

DELEGATE BOOKLET:

Removing Barriers For Students

Facing Challenging Circumstances

Using CBT Education

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6TH FORM COLLEGE

Questions to ask:

Part 1: Introduction

Task 1: Case Studies

Read the 3 case studies below. Considering these students, and your own students, what kinds of barriers do you think they could potentially face? These can include (but not limited to) academic, psychological, emotional and environmental barriers.

Amelia

- Lives with grandparents.
- Both parents have a drug addiction- very little contact.
- Bursary & FSM
- Potentially first generation student in higher education.
- Intelligent, hard-working.
- Aspiring to be a clinical psychologist.
- **Needs ABB.**

Emily

- High performer at GCSE.
- Dances in regional competitions.
- Ambitious and hard-working.
- Struggling to make the transition from GCSE to A-level.
- Struggles to meet deadlines.
- Parents regularly contact concerned about low grades in psychology.
- **Needs AAA**

Alfie

- Performed well in GCSEs ('pulled it out the bag').
- Identifies himself as 'lazy'.
- Lives between households & shares a bedroom with a sibling.
- Achieved U, E & U on 3 assessments.
- On the highest sanction for missed deadlines.
- **No next steps planned post-college.**

Notes:

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Part 2: Sample Tasks and Materials

Lesson 1: CBT and Mental Health

Covered in the lesson:

-  Defining mental health
-  Approaches to physical health issues vs mental health issues
-  Our relationship with social media
-  Applying the CBT cycle to challenges students commonly face

Sample task:

Reducing Stigma Surrounding Mental Health



You have a bad cold and you're feeling unwell. Write down:

- a) All the things you would do to support yourself getting better.
- b) What you would do, in future, to try to prevent yourself from getting ill in future.



A student has an exam coming up, which involves giving a presentation to their class for 10 minutes on their chosen topic. They feel incredibly anxious about the presentation, to the point they feel panicky, and they can't stop thinking about it. Write down all the things the student might do in this situation:

This task allows students to **explore differences** in how we respond to physical and mental health challenges. Students usually write down helpful ways to manage physical illness. For the example relating to a psychological and emotional challenge, students have a mix of responses ranging from asking for support to faking an illness. It encourages students to think about why their methods for dealing with physical illness are usually helpful compared to a significant proportion of the methods they use to deal with an emotional or psychological challenge are often unhelpful.

Lesson 2: Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Covered in the lesson:

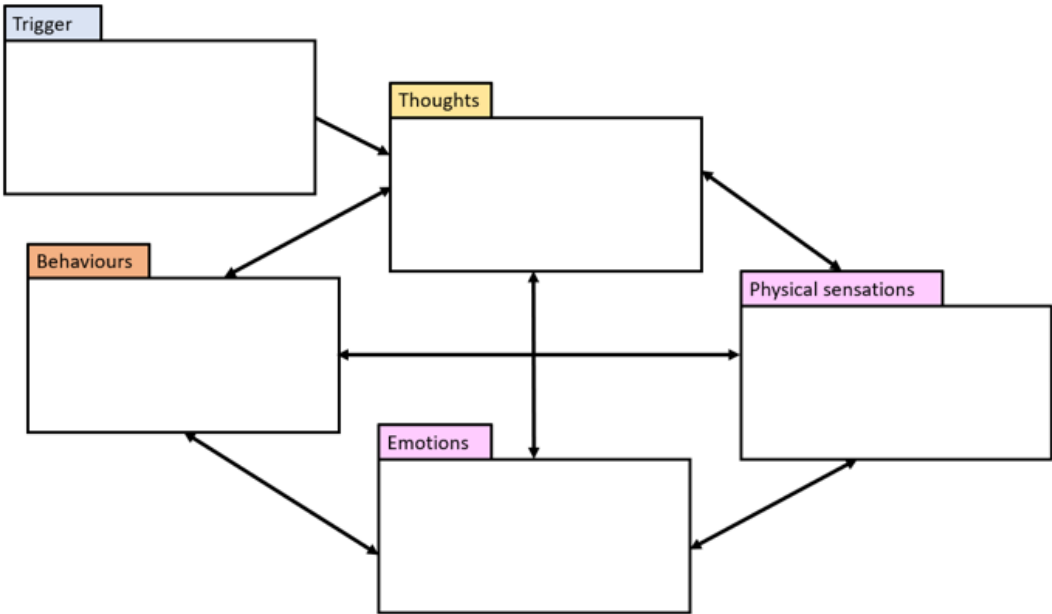
- ✚ Applying the CBT cycle to student case studies
- ✚ Attaching meaning to events
- ✚ Types of unhelpful thinking styles

Sample task:



Amy often finds she worries that her friends do not reply to her when she messages them. She will message them, see they have been online, but they have not replied to her message. If they don't reply within 3 hours, she starts to become anxious. She often thinks she has done something to upset them. Sometimes she feels worried that she is going to lose them as a friend so she will message them asking them if they are OK. Sometimes she asks them if she's done something to offend them and they reassure her she hasn't. After this, Amy feels stupid and promises herself that she won't be 'so needy' next time, but the same thing happens.

