to fluctuating situational demands,
- (2) **reconfigures** mental resources, or **changes** strategies when these impact personal or social functioning
- (3) **shifts** mindsets or perspectives
- (4) is aware, open, and committed to behaviours that are **congruent** with deeply held **values**
- (5) maintains **balance** among important and competing desires, needs, and life domains

It refers to the ability to be mindful at points of choice and to take effective action, guided by your values (Harris, 2008).

- ▶ Psychological flexibility is “*the ability to contact the present moment more fully as a conscious human being and to **change**, or **persist** in, behavior when doing so serves valued ends*” (Biglan, Hayes, & Pistorello, 2008).
 - ▶ Part of METACOGNITION!!!! (i.e., thinking processes relevant to emotions)
 - ▶ Results in enhanced emotional regulation ie management of feelings
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Psychological flexibility

- ▶ eg long-term, **values-driven goals** = we sometimes forego short-term positive experiences (eg stay home from party to study)
- ▶ eg we sometimes utilise negative emotions (eg anger) to our advantage in gaining our goals [“Righteous indignation can be considered “positive” in terms of promoting progress toward desirable goals.” (p. 866)]
- ▶ **Balancing** psychological **needs** (eg competence vs connectedness)
- ▶ Balancing focus on past (eg savouring), present (eg appreciating the moment) and future (eg long-term goals)
- ▶ **Flexible** use of strategies (eg acceptance vs. reappraisal; problem- vs. emotion-focussed coping, active vs. passive coping) **depending on the situation**

Kashdan & Rottenberg (2010) claim that **psychological flexibility** is correlated with **psychological health**, with psychological disorders characterised by lack of psychological flexibility

- ▶ (BUT more conceptual and empirical work is needed)

Psychological Flexibility

In summary, psychological flexibility entails:

- ▶ having the mindfulness to avoid being hijacked by reactive thoughts and feelings
- ▶ keeping our focus on attaining our valued academic and other objectives

The more we struggle with our difficult thoughts and feelings by suppressing, ruminating, or fusing with them, the more they are likely to upset us, our relationships, our learning, and our goal attainment.

The goal of mindfulness and the strategies for *going to* or *going through* your unhelpful emotions is **not** to prevent or eradicate unpleasant thoughts and feelings (which are part of being human).

The goal is to disentangle yourself from distracting, unhelpful thoughts and feelings and to refocus on more important and useful matters (eg proactively doing academic work).

Being willing to experience unwanted emotions yields a host of benefits including:

- ▶ decreased anxiety (Karekla, Forsyth, & Kelly, 2004)
- ▶ enhanced innovation (Bond & Hayes, 2002)
- ▶ improved learning, mental health and job performance (Bond & Flaxman, 2006).

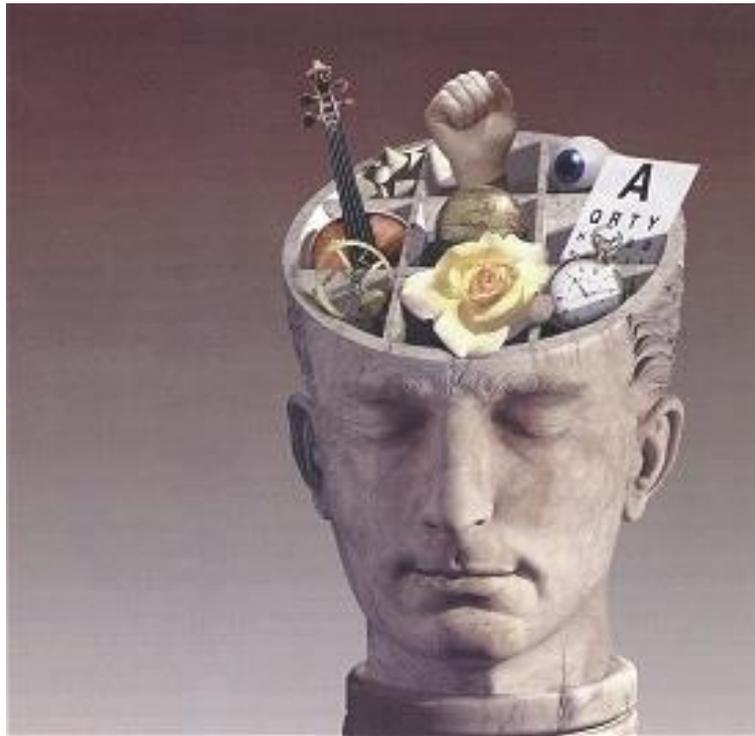
(adapted from Heslin, 2014, pp. 32-33)

