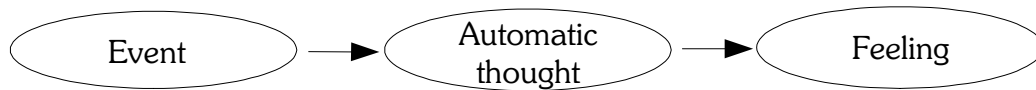


Irrational Beliefs

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Deep down, we all have beliefs about ourselves and the world. It is these beliefs that trigger our feelings. For many people, the beliefs are negative ones that aren't realistic or don't fit with the way things really are. That is why they are sometimes called *irrational beliefs*. One of the ways of overcoming depression is to recognize these irrational beliefs and change them. Which of these beliefs is feeding your feelings?



1. I must have love and approval from everyone all the time in order to be worthwhile.

Automatic Thought: Because my friend is angry with me I am unlovable.

Challenge: I can't please them all the time. It's probably just temporary anyway.

New Belief: It's nice to have love and approval but it's impossible to have it all the time. I can survive without it.

2. I must be thoroughly competent, adequate, and successful in every way in order to be worthwhile.

Automatic Thought: Because I made a mistake I'm a total failure.

Challenge: Nobody is perfect. I've been successful at some things in my life.

New Belief: It's OK to make mistakes.

3. I must become very anxious, angry, or depressed over someone else's problems and disturbances if I truly care about that person.

Automatic Thought: My friend has a problem and it's all up to me to fix it.

Challenge: Whose problem is this?

New Belief: I can support others but they have to take responsibility for their own problems.

4. There is a right and perfect solution to every problem, and it is awful not to find it.

Automatic Thought: Because I didn't get this done perfectly I'm a total failure.

Challenge: I did a good job and that's enough this time.

New Belief: I can aim for perfection but I'm not a failure if I don't reach impossible standards.

5. Things in life are supposed to turn out a certain way and it is unacceptable if they don't. (My life should be easy and smooth all the time.)

Automatic Thought: It's absolutely horrible for me to have this problem.

Challenge: Lots of people have setbacks and problems. I can get through this.

New Belief: I can be flexible and adjust to things that I don't like.