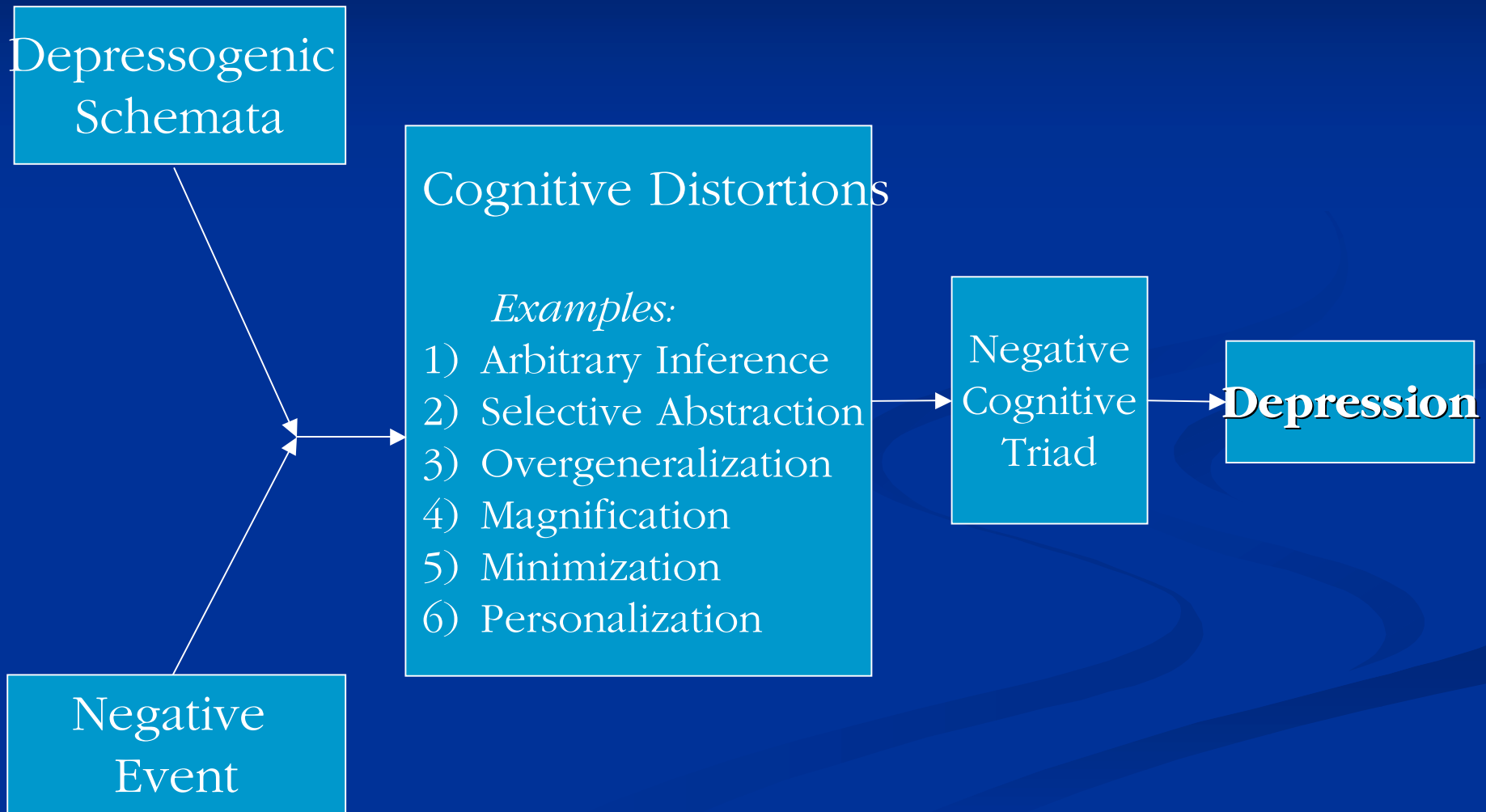


# Cognitive Therapy of Depression for Children and Adolescents

John R. Z. Abela, Ph.D.

McGill University

# Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression



# Cognitive Theory of Depression

## Schemas

- Stored bodies of knowledge that affect information processing
  - Encoding
  - Comprehension
  - Retrieval of information
- Schemas guide attention, expectations, interpretations, and memory

# Cognitive Errors

## ABRITRARY INFERENCE

- Drawing a conclusion that is not supported by evidence

## SELECTIVE ABSTRACTION

- Focusing on a detail taken out of context, ignoring other more salient features, and conceptualizing whole experience based on this element

# Cognitive Errors

## OVERGENERALIZATION

- Drawing general conclusion based on single incident

## MAGNIFICATION/MINIMIZATION

- Error in evaluation based on over- or underemphasizing selected aspects of situations

