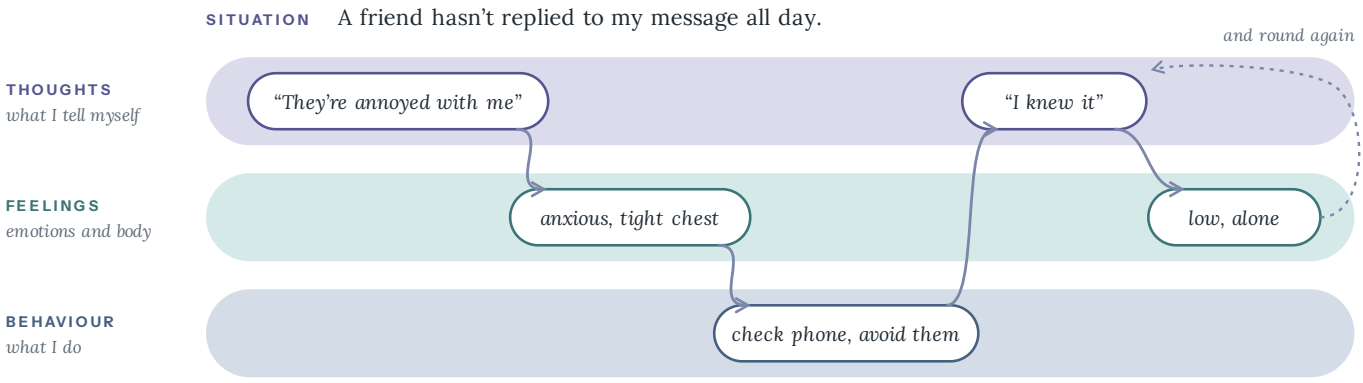
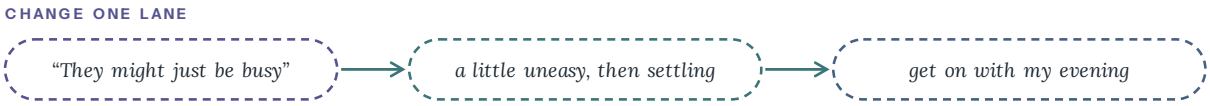
Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviour

How one moment plays out across what we think, feel and do

A central idea in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is that thoughts, feelings and behaviour are linked, and each can influence the others (Beck, 2021). Picture them as three lanes running side by side through any moment. Noticing what is happening in each lane can show how a pattern keeps going, and where there might be room to change it.



One moment, played across three lanes: each lane can set off the next.



... and the other two may shift. You can start from any lane.

01 The three lanes

each is part of the picture

THOUGHTS

What goes through my mind

Words, images, predictions and interpretations, often quick and automatic.

"I'll mess this up." "They don't care."

FEELINGS

What I feel, and where

Emotions, and the body sensations that come with them.

Anxious, flat, ashamed; hot face, heavy limbs.

BEHAVIOUR

What I do, or don't do

Actions, avoidance, checking, withdrawing, reaching out.

Stay in. Re-read the message. Say yes when I mean no.

02 Worth knowing

holding the model lightly

It runs in every direction

A thought can lead to a feeling, but a feeling can shape thoughts, and an action can change both. There is no fixed starting point.

Context and the body matter too

Situations, physical health, relationships and past experiences all feed into each lane (Greenberger & Padesky, 2016).

Behaviour is often the easiest lane

Feelings rarely change on command. Trying a small, different action is often the most direct way to shift the other two.

Thoughts are not facts

Noticing a thought, and weighing the evidence for it, can loosen its grip, without forcing yourself to "think positively".

A 30-SECOND CHECK-IN

THOUGHT LANE
What am I telling myself right now?

FEELING LANE
What do I feel, and where in my body?

BEHAVIOUR LANE
What am I doing, or about to do?

WHAT THE RESEARCH SUGGESTS

CBT, which builds on these links, has strong evidence across many difficulties, though it does not help everyone equally (Hofmann et al., 2012). The three-lane picture is a simplified teaching model, not a complete account of how minds work.

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03 Map one moment

fill in the lanes in any order

The situation:

	first	*then*	*then*	*then*
THOUGHTS *what I told myself*				
FEELINGS *emotions and body (0–10)*				
BEHAVIOUR *what I did, or avoided*				

How did the lanes feed each other?

Does this pattern feel familiar?

04 Change one lane

choose where to start

○ A different thought
a more balanced or kinder way to see it

○ Caring for the feeling
naming it, breathing, making room for it

○ A different action
one small, doable step

05 What happened to the other lanes?

before and after

Belief in the thought
before ____ % after ____ %

Strength of the feeling
before ____ /10 after ____ /10

Did my behaviour change?
○ yes ○ partly ○ not yet

06 Reflection

what am I noticing?

Which lane is easiest for me to change, and which is hardest?

Something I want to remember

SOURCES

Beck, J. S. (2021). *Cognitive behavior therapy: Basics and beyond* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
Greenberger, D., & Padesky, C. A. (2016). *Mind over mood: Change how you feel by changing the way you think* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.
Hofmann, S. G., Asnaani, A., Vonk, I. J. J., Sawyer, A. T., & Fang, A. (2012). The efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy: A review of meta-analyses. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 36*(5), 427–440.

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