Task: complete the CBT cycle for Amy, using the information above (annotate the paragraph if it helps):



Students practise applying the CBT cycle to case studies.

Students learn about unhelpful thinking styles including catastrophising, black and white thinking, labelling, magnification and minimisation. Students use examples they can relate to e.g. studies, friends, parent/carers interactions to identify their own unhelpful thinking styles. We explore how common they are and the point they can become problematic.

At the end of each lesson, students have the option to scan a QR code to provide me with a case study to use the following week- these are anonymised and checked for appropriateness.

Lesson 3: Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

Covered in the lesson:

- Identifying 'hot' thoughts
- Assessing the benefits and drawbacks of negative thinking (motivation to change)
- Identifying whether thoughts, or the situation, needs to change
- Creating balanced thoughts

Sample tasks:

TASK 1	
Write your hot thought in the space below (from your thought diary):	
Step 1: In the table below, write down the advantages and disadvantages of having this hot thought. Then, write down any key observations/ realisations you have about this thought.	
Advantages	Disadvantages

Detective Work: Now refer to the hot thought, and ask yourself, "What is the <u>factual</u> evidence for and against my hot thought?"	
My HOT Thought:	
Factual Evidence For My HOT Thought	Factual Evidence Against My HOT Thought

Students learn about **'hot' thoughts**, looking at factual evidence for, and against, the 'hot' thought. They use case studies, or their own examples, to dispute a 'hot' thought and **try creating new balanced thoughts**.

Case studies include people struggling with generalised anxiety, low mood and specific phobias.

Students explore when thought challenging may be **unhelpful, or even harmful**. We explore instances when negative thoughts may be an accurate reflection of a situation.

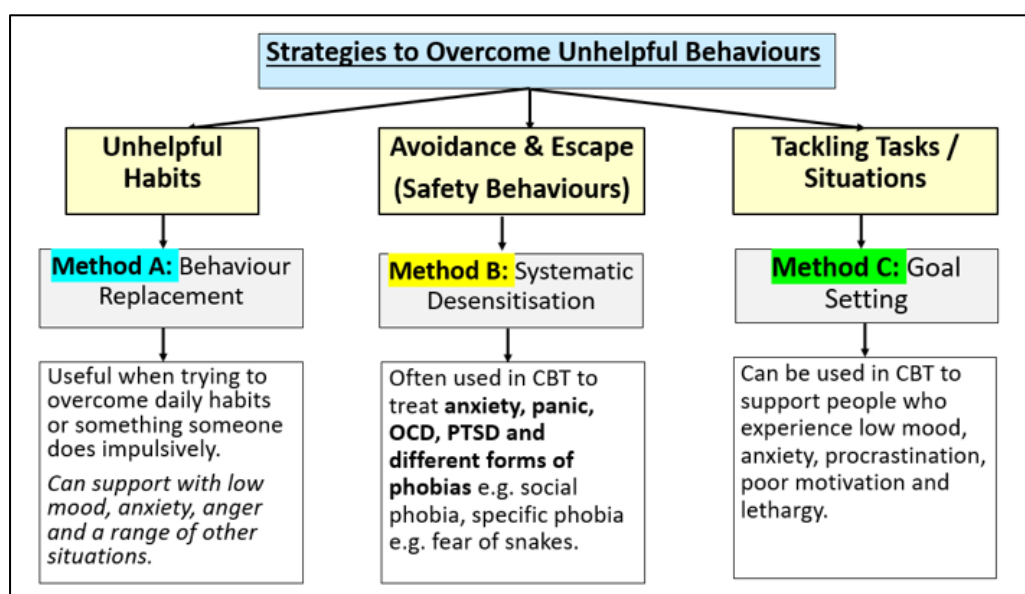
Students **develop empathy** through exploring the advantage of some negative thoughts and the wider implications of changing thoughts and behaviours e.g. reactions from others.

Lesson 4: Unhelpful Behaviours

Covered in the lesson:

- ✚ Personal values
- ✚ Unhelpful behaviours that can maintain problems
- ✚ Is it the behaviour itself that's the problem, or the function behind it?
- ✚ Avoidance and safety behaviours
- ✚ Behaviour replacement, graded exposure and goal setting

Example from the booklet:



Students explore the idea that **one strategy for all unhelpful behaviours may be ineffective**.

Students work through the different methods for overcoming unhelpful behaviours depending on which **case study** they are interested in.

Students explore the importance of **positive reinforcement** when attempting to overcome unhelpful behaviours as a way of maintaining motivation.

