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HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

English ▼

Default Question Block

Welcome to Project Think!

All of us have **negative thoughts** sometimes, like “I’m not as smart as other people”.

These thoughts can make us feel bad and can get in the way of our goals, like doing well in school. There are many different reasons

why we have these kinds of thoughts. Sometimes, negative experiences—like getting bullied by other kids—can cause us to have negative thoughts. For example, getting bullied can cause thoughts like "I don't belong" and "nobody likes me." For these kinds of experiences, it is important to ask for help from a trusted adult, like a parent or a teacher.

In this activity, we'll talk about thoughts that a student like you can address directly on their own. First, you'll learn how to identify thoughts that make you feel bad and get in the way of your goals. Then, you'll learn how to change these thoughts to be more helpful for you.

Changing your thoughts may not change your situation. But, it can help you feel better in the moment and figure out what to do next to reach your goals.

Changing unhelpful thoughts

Studies show that there are **ways to help** students like you deal with these negative, unhelpful thoughts.

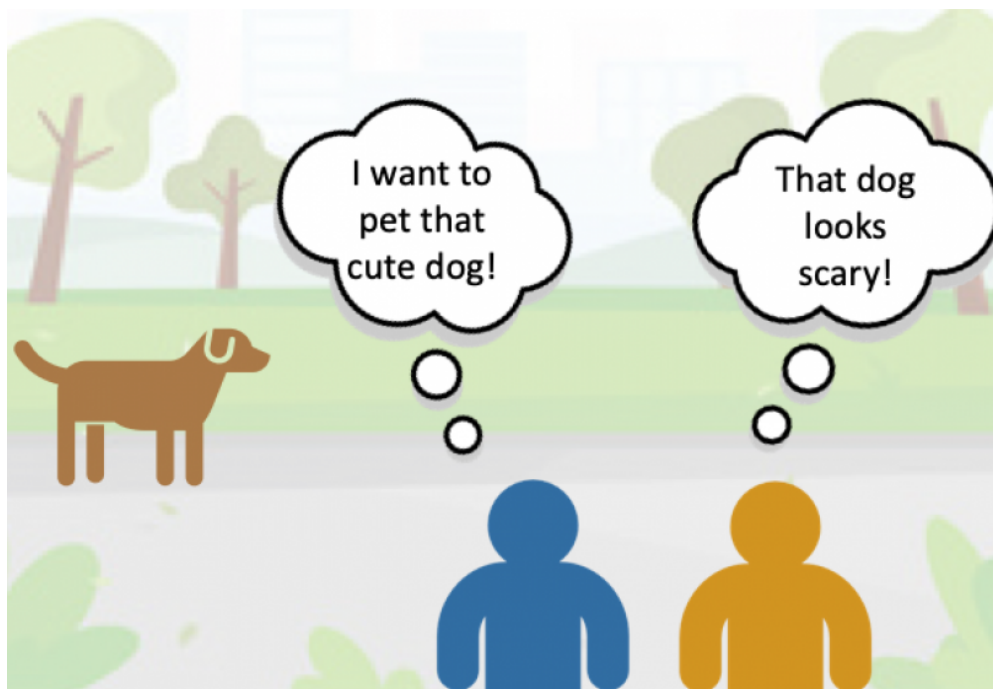
What are thoughts?

Thoughts are the **things we say to ourselves**. We have thoughts all the time, often without realizing it.



