

# WORRIES

A worry is a feeling of unease, fear or nervousness when you start to think about unpleasant things. It is a type of thinking, often about something that might happen in the future and it leaves you feeling frightened, nervous or anxious. Some people call worries, anxiety or stress.

People that worry a lot often feel very nervous about the potential dangers of what could or might happen in certain situations.

A worry can be a specific thought that makes you feel nervous, such as "what if I make a mistake during my drama play and everyone laughs at me", or it can be a more general feeling that you get, such as getting butterflies in your tummy or feeling sick even though your not actually sick.

A worry is a normal feeling to have and it can in fact serve us well in several situations. For example, feeling worried about a math test can help us study more or feeling worried about a sports game can actually help you prepare better and even perform well. However, when we worry too much and it starts to interfere with things in our everyday life, then it is not good, and we need some special tools and tips to help us overcome our worried feelings.



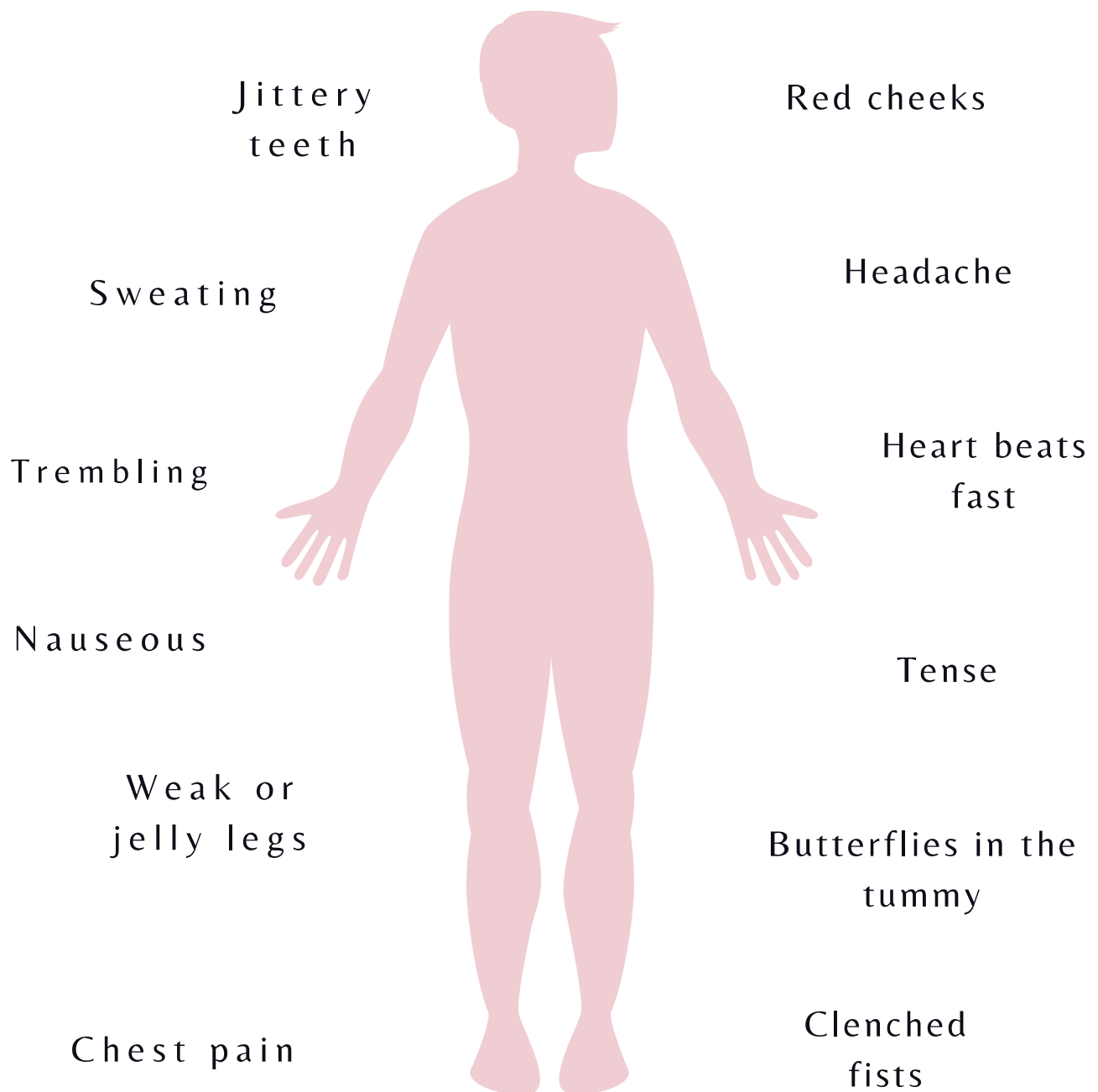
Everybody experiences worries, however if you are starting to feel worried more often or if you can't seem to stop thinking about your worry and it is leaving you feeling upset, then this mini book is going to help you manage your worries so that they don't bother you anymore.

