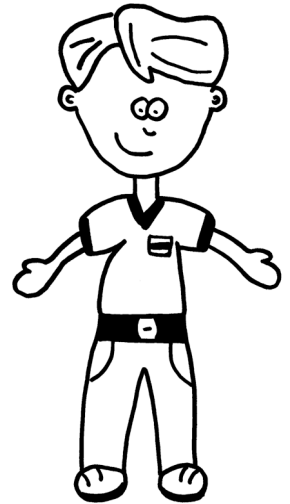j

BELIEVING YOU CAN

is the first step to

ACHIEVING

A program building self-esteem, increasing motivation to learn and challenging negative thinking styles

Alicia Chodkiewicz

Christopher Boyle

CONTENT PAGE

Preface

When I look back on my own schooling, I realise that I was one of the lucky ones. I was a high achiever, a straight A student, who loved learning, was particularly good at maths, and loved new challenges teacher's set for me. However, when I began working with children in the area of learning support, I realised that not all children shared my love for learning. For many, learning was a constant struggle that brought with it a lot of frustration and disappointment. As a maths tutor, I often had students, even parents say to me "I can't do maths" or "I don't have a mathematical brain." Many children and even adults completely shut down when are confronted with a task that requires them to use numbers. So what's going on?

What I discovered in my extensive work and research in this area, is that negative perceptions of one's own abilities is a strong influence over whether they succeed or fail. For example, a student who is struggling with their learning, who despite trying hard, is falling behind in their work and getting low marks, begins to doubt their abilities. As soon as a student begins to doubt themselves loses motivation and ultimately disengages. "What is the point, I am only going to fail anyway" becomes a common thought.

We are constantly comparing our achievements and failures with those around us and we are conscious of how others perceive us. So students who see themselves as failing in a school environment, may try to protect themselves, either consciously or subconsciously, through self-sabotage. That is, to protect themselves from the fear of shame and embarrassment, they simply do not try and leave their homework to the last minute, so that when they inevitably do fail, they have an excuse as to why. Rather than viewing this behaviour as a student's attempt to protect themselves from further shame and embarrassment, we tend to chastise the student for not working.

The cycle of negative self-perceptions, and self-sabotaging behaviour becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Fear of failure leads to withdrawal of motivation and effort resulting in failure. Through my work with students, I observed that many who were struggling with their learning had internalised very strong negative views of their abilities that academic instruction alone was not enough to help them improve their learning.

Even before I became an educational psychologist and learnt about attribution, I knew that to help my students, I needed to improve their internal dialogue by fostering a belief in them that, despite any negative experiences, they were capable students. Together with making my lessons fun, I strived to motivate my students and have them believe in themselves. The positive results in children who began to believe that they could do maths was astounding.

When my path crossed with Dr. Chris Boyle and I learnt about his work in encouraging healthy thinking in students as a way of inspiring fulfilled academic potential, I knew that I wanted to further research this area. Much of what I read supported my own experiences working with struggling students, and reaffirmed for me that there was a real need in our schools for more support in this area. This is how we came to develop this program and write this book. We hope

this book will educate educational practitioners on how negative thoughts hold students back and sabotage learning, as well as teach students skills to identify and overcome negative thinking patterns. It is my hope that every educator, parent or child worker who reads this book thinks about the thoughts and reasons behind a students actions instead of labelling them as "lazy" and that every child who takes part in this program, replaces the phrase "I can't do it because I am not smart enough" with "I can do it, if….".

SECTION 1

Background
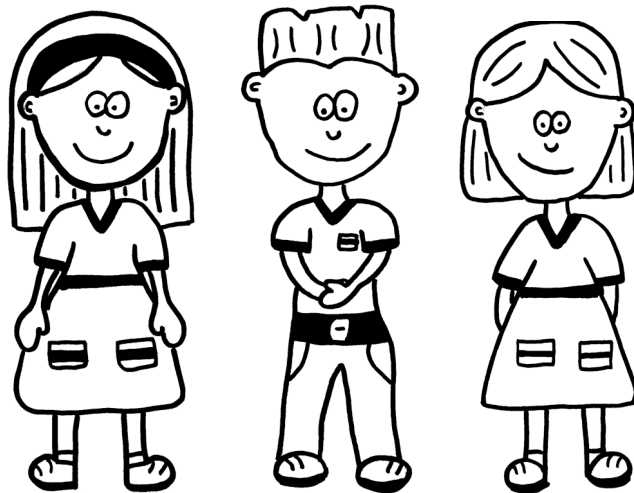
Why are student support programs needed?

Parents, teachers, psychologist and other educational practitioners all share a common goal, to find the most effective ways to support the social, cognitive and academic development of children and young people. Within the schooling system, the focus is currently on understanding the dynamic nature of the learning process. A student plays an active role in his or her learning and can only benefit from the learning opportunities provided when making the active choice to learn. There are a variety of factors influencing this decision including:

- Motivation to learn
- Enjoyment of the learning process
- Self-esteem and belief in ones ability to succeed
- Thinking style
- Resilience
- Engagement in the learning activity
- Exertion of effort
- Time spent mastering the new skill
- Dedication to persevere in the face of difficulty.

(Hattie, 2003; Wigfield, Eccles, Roeser & Schiefele, 2008)

With the new challenges facing children of the 21st century and the increased pressure on students caused by the rise of standardised testing (Lewis, 1999; Solley, 2007), many are asking if our school systems are doing enough to support these non-academic elements of learning (Casserly, 2013; Lewis, 1999). With more and more research showing a positive impact of psychological and cognitive based interventions on student motivation, self-esteem, thinking styles and classroom behaviours (Hall, Hladkyi, Perry & Ruthig, 2004; Haynes et al., 2011; Toland & Boyle, 2008), it appears that such programs may be the missing link needed in our current education system to support both academic achievement and overall wellbeing among students (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2014).

Who stands to gain from such a program?

Much of the work around implementing psychological-based interventions to support learning is aimed at students already showing signs of learning difficulties. The rational for this trend seems logical, as students who are constantly struggling in school typically hold low levels of self-esteem, motivation and engagement in the learning process and develop negative thinking styles (Au, Watkins & Hatte, 2010; Shmulsky & Gobbo, 2007). When we first began developing this program, we too considered targeting it specifically at students experiencing learning difficulties. However, the more we ourselves learnt about this area, the more evident it became to us that all students had the potential to gain form this program for the following reasons:
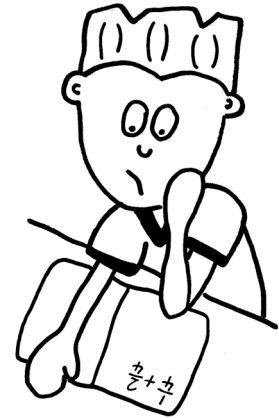
- All students have strengths and weaknesses, and therefore all students at some times in their lives will experience moments of difficulty.

- A student's self perceptions are not purely based on their abilities, but rather are largely shaped through social comparison (Nagengast & Marsh, 2012; Tiedemann & Billmanna-Mahecha, 2004). That is, even high achieving students may feel like they are failing if they see their classmates or close friends achieving at a higher level.

- Student self-perceptions are not always accurate, as students performing highly have been found to hold low self-esteem beliefs regarding their ability. Research has shown that a student's self-perception of low ability has a more detrimental impact on factors such as motivation and thinking style, than does an actually deficit in academic ability (Banks & Woolfson, 2008; Frederickson & Jacobs, 2001).

- The skills taught in psychological-based interventions often have far wider influence than just improving students' learning in schools. Through an understanding of the thinking process, learning to evaluate ones thoughts and developing cognitive coping skills, these programs teach life long lessons that will help students overcome the many challenges they might face in their future years of schooling and beyond.

- When psychological-based programs are run with more inclusive groups of students, the findings show that students of all ability levels benefit in some way from the intervention (Hall et al., 2004; Perry, Stupnisky, Hall, Chipperfield & Weiner, 2010; Toland & Boyle, 2008).

In developing this program, and writing this book, it was important for us to design an intervention that is versatile, offering something for every student. While we feel this program would be extremely beneficial for students experiencing learning difficulties, the program would also benefit students with low self-perceptions, those experiencing socio-emotional difficulties, or in fact any student within the current educational system.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Have you ever noticed that two people faced with the same situation often react differently? Over the past 50 years psychologists have been looking to answer this question, by investigating peoples' *cognitions* (known more simply as *thoughts*). The way we perceive the world, make prediction about the future, experience emotions, respond to situations and live our lives are all influenced by our thoughts (Anderson, 2010). This is one of the underlying premises of cognitive behavioural therapy.

To put it simply:
- First you have a thought
- This thought conjures up an emotion
- Together this thought and emotion determines how you will behave.

Lets look at an example: When preparing for a football match, Max has the following thought "I'm good at football", which makes him feel confident and leads to him trying his best and enjoying the football match.
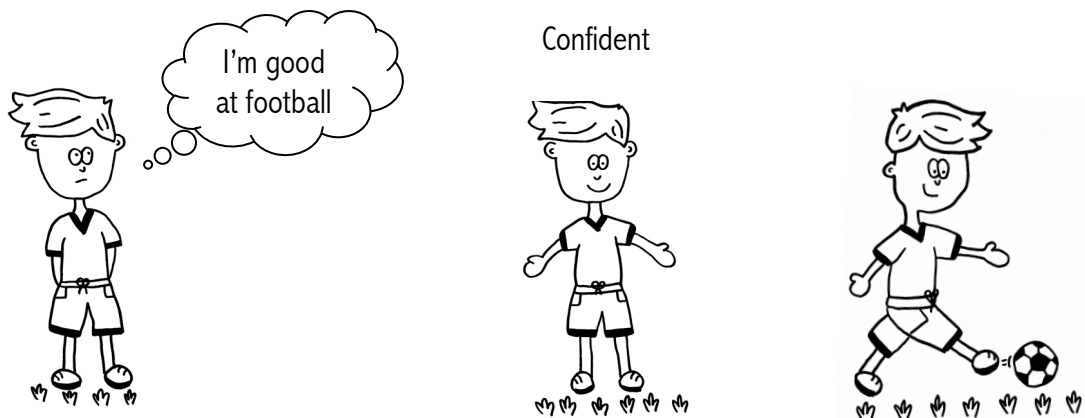
On another day, Max has the thought "we will never win this game", this thought leads Max to feeling disappointed and defeated before the game even begins. As a result Max does not try very hard and has a miserable time.
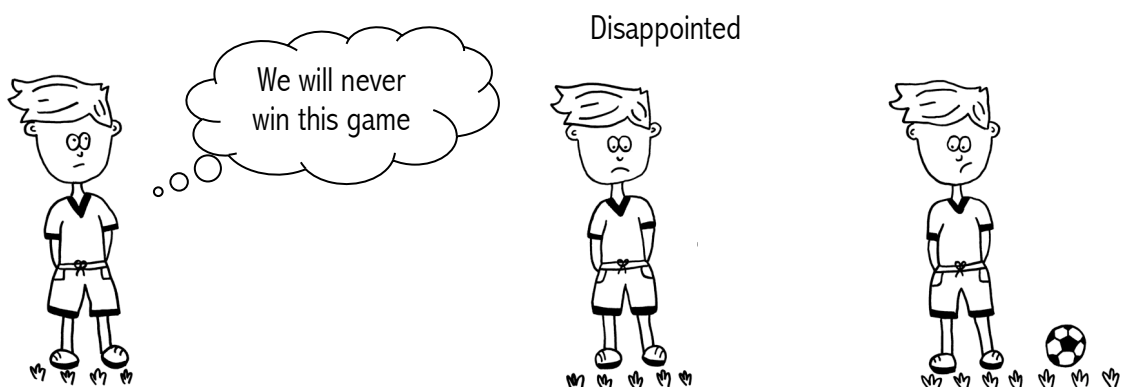
While this idea in itself seems to be something most people would intuitively be aware of, many are unaware of how biases in our thoughts, perceptions and interpretations can negatively impact our lives. As we grow up we begin building a map of the world around us based on our experiences and perceptions, which by adolescence and young adulthood consolidate into a set of core beliefs and thinking patterns. There are many ways that these thought processes are manipulated to distort reality or lie to us (Friedberg & McClure, 2002). This can include predisposing us towards noticing only certain events (i.e. only noticing when a person has made a mistake and not all the times they have been successful), mind reading (thinking you know what another person is really thinking), and prophesising as fact (accepting your own predictions as a certainty), just to name a few. The development of biased and negative thinking styles have been linked to a number of emotional and behavioural problems, such as anxiety and depression.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (also known as CBT) is a form of intervention developed to challenge cognitive misconceptions and encourage adaptive thinking styles (Hopkins, 2005). This is achieved through education about the role of thoughts, modelling of adaptive thinking patterns, teaching cognitive coping skills and offering the opportunity for new positive learning. CBT also looks at how elements of reinforcing and discouraging feedback influence the development of thinking and behavioural patterns. CBT has become a popular psychological intervention used to treat emotional and psychological problems. Often, however, CBT is administered as a reaction to a problem, as Opposed to being used to arm individuals with tools needed to develop healthy thinking styles and overcome adversity before problems arise. We feel that there is great potential in opening up CBT programs to nonclinical populations.

In recent years researchers have started investigating the potentially positive effects of using CBT with school students to improve achievement and well being, with promising results (Berkeley, Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2011; Toland & Boyle, 2008). By developing this program, and writing this book, we want to give more students the chance to benefit from the positive effects of CBT and to build healthy thinking styles that will last a lifetime.

