

Identifying the triggers, reframing thoughts and changing behaviour

Negative thoughts can result in negative behaviours.

It can help to ask clients to identify their triggers, the situations or events that lead to the consequent thoughts and behaviours.

1. Identify the triggers

2. Change the thought and the response to the same situation/trigger

Spending time supporting clients to come up with positive thoughts that they know will lead to a healthy behaviour can help them when they are in a challenging situation.

Consider the following example of triggers that could lead to negative or positive thoughts and consequent behaviours and/or feelings.

| Trigger (situation/ event) | Thought (negative vs positive) | Feeling/Behaviour |
|---|--|---|
| Eating some sweet biscuits for morning tea | I've eaten something unhealthy I may as well give up eating healthy for the rest of the day. | Continue to choose unhealthy foods for the rest of the day. |
| | I've had my treat for the day and enjoyed it but I want to be healthy so will eat nutritious foods for the rest of the day. | Choose healthy foods for the rest of the day. |
| A social event where everyone is eating unhealthy foods | It's not fair that everyone else can eat unhealthy food, it's so hard and boring trying to be healthy. | Eat lots of unhealthy food and then feel guilty. |
| | It's hard choosing healthy foods when there are lots of unhealthy foods around but it is worth it to stay healthy and achieve my health and wellness vision. | Select the healthiest foods on offer then move away from the food and talk with friends. |
| A family member/ flatmate serves themselves up a big bowl of ice-cream after dinner | It doesn't matter if I join in just this once. | Give in and eat a big bowl of ice-cream, then feel guilty that it has happened again. |
| | It doesn't matter just this once but I know I say this to myself every night and if I keep on saying this I will never be healthy. | Eat a small portion of a healthier dessert and save the ice-cream for once a week. Feel stronger and confident. |
| A stressful day | This day has been too hard to cope with, I need a treat to make myself feel better. | Eat a tub of ice-cream and a bottle of wine. Feel guilty the next day. |
| | This day has been hard to cope with, I normally go for unhealthy foods but know that's not the answer. I will treat myself with a massage and a phone call to a good friend. | Feel relaxed and happy after the massage and humorous conversation. |

1. Activity

Consider your triggers for unhealthy behaviours and write up a negative and positive thought and the consequent feelings and/or behaviour. You could use this resource with your clients too.

| Trigger | Thought (negative vs positive) | Feeling/Behaviour |
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