

CATCH IT, CHECK IT, CHALLENGE IT, CHANGE IT.

The 4 C's of managing thoughts and emotions.



CATCH IT

Catch or identify the thought that came before the emotion.



CHECK IT

Check the thought and emotions. Recognise, attend, and reflect on the emotion and thought. Validate your emotions.



CHALLENGE IT

Challenge it. Is there evidence? What are the facts? Remember behaviour and emotions are two separate things.



CHANGE IT

Change or replace your thought, or action with a more helpful, realistic, and encouraging response. Choose what is best to move forward.



The Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit



Emotions are an integral part of being human; they can help us survive, grow, and connect with others. They can guide decisions, behaviours, and motivations. Positive and negative emotions matter, will be experienced and will fluctuate. While no one wants to necessarily be sad or angry, negative emotions are still important at times in our lives.

However, sometimes we get caught in a vicious cycle with our emotions and thoughts. For example, Anxious thoughts → uncomfortable feelings → making choices and taking actions that are restrictive/limiting.

It can be helpful to notice emotions and thoughts as they arise for ourselves. Then consider whether the emotions and thoughts are justified. If they seem to be exaggerated, try responding in a more balanced/helpful way. Seek support if you need help with this in the moment. We want to give you tools to help you regulate them if needed.

Use the table below to help you **CATCH** these thoughts, **CHECK** them, **CHALLENGE** them and consider how you might **CHANGE** your response.

CATCH IT:

What emotions are you experiencing? What thoughts are you having? Be aware. How intense is this? Acknowledge something might be wrong and if your emotional state has changed? Put the emotions you are experiencing (or your best guess) into words.

CHECK IT:

Are you perhaps thinking that things are worse than they really are? Reflect on how accurate and useful this is? Recognise and attend to the emotion and thoughts. *What did those thoughts/emotions mean to me, or say about me or the situation? What has triggered this? What am I actually responding to?*

CHALLENGE IT:

What is **1**. The evidence for and **2**. The evidence against these thoughts? Is there something you have overlooked or have you jumped to conclusions? Are you using catastrophic language or other unhelpful thinking styles? Help to contextualise the perceptions. What **facts** do I have that the unhelpful thought/s are NOT totally true? Is it possible that this is opinion, rather than fact?

Note: An opportunity to connect, teach and learn here. Set limits & boundaries if needed. It is important to accept & validate emotions but this doesn't mean you are accepting or allowing inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour & emotions are two separate things.

CHANGE IT:

Considering all of the above, is there another more helpful and balanced way of thinking or actions which can be taken? Do you need to change or choose to replace the thought or action to a more helpful, realistic and encouraging one to help you through this? Reflect and explore. How might this change your emotion to the situation now? Sometimes you will be able to change an unhelpful thought to a positive or neutral one, but this will not always be possible. Do not worry about this, it's still helpful to be in more control and benefit from this process of reflection. Consider accepting and committing to moving forward. Talk to a trusted adult if you need further help, seek support if needed.