Attribution Theory

As outlined in the previous chapter thoughts are powerful and significantly impact a person's feelings, reactions, expectations, behaviours and future outcomes. Attribution theory looks at understanding the power and impact of a specific type of thought, the *why* question. As human beings we are constantly trying to understand the world around us, and our place within it. As a result we constantly spend our days asking the question *why*. These questions range from: the everyday trivialities, such as "why was I late?" Reactions to major events, "why did that accident occur?" Or pondering of a more profound nature, "why have I not yet reached my personal goals in life?" Often we are not even consciously aware that we are asking these *why* questions.

Attribution theory takes a closer look at our *why* questions, to understand what attribution we use to explain the causes of events. Bernard Weiner is one of the most prominent theorists acclaimed for his work in developing the current model of attribution theory. Weiner (1985) wrote that there are three levels at which people make causal attributions to answer the question of *why*.

Why?
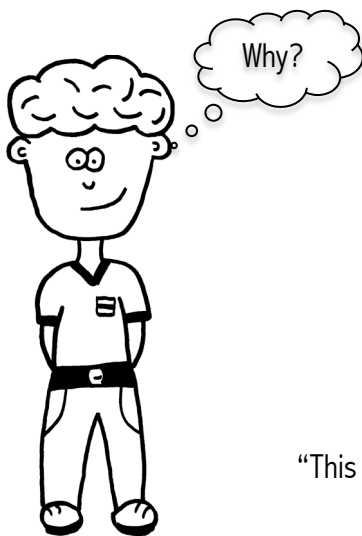
Who caused the event? (Locus of Control)
"I was the cause" vs. "Someone else was the cause"
(Internal vs. External)

Is the event controllable? (Controllability)
"I have complete control" vs. "I had no control"
(Controllable vs. Uncontrollable)

How stable is this event? (Stability)
"This occurs often for the same reason" vs. "This was a one off"
(Stable vs. Unstable)

Weiner (1985) proposed that over time individuals use consistent patterns of causal attributions to explain the occurrence of similar events, which develops into an individual's attribution style.

Attribution theorists have looked to learning as a time when students are regularly experiencing moments of perceived academic failure and success. The reasons a student uses to explain these academic events consequently impacts how that student perceives their own personal abilities, evaluates the merits of hard work and predicts future academic outcomes (Kole & Boyle, 2013).

To demonstrate the impact of attributions on the learning process lets look at the example of two students, Amy and Lily. Lets first consider what happens when our two students succeed. When Amy succeeds at a task, such as receiving an A on an assignment, Amy attributes this success to her own hard work. Consequently, Amy has confidence in her ability to achieve high results, is motivated to work hard in the future and expects future success. When Lilly experiences the same success she, however, attributes the high grade to the assignment being easy. In this instance Lily does not demonstrate any confidence in her abilities, she is not encouraged to work hard and she will only expect future success on tasks that she deems to be easy. Considering attribution responses to academic instances of failure, lets return to Amy. Following a failed test Amy reasons that she failed because she did not study enough for the test. Amy therefore feels personal responsibility for the failure, but believes that through increased study in the future she has the ability to improve her test performance. Lilly, on the other hand, attributes her failure on the test to a lack of ability. Lilly sees this result as a confirmation of her low skill level. Believing she has no control over her level of ability Lily feels helpless to the inevitability of future failure, therefore having no motivation to work hard in the future.

The example above demonstrates how the reasons students use to explain academic success and failure can have a drastic impact on the way they view themselves, their motivation to work hard and their expectations of future outcomes. Attribution theory states that following academic success it is advantageous to make causal attributions that assign personal responsibility, controllability and stability (such as ability and hard work). While following failures attributions that assign personal responsibility, that is controllable and which suggest failure is unstable (such as lack of hard work, or use of the wrong strategy) are beneficial. Such attributions lead students to feel confidence in their abilities, optimistic about the chance of future success and therefore motivated to work towards their goals.

Teachers and parents themselves are often unknowingly shaping students self-perceptions and attribution beliefs each time they provide feedback. While this feedback is generally well intentioned, even seemingly natural responses can negatively shape a student's developing attribution style if it is incongruent with the adaptive attributions described above (Burnett, 1997; Perry & Hall, 2009).

Attribution theory has redefined the way many now look at supporting learning and student development. An intervention rooted in attribution theory has shown that working with student thinking patterns to promote positive attribution beliefs can positively influence learning (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2014). Such interventions, known as attribution retraining, while often not explicitly teaching any academic skills, nonetheless significantly improve students' academic outcomes (Morris, 2013; Toland & Boyle, 2008).
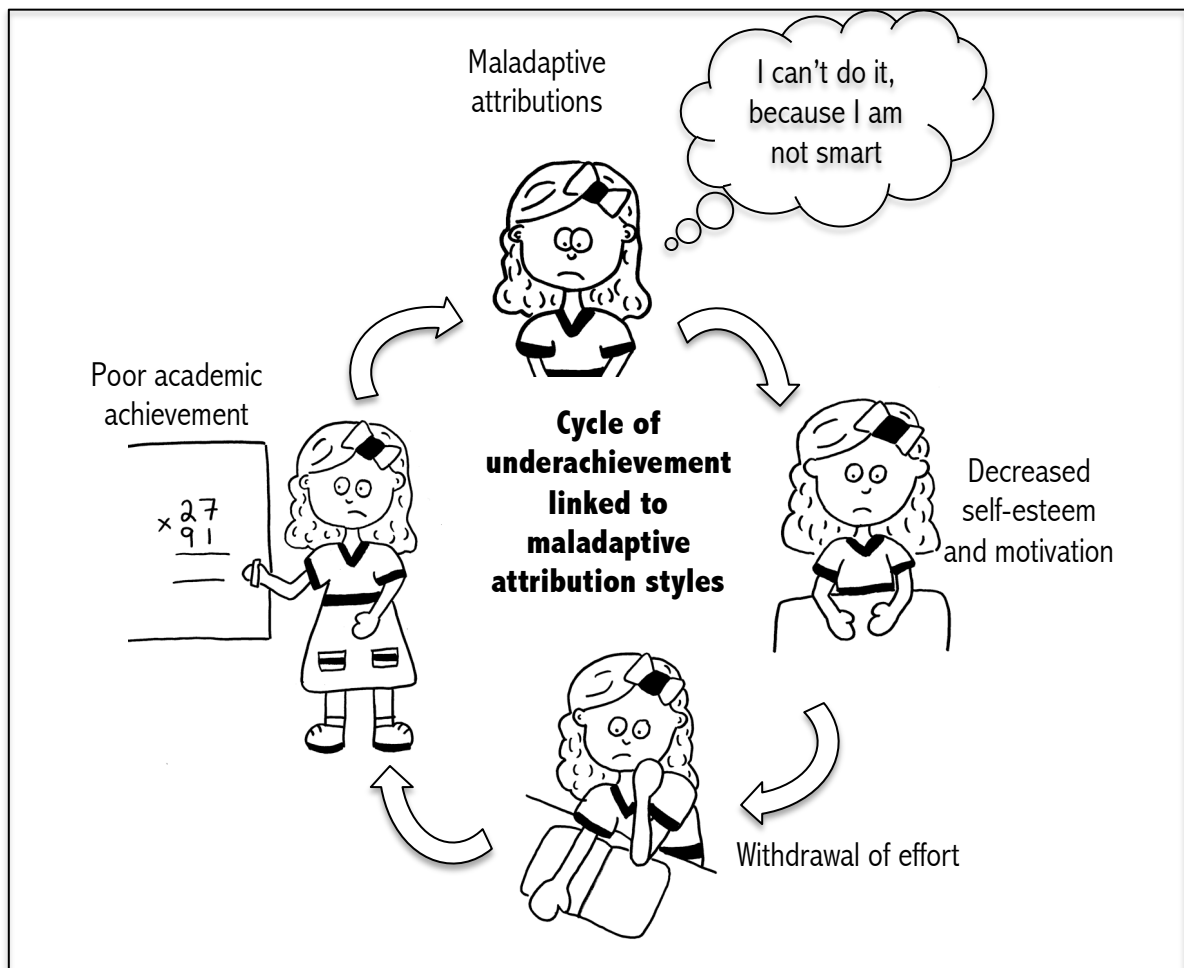
Improvements in school performance are credited to the associated improvements in self esteem, motivation, effort exertion and persistence on difficult tasks that are shown to follow the promotion of adaptive attribution styles (Dresel & Haugwitz, 2008; Dresel & Ziegler, 2006). Research has also found that through simply changing the way we respond to students, by deliberately giving feedback that is in line with adaptive attributions, improvements in student performance and wellbeing are seen (Dresel & Haugwitz, 2008; Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

Thoughts are a powerful thing, and within the learning environment can greatly shape the way in which a student learns and grows. It is becoming ever more evident that our educational systems need to go beyond the promotion of purely academic based skills, and rather begin to look at how the promotion of positive thinking skills can help students reach their full potential. Programs, such as this one, by drawing on the latest attribution research promises to offer students a healthier, happier and more successful school experience.

Developing the program

The first steps

When designing the program *Believing You Can is the first step to Achieving* we decided to use CBT and attribution retraining techniques together. The idea of combining these two therapy techniques was first proposed by Försterling (1985) almost 30 years ago. Försterling recognised the many similarities between the two forms of therapy, especially within the academic domain. Since this time, only a few research studies have combined attribution retraining and CBT techniques, with positive results coming out of both the United Kingdom (Toland & Boyle, 2008) and North America (Berkeley et al., 2011). This earlierresearch along with a number of other intervention programs (Seligman, 2007; Stallard, 2002) inspired the creation of this program and book.

Following an examination of the programs outlined above and an in depth review of the research in this field (Chodkiewicz & Boyle, 2014; Morris, 2013) the following key areas were chosen to incorporate in the program:

- Understanding the link between thoughts, feelings and actions

- Learning how to identify helpful and unhelpful thinking patterns

- Identifying the "why" question and learning how to evaluate unhelpful causal attributions

- Developing coping skills to foster adaptive thinking.
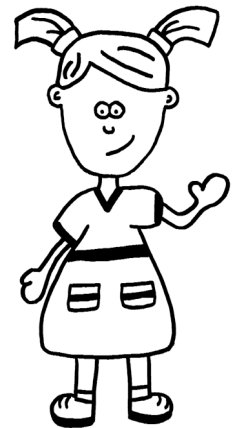
Age of students

Primary school is a crucial time of learning and discovery. During these years, children achieve important cognitive milestones, learn about their place within the word and begin to develop an independent identify. It is in these years that thinking and behavioural patterns begin to emerge. Research looking at thinking styles and attribution beliefs found that the attribution ideas of primary school students often become entrenched when those students reach high school (Chan & Moore, 2006). The primary school years, may be the optimal time to teach students positive thinking skills, as the thinking styles established in these years have the potential to influence long-term thinking and behaviour. Therefore, it was decided that students in the upper primary years (Grades 3 − 6) would be the focus for this program.

Making the program suitable for a young audience

Students learn best when they are engaged in the learning process (Hattie, 2003). One of the best ways to engage young students is to make learning FUN. This program stands out from previous work in the field, because it uses a high level of games and interactive activities to promote positive thinking skills. These activities include: target games, quiz show games, charades, role-plays and more. Each session was designed around the following model: class discussion to introduce a new skill; fun activity to practise using the new skill; and independent activity to consolidate and demonstrate mastery of the new skill (through worksheets and homework).

Why develop a workbook?

There are a number of benefits associated with the use of a program workbook. For example, a workbook:

- gives a structure to the program, clearly setting out for students the topics that are being covered
- offers a chance for students to consolidate the skills learnt in class activities through independent practice
- gives students who might otherwise feel uncomfortable or shy in whole class activities the chance to practise newly learnt skills
- provides an opportunity for program facilitators to monitor individual students understanding of the topics and skills
- provides students with a tangible resource that summarises the skills learnt in the program
- The workbook, along with this guide, allows for easy and effective replication of the program so that it is accessible to a wide range of educational professionals.
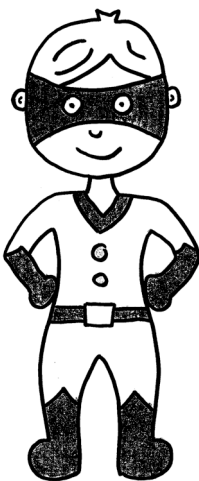
Homework

While many students may see homework as the bane of their existence, homework is nevertheless an important part of the learning process. When trying to shape students thinking styles and behavioural patterns, the most effective programs will be those that provide the opportunities for practice and rehearsal of skills within real life settings (Hudson & Kendall, 2002). For this reason each program session includes a homework sheet. The homework activities themselves are simple and should not take long for students to complete. The activities should, however, encourage students to continue thinking about their newly learnt thinking skills between sessions.

Program Length

When deciding upon the length of the program, a number of considerations were taken into account. Firstly, an evaluation of similar programs found that such interventions typically run for between 5 – 12 sessions with students in this age group (Berkeley et al., 2011; Toland & Boyle, 2008). Secondly, there is often great pressure on schools to fit a range of extra curricula activities into their already full teaching schedules. It was therefore seen as advantageous to design the program to fit within a single school term, helping the program to fit easily into the school calendar. Thirdly, when designing the program to be run within a single school term (Australian school terms running for 9-11 weeks) there needed to be some flexibility to work around other common school commitments, such as school camps, athletics carnivals or public holidays. Based on these considerations the project was designed to run for a total of eight weekly sessions lasting approximately one hour in length. However, the schedule of session administration and program length can be modified, for further details see Section 3.