Therapeutic approaches that may develop psychological flexibility (PF)

- ▶ **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (this week)**
 - ▶ usually does not explicitly refer to PF as a concept, but techniques should help to develop PF
 - ▶ **Acceptance Commitment Therapy/Training (Week 10)**
 - ▶ explicitly refers to PF
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What is CBT?

- ▶ Class Discussion: What do you know about CBT?



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

- ▶ Cognitive-behavioral therapy is based on the idea that **our thoughts cause our feelings and behaviours** (not external things, like people and events).
 - ▶ Changing **cognitions** can change feelings and behaviour (even if the situation doesn't change)
 - ▶ CBT is based on the scientifically supported assumption that **most emotional and behavioural reactions to situations are learned**
 - ▶ The goal of therapy is to help clients *unlearn* their unwanted reactions and to learn a new way of reacting.
 - ▶ eg thoughts, judgments, attitudes, beliefs (icebergs), stereotypes
 - ▶ Treatment is time-limited and focused on discrete problem targets. It is structured and directive, focussing on the client's goals.
 - ▶ CBT theory and techniques rely on the **Inductive Method**, which encourages us to look at our thoughts as being hypotheses or guesses that can be questioned and tested (= critical thinking, metacognition!). If we find that our hypotheses are incorrect (because we have new information), then we can change our thinking to be in line with how the situation really is.
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Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

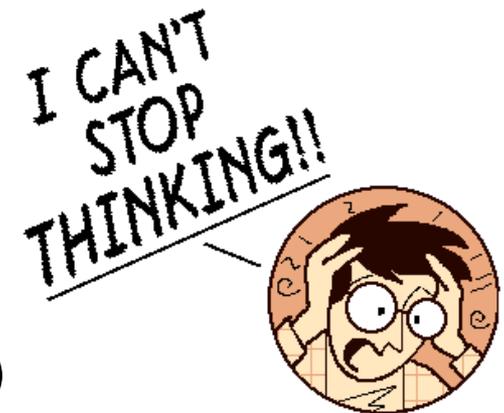
Cognitive strategies:

- ▶ learning to recognise the negative thinking habits that cause distress
- ▶ using techniques to develop more reasonable ways of thinking

Behavioural strategies: undertaking behaviours that help us change the way we think and feel:

- ▶ behavioural experiments
- ▶ practicing deep relaxation and breathing techniques
- ▶ repeated exposure to feared situations
- ▶ problem solving, goal setting
- ▶ using assertive communication
- ▶ utilising social support
- ▶ activity scheduling

Also **Mindfulness Strategies** (more recently)



Emotions, cognitions and behaviours can all interact

Cognitions -> emotions

eg “I might fail my course” -> anxiety

Emotions -> behaviours

eg Anxiety -> work to finish assignment

Emotions -> cognitions

eg fear-> perceive neutral event as threat

Cognitions -> behaviours

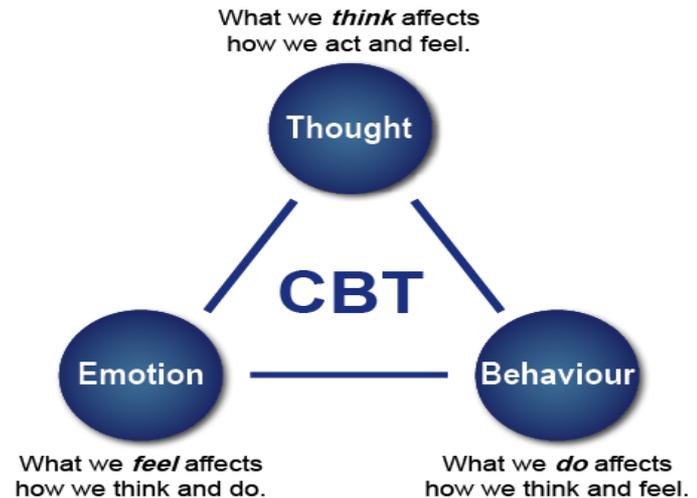
eg “people don’t like me” -> avoid social contact