Just move through this booklet at your own pace, remember to listen to your body and please speak up if you are feeling uncomfortable about any of your feelings, because talking always helps.

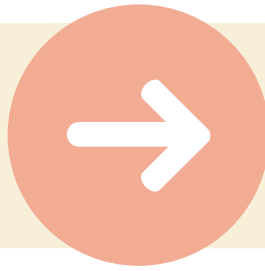
# IDENTIFYING PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Everybody's body will physically respond to anxiety in many different ways. But some common physical symptoms are shown below.

Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Starting with the top of your head, become aware of how your body feels. Slowly move down your body, noticing how each body part feels, down to your toes. Make a note of any areas of discomfort on the body below.



# Negative



# Positive

My negative thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence for my thought:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence against my thought:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can I reframe my negative thought to a more realistic one?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Things I can NOT control

- So I can let Go of these things



The past

What other people think

What other people believe

Other people's actions

The weather

## Things I can control

- So I will focus on these things



Who I spend time with

My goals

Death

What other's post online

My Boundaries

What I post online

My thoughts

My values and beliefs

What I say

How I spend my spare time

My age

How people react to my boundaries

What I say about other people

My actions

My honesty

Other people's opinions

Predicting what will happen

The future

The results of a sports match



# PROS AND CONS

The Pros and Cons skill can help individuals respond to difficult situations and feelings in a more effective way.

Naturally, many people use pros and cons to assess situations and behavior, such as whether or not they should choose to proceed with something. However, the pros and cons is a little different as this skill also assess the pros and cons of tolerating vs not tolerating distress (coping vs not coping). For example, imagine that your natural urge or behavior was to verbally speak up and give your friend a piece of your mind because they said something that was very upsetting to you. The comment said, made you upset and hurtful experiences and feelings from your past were re triggered. Of course, you could yell and scream as you normally would, or you could sit with the uncomfortable feeling, ride the feeling wave and talk yourself through some effective coping skills. Thinking about the consequences of tolerating versus not tolerating this distress can help you make more positive choices that align with your long term goals.

## HOW TO DO IT

**1** WHAT IS THE URGE OR BEHAVIOR THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO AVOID?

**2** EXAMINE THE PROS AND CONS OF ACTING ON THE URGE/BEHAVIOR VS NOT ACTING ON IT. CONSIDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST WHEN YOU ACTED ON YOUR URGE.

**3** LOOK AT THE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES (OR PROS AND CONS) FOR EACH OPTION. CONSIDER YOUR VALUES AND LONG TERM GOALS.



# PROS AND CONS

## IMPULSE ACTION/BEHAVIOR

**ACTING ON BEHAVIOR**

**NOT ACTING ON BEHAVIOR**

**PROS**

**CONS**

**THE JUDGE'S VERDICT**



EXAMINE THE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES FOR EACH OF THE VIABLE OPTIONS. WHAT IS THE BEST THING TO DO?



