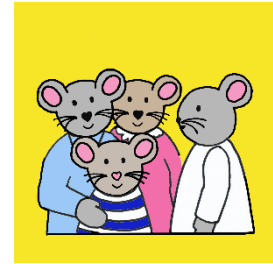


## Cognitive Coping - BLUE

### Use This:

To identify and revise unrealistic negative thoughts in order to improve mood.



### Goals

- The child will understand the relationship between thinking and feeling
- The child will be able to identify unrealistic negative thoughts
- The child will learn to evaluate the evidence that supports or does not support the negative thoughts
- The child will learn to generate more realistic thoughts

### Materials

- **Fear Thermometer** and **Fear Ladder** (2 unrated copies for anxiety/trauma) (p. 305, 307)
- **Feelings Thermometer** (p. 329)
- **Changing B-L-U-E Thoughts** worksheet (p. 360)
- **Double Bubbles on My Own** worksheet (2 copies) (p. 362)
- **Changing B-L-U-E Thoughts** parent handout (p. 363)
- Pencils, pens, markers
- **Weekly questionnaires** and **Monitoring sheet** (see pages 268 – 285)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 267)

*⚡ If time is tight: Make the connection between what we think and how we feel and help the child identify and change unrealistic negative thoughts.*

### Main steps

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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Set an Agenda</b>         | Remember to start by setting an agenda together and by reviewing any practice assignments.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Obtain Weekly Ratings</b> | If the main focus is traumatic stress or anxiety, use the 0 to 10 scale of the <b>Fear Thermometer</b> to obtain <b>Fear Ladder</b> ratings from both the child and his or her parent. If the main focus is depressed mood, use the <b>Feelings Thermometer</b> to take a rating. Review the <b>Weekly questionnaires</b> and <b>Monitoring sheet</b> in detail. |

**Introduce Connection Between Thoughts and Feelings**

Explain to the child that today's session will focus on how our thinking can change our feelings, and on learning how to examine and change thoughts in order to feel better.

**Example script**

*Imagine that you get a bad mark on a test. How you **think** about this situation can affect how you will **feel** about it. One way of thinking about this might be "Oh no, I've failed. I'm always going to fail. This means I'll never get anywhere in life. I'm probably the biggest idiot in the whole school." Another way to view the situation is, "I'm sorry I got a bad mark, but I know I can study more next time and do better." How would you feel after having these thoughts? What would you do?*

**ACTIVITY "B-L-U-E" Glasses**

Ask the child to imagine he or she is wearing dark sunglasses (better yet, ask the family if they have any sunglasses they can wear for this part of the session), and to describe how things appear to him or her. Are things clear or blurry? Are colours accurate? Do things appear as they really are? Having negative thoughts can be like seeing the world through dark glasses. It makes it harder to see the world the way it really is (the colours, etc.), and it affects our mood (makes us feel more down/sad). Discuss what it is like to take off the dark glasses, and talk about the similarity between seeing more clearly and thinking more realistically.

**Introduce B-L-U-E**

Introduce the child to the acronym B-L-U-E, looking at the **Changing B-L-U-E Thoughts** worksheet, and provide some examples of each type of thought, asking the child for suggestions.

**B Blaming myself:** Taking too much personal responsibility for negative events such as a seizure.

**L Looking for the bad news:** Paying attention only to the negative information and ignoring the positive information.

**U Unhappy guessing:** Expecting bad outcomes when we don't really know how things will turn out.

**E Exaggerating:** Making things seem worse than they really are.

**Relate B-L-U-E to the Child's Life**

Ask the child to give examples of some unrealistic negative thoughts he or she has had, these may or may not be related to the epilepsy, and apply the correct B-L-U-E label to those thoughts. Be sure to come up with your own examples of BLUE thoughts, in case the child can't think of any. (If the child does offer negative thoughts, but they don't fit one of the BLUE categories, don't worry about fitting them into BLUE; instead, just say something like, "Yes, that does sound like a pretty unrealistic thought").