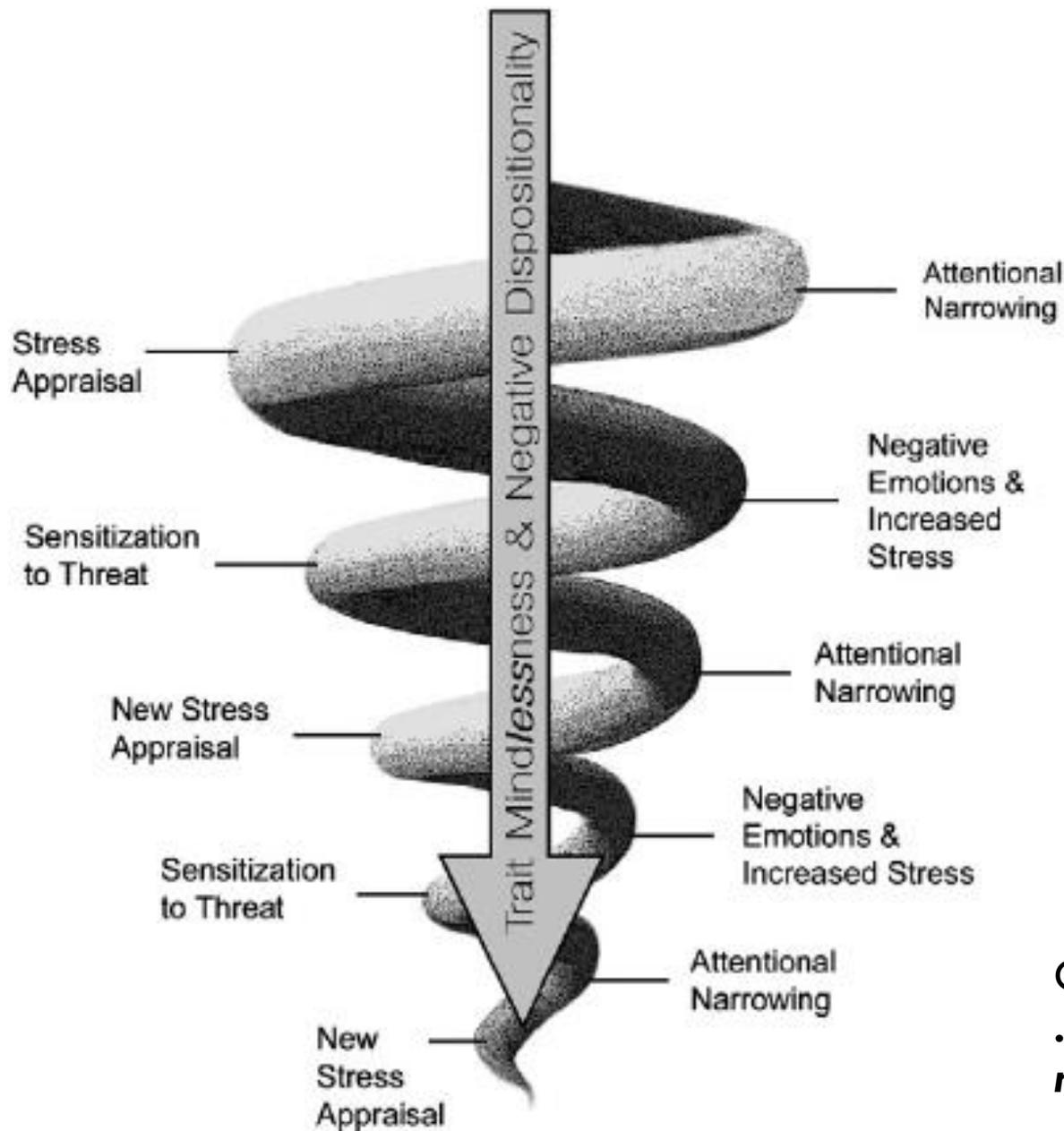
Behaviours -> cognitions

eg Avoid social contact -> reinforces belief people don’t like me

Behaviours -> emotions

eg Avoid social contact -> loneliness, depression





Garland, Fredrickson et al., 2010
**... should include behaviors,
motivations...**

Fig. 1. Downward spiral of psychopathology (Garland, 2010).

