

Teacher Resource

Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour Mountain (The Metacognitive Triangle)

Teacher information:

This is another useful tool to encourage pupils to recognise their emotional responses. The triangle is described as a mountain. The behaviour is the bit on top that we can see and the thoughts and feelings are happening under the surface, often where people can't see them. A useful discussion point is to understand and recognise the difference between feelings and thoughts.

As a starting point, show students the Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour Mountain resource (on the next page) and offer an explanation of how feelings and thoughts can affect behaviour. Refer to the teacher resource 'The Metacognitive Triangle' on page 69.

Then ask pupils to think about the differences between thought and feelings, by completing the following table (this can be done as a whole class exercise). Pupils can relate to their own experiences, or focus on one of the characters from the case study, or refer to an incident that has taken place in school.

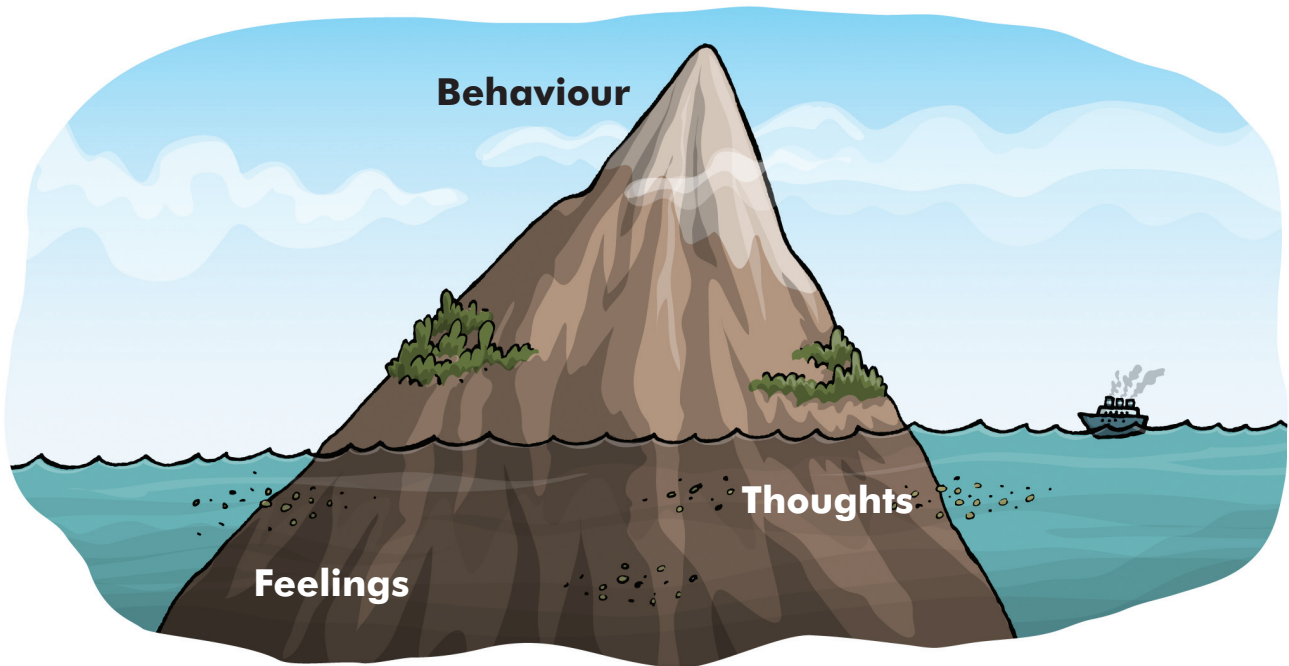
Feelings	Thoughts*	Behaviour
Delighted	"I have been lucky"	Kind to others
Gloomy	"I hate her"	Shouting
Nervous	"What will happen now?"	Crying
Cross	"It's not my fault"	Punching

*Putting thoughts in speech marks helps to remind us the difference between thoughts and feelings.

Next, ask pupils to complete the tables on the Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour Mountain, from their own perspective and/or that of others.

Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour Mountain

Talking about thoughts and feelings is important, as it can help us to understand our own actions and behaviour, and that of others.