Group Size

This program was developed as part of a research project looking to answer a very specific research question. As such, the program was designed for a specific and small population of students and run in small groups of 4 – 7 students. Through the implementation of the program and extended research, the potential for this program to have positive effects for a wider range of student has been recognised. There is something in the program to extend every students, whether it is enhancing the way a student approaches academic tasks, boosting a student's self esteem or proactively teaching cognitive coping skills. There is therefore potential for the program to be effectively run with large groups and even whole classrooms, see Section 3 for more details.

How the research helped shape the program

The best way to develop a fun and engaging program for young students, is to allow it to be shaped by the ideas of the students themselves. A pilot study was used to identify: how well the program communicates the desired skills; how engaging the activities are for students; and how well the sessions flow. Together with the students many games were modified, new games were created and session structures changed. With each subsequent research project, the program continued to improve and evolve. The program in its final form should be credited to the inspiration and collaboration of all the students who have participated in the program so far.

The Research

In 2013 Australian primary school students took part in a study investigating the effectiveness of the *Believing You Can is the first set to Achieving* program. What follows is an explanation of this study and the brief description of the findings.

For this study students were selected based on signs of maladaptive attribution patterns. A total of 50 Grade 5 & 6 students were drawn from primary schools around Melbourne, Australia. These students were aged between 10 years, 2 months to 12 years, 6 months.

Study 1:
Students were randomly allocated into two groups, the research group and the control group. Initially only the research group, made up of 31 students, took part in the program. A total of six groups were formed, with between four to seven students in each group. The program was run during May and June of 2013. Measures were taken at three times across the year, before the program began (April), directly following the program (July) and two months following (September).

Study 2:
Following the completion of Study 1, the students in the control group were invited to take part in a program being run in October and November of 2013. A total of 13 students took part in this second study. Measures taken at the three time periods before the program (April, July and September) were compared to student performance directly following the program (December).

 The program was run within the school day, with students attending weekly sessions of approximately 45 – 60 minutes. A comprehensive description of this program can be found in Section 2 of this book.

RESULTS

One of the central aims of the program was to foster improved academic achievement among students. Academic achievement was measured across the three domains of reading, spelling and mathematics.

Study 1:

When comparing the results of students taking part in the program with their control group peers who did not, the following results were found:

- Reading ability significantly increased more for students who completed the program. The greatest increase in reading skills occurred during the two months following the completion of the program, when students were able to spend time practicing the newly learnt skills

- Spelling ability showed more improvement for students who completed the program, however, this difference did not reach statistical significance

- Mathematical ability showed no significant signs of difference between the two groups

- Student self reported self-esteem showed more improvement for those who completed the program directly following program completion, however, this difference did not reach statistical significance.

Study 2

When comparing students' academic performance following the program to their achievement during the previous six months, the pattern of results supported those seen in Study 1. What is noteworthy, however, is that the changes seen in Study 2 occurred more quickly than was seen in Study 1.

- Reading ability, which showed only minor improvement during the beginning of the year, drastically improved following the program. This was found to be a statistically significant improvement.

- A slight increase in the rate of improvement of spelling skills was seen following the program, however this did not reach the level of statistical significance.

- Mathematical skills did not appear to significantly change as a result of the program.

- A slight increase in student self reported self-esteem was seen following the program, however, this did not reach the level of statistical significance.

The study concluded that there was evidence to show a positive impact on learning and academic achievement. There were potentially two elements of this study that limited our ability to see stronger results.

- Firstly, academic performance was only measured two months following the completion of the program. While this was enough time to see the positive improvements in reading, potentially students need more time for their newly learnt skills to have the same level of impact on their spelling and mathematic skills.

- Secondly, different academic skills develop at different speeds due to their varied nature. For example, reading is a skill that students can easily independently practise; all they have to do is pick up a book. Spelling and mathematics, however, are skills that require students to have access to more structured working activities with feedback.

It was therefore concluded that over time and with increased opportunities to independently practise all academic skills, the program could improve a wider range of academic skills.

The research also suggested that the program may have a more robust impact on student self-esteem if the ideas and skills learnt in the program are extended and encouraged within the natural learning environment, as is outlined in Section 3.

Student Feedback

It is easy for us, the creators of the program, to tell you how great it is. But lets now hear from the students themselves. A total of 39 students were given the chance to voice their own opinions on the program, here is what they said:

How students rated the program:

How would you rate the program?

```
25

20

15

10

 5

 0
      1        2        3        4       4.5       5
"I didn't like it"                          "I really enjoyed it"
```
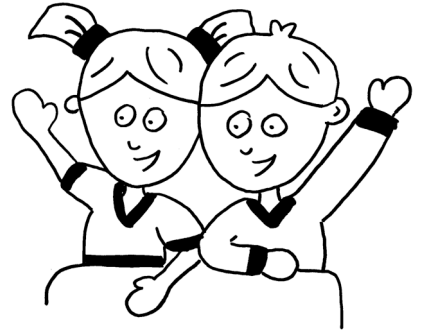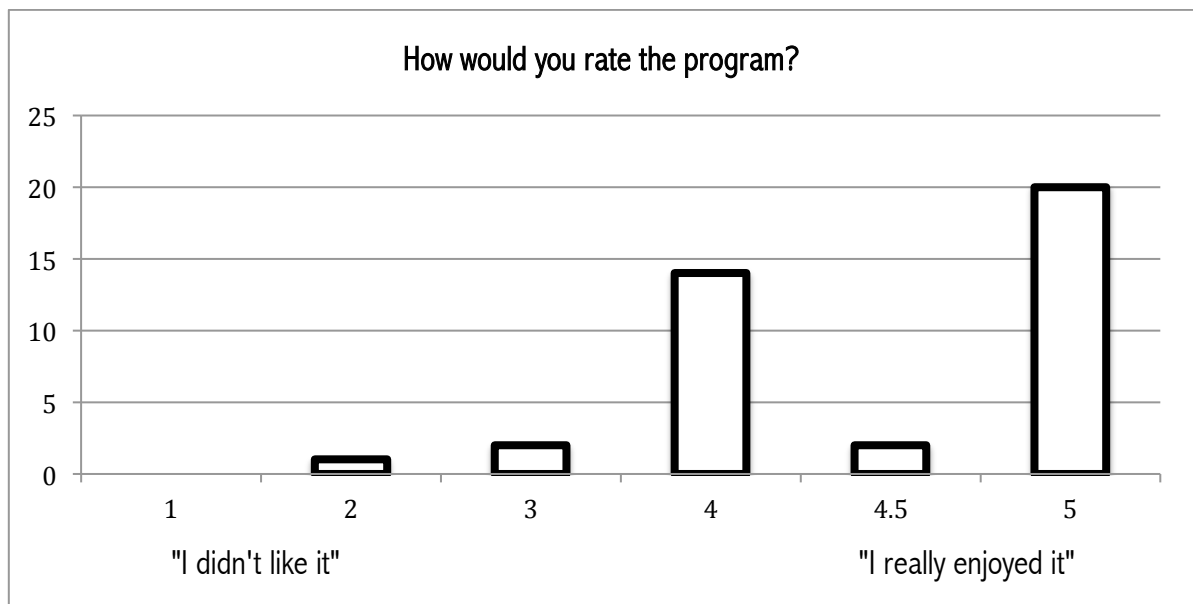
When asked how much they liked the program, 92% of students rated the program to be 4 or more out of 5. In other words, an overwhelming number of students really enjoyed the program.

What parts or activities in the program did you enjoy the most?
When students were ask about their favourite parts of the program the most popular by far was:

- Making a Film in session 8
- Becoming Superheroes in Session 6 & 7

Other popular activities included:

- Target activity in Session 2
- All the games
- Everything
- Role-plays
- Learning about being positive
- Making comics
- Sharing feelings

What parts or activities did you not enjoy or find boring?

When the students were asked to comment on their least favourite elements of the program 60% of student responded with:

" NOTHING "

Only a few students criticised the following areas:

- Writing in workbooks
- Homework
- Listening for a long time.

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the program in the future?

When students were given the chance to offer their opinion on how to improve the program the most advocated changes were:

- For the program to go for longer or occur more often
- Stay exactly the same
- More games.

18

(left intentionally blank)

SECTION 2

Guide to running the program
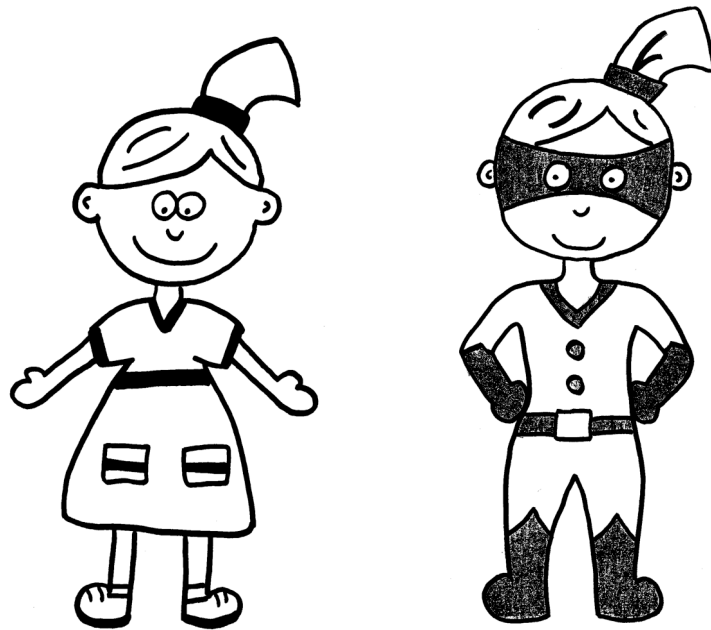
What to know before getting started

In this book you will find a detailed description of each session of the *Believing You Can* program outlining topics to be covered, materials needed and activities. The intervention has been designed to run as a complete program including, in its entirety, the content as outlined in this book. With that said, we appreciate that every student population is unique, therefore the program may need to be tailored to better suit the specific needs and characteristics of a student group, in this case please refer to Section 3 where modifications are discussed.

Running the program

This program has been designed in a way that allows it to be run with a wide group of students in the upper primary school years, many of whom may vary in regards to their developmental stage, cognitive levels, academic skills and social awareness. When running the program it is important that instructors aim to engage the students, and therefore will need to tailor their delivery to the students level. This can be achieved through using relevant language, and tailoring examples, games or activities to better meet the needs of the students. The program incorporates: psycho-education, completing workbook activities based on hypothetical examples, role-playing, games and interactive discussion. This book should be seen as offering a blue print for how to run the Believing You Can program, but allow yourself to be flexible to incorporate the ideas and suggestions of students when running games and activities. Most importantly make sure that you and the students have *fun*, as students show the greatest level of learning when they are engaged in and enjoying the learning process.
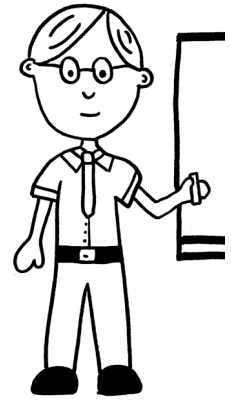
Session Guides

The Believing You Can program is designed to be conducted with groups of four or more students. Standard administration of the program is 8 weeks, with session typically occurring weekly or fortnightly. When presenting the program with a group of 4-10 students, sessions typically run for between 45 – 60 minutes. This time may be slightly longer when working with larger groups.

Each session guide includes: goal of the session; what you need for the session; an outline of the session; as well as a detailed description of each activity. Sessions typically begin with a class discussion and an introduction of a new topic. Students are then given the chance to develop their understanding of the topic and practise the newly learnt skills through both an activity/game and a worksheet. It is important that each topic is introduced in the order indicated below and that all focal themes are adequately explained. Instructors are encouraged

to read Section 1 of this book to get an understanding of the theories underlying this program, as well as thoroughly reading through each session guide before administration. While it is important to work through all the activities in the workbook, instructors have some flexibility when running the activities. The activities provided in the session guides have been well received by students and help to make the sessions engaging and fun. However, activities can be easily modified, shortened or removed without negatively impacting the program.

Homework
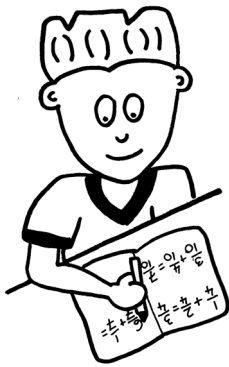
Homework is an important part of learning a new skill (Hudson & Kendall, 2002). In the Believing You Can program we refer to homework as 'activities to practise what you have learnt' rather than homework to try to avoid the negative associations that students might have to the word 'homework'. The practice activities provide students with the chance to independently practise their newly learnt skills within their home and school environments. The practice activities should be explained to the students at the end of each session and the homework sheets distributed. It is often important to provide examples of how to complete the activity or allow students to ask questions. For this reason allow at least 5 minutes at the end of the lesson for explaining the practice activity. It is also important that each session begins with a review of the practice activities and a discussion of how students found using the new skill (i.e., was it hard to use the new skill, did the new skill help the situation).

