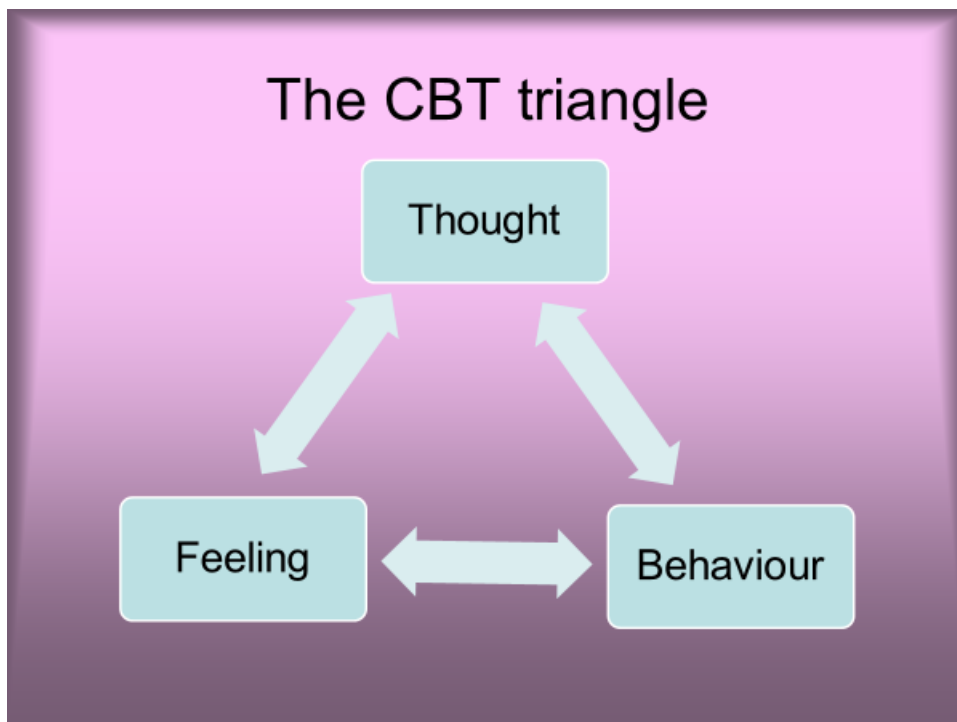


Being a Detective: Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour

The hardest job is trying to work out the internal, inside your child triggers that cause behavioural issues. This is because you can't see them, and you may have to make a best guess. Sometimes you will get your best guess spot on, and other times you will miss the mark, and have to have another think, and another guess.

The first place we start is how your child is thinking! Why? Because how they think about any given event directly changes how they are feeling, and so how they will behave. Have a look at the picture below



Thoughts

So, how we think about something, how we interpret why someone does what they do, or how we have experienced someone acting in the past effects out thoughts about that person.

So, imagine that you are in your house, you hear a noise upstairs. What is your first thought and why?



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If your first thought was that it was a burglar, then this may be because you have been a victim of crime in the past or have a friend or relative who has been. Or maybe you believe that your town or street is dangerous, or that people generally are likely to break into your house.

See how you first think about the noise is less to do with the noise itself, and more to do with your own life and what has happened to you.

But, if your first thought was that it was the 'cat' then this maybe because the cat's always knocking things over, your history with the cat effects your thoughts this time.

So how we think about something is down to what we have been through, and what we've been through in life, changes how we interpret every event to decide if it is dangerous or safe. So how we think DIRECTLY changes how we feel.

Feelings

If we think the noise is a burglar, we feel scared, maybe angry maybe terrified. If we think it's the cat, we may feel a little annoyed, or not care at all.

Our feelings then lead to what we do next, this is our behaviour.

Behaviour

So of course, if you think it's a burglar, and are afraid you are likely to run from the house or call the police. If you think it's a burglar but feel angry you may grab a frying pan and rush upstairs. If you think it's the cat, you may feel frustrated and ignore it, or go to look to see what has been damaged.

So, what you thought effected how you felt and how you behaved.

Your child



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Your child is just the same as you. So, we need to focus less on what they are doing, (behaviour) and start to focus on what they are thinking and feeling.

Let's take an example from the diary, one where there is no clue why they acted as they did. So when your child hits you, lets think about what they may have thought and felt.

Thoughts

Maybe they thought:

- You were going to hit them 'I'm in danger' because they have been hit in the past or seen grown ups hit people
- You don't love them and will send them back to care 'I'm unlovable', because they still don't think that living with you is forever
- They think that they are bad 'I'm unlovable' or 'I am to blame' or 'I'm a bad child'

Feelings

For lots of children those thoughts may lead them feeling sad, scared, angry or deep shame, and the outcome maybe hitting out

Try to work out this week what thoughts your child maybe having, what feelings it may trigger to understand the behaviour.

DON'T FORGET!

What about you?

Now of course, this triangle of thought, feeling and behaviour is not just limited to your child, it works on you too. So, you react to your child's behaviour is based on how you think about it and why you think it happened.



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If you think:

'they've done this on purpose'

'they're just trying to spoil things on purpose'

'they're just trying to hurt me'

'I'm a bad parent'

Then you may feel angry, hurt, sad, hopeless, ashamed. So you shout, withdraw, become vengeful, rejecting, sarcastic or empathic.

So, now's the much harder part, go back to the hardest event this week, one which you didn't handle as well as you would have liked, and ask yourself what was going on for you?