# Cognitive Errors

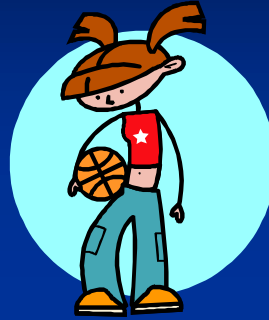
## PERSONALIZATION

- Inappropriately relating external events to oneself without an obvious basis for making such connections

# The Cognitive Triad

Individual's view of:

- Him/Herself



- World (day-to-day experiences)



- Future



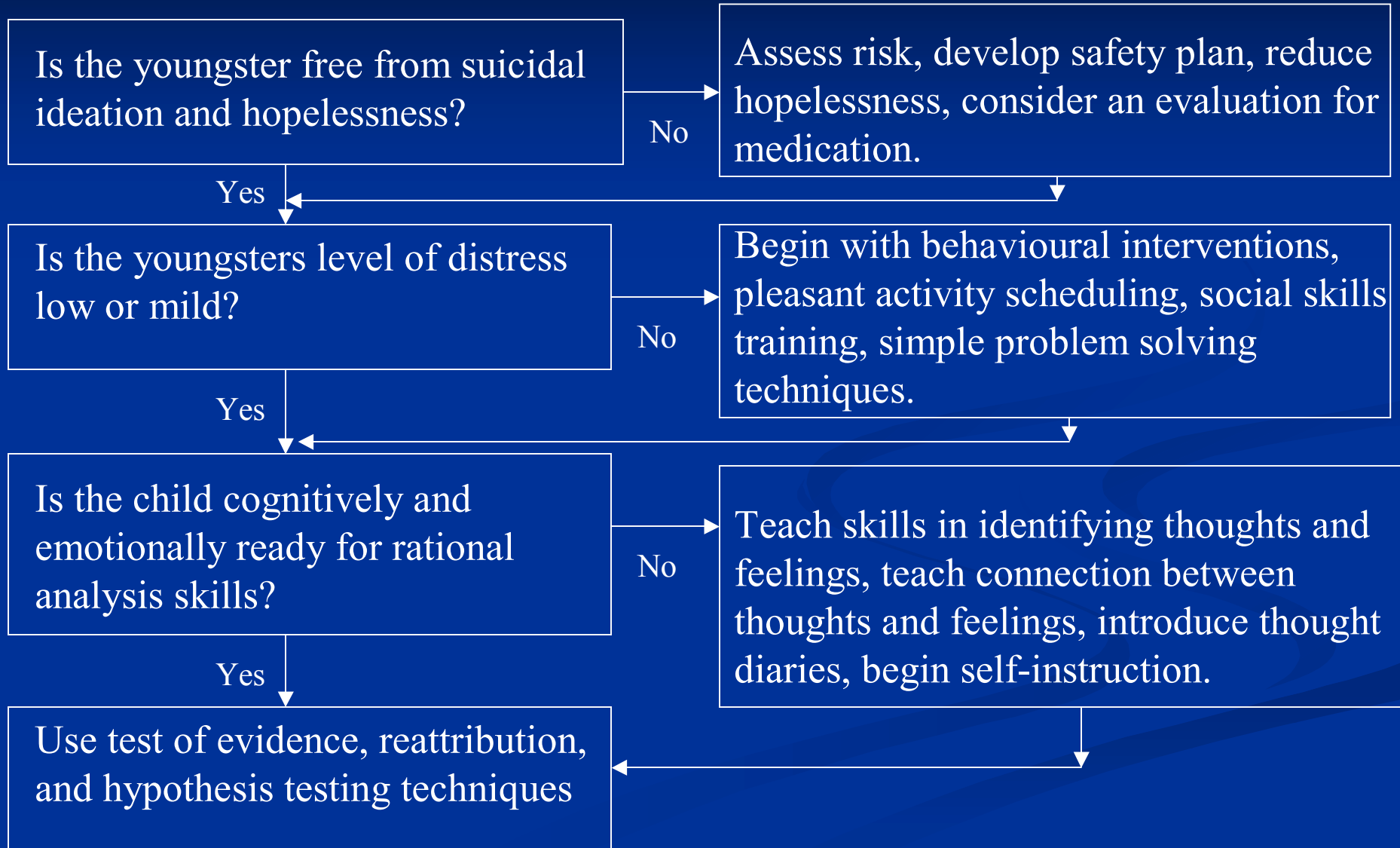
# Overview of Cognitive Therapy

- Short term, time-limited psychotherapy
  - Maximum of 20 sessions over 10 – 15 weeks
- Collaborative, empirical approach to identify and resolve problems
- Comparable to scientific investigation:
  1. Collecting data (events, thoughts, feelings)
  2. Formulating hypotheses based on data
  3. Testing and revising hypotheses (i.e. thinking patterns) based on new information