Extra Materials

The extra materials section in this book provides resources that may help in the administration of the program. These materials, however, are not mandatory and instructors are encouraged to get creative when sourcing alternative materials or creating their own.

Sticker Chart

The sticker chart is an optional element of the program. The sticker chart was used as a way to encourage student engagement and homework completion. stickers can be awarded to students for participation in each session, exceptional contributions, as prizes for winning games or for completing homework sheets. At the end of the program the number of stickers a students has accumulated determines the number of times that student's name was put in the draw to win a prize.

SESSION ONE

Thoughts → Feelings → Actions

Goals of the session:

This introductory session is aimed at showing students how thoughts feelings and actions are interlinked and demonstrates how changing thoughts can have a big impact on feelings and behaviour.

What you need for the session:
- Emotion Face Cards (*found in the extra materials section*)
- Emotion Labels (*found in the extra materials section*)

Outline of Session One:
1.1   Introduction to the program
1.2   Make a list of group rules
1.3   Getting to know you activity
1.4   Setting goals
1.5   Identifying feelings
1.6   Placing emotions on the spectrum
1.7   Matching thoughts and feelings
1.8   The link between thoughts, feelings and actions
1.9   Activities to practise at home.

1.1   Introduction to the program

The important points to mention in the first address to the students:
- The program is to learn new skills about thoughts and feelings
- Why the students were chosen for the program (*this will be dependant on your selection methods*)
- What students can achieve at the end of the program (*for example: use new thinking skills to be more positive and happy learners*)
- Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answers in the activities
- The importance of completing home activities and stickers (*optional*)
- Information about how long the program will go for.

1.2   Make a list of group rules

Talk through the three rules already in the workbook on page 3 (see below). Allow students to brainstorm ideas about other important rules that will foster a happy learning environment.

Group Rules:

- o   Listen to others when they are talking

- o   Respect each other

- o   What is said stays confidential

✏ ....

✏ ....

1.3   Getting to know you activity

This is a fun activity to allow the students and instructor to get to know each other. Each student is asked to write three facts about themselves in their workbook on page 3, but only two of these facts are truthful and one is a lie. Each student takes turns in reading out their statements while the rest of the group guesses which statement is a lie.

1.4   Setting Goals

Ask each student to complete their goals for learning on page 4 of their workbooks. Students should be instructed to draw themselves on the staircase to represent where they are with their learning. The first staircase represents where they current are, and the second one represents where they want to be in the future.

1.5   Identifying feelings

Place the emotion face cards on the board. As a class match the emotion labels with the emotion cards (*blue tack or Velcro strips etc. can be used*). Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answers, one emotion card could match lots of emotion labels and vice versa. As a class allow the students to match the labels and emotions on the board and complete page 5 in the workbook. Encourage discussion about any differences between students' answers.

1.6   Placing emotions on the spectrum

Discuss emotions in terms of if they make you feel positive or negative, highlighting how some emotions can be stronger then others. Draw a spectrum on the board ranging from "NEGATIVE → NEUTRAL → POSITIVE". Invite the students to place the emotions cards along the spectrum. Discuss as a group the results, looking particularly at the emotions placed at the ends of the spectrum.

1.7   Matching thoughts and feelings

Begin this activity by explaining that our feelings do not just come out of nowhere, but are influenced by our thoughts. Go through the example on page 6 of the workbook (see below) and then as a class, or individually, get the students to fill out the faces and name the emotion that would match each thought on the page.
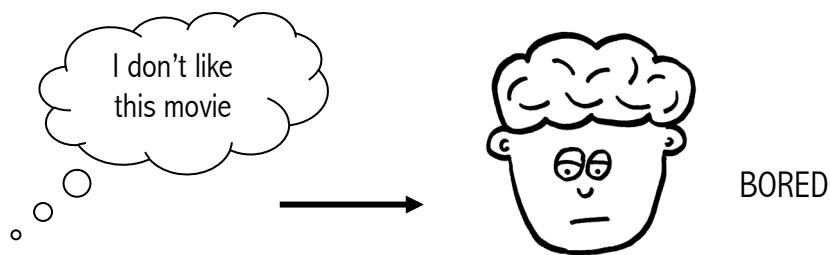
Activity: Ask all the students to put their heads down. The instructor then reads out one of the thoughts from the workbook and asked the students to raise their heads and show using facial expressions the emotion that the thought would make them feel.
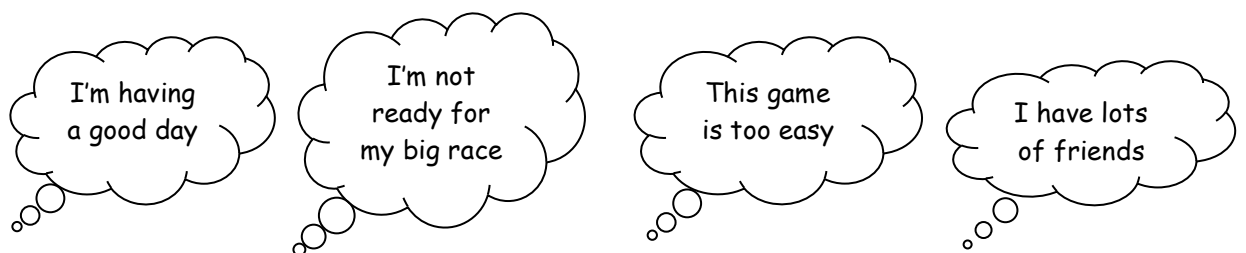
1.8   The link between thoughts, feelings and actions

This activity is the pivotal component of this session. It extends the previous activity to demonstrate how our thoughts and feelings are important in shaping our behaviour. Using the example in the workbook demonstrate that there is a pathway between having a thought, the way we feel because of the thought, and then the way we act by reading through the example on page 7 of the workbook (see below). Students should then complete the blank pathways on the page, noting that in the last exercise students also have to write their own thoughts.

The pathway: our thoughts cause our feelings, which then make us act in a certain way. Let's have a look at how this works

THOUGHTS   **FEELINGS**   **ACTIONS**

I am a good painter

Confident
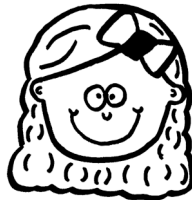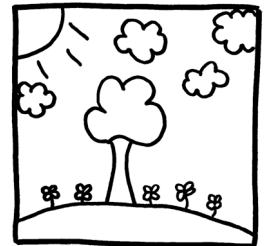
Activity: Get the students to act out some of their pathways. Have them first say the thought, show the emotion through a facial expression and act out the behaviour that follows.

1.9   Activities to practise at home

Students are instructed to read peoples' thoughts by applying the thought – feeling – action chain backwards. First the students need to record an action they have seen someone else do. They the students have to write down what emotion they thought the person was experiencing, getting clues from facial expressions. Lastly the students need to imagine a thought that could make the person feel and act that way. The students are then given the opportunity to ask the person for his/her real thought and record if the guess was correct.

SESSION TWO

Helpful and Unhelpful Pathways

Goals of the session:
This session aims to teach students the importance of thoughts by demonstrating how helpful and unhelpful thought pathways can lead to positive and negative behaviour.

What you need for the session:
- Thought pathways printed on half A4 sheets (*found in the extra materials section*)
- Two targets labelled "HELPFUL" & "UNHELPFUL" (can be written on the board, on a poster pinned to the wall or in a circle on the ground; *examples can be found in the extra materials section*).

Outline of Session 2:
    2.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
    2.2   Categorising helpful and unhelpful thought, feelings, action sequences
    2.3   The importance of helpful thoughts
    2.4   Activities to practise at home.

2.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Start the session off by asking the students if they enjoyed the firs session and revise the topics covered (labelling feelings and the link between thoughts, feelings and actions). Go over the homework, allowing students to read examples to the class and have a discussion about what students may have found difficult when trying to mind read.

2.2   Categorising helpful and unhelpful thought, feelings, action sequences

At this stage we begin to look at how some thoughts can be more helpful than others. But what classifies a helpful thought? Helpful thoughts are those that lead to positive emotions and actions that help us achieve our goals and do better in the future. Unhelpful thoughts, on the other hand, cause us to feel negative emotions and lead to unhelpful behaviour such as giving up or missing out on activities. Go through the examples in the workbook, page 8 (see below),

and ask the students to independently complete page 9 by indicating whether each pathways is helpful of unhelpful.

HELPFUL:

THOUGHTS

I'm good at football

FEELINGS

Confident
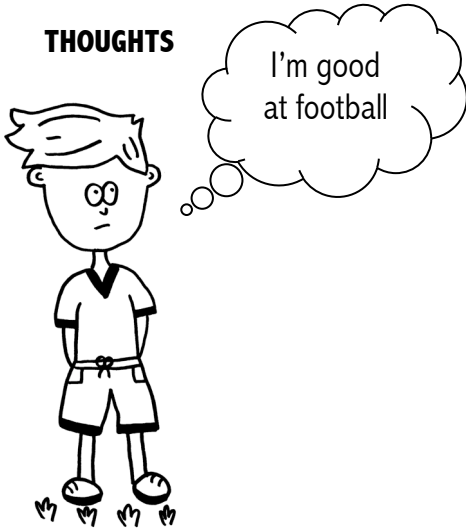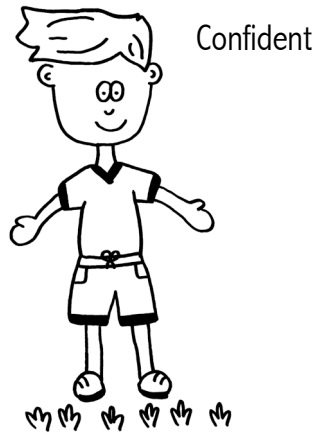
ACTIONS

Trying hard and have fun

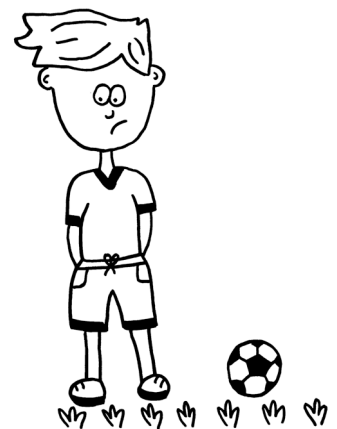## UNHELPFUL:

THOUGHTS

We will never win this game

FEELINGS

Disappointed
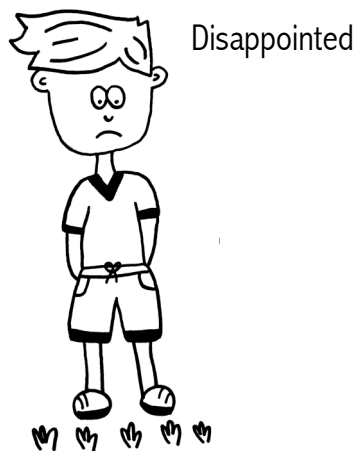
ACTION

Don't try your best

Activity: This activity uses the thought pathways provided in the extra materials section and two targets labelled "helpful thoughts" and 'unhelpful thoughts". Students are to form a line, approximately 1 meter in front of the target. Each student is given a half A4 piece of paper with a thought pathway. Each student is then instructed to decide if the pathway they received is helpful or unhelpful, scrunch that paper into a ball and throw it at the matching target. Each student should have two turns each. Next give each student an A4 piece of paper and ask them to cut it in half. On one pieces student should write a helpful thought → feeling → action and on the other an unhelpful pathway. The instructor then collects these pieces of paper and randomly divides them between the students (making sure that no student receives a pathway they have themselves written). The students are then given the opportunity to play the game again with the new pathways. If desired, students can earn points and the winner of the game can receive a bonus sticker for his/her sticker chart.

2.3   The importance of positive thoughts

After highlighting the link between helpful thoughts and helpful behaviour, have a discussion on how helpful thoughts may be advantageous. Point out that it is not always easy to think of helpful thoughts, especially when something bad has happened, and that is why it is good to have some helpful thoughts already prepared. Ask the students to cut out the thoughts from page 11 and glue the helpful thoughts (see below) in the thought bubbles on page 10. Warn the students to watch out, as not all the thoughts are helpful. There will be three empty thought bubbles for students to write in helpful thoughts of their own.

I have fun even if I don't win	I do have friends	I will do better next time	I have lots of good qualities

I am a good person	It is ok to ask for help	If I put my mind to it, I can do it

2.4   Activities to practise at home

This activity gives the students the chance to search for thought pathways in their own lives and to practise identifying when helpful and unhelpful thoughts may be leading to helpful and unhelpful consequences. Suggest also that the students try to think of more helpful thoughts to add to their list on page 10.

SESSION THREE

Where do we have helpful and unhelpful thoughts?

Goals of the Session:

This session aims to help students identify unhelpful thoughts in their own lives and to encourage helpful thoughts in response to success through self-congratulations.

**What you need for Session:**

- Ball (optional)

Outline of Session 3:

      3.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

      3.2   Looking at where unhelpful thoughts occur when we learn

      3.3   Promotion of self congratulations

      3.4   Activities to practise at home.

3.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Start the session by asking the students if they remember: What is the difference between a helpful and an unhelpful thought pathway? Which one is better and why? Go through the homework allowing students to share any thought pathways they observed since the previous session. Moving onto our list of helpful thoughts, ask if the students can remember some of the helpful thoughts from last week and if anyone has any new helpful thoughts.