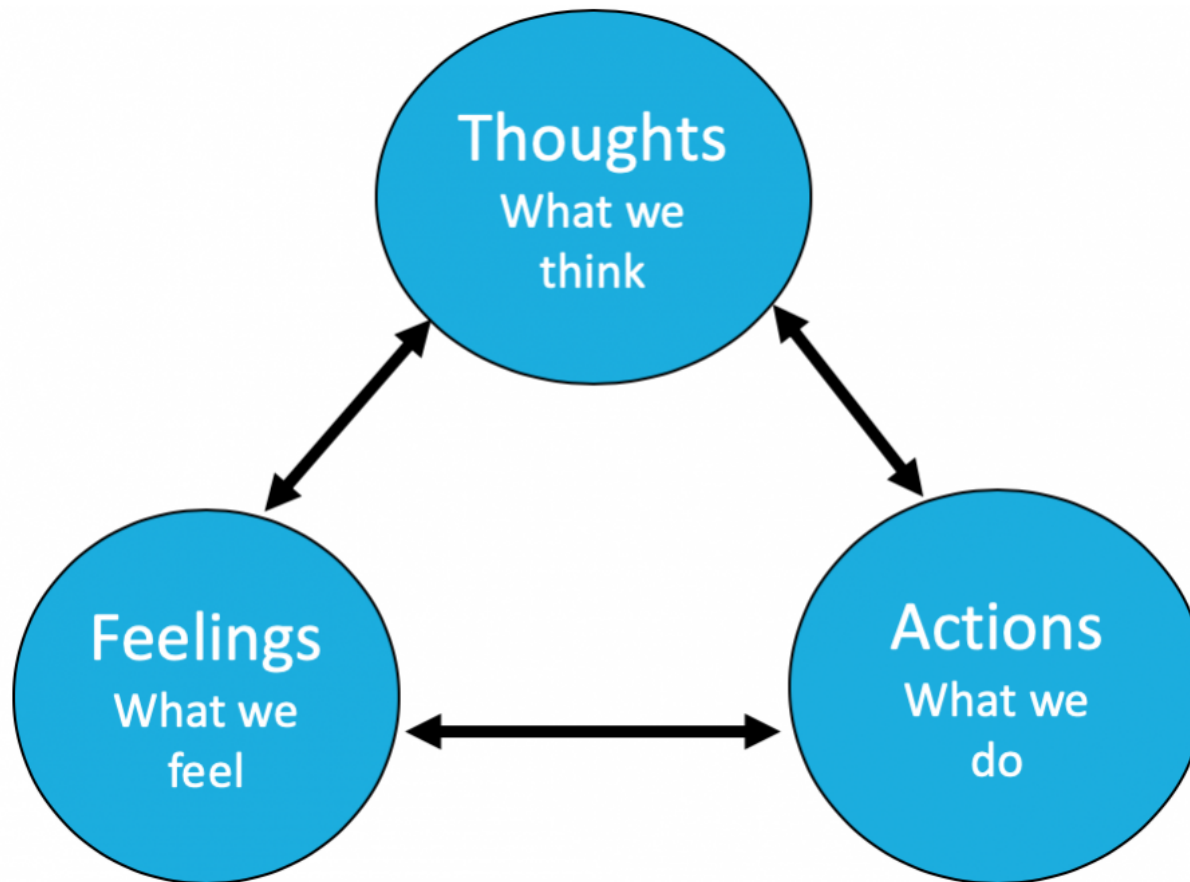
Different people have different thoughts

Different people can have **different thoughts** about the same thing.



Thoughts, feelings, and actions

Our **thoughts**, **feelings**, and **actions** are all **connected**. For example, if we think about a fun activity that we like, we might feel happy, and we might do that activity again.



Different kinds of thoughts

Some of our thoughts are **neutral**, some of our thoughts are **unhelpful**, and some of our thoughts are **helpful**.



Neutral thoughts

Neutral thoughts, like “that flower is yellow,” typically don’t cause us to have any specific feelings or act in any specific way.



Today, we will focus on **unhelpful** and **helpful** thoughts.

Unhelpful thoughts

Unhelpful thoughts are often **negative**. They can cause **negative feelings**, like sadness, anger, and fear.



Unhelpful thoughts

These thoughts can make us **act** in ways that make us **feel even worse**, like yelling at another person or avoiding other people.



