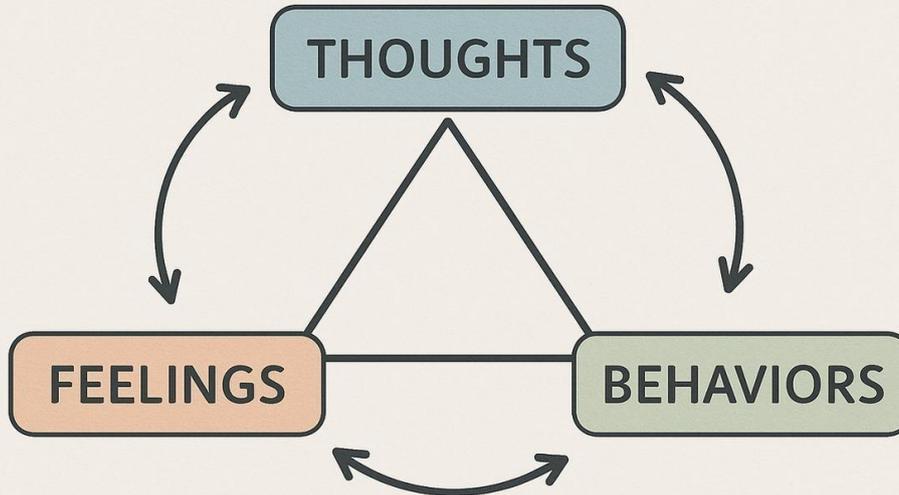


# CBT TRIANGLE

Connect thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to break negative cycles.



## **Thoughts (Cognitions)**

Our beliefs, interpretations and thoughts about situations.

## **Feelings (Emotions/Body Sensations)**

Emotional and physical responses to situations.

## **Behaviours (Actions)**

How we act or react in response to our thoughts and feelings.

## **Interconnection of Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours**

Our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are deeply interconnected in a cyclical relationship often referred to as the CBT Triangle. Thoughts influence feelings and behaviours. Feelings influence thoughts and behaviours. Behaviours influence feelings and thoughts.

## **Unhelpful Thoughts**

Negative thinking involves persistent and distorted thought patterns known as cognitive distortions. Cognitive distortions are habitual automatic ways of thinking that can distort reality and negatively affect mental health. Common patterns include all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization and catastrophizing which create vicious cycles of stress, anxiety, low self-esteem and disillusionment.

## **Unhelpful Emotions**

Unhelpful emotions are intense and often unwarranted feelings like excessive anger, anxiety, guilt or worthlessness that hinder daily functioning, lower self-esteem and impair rational thinking.

### **Unhelpful Behaviours**

Unhelpful behaviours include excessive safety behaviours, compulsive behaviours, controlling behaviours, avoidance, isolating or acting out.

### **Self-Perpetuating Cycle**

Negative thinking, unhelpful emotions or unhelpful behaviours create a self-perpetuating cycle of emotional distress. We can break the negative cycle by identifying and changing unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours to improve well-being. Changing one component automatically shifts the others. For example, challenging negative thinking will reduce unhelpful emotions and modify behaviours. Challenging negative behaviours will reduce unhelpful emotions and thoughts will become more realistic. Grounding techniques relax the body, calm the emotions and promote rational thinking.

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