Albert Ellis

- ▶ Beliefs are irrational when they go against our basic desire for happiness and good health.
- ▶ eg if holding a particular belief makes you experience inappropriate anger, anxiety, depression, etc
- ▶ Irrational beliefs include
 - ▶ Tyranny of the “shoulds”
 - ▶ Awfulising
 - ▶ Faulty thinking

Examples of Faulty Thinking

- ▶ ***Black-and-white thinking***
- ▶ ***Overgeneralising****
- ▶ ***Personalising***
- ▶ ***Filtering***
- ▶ ***Jumping to negative conclusions***
- ▶ ***Mind reading***
- ▶ ***Blaming***
- ▶ ***Labelling***
- ▶ ***Predicting catastrophe***
- ▶ ***Comparing***
- ▶ ***Just world fallacy***
- ▶ ***Hindsight vision***

Faulty Thinking

- ▶ **Black-and-white thinking** = tendency to see things in a polarised way
- ▶ **Overgeneralising*** = draw negative conclusions on basis of limited evidence
- ▶ **Personalising** = feel responsible for things that are not our fault
- ▶ **Filtering** = negative beliefs bias our perceptions
- ▶ **Jumping to negative conclusions** .. on basis of too little evidence
- ▶ **Mind reading** = assume negative evaluation
- ▶ **Blaming** others for your situation, and not acting to solve problem
- ▶ **Labelling** eg I am stupid; my boss is a jerk
- ▶ **Predicting catastrophe** = habitual focus of negative consequences; what if?
- ▶ **Comparing** = appraise status, personal worth by comparing to others
- ▶ **Just world fallacy** = expectation that things should be fair
- ▶ **Hindsight vision** = incorrect belief (usually) that “should have known at time that decision was wrong”

Discover Faulty Thinking: Scenarios (5 mins)

- ▶ Each person takes one scenario from the hat.
 - ▶ Identify the types of faulty thinking patterns that are likely to cause distress in your scenario (2 mins)
 - ▶ Share this with your table group
 - ▶ Individuals to share examples with whole class
 - ▶ **Black-and-white thinking** = tendency to see things in a polarised way
 - ▶ **Overgeneralising*** = draw negative conclusions on basis of limited evidence
 - ▶ **Personalising** = feel responsible for things that are not our fault
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Giving psychology
away....

....and acknowledging
the psychological health
continuum

Beliefs badly met-> *emotions*

- ▶ I must be loved and approved of by everyone -> ***anxiety, unassertive behaviour, depression, poor self-esteem***
- ▶ The world should be a fair place and I should always be treated fairly -> ***anger, depression, frustration, depression***
- ▶ People should have the same values and beliefs as me, and they should do things the way I do them -> ***anger, resentment, poor relationships***
- ▶ The world should provide me with what I need -> ***frustration, depression, despair***
- ▶ When I do something badly, I am a bad person, a failure, an idiot -> ***poor self-esteem, frustration, depression***
- ▶ It is awful when things don't go the way I like -> ***frustration, anger, depression.***
- ▶ There is a correct solution for every problem, and it is awful if I cannot find it -> ***indecision, procrastination, anxiety***

Edelman draws on Albert Ellis' ABC[-D]

A = activating event/situation/adversity that triggers a response

C = consequence – emotions and behaviours

eg A (running late for appointment) -> C (anxiety,
reckless driving)