3.2   Looking at where unhelpful thoughts occur when we learn

This activity is looking at where unhelpful thoughts can occur. With the class brainstorm some places where students have helpful and unhelpful thoughts. Ask the students to think of two places where they themselves have unhelpful thoughts and write those places in the two spaces provided on page 12. Students then have to identify an unhelpful thought that they may have in that location and replace it with a more helpful thought.
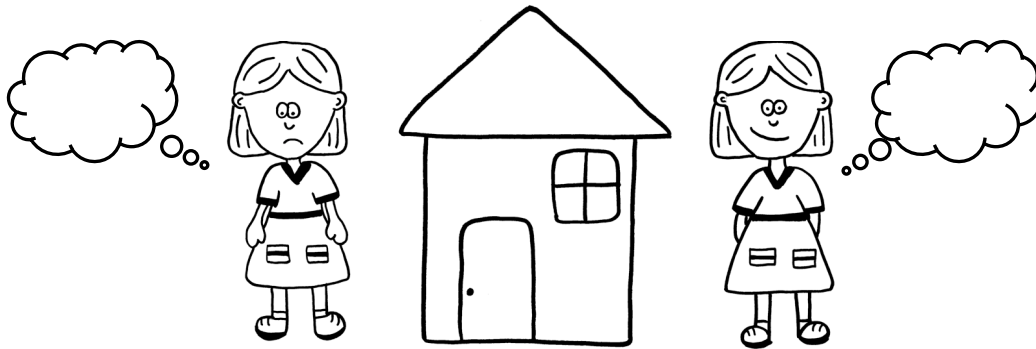
Activity 1: Play a charades style game, where students act out (without words) a place and an action where they have a helpful or unhelpful thought, while the rest of the group tries to guess.

Activity 2: Make a circle and select one student to stand in the middle. A ball is thrown from student to student. The first student with the ball says a location, the second student then says an activity that would match this location, and the third student says an unhelpful thought. The person in the middle then has to replace that thought with a helpful one. If the person in the middle catches the ball the person who threw the ball has to swap with them and go in the middle.

3.3   Promotion of self-congratulations

This activity is encouraging students to take more responsibility and pride in positive events and moments of success. Students are invited to create their own form of self-congratulations and identify three times when it would be appropriate to use. This is accompanied by a worksheet for students to independently complete on page 13. As a class, read out a number of scenarios, the students are to respond with their self-congratulations following appropriate scenarios, for example "You completed a really difficult puzzle".

3.4   Activities to practise at home

This activity asks students to identify unhelpful thoughts in their own lives, and report: where the unhelpful thoughts occur (location), what happened (event) and what the unhelpful thought was (thought). Students are also given the chance to practise their self-congratulations.

SESSION FOUR

How does this all relate to school and learning?

Goals of the Session:

The aim of this session is to demonstrate how the link between thoughts, feelings and behaviours play a role in how students learn and act at school. The session introduces the concept that thoughts can have a big impact on what students are able to achieve.

What you need for the Session:

- Difficult puzzle (optional). These can be any activity that is extremely tricky to complete without knowing a secret trick, such as the magic pyramid puzzle. Such puzzles can often be found in magic shops.
- Question cards (*found in the extra materials section*)

Outline of Session 4:

4.1　Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
4.2　Identifying cognitive obstacles to learning
4.3　Relating thoughts, feelings, action sequence to the school setting
4.4　Test your thoughts
4.5　Activities to practise at home

4.1　Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Ask students to share with the class their homework activity, get students to discuss places they identified unhelpful thoughts in their own lives. Are there new places from those we spoke about last week? Ask students to share some of their unhelpful thoughts, as a class brain storm some helpful thoughts that could replace them. Discuss if the students used their self-congratulations since the last session.

Activity: Using a puzzle such as the "magic pyramid". Allow each student to attempt to make the pyramid and verbalize unhelpful thoughts such as "I can't do this" or "this is impossible". Ask students to verbalise some more helpful thoughts that they could use instead when trying to solve the puzzle, such as "maybe I am just using the wrong strategy". Show the students

the secret to solving the puzzle, giving each student a chance to test it out and successfully complete the puzzle. Ask again about the thoughts each student has after being able to complete the puzzle.

4.2   Identifying cognitive obstacles to learning

We are now looking to link the work we have done in the last two sessions to school and learning. Using the example on page 14 (see below) discuss with the students how our thoughts about a maths problem can impact what we do. Highlight how the helpful pathways lead to more helpful behaviours that help students learn and do better at school.

4527 X 763 = ?

UNHELPFUL pathway

I can't do it → Disappointed & Angry with myself → Give Up

HELPFUL pathways

This is tricky, but if I keep trying, maybe I can get it → Hopeful → Keep trying

If I try a different way, maybe I can get it → Enthusiastic → Keep trying a new way

If I ask for help, maybe I can get it → Positive → Ask for help and keep trying
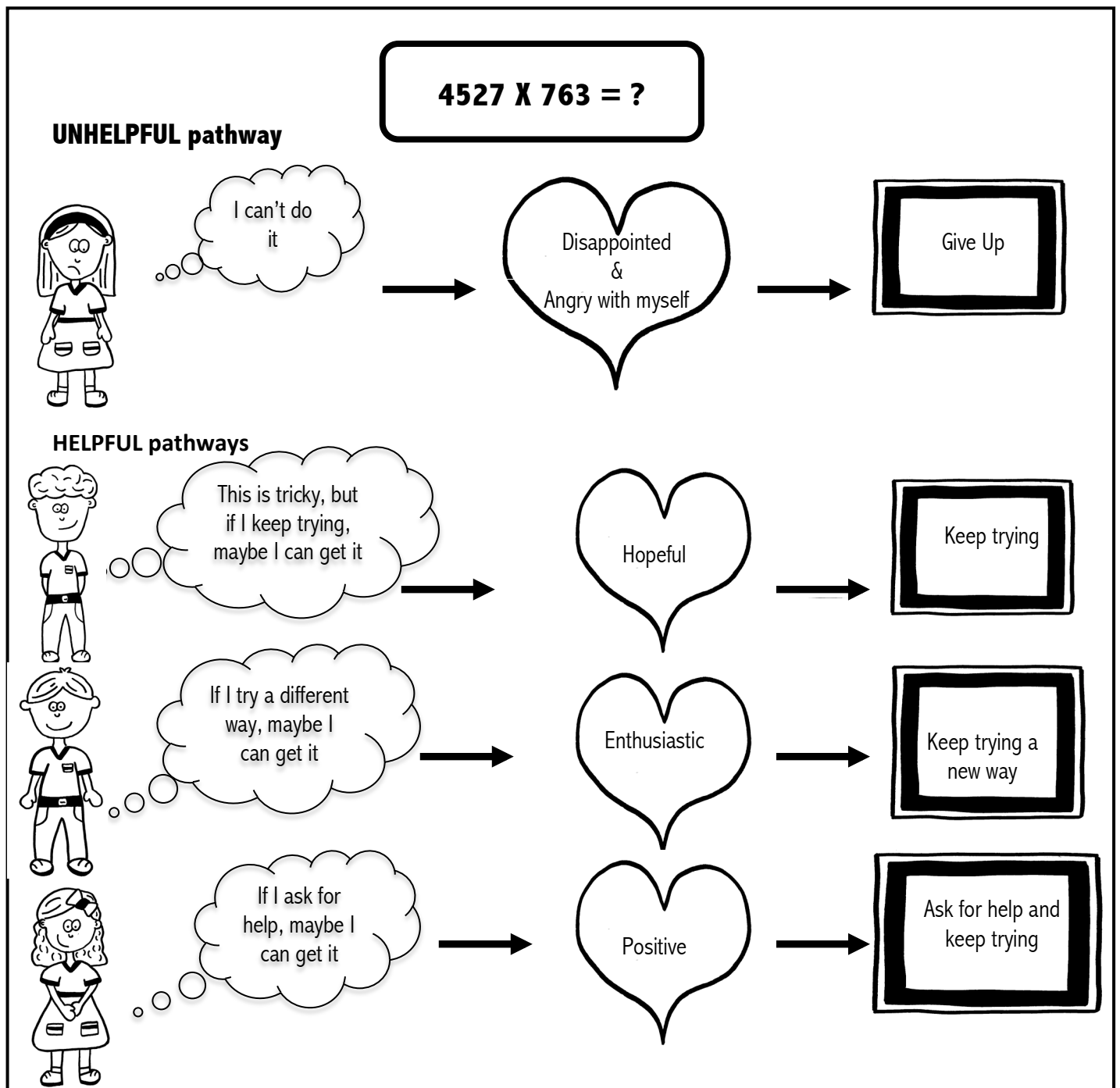
4.3   Relating thoughts, feelings, actions sequence to the school setting

On page 15 of the workbook ask the students to look at the two scenarios presented (see below), replacing the unhelpful thoughts with more helpful ones, and writing the feelings and actions that would follow. Ask some students to share their work with the class.
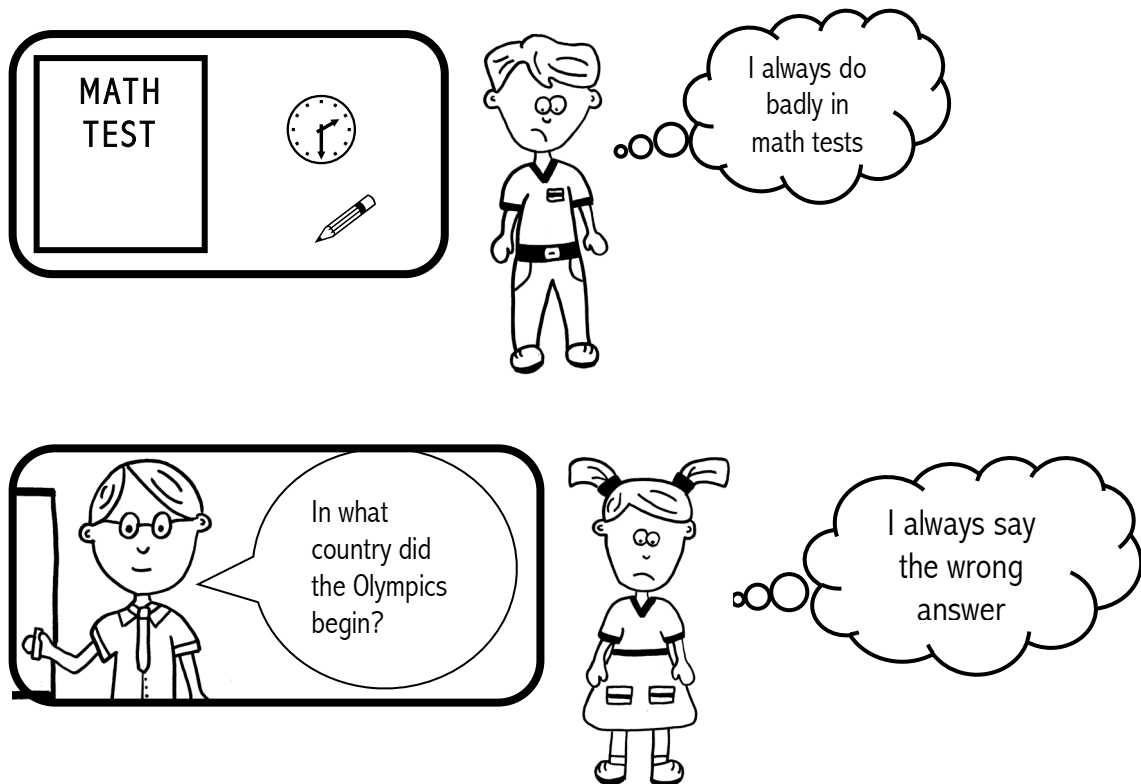
4.4   Test your thoughts

This activity is set up like a quiz. Students are chosen to answer a set of questions that range from moderate to extremely difficult. The attached 'Question Cards" in the extra material section can be used, or instructors can create their own to suit their student population (make sure there is a range of easy, moderate and extremely difficult/impossible questions). Once a student has provided an answer, ask about the thought that student was having when answering the question. Get the rest of the students in the group to say whether the thought was helpful or an unhelpful. If the thought was classified as unhelpful, brainstorm ideas for more helpful thoughts.

It is important to clearly explain to the students before beginning this activity that:

- Some questions will be easy, while others will be very difficult.
- The aim of this activity is not to see if you can answer the questions right or wrong, but rather to see how you think. So it is ok if you do not know the answer or get questions wrong
- Students should not call out the answer or say things such as "I know the answer" or "that is easy". Explain how this might make someone feel if they do not know the answer or are finding the question difficult.

4.5   Activities to practise at home

With the class read through the book "I Hate/Love Maths" (se the next page). Discuss how this was used as a way to demonstrate the helpful and unhelpful thought pathways in school. Invite the students to write their own books about thought pathways for homework.

BELIEVING YOU CAN is the first step to ACHIEVING

BELIEVING YOU CAN

Is the first step to

ACHIEVING

LOVE

I HATE MATHS

Alicia Chodkiewicz

Lucy loves school

She loves painting in art

And playing instruments in music

And reading books in the library

But one thing about school that Lucy hates is...