Students often ask questions about **neurodiversity and the function behind certain behaviours** e.g. stimming. Students are often keen to explore the ethical issues surrounding behaviour change.

Students are encouraged to explore whether the behaviour, or the purpose behind the behaviour, is the issue. Who is the behaviour an issue for? Why? Why do people seek help for certain behaviours?

Lesson 5: Emotions & Assertiveness

Covered in the lesson:

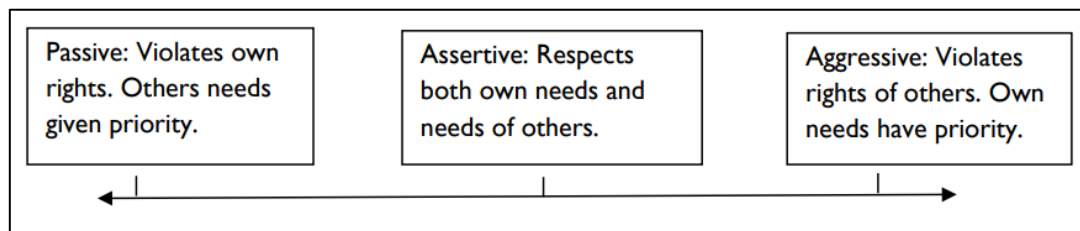
- ✚ Helpful and unhelpful emotions & emotional validation
- ✚ Societal and cultural norms around emotional expression in males and females
- ✚ Assertiveness including techniques to say 'no'

Examples of exercises and tasks:

 Complete the table below for each emotion. You can do this by yourself or with someone next to you. If you and your partner have different answer, put your own answer down on your sheet.

Emotion	Is it OK to feel this emotion?	Do you think it's a healthy or an unhealthy emotion?
Depression		
Sadness		
Anger		

This activity helps students to make an important distinction between healthy and unhealthy emotions and whether they're OK to experience. This validates their own emotional experiences and allows them to differentiate between feeling and emotion and acting on it.



Activity

Scenario: You are free with your friend in a study period. They want you to go McDonalds down the road with them. You want to stay in the library to get some work done but they keep asking. Pretend I am your friend. Try to say 'no' to me



Students requested this topic! Students explore assertiveness including assertiveness myths. Students most commonly identify with being passive or passive-aggressive. We introduce role play as an opportunity to bring humour to the situation, highlighting how hard it can be to say 'no'. We explore strategies for saying 'no' and when you might use each one.

Lesson 6: Self-Esteem

Covered in the lesson:

- ✚ Connection between early life experiences and self-esteem
- ✚ How thoughts and behaviours can 'confirm' negative core beliefs
- ✚ Strategies to overcome low self-esteem

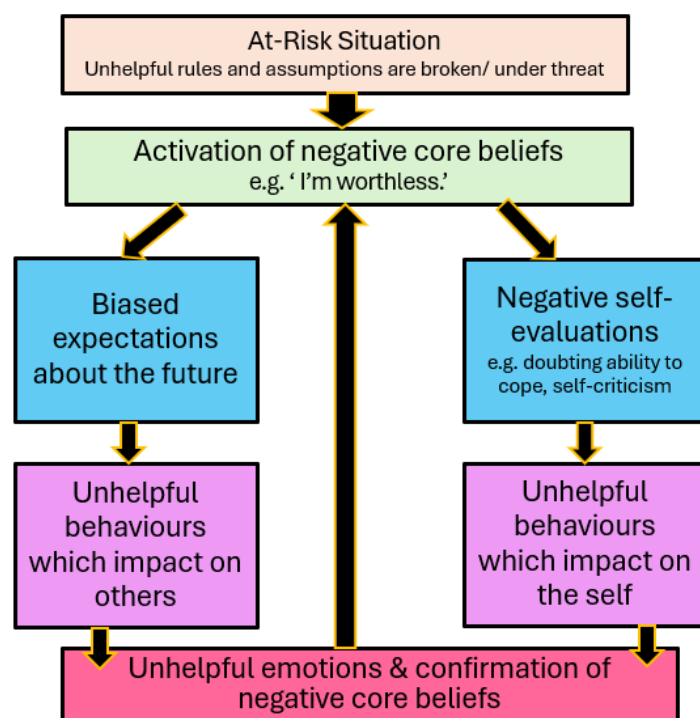
This lesson can be triggering for students. It is managed by using trigger warnings and, if necessary, changing case studies. Students choose which case study I model on the board. They often opt for relationship difficulties and perfectionism.

Sample tasks:

Students have the model below described to them using an example many students are familiar with. Two common examples are 1) repeated patterns of being in friendship groups where they feel their needs are ignored and 2) struggling mentally when they get feedback on assessments and they are not achieving, or exceeding, their target grade.

