



Award-winning  
Student Wellbeing  
Program

• Australia Wide •



# PARENT SUPPLEMENT MODULE 5

Evidence-based psychological skills training  
for mental health, wellbeing and resilience  
in your school



# 5

## Learning Helpful Thinking

- **Key Concepts**
- **Key Student Activities**
- ◆ **Discussion Points**
- ★ **Parent Self-Reflection**

## ● Key Concepts

See the *Helpful Thinking Template* (in the Appendix) as an example of how to train one's thinking.

- This week builds on principles we have discussed earlier – that thoughts affect the way we feel, but they are not always accurate or helpful.
- If we can learn to think in ways that are **balanced**, **realistic** and **helpful** then our emotional lives will be more balanced.
- Another important part of helpful thinking is in choosing helpful behaviours regardless of the emotions and urges we feel.
- Helpful thinking involves:
  1. Looking at many possible explanations
  2. Figuring out a balanced way of thinking about the situation (as opposed to accepting our automatic thoughts, which often include thinking errors)
  3. Choosing a helpful behaviour
- We can use various writing templates to help us practice helpful thinking. Remember – in order to write something down, we need to think it first. Structured writing tasks are actually also structured *thinking* tasks. That is why we recommend people write out their thinking when learning new (helpful) thinking skills.

## ■ Key Student Activities

- Students complete the 'Types of Thoughts' worksheet, exploring the multitude of possible ways in which thinking – rather than events themselves – affect our emotional reactions and subsequent behaviours.
- Students work through the examples of Jane at the choir, and Joseph after football training. They need to identify automatic thoughts, thinking errors and then;
- Create a more balanced, realistic and/or helpful way of thinking about the things that are bothering Jane and Joseph.

## ◆ Discussion Points

- Ask your child to talk you through how they were able to help Jane and Joseph resolve their concerns.

## ★ Parent Self-Reflection

- Why might 'positive thinking' not always be the most helpful kind of thinking?
- Try the Helpful Thinking Template (in the Appendix below) using an example of a situation (either current or past) from your own life.

# The Helpful Thinking Process

<b>Step 1</b> 'What is my automatic thought?'	Write it down:	What is the feeling?
		How strong is it out of 10?
<b>Step 2</b> 'What are three other possible outcomes or explanations?'	Write them down:	
<b>Step 3</b> 'What has happened in the past in this situation, and what is most likely to happen now?'	Write it down:	

<p><b>Step 4</b>          'What would my thinking brain say, compared to my emotional brain?'</p>	<p>Write it down:</p>	
<p><b>Step 5</b>          'How would advise a friend in this situation?'</p>	<p>Write them down:</p>	
<p><b>Step 6</b>          'Given what I've written above, how could I rewrite my original thought (from Step 1), to make it more:          ✓ Balanced          ✓ Realistic          ✓ Helpful?'</p>	<p>Write your more balanced, realistic, and helpful thought here:</p>	<p>What is your feeling now?</p> <hr/> <p>How strong is your feeling now, out of 10?</p>
<p><b>My helpful course of action is:</b></p>		