MATHS

She found maths hard,

she didn't often get the right answers,

and she got low grades

Lucy thought: "I'm not good at maths"

Lucy felt: sad, hopeless and unmotivated
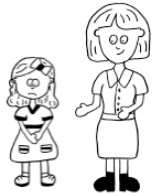
Lucy did: not try in class

and did not do her maths homework

One day the teacher was worried about Lucy
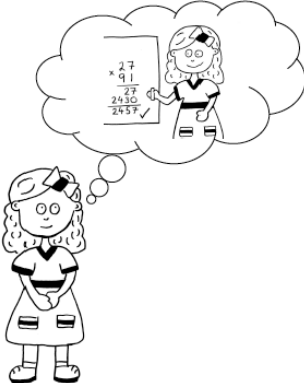
She told Lucy that it is important to think positively about maths because...

BELIEVING YOU CAN is the first step to ACHIEVING

The next day, Lucy decided to think positively...

Lucy thought: Maybe I can do math

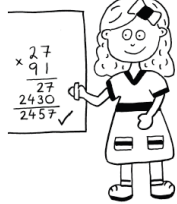Lucy felt: happy, hopeful and motivated

---

Lucy did: try in class, even on the tricky questions

and she did all of her maths homework

The more positive thoughts Lucy had

the more effort she made with maths

and the more her maths skills and grades improved

At the end of the year, the teacher asked Lucy

What do you love about school?

Lucy replied:

I love painting in art

I love playing instruments in music

I love reading in the library

and

I LOVE MATHS

SESSION FIVE

Why do we succeed and fail?

Goals of the Session:

This session aims to introduce students to the concepts of attribution theory, understanding helpful and unhelpful explanations for why one may succeed and fail, and encouraging helpful attribution styles.

What you need for Session:

- One set of Devil horns and angel halo (Optional)

Outline of Session 5:

      5.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

      5.2   What is success and failure for you?

      5.3   Identifying *why* we succeed and fail

      5.4   Activities to practise at home

5.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Open the session by asking the students if they can name any of the helpful thoughts identified last lesson when completing the "test your thoughts" activity. Ask students who completed the homework if they would like to share their books with the class.

5.2   What is success and failure for you?

Explain to the students that when we are learning we constantly experience moments where we feel successful and other moments where we feel like we failed. However, this is not always the same for everyone. To demonstrate this, ask all the students to close their eyes and listen to the scenarios you read out from page 16 in the workbook (see below). After each scenario ask the students to raise their hand if they would classify the scenario as a success or a failure. When all the scenarios have been read out, have a discussion with the students regarding which responses were unanimous and which ones were not.

- Coming third in a running race
- I got half the questions right on a spelling test. This was better than I did last week
- I finished the math worksheet, but I was the last in my class
- I worked really hard on a project and got a C
- I made a speech in front of the class, it was going really well until I forgot some of the words
- I was told by the teacher that I was working hard, and other students called me a teachers pet
- All the class have started their work, but I didn't understand what to do and just gave up
- I am placed in the middle group for Math
- My story came 4th in a writing competition
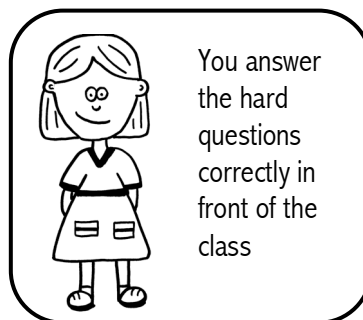
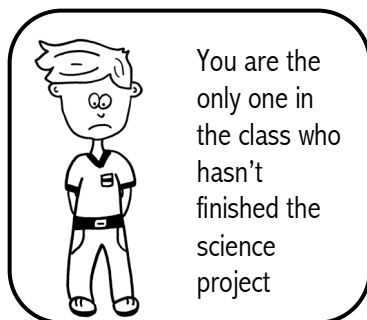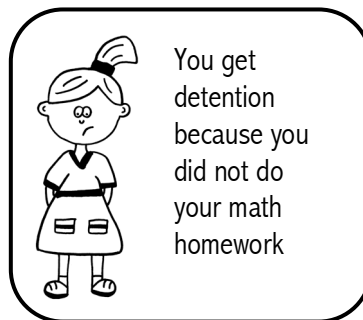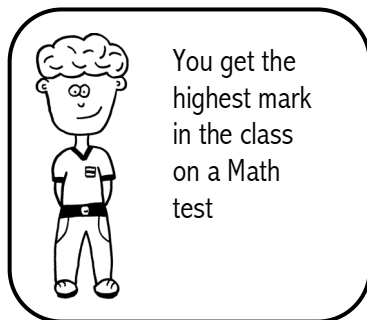### 5.3 Identifying why we succeed and fail

Discuss with the students that when we succeed at something, we often think of reasons to explain why we succeeded. Some of these thoughts can be helpful because they make us feel proud, positive and encourage us to keep working hard in the future. Other reasons can be unhelpful, because they do not make us feel good about our achievement, make us believe we can't succeed again or tell us to stop trying. Together as a class go through each of the boxes on page 17 of the workbook, put a tick in each of the boxes with helpful reasons and a large cross through any of the unhelpful reasons (refer to the correct answers below). The same activity should be repeated in relation to reasons we use to explain why we fail, completing the activity on page 18 of the workbook.

Caution: Many students identify attributions of luck, i.e. I was lucky or I was unlucky, as a helpful thought, however they are actually very unhelpful. For example, when a student succeeds and thinks that is because they were lucky, that student does not feel proud of their achievements as they do not feel personally responsible for the outcome. The student will also feel no personal control over whether or not they will succeed again in the future. Similarly when a student fails and feels that it was due to bad luck, that student is not identifying ways to improve in the future, as they feel helpless to the uncontrollability of future bad luck.

Activity: This game allows students to test out the idea that some reasons we use to explain why we fail and succeed can be good or bad. For this game a student should be selected to play the "person", one student to play the "angel" and one to play the "devil" (props such as devil horns and angel halo can be used if available). The person in the middle reads out one of

the scenarios from page 16 of the workbook and says whether they feel success or failure. The "devil" then uses an unhelpful reason to explain why the event occurred (students can make up reasons of their own or can refer to those in the workbook), at which point the "person" says how the reason the devil gave made them feel and how they would later act. Next the "angel" uses a helpful reason to explain why the event occurred and the "person" can again say how they would feel and how they would later act. Students can swap rolls for each different scenario. To make it more fun you can allow the students to vote on whether the angel or devil made a more convincing argument, and collect a running tally to see which one wins at the end of the game.

On page 19 of the workbook students should independently complete the activity, by writing one reason to explain why each of the scenarios occurred. Students can make up their own reasons or refer to examples in their workbooks.

You get the highest mark in the class on a Math test		You get detention because you did not do your math homework	
You are the only one in the class who hasn't finished the science project		You answer the hard questions correctly in front of the class	

5.4   Activities to practise at home

Explain to the students that we are not always aware of our feelings of success and failure. Ask students to complete the homework activity by noticing a time before the next session when they feel success and another time when they feel failure. Students should write down what made them feel this way, what thought they had to explain *why* the event occurred, and if that thought was helpful or unhelpful.

BELIEVING YOU CAN is the first step to **ACHIEVING**
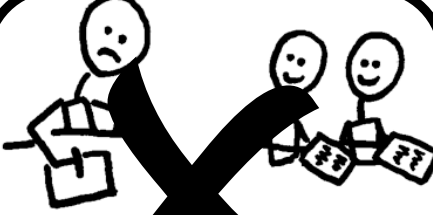
Correct answers for page 17

SUCCESS ✓

I tried really hard

It to...me lo... ...o do then others, so I must be dumber then them

I asked for help when I had a problem

It will NEVER...en again

I tried different strategies until I found the best one

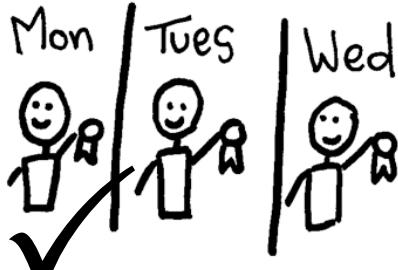It wa...st eas...t's why I succeeded

CAUTION
I was lucky

Mon | Tues | Wed
If I can do it once, I can do it again

I am good

If I can succeed at this, maybe I can succeed at other things as well

They ...me win beca...they fe...orry for me

I can achieve great things if I put my mind to it

Correct answers for page 18
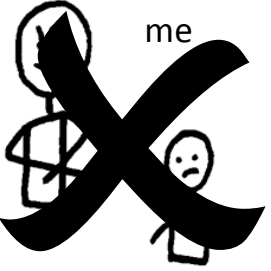
FAILURE ✗

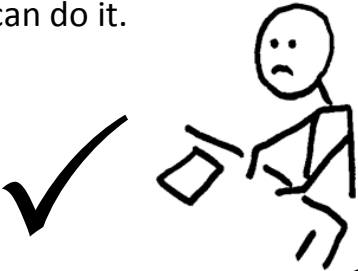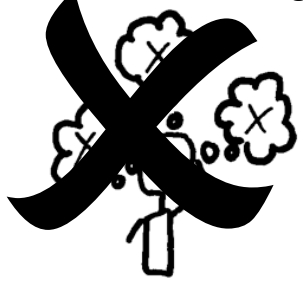|		
I **ALWAYS** fail and I **ALWAYS** will	I only tried one way to solve the problem. Next time I should try more	The teacher hates me
CAUTION I was unlucky	I didn't try hard enough. If I try harder next time I can do it.	It just shows that I am stupid
When I had a problem, I didn't ask for help.	Everyone fails sometimes	If I can't do this I probably can't do a lot of things
I can't be the best at everything. And that's ok	Everyone now thinks that I am dumb	I gave up when it became hard. Next time I shouldn't give up so quickly

SESSION SIX

Becoming super heroes – stopping unhelpful thoughts

Goals of the Session:

This session is looking to teach students skills to overcome unhelpful thoughts in their every day lives.

What you need for the Session:

- Super hero emblem (Optional). In past programs students have created super hero badges with their own super hero names.

Outline of Session 6:

     6.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

     6.2   Becoming a super hero introduction

     6.3   Super Power 1: Stop that Thought

     6.4   Super Power 2: Check that Thought

     6.5   Super Power 3: Change that Thought

     6.6   Activities to practise at home

6.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

Begin the session by reminding students that last lesson looked at reasons to explain why we succeed and fail. Ask the students before opening the workbooks if they can remember any of the helpful reasons to explain success or failure. Follow by asking the students if anyone was able to find examples in their own lives of reasons they used to explain success and failure. Is any students identified using unhelpful reasons to explain why events occurred in their own lives, as a class brainstorm more helpful reasons that can be used in the future.

6.2   Becoming a super hero introduction

Start this activity by explaining to the students that while it is important to try to stop unhelpful thoughts, it is not always easy. Therefore the students are going to learn how to use three very special superpowers to defeat their evil enemy unhelpful thoughts. This would be a good time to give out or create super hero emblems, and turn to page 20 in the workbook.

6.3   Super Power 1: Stop that Thought

The first super power is used to stop unhelpful thoughts. It should be accompanied with the action of raising an open palm to say stop. Go to page 21 in the workbook and read through the comic on page 22 (see below).

6.4   Super Power 2: Check that Thought

The second super power is the most difficult but also possibly the most important and can be accompanied with the gesture of making glasses with your hands. With this power the student checks the reasons used to explain why something happened, analyses if this reason is true or false, and identifies different reasons that may better explain the occurrence. Talk to the students and explain that there is often not just one reason why an event occurs, but rather lots of different reasons contribute to an outcome. To demonstrate this draw a pie chart to find different reasons that could have caused a negative event such as "we lost the basketball game". Also discuss how the helpful thoughts from last lesson on pages 17 and 18 of the workbook would be useful when using Check that Thought. Go to page 23 in the workbook and read through the comic on page 24 (see below).
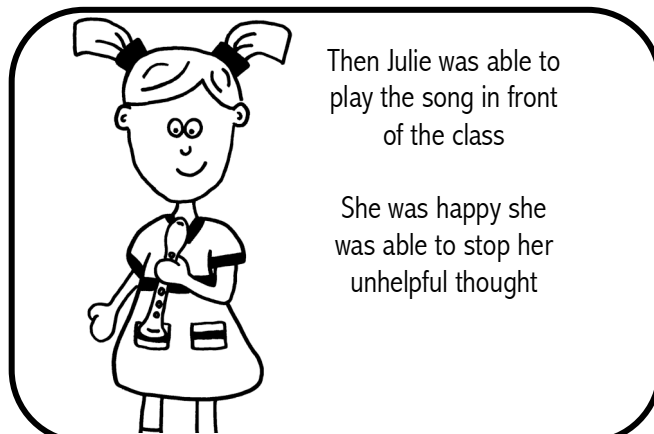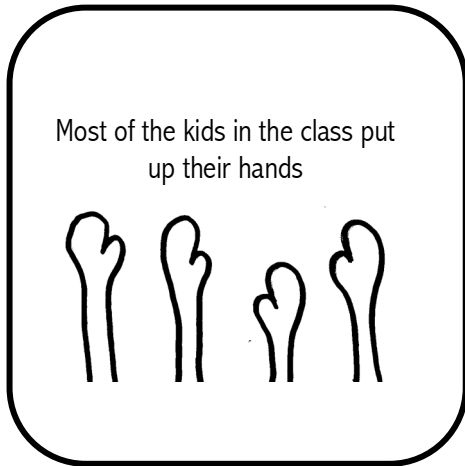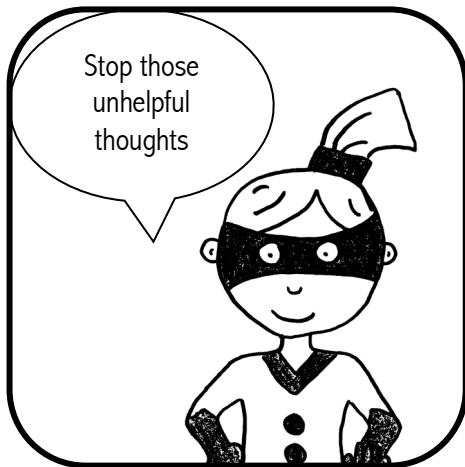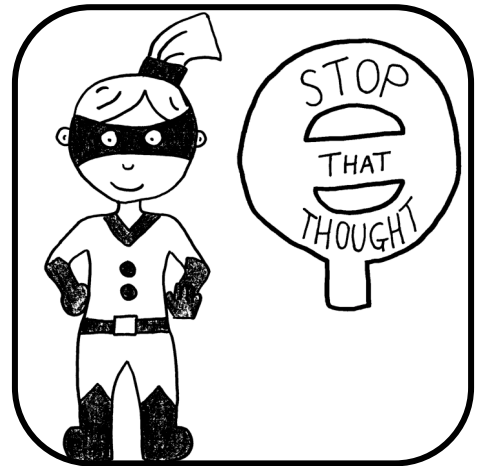
6.5   Super Power 3: Change that Thought

The third super power is similar to the activities that have been done in earlier sessions, replacing unhelpful thoughts with more helpful ones. The action to accompany this super power is a thumbs-up. Go to page 25 in the workbook and read through the comic on page 26 (see below).

