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## Identifying Thoughts vs. Feelings and Using the Emotion Wheel

### What are Thoughts vs. Feelings?

#### *Thoughts:*

- Thoughts are the interpretations, beliefs, or evaluation your mind creates in response to situations, sensations, or experiences.
- They are the ongoing internal dialogue you have with yourself -- words, images, or ideas that you consciously or even subconsciously create throughout the day.
- Thoughts play a crucial role in shaping how you feel and act!

#### *Feelings:*

- Feelings are automatic, physical or behavioral responses that evolved for survival.
- They include simple reactions such as anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise.

#### *Main Difference:*

- Feelings are not conscious choices—they are automatic survival responses.
- We can influence our feelings by **changing how we think and behave.**

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## *Example:*

- Feeling: Fear in a high pressure situation (test, difficult social situation, challenging conversation)
- Thought: Anxiety or worry that your grade will change how people perceive you, your self worth

## **Exercise #1: Name that Feeling vs. Emotion**

### **Instructions:**

- On your own worksheet, describe your immediate feeling for that situation
- Then create two separate thoughts that could come from that feeling: one harmful and one constructive.

### **Example:**

*Scenario* -

You are having trouble focusing while doing schoolwork.

*Immediate Feeling* -

Frustration/Stress

*Harmful Thought* -

Self Doubt: "I must not be smart enough if I cannot concentrate"

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*Constructive* Thought-

Self Compassion: “It’s okay to struggle. I will take a break and try again”

Scenario:	Feeling:	Unhelpful Thought:	Constructive Thought:
You are struggling with feeling left out at school and finding it hard to connect with your friends.			
You feel overwhelmed by the pressure to meet academic expectations from your teachers.			
You’re having a hard time communicating with your parents and feel like they don’t understand your perspective.			

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## **Exercise #2: Using the Emotion Wheel**

**How can we accept our feelings, but change our thoughts?**

### Step 1: Recognize & Name Your Feeling

- Feelings happen automatically and are neither "good" nor "bad."
- Notice what you're feeling without judgment (e.g., "I feel anxious," "I feel frustrated").
- Labeling your feeling helps you understand it rather than react impulsively.

### Step 2: Accept the Feeling Without Fighting It

- Feelings are natural responses to situations; they don't need to be "fixed" immediately.
- Instead of saying, "I shouldn't feel this way," try, "It's okay that I feel this right now."
- Acceptance does not mean you have to act on the feeling—it just means acknowledging it.

### Step 3: Identify the Thought Behind the Feeling

- Feelings come from how we interpret the situation.
- Ask yourself, "What am I thinking that is making me feel this way?"

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- Example: "I failed my test" (emotion = sadness) » "I'm not smart" (thought) » Feeling = hopeless

## Step 4: Challenge & Reframe Unhelpful Thoughts

- Replace negative thoughts with more balanced, constructive ones.
- Example:

Instead of "I'm a failure" » Try "One test doesn't define me, and I can improve."

Instead of "No one likes me" » Try "Maybe they were busy; I can reach out again."

## Step 5: Adjust Your Actions & Focus on What You Can Control

- Thoughts influences feelings—change your thoughts to shift your feelings.
- Take small, productive steps:
- If you're feeling anxious about a test » Study in small chunks instead of avoiding it.
- If you're feeling lonely » Reach out to a friend instead of assuming they don't care.

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## Step 6: Use Mindfulness & Self-Compassion

- Remind yourself: "Emotions pass. I don't have to let them control me."
- Practice meditation and use coping techniques that we learned in previous lessons.

### **Instructions for Using the Emotional Wheel (Below):**

Think of two recent situations where you felt one of the **core 6 "feelings"**.

- Then within that feeling, circle 1 - 2 more **specific feelings** you felt within that core feeling.
- Then in the thought table below, reflect on an unhelpful **thought** that perpetuated negative feelings.
- Create a **constructive thought** that acknowledges the emotion, yet contributes to more positive feelings.

1. Recent Situation Description #1:

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2. Recent Situation Description #2:

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3. Select a Core Feeling and Specific Feeling for each Situation on the Next Page:
4. Fill out the Thought Table:

Core Feeling:	Specific Feeling(s):	Unhelpful Thought:	Constructive Thought:

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