# PROS AND CONS EXAMPLE

## IMPULSE ACTION/BEHAVIOR

### SELF HARM

#### PROS

#### ACTING ON BEHAVIOR

PROS OF ACTING ON URGES, GIVING UP, GIVING IN OR AVOIDING

- FEELING BETTER IN THE MOMENT
- RELEASE TENSION
- FEELING SOMETHING RATHER THAN NUMB
- FEEL COMFORT IN FAMILIARITY
- EASE ANXIETY

#### NOT ACTING ON BEHAVIOR

PROS OF RESISTING URGES, DOING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE,

- NO SCARS
- FEELING PROUD
- LEARN TO DEAL WITH EMOTIONS IN A MORE EFFECTIVE WAY

#### CONS

CONS OF ACTING ON URGES

- AVOIDANCE OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS
- CAUSES DISTRESS TO LOVED ONES
- MIGHT ACCIDENTALLY HURT MYSELF REALLY BAD
- EMBARRASSMENT AND SELF-LOATHING

CONS OF RESISTING URGES

- NO INSTANT RELIEF
- FEELING OUT OF CONTROL
- FEELING HELPLESS

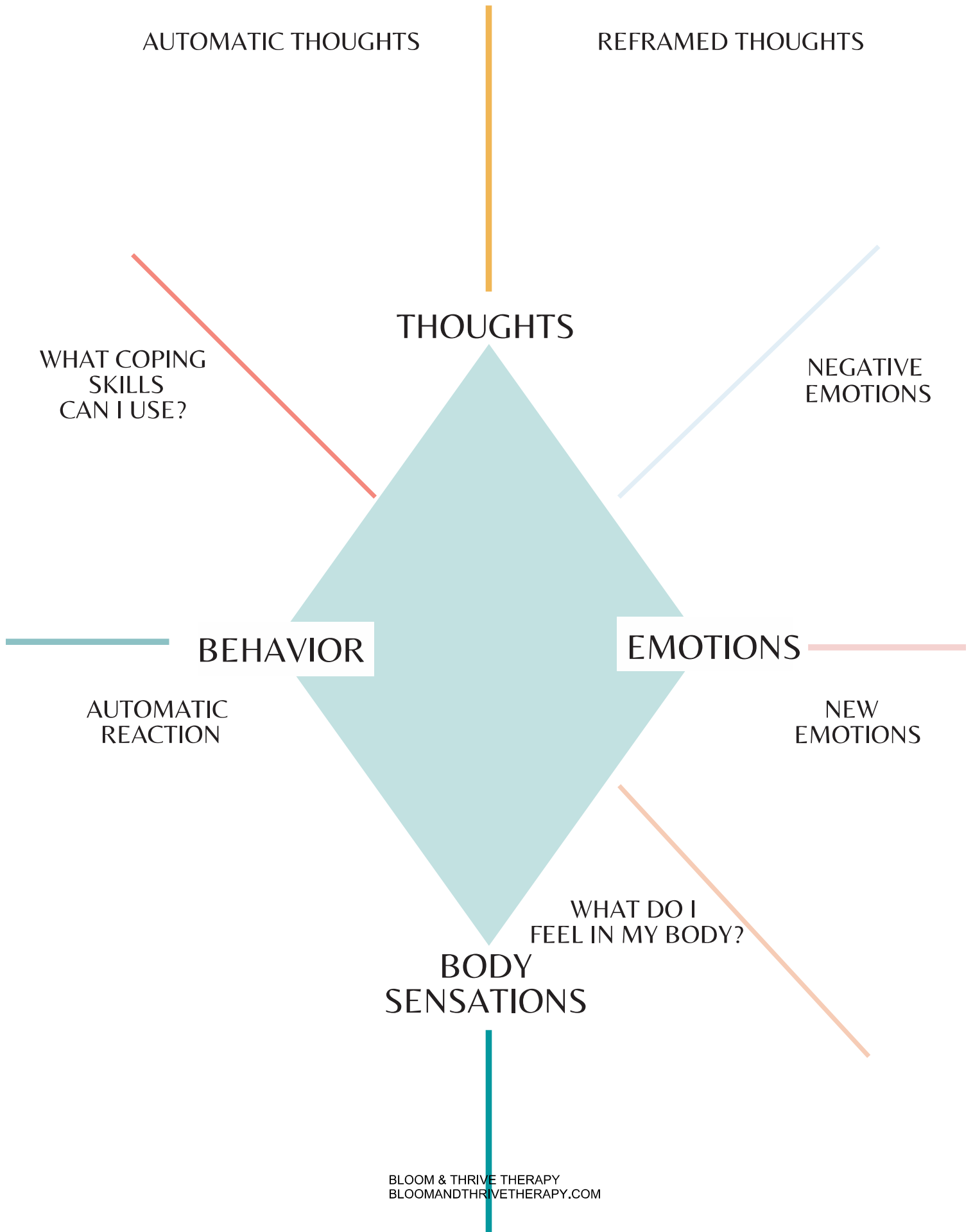
#### THE JUDGE'S VERDICT



EXAMINE THE ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES FOR EACH OF THE VIABLE OPTIONS. WHAT IS THE BEST THING TO DO?

"SELF HARMING IS NOT WORTH IT AS IT DOESN'T FIX ANYTHING LONG TERM, INSTEAD I SHOULD TRY AND USE SOME MORE EFFICIENT COPING SKILLS."