6.6   Activities to practise at home

This week students are asked to create their own comic of a super hero using their powers to defeat unhelpful thoughts. Emphasise that the comic should be related to a learning situation. If there is time at the end of the lesson ask the students to complete the "comic book story plan" in their homework sheet and give them the opportunity to talk through their ideas with the instructor or the class.

THE POWER OF STOP THAT THOUGHT

43

THE POWER OF CHECK THAT THOUGHT

THE POWER OF CHANGE THAT THOUGHT

Hayden was painting in art class
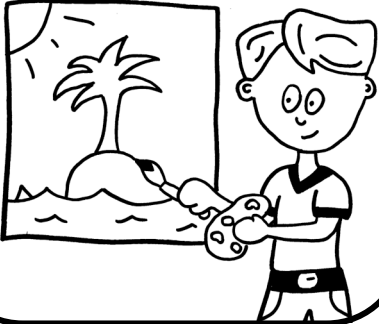
The 3 best paintings will go on display

Mine will be picked for sure
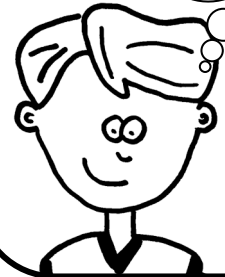
But when the 3 paintings were chosen, Hayden's was not one of them

CHANGE THAT THOUGHT
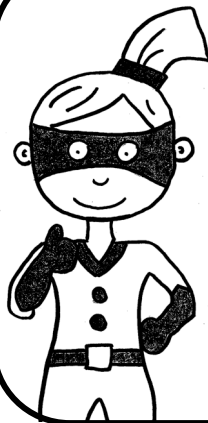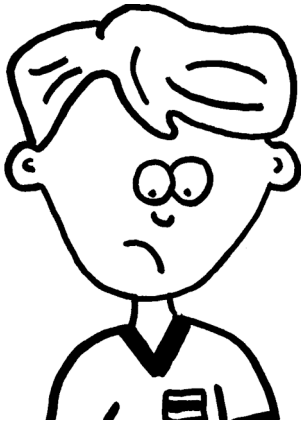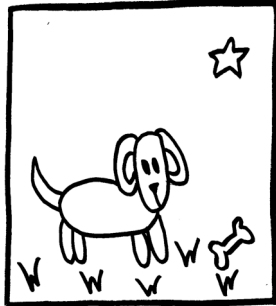
I can't win all the time. The other paintings were good too. Maybe next time mine will be chosen.

Peace in the world
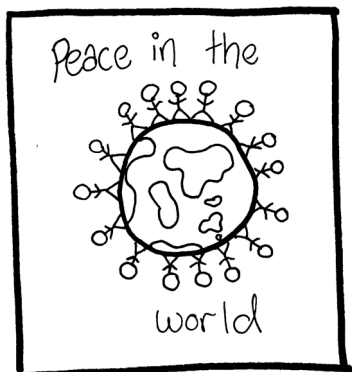
The next week Hayden's painting was selected as the best in the class and put on display for all to see
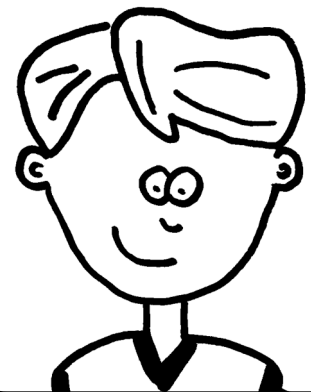
SESSION SEVEN

Practising your new super powers

Goals of the Session:
This session is a chance for students to further practise the skills learnt in the last session and apply them to a range of different situations.

What you need for the Session:
- Props to use in role-play activities, such as school supplies, super hero cloaks etc. (optional)

Outline of Session 7:

      7.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

      7.2   Role plays: Saving others from unhelpful thoughts

      7.3   Role plays: Saving yourself from unhelpful thoughts

      7.4   Defeating the *ALWAYS* and *NEVER* monsters

      7.5   Activities to practise at home

7.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home

For this lesson it is optimal to have the workbook already opened to page 27 (see below) when the students arrive. Ask the students to complete the page independently without turning back to previous pages in their workbook. Once each student has complete the page, discuss as a group the answers and what students remember from last lesson. Ask if any students would like to share the comics created for homework.

WHAT ARE THE 3 SUPER POWERS?

| **THAT** | **THAT** | **THAT** |
| **THOUGHT** | **THOUGHT** | **THOUGHT** |

WHY DO WE HAVE THEM?

WHEN CAN WE USE THEM?

7.2   Role-plays: Saving others from unhelpful thoughts

Get the students to pair up. Each pair should have their own unhelpful scenario and thought; this can be chosen from page 28 in the workbook (see below) or made up by the students. The pairs should then select one person to play the 'person having the unhelpful thought' and the other to play the 'superhero'. Students should be encouraged to use all three super powers in their plays and can be given extra paper to draw out a pie chart with at least 3 reasons when using Check that Thought.

- You are learning about fractions in maths, but you just don't understand what a fraction is

  "I'm just not good at math and never will be"

- Your teacher says that the 3 best students in the class will be given a special treat. You work really hard but your not chosen

  "Why should I work hard if the teacher doesn't even notice"

- Your class goes to the pool, but you are the only one who cannot swim.

  "Everyone is going to laugh at me"

- You come 5th place in a running race

  " I'm so slow"

- For a project you make a model of the earth. When you bring your project to school you see that your friends projects are better than yours

  "My work is never as good as my friends."

- In math you can't remember your 8 times tables.

  "Everyone else can do it, I'm the worst in the class"

- The music teacher asks you to clap a beat, but you get it wrong.

  "I hate music"

- Your friends are all reading books that are more difficult than yours.

  "I can't read good and never will"

7.3   Role-play: Saving yourself from unhelpful thoughts

This is a chance for the students to learn to be their own advocates in defeated unhelpful thoughts. Each student should either think of an unhelpful thought or choose one provided on page 29 of the workbook (see below). Each student then has to do a short role-play showing the class how they would defeat the unhelpful thought. In this activity students do not have to use all three super powers if they feel that one super power alone will be strong enough to defeat the unhelpful thought.

- The teacher gives you a story to read, but you don't understand some of the words

- You have to give a speech in front of the class but you are scared

- In art you are making clay sculptures, but yours breaks.

- Your teacher asks the class a question. You put up your hand but you say the wrong answer.

- On a spelling test you get all of the words wrong

- You are the only one in your class who has not done the homework

---

7.4   Defeating the ALWAYS and NEVER monsters

Explain to the students that words such as ALWAYS and NEVER can be evil and can make our thoughts very unhelpful. For example, "I always fail and always will" or "I never win". Ask the students to think of reasons why these monsters might be unhelpful and what might be the best way to defeat them, complete page 30 in the workbook (see below). Once students have attempted to complete the worksheet independently, discuss how these monsters lie to us in two ways:

- They change the way we think about our past, by telling us that we always or never did something
- They try to predict the future by telling us we will never or always will do something.

Students should be encouraged to use Check that Thought to defeat the evil ALWAYS and NEVER monsters.

Why are these monsters BAD?

How can we defeat them?
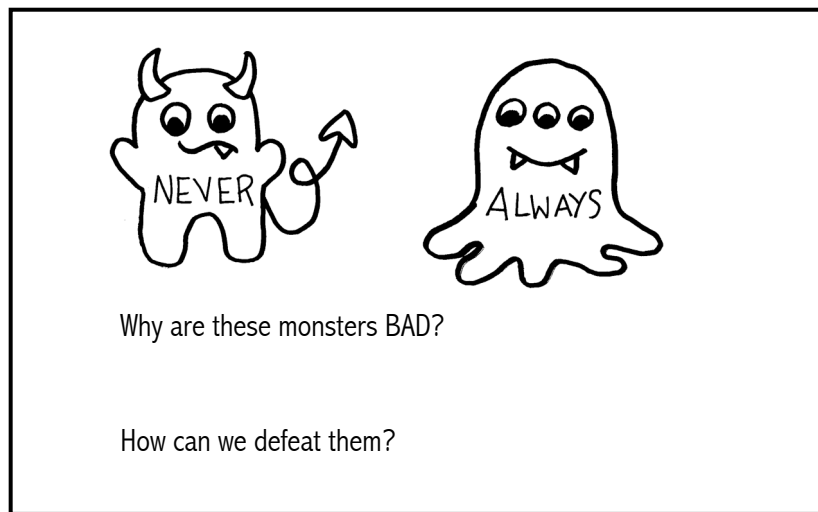
7.5   Activities to practise at home

Now that students have have practised using their super powers, tell them that you think they are ready to use them in their own lives. Ask each student to use each of the three super powers before the next lesson and to write down what the unhelpful thought was and how they defeated it.

SESSION EIGHT

Review of what we have learnt

Goals of the Session:
This session is a chance for students to look back at all the skills learnt in the program and consolidate this knowledge through creating a means of presenting their new knowledge to their classmates.

What you need for the Session:
- Needs for this session will be dependant on the form of presentation that is being used. It is encouraged that this is decided in advance so that the correct material can be available for this session.

Outline of Session 8:
8.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
8.2   Checklist of everything we have learnt in the program
8.3   Presentation
8.4   Setting goals for my learning
8.5   Certificates

8.1   Review of work from last session and activities practised at home
Ask the students if they enjoyed being superheros in their own lives. Encourage students to share with the class any experience they had since the last lesson of using their super powers and how this impacted their thoughts, feelings and actions.

8.2   Checklist of everything we have learnt in the program
As a class go through each of the points on page 31 of the workbook (see below). Ask the students to discuss what each point means and what they have learnt about that topic. Get the students to tick each of the points that can confidently say they now know.

☐ How are thoughts, feelings and actions linked?

☐ What is the difference between HELPFUL and UNHELPFUL thoughts?

☐ Why are UNHELFPUL thoughts unhelpful?

☐ How do our thoughts impact our learning?

☐ What should I do if I succeed or do something well?

☐ What are some helpful thoughts to explain WHY I did well?

☐ What are some helpful thoughts to explain WHY I failed at something?

☐ Why should I try to defeat the unhelpful thoughts?

☐ How can I defeat the unhelpful thoughts?

☐ I CAN think HELPFUL THOUGHTS and use all these skills to help my learning

8.3   Presentation

The remainder of the session is dedicated to working together with the students to create a presentation that can be used to teach other students about the skills learnt in the program. The most successful form of presentation with past groups has been to make a short video. An example of a video created by a previous group is available in the extra materials section. Other presentation options include: posters to hang in the classroom; role-plays to perform at assembly; or a bulletin to put in the school newsletter. The checklist on page 31 may be helpful to design the content of the presentation. During this lesson it is important for the instructor to play a facilitator role, allowing students to use their own ideas to direct the form or the presentation while assuring that the key elements of the program are being adequately represented.

8.4 Setting goals for my learning

Before completing the session, ask each student to complete again their goals for learning on page 32 of their workbooks. Students should be instructed to draw themselves on the staircase to represent where they are with their learning. The first staircase represents where they current are, and the second one represents where they want to be in the future. Students should be encouraged to look back on page 3 of their workbooks and discuss with the group any differences.

8.5 Certificates

At the end of the session, or at a separate time organised with the school, students should be presented with certificates that can be found in the extra material section. Students should also be given their workbooks to take home and any other material they have created during the program.