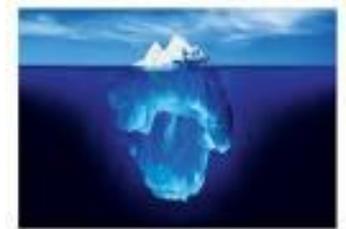
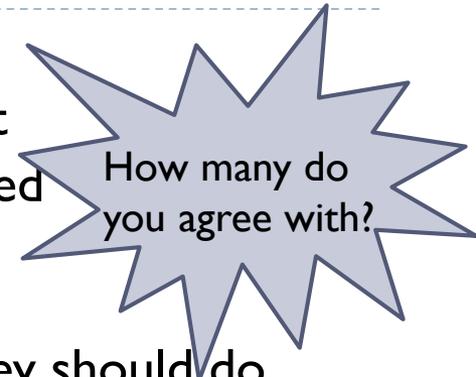
But A does not directly cause C – there is a **mediating step**:

B = Beliefs about the situation (eg I should always be punctual) – often negative, biased, unreasonable, held as rigid “rules” or “should’s”; can make us feel bad, and make us behave in self-defeating ways

(adapted from Edelman, 2013; see also Reivich et al., 2011)

Examples of Mediating (Irrational) Beliefs

- ▶ I must be loved and approved of by everyone.
- ▶ I must be competent, adequate and achieving in every respect
- ▶ The world should be a fair place and I should always be treated fairly.
- ▶ I must always be punctual – people won't like me if I am late
- ▶ People should have the same values and beliefs as me, and they should do things the way I do them.
- ▶ It is easier to avoid problems than confront them.
- ▶ If there is a chance that something bad might happen, I should dwell on it now
- ▶ The world should provide me with what I need.
- ▶ When I do something badly, I am a bad person, a failure, an idiot.
- ▶ It is awful when things don't go the way I like.
- ▶ There is a correct solution for every problem, and it is awful if I cannot find it.
- ▶ Certain people are bad and they should be blamed or punished for their misdeeds



(adapted from Edelman, 2013)

Ellis' Tyranny of the “should’s”

When we believe that things **should** or must be a certain way – ie demandingness – rather than just having a preference, we make ourselves susceptible to distress

- ▶ I **should** be loved and approved of by everyone
 - ▶ I **should** be competent and effective in everything I do and always do a perfect job
 - ▶ I **should** never make mistakes
 - ▶ My life **should** be easy and hassle-free
 - ▶ I **should** be treated fairly
 - ▶ People **should** do things the way I do
 - ▶ The world **should** provide me with what I need
 - ▶ I **should** have control over my life
 - ▶ I **should** be in a relationship
 - ▶ I **should** be making lots of money
 - ▶ I **should** be like other people
 - ▶ I **should** always say “yes” to other people
 - ▶ I **should** always be positive and cheerful
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Ellis' "Awfulising"

= exaggerating the negative aspects of our lives

Experiencing unpleasant situation as **disaster**, resulting in intense feelings of anxiety, frustration, guilt, embarrassment, depression or resentment

People must like and respect me – it is **awful** to be disapproved of

It is **awful** when things don't go the way I like.

- ▶ On an awfulness scale of 0-100, most things we experience fall between 0-20
- ▶ When we awfulise, we experience them as 100

Ask yourself: What is the best case, worst case, and most likely case

More Strategies to deal with Catastrophising

- ▶ 1. **“What’s the most likely scenario?”** Sometimes it’s useful to introduce a dose of rational thinking. *“Yes, I could break my leg if I go skiing. But chances are I won’t.”*
 - ▶ 2. **“Does it really matter?”** *“You may be right, but is it the end of the world as we know it?”*
One way of dealing with catastrophising is to admit that you could be right, but even if the worst case scenario does happen, the sun will still shine tomorrow. Take yourself to the worst possible scenario and you may see it’s not so bad.
 - ▶ 3. **“Where does this fit on the Mood Meter?”** Catastrophisers get themselves in a knot about relatively insignificant things. Get some perspective by giving your worry a score out of ten, on how important the issue really is.
 - ▶ 4. **Replace extreme words for feelings with more moderate descriptors:** We often talk in extremes – ‘awesome’, ‘the best’, ‘gross’, ‘terrible’. Extreme language leads to extreme thinking, so replace *“I’m furious”* with *“I’m annoyed”*, *“It’s a disaster”* with *“It’s annoying”*, *“I can’t stand it”* with *“I don’t like it”*. By changing your language you change how you think and feel about events.
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Icebergs: Remembering Reivich et al. (2011)

Icebergs?