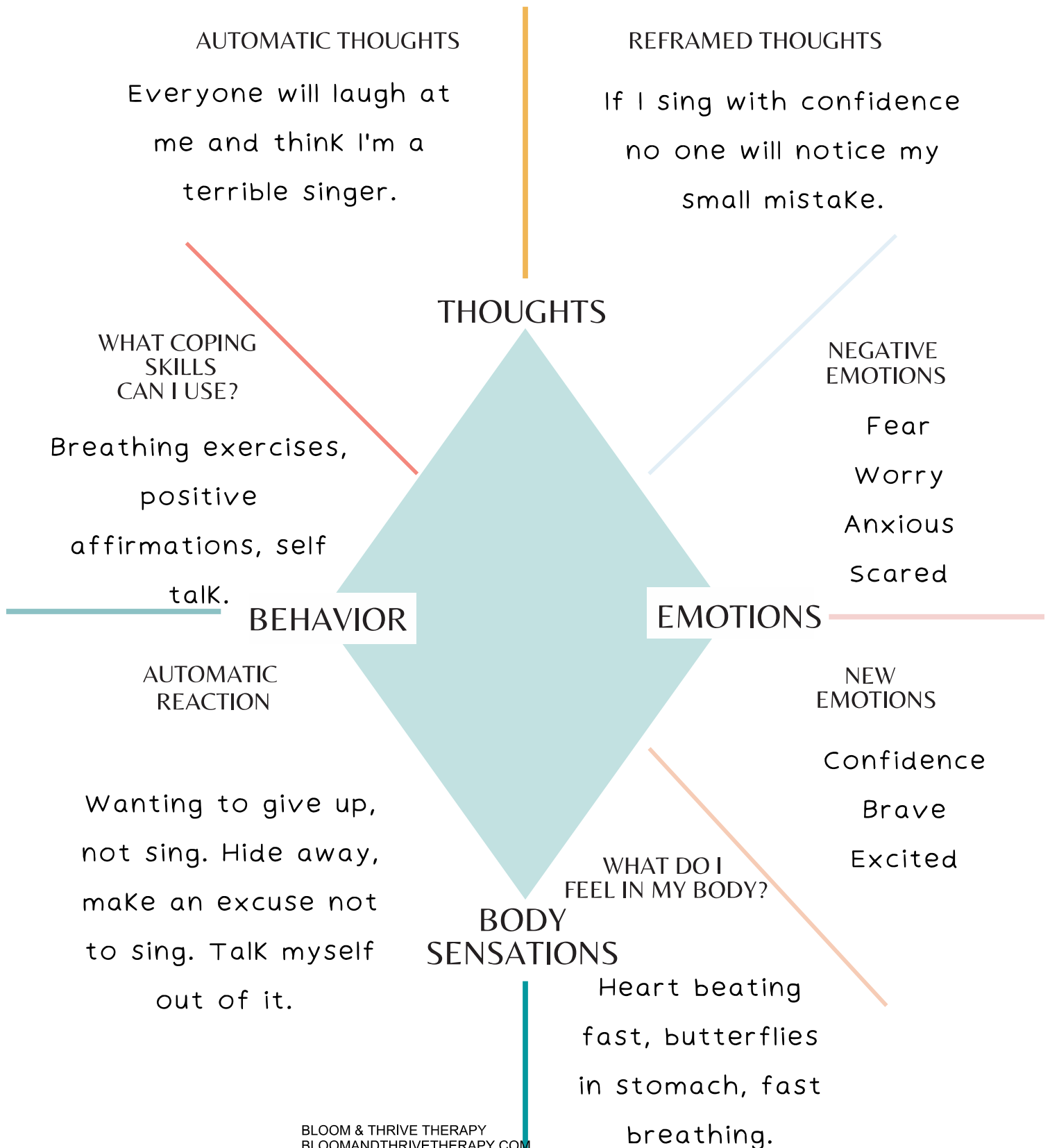
# CBT DIAMOND





# CBT DIAMOND

**EXAMPLE:** "I am going to make a mistake in my singing performance"



# CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

AM I MAKING ASSUMPTIONS?

IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT IT?

WHAT ARE OTHER POSSIBLE OUTCOMES?

IS THERE EVIDENCE FOR THIS WORRY?

WHAT ADVICE WOULD I GIVE TO A FRIEND?

IS THIS WORRY IN OR OUT OF MY CONTROL?

# PUTTING THOUGHTS ON TRIAL

## HOW ACCURATE IS YOUR THOUGHT?

THE  
THOUGHT



WHAT IS MY WORRY OR THOUGHT?

THE  
DEFENCE



WHAT EVIDENCE DO I HAVE THAT  
MY THOUGHT IS TRUE?  
FACTS, NOT OPINIONS

THE  
PROSECUTION



WHAT IS EVIDENCE DO I HAVE  
THAT MY THOUGHT IS NOT TRUE?

THE JUDGE'S  
VERDICT



WHEN I EXAMINE ALL OF THE EVIDENCE, BASED ON THE FACTS, CAN I  
DECIDE WHETHER MY THOUGHT IS LIKELY TO COME TRUE OR UNLIKELY?

# DECATASTROPHIZING

Cognitive distortions are thinking styles that our mind uses to convince us of one thing, when in reality it's completely untrue. The inaccurate thoughts are used to reinforce negative thinking patterns.

They are biased perspectives we take on unknowingly and reinforce over time.

## CATASTROPHIZING

Only seeing the worst possible outcome of an event or situation and then deciding that if this outcome does happen, then the results will be a disaster.

Worries become escalated and thoughts become exaggerated.

For example, "If I fail this test, I won't be able to pass school, and I will never succeed in life."

WHEN YOU START TO QUESTION YOUR WORRIES, YOU CAN START TO BREAK DOWN THE COGNITIVE DISTORTION.

What am I worried about?

When I think about all the evidence and my past experiences, how likely is it that this worry will actually come true?

If my worry does come true, what is the worst possible outcome?

If my worry does come true, what is likely to happen? How will it affect me?

Will this worry matter tomorrow, next week, in a month or even in a year's time?

# Distress tolerance skill

S.T.O.P



## STOP

Interrupt your negative thinking with the command STOP! and pause with what you were doing.