**Make a Connection**

Explain that when thoughts are overly negative and unrealistic, they can result in bad moods or actions (like giving up or arguing). Discuss with the child the way that different thoughts

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| <b>between Thoughts and Feelings</b>  | can lead to different feelings and actions, using one of the examples on page 1 of the <b><i>Changing B-L-U-E Thoughts</i></b> worksheet.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Explain That Thoughts Can Be Untrue</b>   | Ask the child if he or she has ever had thoughts that later turned out to be incorrect. Gather some examples, or offer some of your own. Point out that when we are in a bad mood, we are more likely to have negative thoughts, <i>but just because we think it doesn't mean it's true.</i>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Illustrate “Just Because I think it Doesn’t Mean It’s True”</b>   | Go back to the example on page 1, and choose one of the B-L-U-E thoughts you and the child wrote there. How can we know whether that thought is accurate or not? One way is to evaluate the evidence. Are there any other ways to think about the situation – ways of thinking that are more realistic and might improve feelings?   |
| <b>Example script</b>   |  |
| <p><i>So in this example, how does the child know that [negative thought] is true? Is there any other way of looking at the situation? What would you tell someone in this situation who had this B-L-U-E thought?</i></p> <p><i>And by the way, what if some negative thoughts actually are true? How bad would that be? For example, maybe I won't ever be as good a skater as my sister. Is that a big deal? Not really!</i></p> |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Introduce and Practice Double Bubbles</b>   | Use the <b><i>Changing B-L-U-E Thoughts</i></b> worksheet to practise evaluating B-L-U-E thoughts and generating more realistic <b>TRUE</b> thoughts (e.g., "If I practise hard I will improve," "The whole team made mistakes today, not just me."). Ask the child why the negative thought may be unrealistic, and to come up with more realistic <b>TRUE</b> thoughts.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Counter Your Own Thoughts</b>   | Complete one copy of the <b><i>Double Bubbles on My Own</i></b> worksheet with examples from the child's own life, discussing with the child the evidence that supports or does not support the B-L-U-E thought, as well as alternative interpretations of events (i.e., <b>TRUE</b> thoughts).  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Praise and Repeat</b>   | Praise the child for his or her efforts in this exercise. If time allows, ask the child to work through another situation in which he or she might have negative B-L-U-E thoughts, and examine the evidence in order to come up with more realistic <b>TRUE</b> thoughts. Provide praise again.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT</b><br><b><i>Changing Thoughts at Home</i></b>  | The child's practice assignment for the week is to fill in a second <b><i>Double Bubbles on My Own</i></b> worksheet, for a B-L-U-E thought he or she has during the upcoming week. Tell the child to write the B-L-U-E thought he or she had in the B-L-U-E bubble, and write a more realistic <b>TRUE</b> thought in the <b>TRUE</b> bubble, and to mark on the <b><i>Feelings Thermometer</i></b> how each thought made the child feel. |

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|   | Tell the child that you will review the worksheet together the next time you speak.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Send the materials for the next session</b> | <p>Tell the parent/s you will send a written summary and the materials for the next session. Remind them that they <u>do not</u> need to be completed for next session as you will go through them together in the session. Ask the family to make sure they have a small rock and a treat to prepare for an activity next session.</p> <p>Tell the family you will also send the <b>Weekly questionnaires, Monitoring sheet</b> and <b>Feelings Thermometer</b> which need to be completed for the next session.</p> |
|   | Confirm date and time of the next call.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Summarising</b>                             | Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.   |

### Leave 'Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the family by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to treatment or a game or activity that will leave them feeling good about the work you've done today. The end of each session should be used to praise the family's efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

## Helpful Tips

- If the child has not already been trained in the use of the *Feelings Thermometer*, it will be important to introduce that skill before going through the activities in this session.
- To make your discussion of thoughts less abstract and more concrete for the child, examples are very helpful. Such examples can involve thought bubbles attached to drawings or cartoons, stories of people thinking very negative thoughts or illustrations that come to mind from television programmes, films or books.
- If the child is reluctant to discuss his or her negative thoughts, or can't think of any, you can choose to discuss "another kid I know," or give appropriate examples from your own life.
- Make sure the child understands that these 4 types of cognitive errors are only examples, and that there are other forms of negative, unrealistic thinking beyond those in the B-L-U-E list.
- A variety of interactive games can be played to increase engagement in this session – indeed, to make it genuinely fun for the child. Some ideas include: asking the child to ring a bell (or say "beep" every time the therapist voices a B-L-U-E thought, and asking the child for a more realistic TRUE thought each time; if you do this, you will want to slip B-L-U-E thoughts into the conversation for the child to catch – e.g., "Oh, forgot to tell you something – I'm a terrible therapist!"). Or you might come up with hypothetical situations and ask the child to come up with as many realistic TRUE thoughts as possible in response to the therapist's negative B-L-U-E thoughts.
- If the child enters the session in a bad mood, or seems tired, lethargic, or uninterested, this is an opportunity to introduce a **mood booster**: take a brief mood rating, spend a few minutes engaging in a pleasant activity, then re-rate the mood. If it is successful, be sure to highlight to the child that *what we do changes how we feel*.
- Check in on goals: Does the child feel that he or she is making progress? How does the material you covered today relate to the goals you set together?

## How's Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?
- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?