= deeply held beliefs and core values.

Eg “I can handle anything”, “asking for help shows weakness”

Try to think about what your “icebergs” are in relation to how you go about attempting to be a successful student.

Write them down, one at a time, on post-it notes (3 min)

The tutor will collect, “shuffle”, and re-distribute.

Students read out a note, and the class brainstorms the positives and negatives of each iceberg.

Put the “B” between the A and C (2 mins)

- ▶ In groups of 4-5, you will be given a scenario
- ▶ Determine what the “B” could be for your statement (you can have more than one)



Disputing Negative Cognitions

- ▶ Inflexible, unrealistic or irrational thinking can create upsetting emotions.
- ▶ Once we have identified unreasonable thinking, we can find ways to counter it
 1. Logical disputing = challenge rigidity of thinking and irrational beliefs, and identify a more balanced perspective
 2. Write it down, use thought-monitoring forms
 3. Positive actions, problem solving
 4. De-catastrophise
 5. Socratic questioning
 6. Behavioural disputing/behavioural experiments
 7. Goal-focused thinking

(adapted from Edelman, 2013)

Logical disputing

- ▶ I must be loved and approved of by everyone ->
 - ▶ **I prefer people to like me, but it is unrealistic to expect everyone to like me. I can cope if some people don't like me, just like some people cope when I don't like them.**
 - ▶ The world should be a fair place and I should always be treated fairly ->
 - ▶ ***I prefer things to be fair, but I acknowledge that the world is full of injustice. Lots of things aren't fair, and chances are that at times I am going to experience some injustice.***
 - ▶ People should have the same values and beliefs as me, and they should do things the way I do them ->
 - ▶ ***People have the right to have different values and beliefs from mine, and will sometimes say and do things I do not like. I would be nice if others always did what I believe is right, but there is not reason that they must.***
 - ▶ When I do something badly, I am a bad person, a failure, an idiot ->
 - ▶ ***Like everyone else, I sometimes make mistakes and do silly things, but that does not make me a failure or a bad person....***
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(adapted from Edelman, 2013)

Albert Ellis: ABC[-D]

Activating event -> **Belief** -> Consequence

Eg **A** (running late for meeting) -> **B** (“I must always be punctual”) -> **C** (anxiety, reckless driving)

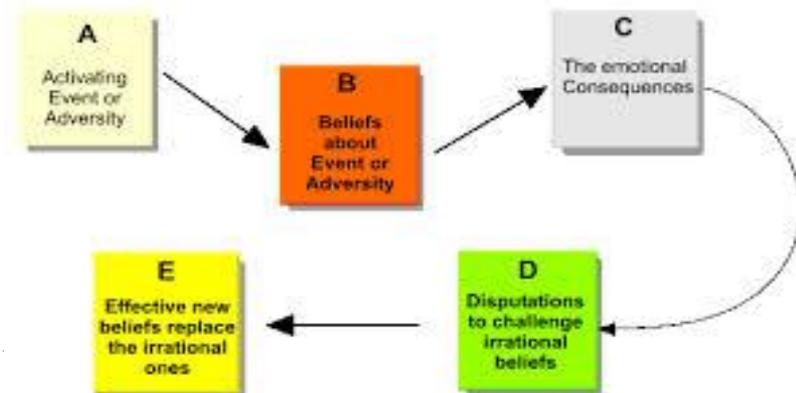
D = dispute = the way we challenge the way we think about situations, our beliefs.

eg “Although I prefer to be punctual: the boss usually does not mind when people turn up a bit late; I am not critically involved at the beginning of the meeting; it is not my fault there was a crash which slowed the traffic”