**We can *change* our *unhelpful* thoughts
into more *helpful* thoughts.**

Helpful thoughts

Helpful thoughts are realistic. They help us **see things as they really are.**



Helpful thoughts

These thoughts can help us **feel** and **act** in ways that are useful to us. That is, they help us **live the life we want to live** and **be the person we want to be**.



Can people change their unhelpful thoughts?

Yes! Studies have shown that **people—just like you—can change their unhelpful thoughts**. For example, one study with teens who

felt sad taught them new ways of thinking. After learning these skills, the teens felt much happier...even 7 years later!



This shows that **people** can **change** their thoughts, even when it is really hard. Once we **change our thoughts**, we can **change** how we **feel** and **act**.



Great work!

You're almost halfway done with the activity!



How can we change our thoughts?

You might be thinking: this sounds great, but **how** can I change my thoughts?



Let's find out!

Change your thoughts in a few steps!

As a reminder, changing your thoughts may not change your situation. But, it can help you feel better in the moment and

figure out what to do next!

Step 1: Notice when your feelings change

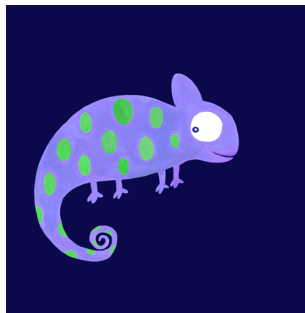
Step 2: Identify your unhelpful thought

Step 3: Check your unhelpful thought

Step 4: Replace your unhelpful thought with a new, helpful one

Step 1: Notice when your feelings change

Earlier, we learned that our **thoughts** and **feelings** are **connected**. **Noticing changes** in our **feelings** can be a good way to identify when we might be having an unhelpful thought.



Many of us have **unhelpful thoughts** when we have **certain feelings**, like anger, sadness, and fear.









Our **unhelpful thoughts** can then make us **feel** even worse!



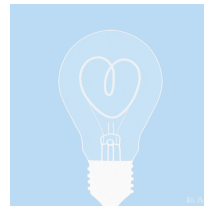
How do you feel when you have unhelpful thoughts?

Below are some **common feelings** people notice when they are having **unhelpful thoughts**. **Click** on the feeling(s) that you think might be caused by your unhelpful thoughts.

-  Scared
-  Mad
-  Sad
-  Embarrassed
-  Empty
-  Overwhelmed

Step 2: Identify your unhelpful thought

The next step is to **identify your unhelpful thought**. You can do this by noticing **what you are thinking** when you experience a **change in your feelings**.



Everyone has unhelpful thoughts

Below are some common unhelpful thoughts. **Click on one** to see how a student like you changed it.

Hint: There is no right answer! If you aren't sure which one to pick, you can take a guess.

- "I'm a failure."
- "Nobody likes me"
- "Nothing ever goes my way"

“When I’m feeling sad, I have thoughts like ‘I’m a failure’ or ‘I’m so stupid,’ which make me feel even more sad.” -- K.B., older student

“When I’m feeling worried and stressed, I have thoughts like ‘Nobody likes me?’ and ‘I’m going to fail that test!’ These thoughts make me feel even more worried and stressed. ” -- J.M., older student

“When I’m mad, I have thoughts like ‘Nothing ever goes my way’ and ‘Everyone is mean to me.’ These thoughts make me feel even more mad.” -- S.E., older student

Step 3: Check your unhelpful thought

We often see our thoughts as the truth. But, when we feel `{q://QID32/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}`, it can be helpful to check our thoughts. To check our thoughts we can ask questions like...

- Who tells me or has told me that this is true?
- Where did this thought come from?
- Is this thought helping me reach my goals?



Find reasons why your unhelpful thought is not true

For this step, try thinking of one or two **reasons why** your unhelpful thought is **not true**. To do this, we can think of **positive** or **good** things about **ourselves**, our **past experiences**, and our **current situation**.

See it in action!