During the task, we explore the difference between acknowledging that our thoughts and behaviours may maintain negative core beliefs versus self-blame. If judged appropriate, I will share an appropriate personal example as students often think everyone else has 'got it sorted'.

We look at ways to overcome self-esteem. Students complete a 'positive qualities' record (this is managed carefully as the previous lessons have allowed me to identify students who may not write anything. This is then managed appropriately).



Lesson 7: Physical Sensations, Relaxation & Having a Routine

Covered in the lesson:

- ✚ The connection between physical sensations and emotional experiences
- ✚ Mindfulness, relaxation, work-life balance
- ✚ Creating an effective routine for managing studies

Examples of exercises and tasks:

Activity



Divide your whiteboard in half. I am going to give you a day alone, to yourself, where you can do what you want. Write down all the ways you'd like to spend time.

Now, I am going to give you a day off but your friends, family etc. also have the day off. On the right, write down what you'd probably end up doing that day.

This activity helps students to explore whether they use their restorative time to rest in a way that meets their physical, emotional and psychological needs. We make links back to assertiveness as many students find themselves doing activities which feel tiring, rather than restorative, through a fear of missing out or a perceived inability to say 'no' to friends.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6-8am							
8-9am							
9-10:10am							
10:20-11:30am							
11:30-12:40pm							
12:40-1:40pm							
1:40-2:50pm							
2:50pm- 4pm							
4-6pm							
6-8pm							
8-10pm							
Other notes for the day:							

Students create a routine but one that works. One with flexibility!

Students often realise they use planners ineffectively once they have completed this task. It allows them to see if they are overstretching themselves and how these may lead to increased stress and worry.

Lesson 8: Putting It All Together

Covered in the lesson:

- ✚ Reflections and relapse prevention in clinical settings
- ✚ Other types of psychotherapies
- ✚ Colouring therapy, bubbles, tower building and origami

Examples of exercises and tasks.

Activity

Reflect on the following questions:

- ✚ Which strategies have you found the most useful?
- ✚ When are you good at helping yourself?
- ✚ When do you think you may need to ask for more support?
- ✚ Are there any 'risky' situations where you will need to be more aware of needing to utilise a CBT cycle?
- ✚ What are your signs that you're experiencing anxiety / low mood / stress etc like you were before? E.g. ruminating, withdrawing from people, not sleeping etc?
- ✚ Who can support you in maintaining your gains? Why them? What could they do to support?



3 years- 389 students

‘The CBT classroom has been the most understanding and encouraging classes I've experienced. It allowed the incorporation of personal anecdotes while respecting individual privacy which aided in the engagement of the material and the sense of safety.’

‘I really enjoyed this programme and it made me rethink a lot of my behaviours and bad habits and helped provide solutions to them. I procrastinate less and get work done on time which leaves more time for independent study and researching universities.’

Part 3: Impact & Student Testimonials

'It helped me to understand the strength of my feelings. I was able to understand how strong they were and where the negative thoughts came from. It helped me to tackle my personal issues.'

'I found tasks on self-care and relationships the most helpful... I have always struggled to develop the level of trust required to form a solid relationship, both romantically and platonically. Additionally, I have always struggled to prioritise my own wellbeing, in order to please people around me.....

The CBT course allowed me to acknowledge that it is important to receive praise for achievements, but it is also important for self-praise and less reliance on other people's opinions about your own success.'

'Joining the CBT was a great decision. It's not like a therapy, so you don't have to worry about being 'fixed' or having conversations of feelings. I think it can be very beneficial to young people who may believe constant negative thoughts are normal...

Engaging in relaxation techniques was beneficial to me as I started to draw daily and it really helped to clear my mind when sometimes it was a bit scattered.'

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Part 4: Embedding CBT Skills Into Lessons

Task 2: Using CBT to address underperformance

Scenario:

It's December of Y13. They've just completed a major internal assessment covering all content from Y12 and Y13 thus far. Over half of the class achieved grades D, E or U. They work reasonably hard, but completion of homework is an area for improvement across the class. In a recent discussion with them, many admit to using their phone too much and procrastinating. You have 3 male students on a high-level sanction for non-completion of work/ poor engagement and a significant number of girls who struggle with perfectionism and a fear of failure.

Q: What do you think CBT Education may be able to help with in this scenario?

Q: How do you think you could embed CBT-based strategies into lessons?

Q: When do you think CBT-based strategies could be useful across their A-level journey?

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Strategies For Embedding CBT Into Lessons

Notes:

[illegible]

Supporting Students From Disadvantaged Backgrounds

Notes:

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal dotted lines, typical of primary school writing paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Final Reflections

Reflections to finish:

-  What have you taken away from this workshop?
-  How can you utilize some of this content in your own lessons?
-  If you are in a leadership position, how could you embed some of these strategies into teaching and learning within your curriculum area?

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