...and E

- ▶ **Adversity** what is the challenge? What you are up against and how you are feeling.
- ▶ **Belief** What is your underlying fear? What are you really afraid of? what is your belief of what will happen if you can't meet the challenge?
- ▶ **Consequences** What feelings and behaviors do you experience as a result of holding these beliefs and fears?
- ▶ **Disputation** challenge these irrational beliefs. Would you accept someone else saying these things about you?
- ▶ **Emotional Relief/ Energisation/ Effective new beliefs**



(Adapted from Edelman, 2013)

Other ways to dispute Negative Cognitions

- ▶ **Write it down**
 - ▶ Identify cognitions leading to distress, write them down, write statements that challenge these cognitions
 - ▶ Writing adds extra level of processing and reinforces new perspectives
- ▶ **Use thought-monitoring forms**
 - ▶ Tool for reflecting on and clarifying cognitions
 - ▶ Headings: Situation, Emotions, Thoughts, Beliefs, Thinking Errors, Dispute, Positive Actions
- ▶ **Positive actions**
 - ▶ consider positive solutions to resolve problems or lessen severity
- ▶ **De-catastrophise**
 - ▶ Put things into perspective eg Have I felt this way before? Have I been wrong before? **Will this matter in 5 years time?** On an awfulness scale of 0-100, how bad is this? ***What is the worst that can happen? Best that can happen? Most likely to happen?***

Socratic questioning

1. What are the facts?
2. What are my subjective perceptions?
3. What evidence supports my perceptions?
4. What evidence contradicts my perceptions?
5. Am I making any thinking errors?
6. How else can I perceive this situation?

Socratic Questioning Homework

▶ Homework: think of a negative interaction or encounter you have had in the past week, which is still bothering you (or make one up). Write it down. Then try to answer the questions below. Submit to Moodle. It will remain confidential.

1. What are the facts?
 2. What are my subjective perceptions?
 3. What evidence supports my perceptions?
 4. What evidence contradicts my perceptions?
 5. Am I making any thinking errors?
 6. How else can I perceive this situation?
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Disputing Negative Cognitions

- ▶ **Behavioural disputing/behavioural experiments**
 - ▶ Behaviour often reinforces cognitions (especially unrealistic or self-defeating)
 - ▶ eg by avoiding task we reinforce the belief that it is aversive
 - ▶ Behaving in a way that is inconsistent with cognitions can be used to dispute those cognitions
 - ▶ If negative outcomes we anticipated do not happen, we realise that our perceptions are wrong
 - ▶ Useful for challenging irrational fear
 - ▶ Experiential learning
 - ▶ [George does the opposite](#)
 - ▶ **Goal-focused thinking**
 - ▶ Does behaving this way help me to feel good or to achieve my goals?
 - ▶ Recognition that current perceptions prevent us from achieving the things we want
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CBT and Problem Solving

- ▶ Problem solving is a key component of CBT
 - ▶ It is focused on how to flexibly and effectively deal with a problem at hand.
 - ▶ Problem solving is a more constructive approach than *worrying*, which is not *solution-focused*
 - ▶ It involves identifying the problem and possible ways of dealing with it
 - ▶ Based on our evaluation of the solutions, we can then develop a plan of how to **best** deal with the situation using one or more of the strategies we have identified.
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Pre-practical for this week: Structured Problem Solving

1. What is the problem?

(Break it down into manageable smaller problems)

2. Step back and view the problem objectively and without emotion, as if it were happening to someone else.

3. What can I do? (Brainstorm a list of possible solutions, good and bad, real and unreal)—write them down.

4. Cross out any silly or impossible options.

5. With those that remain, write down the short-term and long-term consequences, and the **pros** and **cons**.

Possible Solution	Pros	Cons

6. Write down your favourite three.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

7. Put at least one into action!

What do you need to do to implement it? Did it work? Why/why not? Would another solution work better?

CLASS DISCUSSION: How did you find this exercise? Pro's?
Con's?



You have just been given
a taste of:

Giving psychology
away....

....and acknowledging
the psychological health
continuum

**We highly
recommend this
book—read it, and
pass it on!**

Reivich Master Resilience Training criticisms (10 min)

- ▶ In your table groups, each present one point of criticism that you were able to find in your Google search. Discuss each of these, and come to a decision about whether this is a reasonable criticism (5 min)
 - ▶ **CLASS** discussion: each group feed back one criticism you have decided is reasonable, and one you have decided is not, saying why. Different if possible. Class discussion. (5 min)
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Introduction to ACT 1: Revisiting values

ACT – a key component of ACT is **Committed action** - taking action guided by your values – doing what matters.