“When I’m feeling sad, I have thoughts like ‘I’m a failure’ or ‘I’m so stupid,’ which make me feel even more sad. But, when I have these thoughts, I tell myself that **thoughts are just guesses**, and **my sad thoughts are usually wrong**. I **remind** myself that **I help my soccer team win games**, so I must **not** be a total **failure**. I also remember that I **read at least one book every month**, which I **don't think I could do** if I were actually **stupid**. When I think of the reasons that my sad thoughts aren't true, I'm **surprised by how much better I start to feel.**” -- K.B.

See it in action!

“When I’m feeling worried and stressed, I have thoughts like ‘What if nobody likes me?’ and ‘I’m going to fail that test!’ These thoughts

make me feel even more worried and stressed. But, when I have these thoughts, I tell myself that **thoughts are just guesses**, and **my worried thoughts are usually wrong**. I remind myself that I have **two really good friends**, so I know that **at least they like me**. I also remember that I **don't usually fail my tests**, so I **probably won't fail** the one I'm worried about. When I think of the reasons that my worried thoughts aren't true, I'm **surprised by how much better I start to feel.**" -- J.M.

See it in action!

“When I’m mad, I have thoughts like ‘Nothing ever goes my way’ and ‘Everyone is mean to me.’ These thoughts make me feel even more mad. But, when I have these thoughts, I tell myself that **thoughts are just guesses**, and **my angry thoughts are usually wrong**. I **remind** myself that I at least **sometimes get what I want**--when I wanted to go to the movies last week with my friend, but they

wanted to go to the mall, we went to the movies. I also remember that, even though some people are mean to me, there are also **lots of people who are kind to me**, like my math teacher. When I think of the reasons that my angry thoughts aren't true, I'm **surprised by how much better I start to feel.**" -- S.E

Step 4: Replace your unhelpful thought with a new, helpful one

The last step is to **replace** your unhelpful thought with a **new, helpful** one. For this step, you can **use** the **reasons** you identified in Step 3 to help you.

See it in action!

“I've realized that I can **change** my **sad** thoughts into more **helpful** thoughts. Now, instead of thinking 'I'm a failure' or 'I'm so stupid,' I tell myself '**Sometimes, I make mistakes. This doesn't make me a failure. I can do better next time.**' It is **hard work**, but I feel **better** when I talk to myself in this new way, especially when I'm sad.” -- K.B.

See it in action!

“I've realized that I can **change** my **worried** thoughts into more **helpful** thoughts. Now, instead of thinking 'Nobody likes me?', I tell myself '**Sometimes, other people might act like they don't like me. But, I know that my two good friends like me.**' Instead of thinking 'I'm going to fail that test!', I tell myself '**I don't usually fail tests, so I probably won't fail this one. I studied a lot for the test, so now all I can do is**

try my best. It is **hard work**, but I feel **better** when I talk to myself in this new way, especially when I'm worried and stressed." -- J.M.

See it in action!

"I've realized that I can **change** my **angry** thoughts into more **helpful** thoughts. Now, instead of thinking 'Nothing ever goes my way,' I tell myself '**Sometimes I don't get what I want and sometimes I do. Nobody gets exactly what they want all the time and that's okay.**' Instead of thinking 'Everyone is mean to me,' I tell myself '**Some people are mean to me, but many people are kind to me.**' It is **hard work**, but I feel **better** when I talk to myself in this new way, especially when I'm mad." -- S.E.

Great work!

You're more than halfway done with the activity!



Now it's your turn! Identify your unhelpful thought

Try to identify an **unhelpful thought** that **you** have had before or might have in the future. You can choose from the list or you can type in your own example in the box below.

- I can't do anything right
- My friend didn't text me back today, so they must be mad at me.
- If I don't do well on this quiz, I'm going to fail the class.
- I didn't get invited to that party. I'm so unpopular!
- Other





How do **you** feel right now? Use the slider above to pick the face that fits you best **right now**.

Now it's your turn! Check your unhelpful thought

Type **one** or **two reasons** why the unhelpful thought you selected might not be true in the box below. **Remember:** these reasons are **positive** things about ourselves, our past experiences, or our current situation.