SECTION 3

Modifications and Extensions
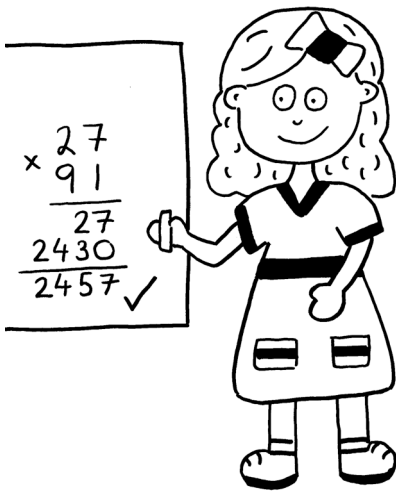
Teaching by Topic

While the program was initially designed to be administered in it's complete form, we are also realistic that it is often difficult for educators to find adequate time in their busy school schedules to administer all eight sessions. When time is limited, educators may prefer to select the sections and activities that target the specific needs of their student population. Below is a list to help you identify which section would be best for your students:

Topic	Sessions/Activities
Teaching students about the links between thought, feelings and actions	Session 1 Session 2
Teaching students about the way in which thoughts influence learning	Activity 1.8 from Session 1 Session 3
Teaching students about the why question and encouraging adaptive attribution styles	Session 4
Teaching students how to use cognitive coping skills	Activity 2.2 from Session 2 Session 6 Session 7
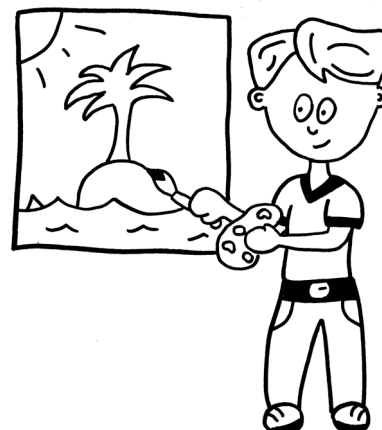
Length of the program
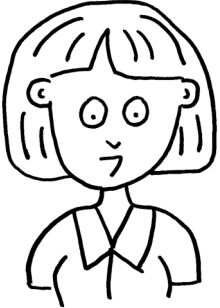
The program was originally designed to be administered for 8 sessions running approximately one hour each. In designing the program, however, we did recognise that this form of administration schedule may not suit every educational setting. Therefore the program was designed in a way that sessions could be easily combined or divided. This gives educators the flexibility to run a program with fewer sessions, or to modify the program to run over a longer period with sessions that are shorter in duration. There are many ways the administration of the program can be modified, and educators are encouraged to mould the program to best fit their needs and time restraints. Below are examples to illustrate how the program can be modified.

Example Outline of a session that runs for 3 sessions

Lesson	Topics	Activities
Lesson 1	Links between thoughts, feelings and actions and how this relates to learning	1.5 1.6 1.7 1.8 2.2 2.3
Lesson 2	Looking at how thoughts influence learning and the why question	4.2 4.3 5.2 5.3 3.3
Lesson 3	Learning cognitive coping skills	6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5 7.2

Example of how sessions time can be shortened and the program length extended

Lesson	Topics	Activities
Lesson 1	Introduction and feelings	1.1 → 1.6
Lesson 2	Link between thoughts, feelings and actions	1.7 → 1.8
Lesson 3	Identifying helpful/unhelpful thoughts	2.2
Lesson 4	The importance of helpful thoughts	2.3
Lesson 5	Identifying where helpful/unhelpful thoughts occur	3.2
Lesson 6	Self Congratulations	3.3
Lesson 7	Thoughts when we learn	4.2 → 4.3
Lesson 8	Reasons why we succeed	5.2 5.3 (pg. 17 only)
Lesson 9	Reasons why we fail	5.3 (pg. 18 & 19)
Lesson 10	Super Powers – Stop that Thought	6.2 → 6.3 7.2

Lesson 11	Super Powers – Check that Thought	6.4 7.2
Lesson 12	Super Power – Change that Thought	6.5 7.2
Lesson 13	Practising cognitive coping skills	7.3 7.4
Lesson 14	Review of program (this can be extended to a number of lessons if desired)	8.1 → 8.3

One consideration that needs to be made when modifying the administration of the program is the homework tasks. Educators should select the most appropriate homework sheet to accompany their modified lessons. Educators are encouraged to be creative and set their own homework tasks if they are unable to find an appropriate homework sheet to match modified lessons. Alternatively educators may choose not to set homework tasks.

With a whole class or larger group

While the program was originally designed to be run in small groups (5 − 10 students), we see no reason why the program would not be just as successful run in larger groups or with a whole class. The whole class activities and games can be easily modified to accommodate a larger number of students. The table below provides suggestions of ways to modify specific activities to better accommodate a larger group. When running the program with a larger group it is important to be aware that sessions may run longer than previously indicated.

Activity	Modification ideas
2.2	• Students can be given only one thought/feeling/action pathway to throw at the target • Students can be asked to write only one thought/feeling/action pathways and allocated to make it helpful or unhelpful • Have a number of targets set up around the room. Have students form small groups to play this activity. Ask students to monitor each others responses
4.1	• Have a number of puzzles that can be passed around the students
7.2 7.3	• Student can form small groups (of approximately 3 − 5 students) to perform the role plays • In the role play activities, possibly not al students will get a chance to perform in front of the class
8.3	• It may be advantageous to divide students into smaller groups (approximately 4 − 6), with each group given a separate role. • For example, if making a movie each student group can be given a different topic from the list on page 31 of the workbook that they are responsible for making a short 1 − 2 minute video about. • For example, if creating posters, student groups can each be responsible for designing a poster targeted at a different audience (other students, parents, teachers etc.).

Given that many classroom teachers may struggle to find an hour in their busy school schedules to add in something extra, there are a number of ways that this program can be tailored to fit into the busy classroom. This program is well suited to being seamlessly integrated into the school day. One particularly effect way of achieving this would be to take each of the described sessions from the previous session and make them "themes" in your class for the week, with the activities being run sporadically across the week. This way the activities of the program can be more easily scheduled into $10 - 15$ minute breaks between other scheduled classes, and may also be advantageous as students are getting more regular exposure to the material.

Encouraging students to use the skills in their own lives

The program was designed so that it could be effectively implemented both within a school setting and externally, as well as having the possibility for a range of educational professionals to fill the role of instructor. The research so far has shown the program to be effective when run outside of the classroom by an independent researcher. However we believe that the program will be most effective when the ideas and skills learnt are integrated into a students everyday lives. Therefore, where possible, teachers and parents are encouraged to model the positive thinking patterns outlined in the program and to prompt students to use the newly learnt coping skills. Below is a list of examples of ways in which teachers and parents can integrate the program skills into the everyday.

Understanding actions

When a child engages in a negative behaviour, such as hitting another student or refusing to do an activity, a typical response is to ask that student why they engaged in such behaviour. People, however, often find it difficult to articulate the reasons behind their actions. Alternatively teachers and parents can use the vocabulary and skills taught in the program to ask the following questions to prompt a student to identify the root thought underlying their

What was happening around you at the time this happened?

_____

What was your action?

_____
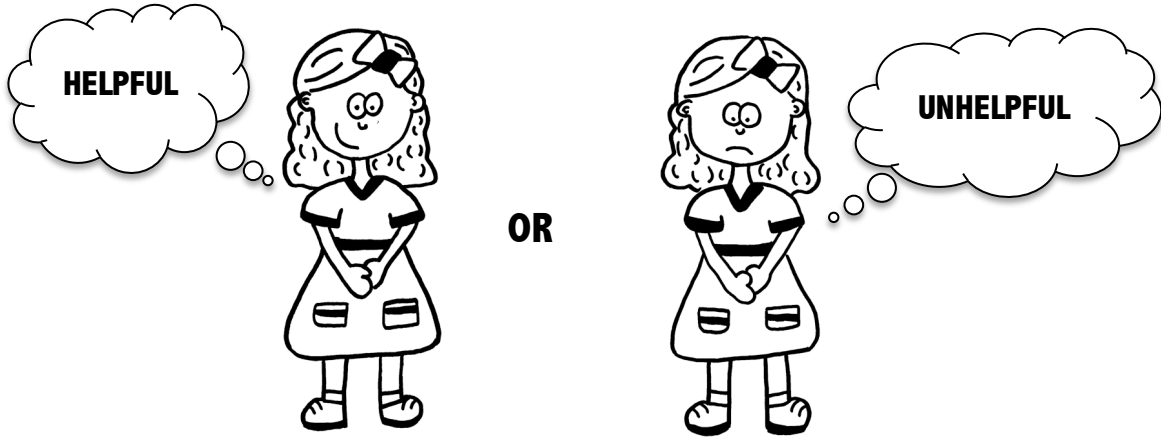
What did you feel before you did this action?

_____

What thought did you have to make you feel this way?

_____

behaviour.

Evaluating thoughts

Students should be encouraged to identify their thoughts as either:

The best way for teachers and parents to encourage the use of this vocabulary to evaluate thought is to use it yourself. For example:

"I am thinking that our class is going to perform well at assembly today, that is a very helpful thought".

Encouraging helpful thoughts

If a student is having an unhelpful thought or is showing signs of low motivation, encourage that student to think of a more helpful thought. Students struggling to think of helpful thoughts can be referred to pages 10 and 14 in the workbook for some hints and ideas. A poster of helpful thoughts can also be found in the extra material section or one can be made by the students and displayed around the room.

Using self congratulations

Students should be encouraged as much as possible to be proud of their achievements. In session 3 students created their own form of self-congratulations expression. It is encouraged that each student in the class, or each person in a family, should have a form of expression to congratulate himself or herself. The self-congratulations can be different for each student or the class can decide on one together. Following moments of success, be it big or small, students should be encouraged to use their self-congratulations. The best way you can encourage students to use self-congratulations is to model the behaviour yourself,

so go on and congratulate yourself.

Explaining *why?*

One of the key aims of the program is to prompt students to think about the reasons they use to explain moments of success and failure, as well as to highlight how these explanations can be helpful or unhelpful. At times when students are likely to experience feelings of success and failure (such as following class presentations or when receiving the results of a test) it would be valuable for teachers and parents to prompt students to think about their *why* explanations. This can be a verbal prompt or an individually completed sheet as shown in the example below. Students should then be encouraged to evaluate their reasons, and replace any unhelpful explanations with more helpful ones. Students should be directed to pages 17 and 18 in their workbooks if they are having difficulty with this.

What is the event?

Do you feel: Success   /   Failure

Why do you think the event occurred?

Is this reason: Helpful   /   Unhelpful

If the reason is unhelpful what is a more helpful reason?

Modelling adaptive attributions

The best way to encourage students to use helpful reasons in moments of success and failure is to provide them with attribution congruent feedback. That is, instead of just giving a student

praise, "good job", include a positive *why* statement, "I noticed that you worked hard on that picture and it looks great, good job". Research has shown that modelling of adaptive attributions through teacher feedback can be an effective way of fostering improved thinking styles and academic achievement among students (Perry & Hall, 2009). Below are some ideas of feedback responses that can be used to model adaptive attributions.

Praising Success:
- You really worked hard / put in a lot of effort
- You are really good at ____
- When you had a problem, you didn't give up
- When you had a problem, you asked someone for help and together you were able to find the answer
- You used the right strategy.

Responding to difficulty and failure:
- You only tried one strategy to solve the problem. Maybe next time if you try different strategies you can get it
- You did not put in enough effort, next time if you try harder maybe you can get it
- You gave up too quickly when you had a problem, next time if you keep trying even when it becomes difficult you can get it
- You didn't ask for help when you had a problem, maybe next time if you ask for help we can work it out together.
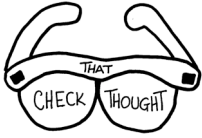
Using cognitive coping strategies

When students are having unhelpful thoughts encourage them to use the three super powers learnt in the program. A recap of the three super powers:

 STOP that THOUGHT: where students are instructed to stop the unhelpful though in it's tracks

 CHECK that THOUGHT: where students check to see if their thoughts are really telling the truth

 CHANGE that THOUGHT: where students replace the thought with a more helpful one.

Independent practice:

Research suggested that the program has the most effective impact on learning when a student has the chance to independently practise an academic skill. It was found that while reading is a skill that can be easily independently practised, as most student have access to books, other academic skills such as mathematics and spelling are less often practised outside of the classroom. One of the ways the program is expected to improve academic performance is by increasing student motivation to work hard toward their goals. It is anticipated therefore that student following the program will be more likely to complete voluntary learning activities. Additional work can be provided for student in the form of non-compulsory worksheets or only learning games, that students can complete when they finish work early in class, have free time or at home.
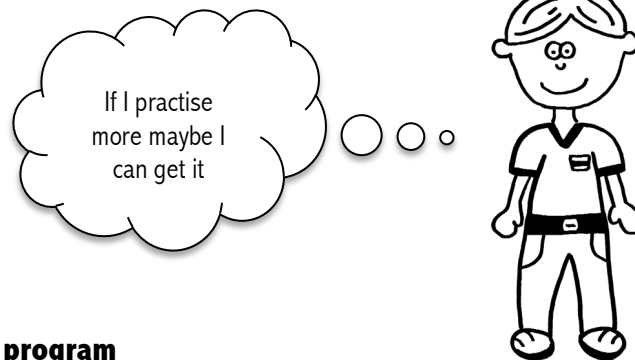
Review of the program

The program will be most effective in the long term if material is regularly reviewed and discussed. For example, at the beginning of each school term teachers can discuss with the students what was learnt in the program and how the positive thinking skills can be used to help their learning. At the end of each school term, teachers again can discuss with the students the elements of the program that they tried to implement during the term, and to evaluate which elements they found helpful. As student develop and learning challenges change, it might be helpful to give the students a chance to brainstorm some new helpful thoughts or create alternative super powers.

64

BELIEVING YOU CAN is the first step to **ACHIEVING**

(Left intentionally blank)

SECTION 4

Program Material