

# Thrive 365

## Dragonfly: Impact Education



### Did you know?

Low mood or depression doesn't only affect our behaviour, it affects our thoughts too. This can then create a vicious cycle as our depressive thoughts perpetuate and even worsen our low mood. It can be common to accept negative thoughts about ourselves or the world as facts. Thoughts such as 'I'm lazy'/'I'm useless'/'the world is an awful place' are common, but healthy people are able to dismiss them. People with depression often get stuck in these thoughts.

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### Notice ABC

**A - What happens B - Your Thoughts C - Your feelings**

People usually notice A: what happens and C: how they feel about it.

For example, A: They miss a deadline; C: They feel upset and embarrassed. They don't normally notice B: what they think. In this example B: 'I'm useless and incompetent and now everyone will know'. When you take B into account C makes much more sense! Not noticing 'B' gives the impression that your feelings are created by things that happen to you or around you and are therefore out of your control. In reality our feelings are created by our thoughts.

### 2 Balance Thoughts

Try to form a habit of balancing every negative thought out with an evidence-based positive one. For example if you think 'I'm lazy' you might balance it out with 'I've done 5 tasks from my list today, it's natural to need a rest'.

Some people find it helpful to write a list of these thoughts in a table to make this a visual exercise and take the thoughts 'out of the head'. Seeing a negative thought in black and white can highlight its irrationality.

Try saying the balancing thoughts out loud and see if it makes a difference to your feelings or mood.

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### Challenge Beliefs

Persistent negative thoughts are often the result of underlying core beliefs. Sometimes people have very critical views of themselves ('I'm not clever'; 'I'm not loveable') that are often the product of past experience and bear no resemblance to reality. The negative thoughts that come from these beliefs are often the most upsetting.

If you hold a negative belief about yourself, look for evidence that disproves it. You could also think about what you would say to a friend who held that belief and apply that to yourself. Writing things down can be a useful part of this process. Working with a counsellor is often key when challenging deeply rooted beliefs that don't support you in life.

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*Islands in the Stream:*  
Senior Mental Health Leads  
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