As a reminder, you selected

"\${q://QID42/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}" as your unhelpful thought.



Now it's your turn! Check your unhelpful thought

Type **one** or **two reasons** why the unhelpful thought you selected might not be true in the box below. **Remember:** these reasons are **positive** things about ourselves, our past experiences, or our current situation.

As a reminder, you selected

"\${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/9}" as your unhelpful thought.



Now it's your turn! Replace your unhelpful thought

Think about how you could **replace** your **unhelpful thought** with a new, **helpful** one. **Type** the helpful thought in the box below.

As a reminder, you selected

"\${q://QID42/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}" as your unhelpful thought.



Now it's your turn! Replace your unhelpful thought

Think about how you could **replace** your **unhelpful thought** with a new, **helpful** one. **Type** the helpful thought in the box below.

As a reminder, you selected

"\${q://QID42/ChoiceTextEntryValue/9}" as your unhelpful thought.



How do **you** feel right now? Use the slider above to pick the face that fits you best **right now**.

0:00

Click the play button to hear audio.

Use what you've learned to help a friend

change their thoughts!

Imagine that a **friend** tells you they have been having unhelpful thoughts, like "I'll never be as smart or fun as other people." Based on what you've learned today, **what would you tell them?** How could they **use** the **steps** you learned to change their thoughts? Try to type **1-2 sentences** in the box below.

0:00

Click the play button to hear audio.

How will you use what you learned today?

To get really **good** at **changing** your unhelpful thoughts into more helpful thoughts, you need to **practice** the steps you learned today! **Type 1-2 ways** you can **use** these steps in your daily life in the box below.

***Tip:** Other students who have completed this program have told us that they like to write down or draw helpful thoughts in a journal or on a note in their phone when they have unhelpful thoughts throughout the day.*



What have we learned today?

1.) **Everyone** has unhelpful thoughts **sometimes** and there are many **different** kinds of unhelpful thoughts.

2.) We can **change** our **unhelpful thoughts** into more **helpful thoughts** using a few steps...

Step 1: Notice when your feelings change

Step 2: Identify your unhelpful thought

Step 3: Check your unhelpful thought

Step 4: Replace your unhelpful thought with a new, helpful one

3.) **Changing** our unhelpful thoughts into more helpful thoughts can make us **feel better** and **reach our goals**.

Block 1

Feedback

To help us improve, we would like to hear about your experience using the THINK Coping Kit.

If you agree to provide your feedback, know that your anonymous answers will be saved and shared with the development team.

In general, did you like the look and feel of Project THINK?

- I hated the look/feel
- I did not like the look/feel
- I liked the look/feel a little
- I liked the look/feel
- I liked the look/feel a lot

How well, in general, did you understand Project THINK?

- I was very confused by it

- I did not understand it very well
- I understood it a little
- I understood it
- I understood it a lot

What are three things that you liked about Project THINK?

1)

2)

3)

What are three things we could change about Project THINK to make it better?

1)

2)

3)

After completing Project THINK, how much do you believe that changing your unhelpful thoughts could help you?

- Changing my unhelpful thoughts will hurt me
- Changing my unhelpful thoughts will not help me
- Changing my unhelpful thoughts will help me a little
- Changing my unhelpful thoughts will help me
- Changing my unhelpful thoughts will help me a lot

How much do you plan on changing your unhelpful thoughts?

- Never
- A few times a year
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Every day or most days

How would you feel about recommending Project THINK to a friend?

- I would tell my friends NOT to do it
- I would not recommend it
- I would recommend it a little
- I would recommend it
- I would recommend it a lot

How much do you think other young people would like Project THINK?

- They would hate it

- They would not like it
- They would like it a little
- They would like it
- They would like it a lot

How much do you think other young people would be helped by Project THINK?

- They would be hurt by it
- They would not be helped by it
- They would be helped by it a little
- They would be helped by it
- They would be helped by it a lot

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