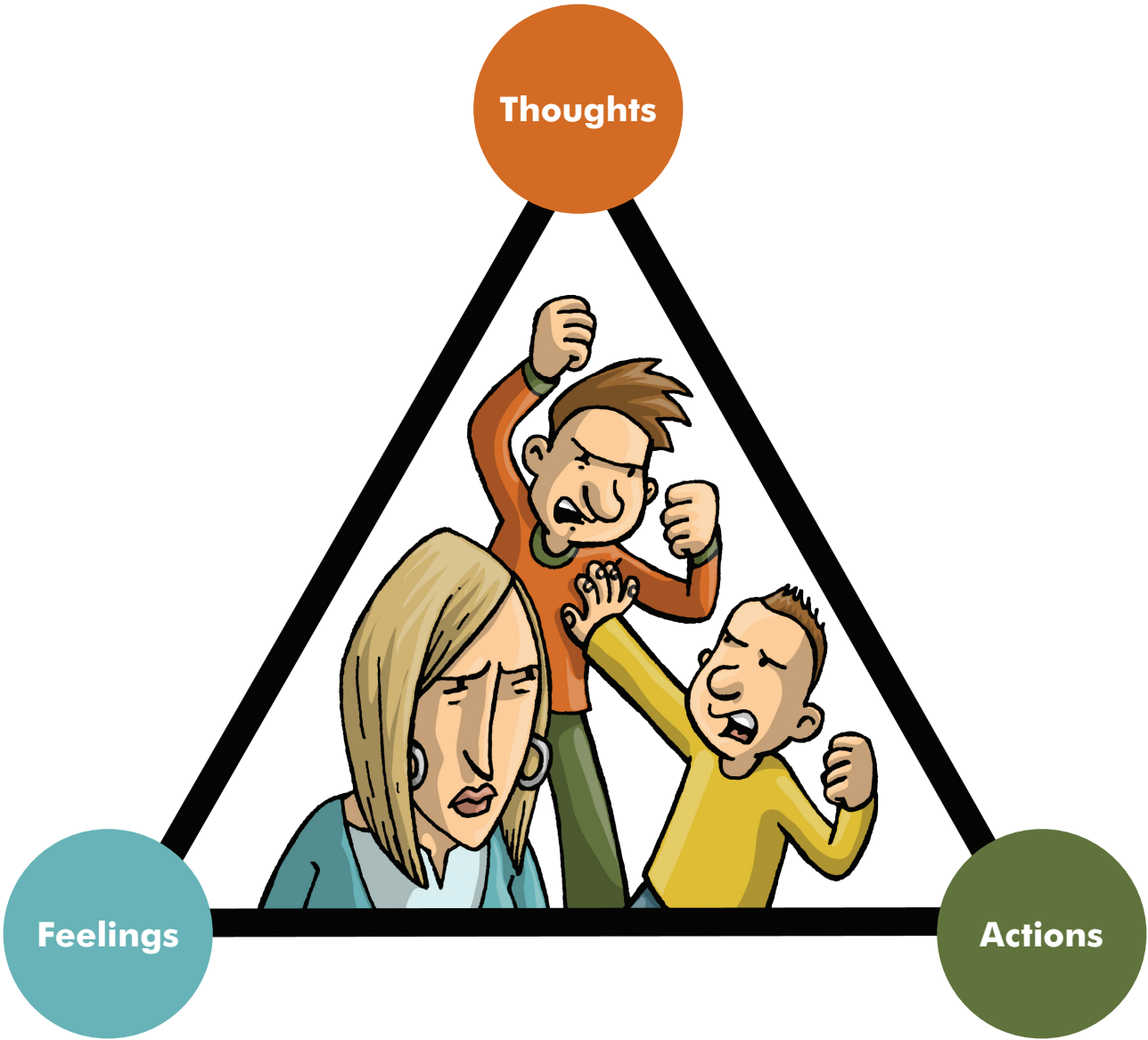


My Feelings	My Thoughts	My Behaviour

Name	Their Feelings	Their Thoughts	Their Behaviour

The Metacognitive Triangle

Information around this resource can also be found in *The Five Themes of Restorative Practices*, as Theme 2 is based upon this.



What I am thinking affects how I am feeling and this impacts on my actions.

The problem is that we always presume that we understand what others were thinking and feeling in a situation and we often act on our own thoughts and feelings about the person.

If we take for example the child who comes into school and, seemingly unprovoked, hits another child: we assume that the child was angry or a bully and we seek to punish the behaviour. However, without knowing what that child was thinking and feeling we will never fully understand the behaviour.

What if the child who did the hitting is subject to a dare and doesn't really want to cause hurt? The child may be more afraid of others than of the consequence of the action.

What if the child who did the hitting has been subject to inappropriate behaviour from the other child, but it has gone unnoticed? What would the child be thinking and feeling?

As adults we are often pressed for time and seek a quick fix to an incident, but does that give us a true understanding?

Encouraging children to consider the links between *thoughts, feelings and actions* encourages them to become more self-reflective and to process thoughts before acting. It also teaches children to become more self-regulating through recognising trigger feelings and thoughts.

If a child can recognise that if they feel unsafe they are likely to think of others as a danger and then perhaps to act out in a self-protective way, perhaps by hitting out first, this can help the child to 'out-talk' the feeling and ultimately to prevent the behaviour.

Introducing children to the metacognitive triangle also encourages them to reflect on what others may be thinking and feeling when they act. This in turn can develop a greater sense of empathy and capacity for compassion.