## TAKE A BREATH

Practice some deep breathing techniques to slow your heart rate down.



## OBSERVE

Observe your thoughts, feelings and behavior. How does your body feel?



## PROCEED

Purposefully and mindfully proceed with your next activity, one step at a time.

# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

## Mental Filter

Only paying attention to some types of evidence.  
Focusing on your failures while avoiding to see your success.

## Catastrophising

Only seeing the worst possible outcome of an event or situation. Worries become escalated and thoughts become exaggerated.

## Jumping to conclusions

Assuming that you know what other people are thinking.  
Predicting the future.

## Overgeneralising

The process of concluding that just because something happened to you once before, it will occur over and over again. It is negative thinking based on only 1 or 2 experiences.

## Emotional Reasoning

Believing that just because you feel a certain way then justifying that your thoughts must then be true.

## Black and White

Seeing things as either good or bad, right or wrong or all or nothing. It fails to see the whole picture and by only seeing black or white you ignore the middle ground, possible the more reasonable ground.

## Labelling

Putting labels on yourself and others.

- "I'm unloveable"
- "They are an idiot"

## Should Statements

Believing that things should be a certain way. Using 'should', 'must' or 'ought' statements directed at yourself. This thinking results in feelings of guilt, shame and self loathing.

## Blaming

Placing the blame on other people instead of owning up to your mistakes or sharing the responsibility. Taking on the victim mentality.

## Personalisation

Taking things personally and thinking that what other people do is a result of your own actions. You may blame yourself for things that were totally out of your control.

# COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

## CATCH AND RESTRUCTURE YOUR THOUGHTS

Our thoughts control how we feel about ourselves. Negative thoughts make us feel down whilst positive thoughts make us feel good. Sometimes our negative thoughts are so engrained in us and they can happen automatically. But we can still make a conscious effort to reframe our thinking.

TRIGGER/EVENT - WHAT HAPPENED	AUTOMATIC THOUGHT	NEW THOUGHT

# ANXIETY TRIGGERS

WHEN THIS HAPPENS

THIS IS WHAT I THINK

THIS IS WHAT I FEEL

WHAT I CAN DO IN THIS EVENT TO REDUCE MY ANXIETY



# CRITICAL THINKING

**WHO**

Who does it affect?  
Who benefits or suffers?  
Who should be consulted?

**WHAT**

What are the strengths and weaknesses?  
What can be done for a positive change?

**WHERE**

Where can I get more information?  
Where can I get more assistance?  
Where is the greatest need for change?

**WHEN**

When will this be a problem in the future?  
When is it time to take action?  
When will I know that the problem has gone?

**WHY**

Why is this a problem?  
Why is it relevant to me?  
Why is there a need for change?

**HOW**

How can change occur?  
How can success be maintained?  
How does this thought harm me?

# BELIEF-O-METER

REMEMBER THAT JUST BECAUSE YOU HAVE A THOUGHT, DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IT. THOUGHTS CAN COME AND GO, BUT WHEN YOU FEEL YOURSELF GETTING STUCK ON AN ANXIOUS THOUGHT, JUST RATE HOW MUCH YOU ACTUALLY BELIEVE IT TO BE TRUE.

PLACE YOUR ANXIOUS THOUGHT IN THE BUBBLE BELOW AND RATE IT 1 - 4 OF HOW MUCH YOU BELIEVE IT.

1 - NOT AT ALL

2 - A LITTLE BIT

3 - MOSTLY TRUE

4 - VERY TRUE



# REFRAMING THOUGHTS

Our thoughts determine our behaviour, therefore it is important to have positive thoughts. Try and change the negative thinking into more positive productive thinking.

## Instead of..

## Try..

Everyone is going to stare at me



People might look at me because they like my outfit

What if I make a mistake



I won't know anyone at the party



I don't want to do this



No body at school likes me



I am a failure



I am going to come last