Choose **ONE** of the areas below, and describe in no more than 100 words how you have behaved in a way that is consistent with your values (within the last 3 months). Post this on Moodle.

1. Family relations: What sort of brother/sister, son/daughter, uncle/aunt do you want to be? What sort of relationships would you like to build?
2. Intimate relations: What sort of partner would you like to be in an intimate relationship? What sort of relationship would you like to build?
3. Friendships: If you could be the best friend possible, how would you behave towards your friends? What sort of friendships would you like to build?
4. Career: What do you value in your work? What would make it more meaningful? What kind of worker would you like to be?
5. Education/personal growth: What do you value about learning or personal growth? What new skills would you like to learn? What knowledge would you like to gain? What sort of student would you like to be? What personal qualities would you like to apply?
6. Recreation: What sorts of sports, or leisure activities do you enjoy? How do you relax and unwind? How do you have fun? What sorts of activities would you like to do?
7. Citizenship/ community life. How would you like to contribute to your community or environment? What sort of environments would you like to create at home, and at work?
8. Health: What are your values related to maintaining your physical well-being? How do you want to look after your health?

Introduction to ACT 2: Milk Activity

- ▶ Say the word, "Milk".
- ▶ What comes to mind when you said it?
- ▶ Can you taste it? Can you feel what it feels like to drink a glass of milk? Cold, creamy, coats your mouth...right?
- ▶ What came across your mind were things about actual milk and your experience with it. All that happened is that we made a strange sound – Milk – and lots of those things show up. Notice that there isn't any milk in this room. Not at all. But milk was in the room psychologically. You and I were seeing it, tasting it, and feeling it. And yet, only the word was actually here.
- ▶ Language is powerful enough to conjure up the experience of milk, even in its absence
- ▶ Now, what I am going to ask you to do is to say the word, "milk," out loud, over-and-over again, and as rapidly as possible, and then notice what happens. Are you ready?
- ▶ Let's do it. Say, "milk" over and over again! (15 seconds).
- ▶ O.K. now stop. Tell me what came to mind while you kept repeating it? What happened to the psychological aspects of milk that were here a few minutes ago?
- ▶ Creamy, cold, gluggy stuff just goes away. When you said it the first time, it was as if milk was actually here, in the room. It was "psychologically" meaningful, and it was almost solid.
- ▶ When you said it again and again and again, you began to lose that meaning and the words became just a sound.
- ▶ What happens in this exercise may be applied to our personal thoughts about ourselves. When you say things to yourself in addition to any meaning behind those words, isn't it also true that these thoughts are just thoughts? The thoughts are just smoke, there isn't anything solid in them. They are just words, sounds in our heads.

(adapted from Hayes, 2009)

Pre-practical Tasks for Week 10

1. Team rating – on Moodle, rate each team member’s contribution to the task so far
 2. Socratic Questioning exercise
 3. Read Harris, R. (2006). Embracing your demons: An overview of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. *Psychotherapy in Australia*, 12(4), 2-8.
 1. Try out the Cognitive Defusion and Acceptance tasks by choosing a thought (defusion task) and an experience (acceptance task) that have caused you distress. Write a 200 word reflection on your experience of these exercises, and how you felt during and after them, including any obstacles that you encountered. Submit to Moodle before Week 10.
 4. Read Mindset handout. Print out pages 3-5 and undertake Exercise 1. Post your completed pages (pp3-5) on Moodle. You will also be asked to discuss aspects of the reading in class.
 5. Thinking back on the first three weeks, where we learnt about resilience **as a DV**, how do you think it is related to Kashdan & Rottenberg’s “psychological flexibility”? Write a 100 word response on Moodle and bring this to class to discuss.
 6. Values exercise - Choose ONE of the areas, and describe in no more than 100 words how you have behaved in a way that is consistent with your values (within the last 3 months). Post this on Moodle.
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