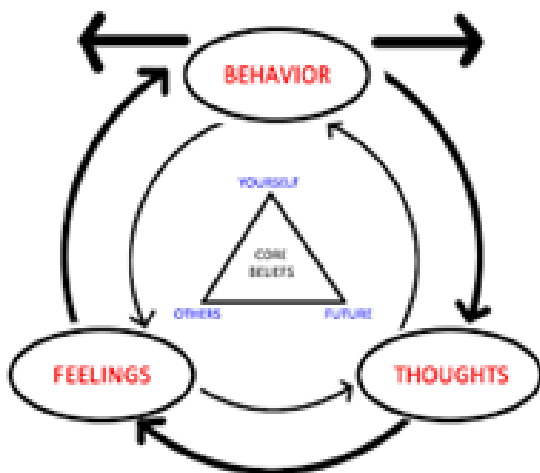


THINKING TRAPS !

CREATED BY THE SYMBIOSIS CENTRE FOR EMOTIONAL WELLBEING (SCEW)

Our minds set up many traps for us. Unless we're aware of them, these traps can seriously hinder our ability to think rationally. This may lead us to engage in faulty reasoning which often results in making stupid decisions. Features of our minds that are meant to help us may, eventually, get us into trouble. These are what we call "thinking traps."



How do we Form Thinking Traps?

Most of the time, we unknowingly use thinking traps, or thinking errors as ways to protect ourselves in stressful situations. Then, we unintentionally practice them in different aspects of our lives. And you know how the saying goes: Practice makes perfect. After a while, these thinking patterns become automatic habits that cause us to live unnecessarily in fear. But the reality is that thinking traps do not protect us. In fact it's quite the contrary, they perpetuate our fear

Here are some Common “Thinking Traps” which we might use!

Dismissing the Positives

It is the tendency of our mind to dismiss positive facts, events, feelings, and exaggerate the negatives. For example - just by reading the newspaper it's easy to notice that most of the content focuses on negative events like number of people getting infected, mortality rate, migrant issues, etc. Positive events are rarely mentioned. They're simply not as attention-grabbing as negative COVID19 news. In the same way, our mind also majorly focuses on negative events that happen in our life and mostly ignores the positive ones.



Catastrophizing

The catastrophizing thinking trap is the tendency to constantly imagine the worst case scenario when thinking about the future.

Thoughts are very often related to 'what if' questions. For example - If you find someone around you is not wearing mask, you might have already jumped to thinking about which hospital to get admitted in after getting infected by this person.



Fortune Telling

This thinking trap tricks you into believing that you can predict the future. And usually, the imagined future is disastrous. You predict something bad happening if you go out for work or going on the terrace. For example - meaningless events like if your society is getting sanitized, your mind sees this as a foreshadow of a catastrophe.



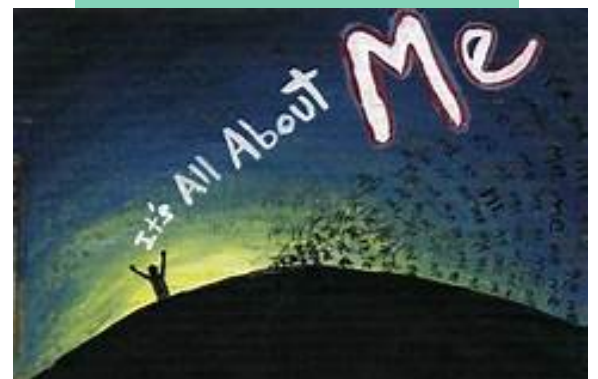
Black or White Thinking



Black or white thinking refers to the tendency to think in extremes. If your thoughts can often be categorized as good vs. bad, lose vs. win, dangerous vs. safe, etc., then “black or white thinking” is likely one of your thinking traps. The reality is most things fall into a “grey zone” falling somewhere between the two extremes. When we polarize situations into extremes, it can lead to problems for us. Example - If we think of someone infected with COVID 19 as a bad person and those who are not as good people.

Personalization

In personalization, a person believes that everything that others do or say is some kind of direct, personal reaction to themselves. They take responsibility for anything bad that happens to others. For example - If a child is coughing, the mother thinks that because she is not taking proper care, her child is sick.



Overgeneralization

In overgeneralization, we come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or a single piece of evidence. If something bad happens just once, we expect it is going to happen over and over again and we generalize this understanding to all similar kind of situations. For example - "Last week my relative had cough and he got tested as COVID 19 positive. Now, I am also having the same symptoms, so I will also get tested positive."



Homework - How to counteract these thought?

Study these thinking traps carefully. If you can, memorize them. See if you can identify which thinking trap was behind which fear. In the future, every time you start to get anxious about anything, try to name the thinking trap that is fueling the fear-driven thoughts. As you notice yourself doing this, bring awareness to your thoughts. As the thoughts play out in your head, challenge them. Remind yourself that these thinking patterns are simply old habits that are not always grounded in reality. Performing this simple practice over and over again can help you break free from these thinking traps. Pretty soon you will notice that they are no longer there.



**DO LET US KNOW WHICH OF THESE
THINKING TRAPS SOUNDS FAMILIAR AND
WHETHER YOU'RE ABLE TO CHALLENGE THEM
SUCCESSFULLY !!!
DO WRITE TO US AT
SCEW.EVENT@SIU.EDU.IN TO SHARE YOUR
STORIES.**

**IN CASE OF ANY MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES, REACH OUT
TO YOUR SCEW CAMPUS COUNSELLOR VIA PHONE OR AT
MINDHELP@SIU.EDU.IN**

SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)

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