# Overview of Cognitive Therapy

- Homework assignments (“experiments”) are critical to treatment
- Designed to help patient:
  1. Develop objectivity about situations
  2. Identify underlying assumptions
  3. Develop and test alternative conceptualization and assumptions

# Choosing an Intervention Strategy



# Treatment of Suicidality

- Enlist parental involvement to maintain safety of child
- Develop contract for safety with the child
- Suicidality is often a maladaptive problem solving strategy
  - Important to general alternatives to self-harm

# **If I feel like hurting myself, I will do one or more of these:**

1. Talk to my mom about my feelings
2. Write in my feeling journal
3. Remind myself that hurting myself is a permanent solution to a temporary problem
4. Ask myself “What else can I try?”
5. Call the crisis hotline and talk out my feelings (555-5555)

# Treatment of Suicidality

## TIME PROJECTION

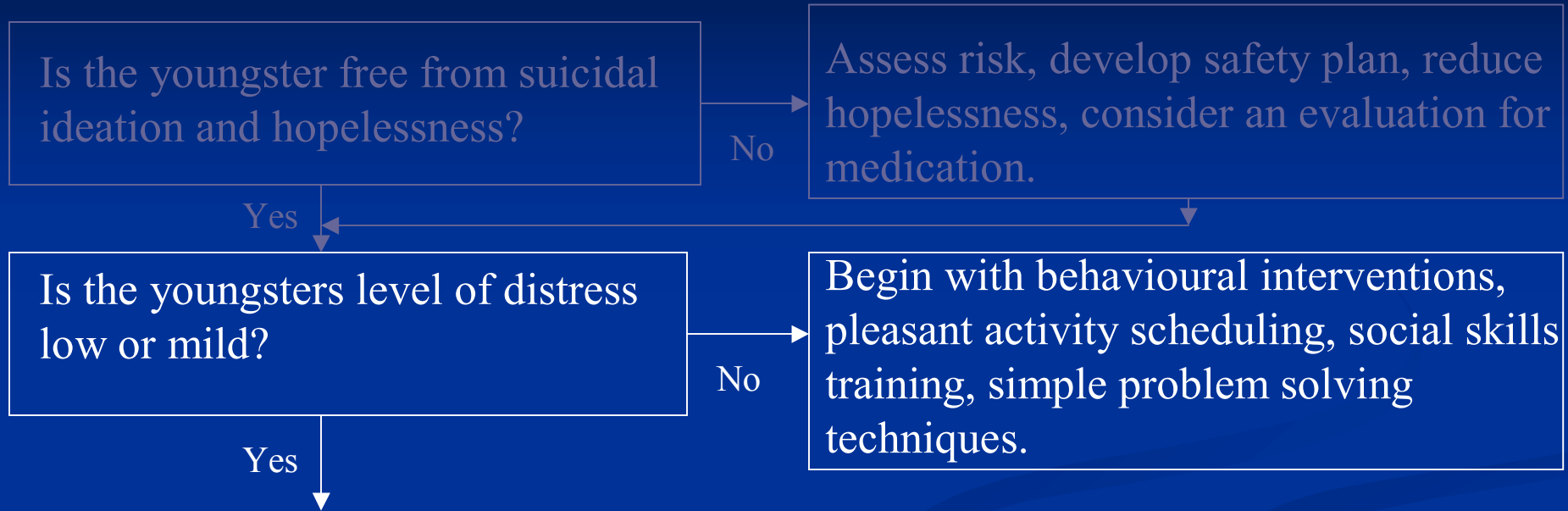
- Widens children's view of future by predicting how thoughts, feelings, and events may be different in 1 week, 1 month, 1 year, ect.
- Trying to help suicidal youngster see that suicide is a *permanent* solution to a *temporary* problem

# Treatment of Suicidality

- Assessing accuracy of child's thoughts related to wanting to die is also helpful
  - Motivation : "I am going to make Drew pay for breaking up with me"
  - Hopelessness (permanent vs. temporary): "I always feel like dying"

IF, a reasonable degree of safety for the child can not be achieved, his/her hospitalization must be considered

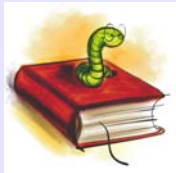
# Choosing an Intervention Strategy



# Pleasant Event/Activity Scheduling

- Scheduling is used to increase the level of positive reinforcement in child's daily routine as well as to activate an inactive child
- Pleasant event scheduling makes use of a schedule that resembles a daily planner

**MONDAY**



**TUESDAY**



**WEDNESDAY**



# Relaxation Training

- Targeted for children and adolescents who are “stressed out”
- Skills include:
  - Controlled Breathing
  - Guided Imagery
  - Muscle Relaxation
  - Adaptive Self-Statements



# Social Skills Training

- Teaching social skills follows a characteristic cognitive-behavioral process
  1. Direct instruction
  2. Graduated practice and rehearsal
  3. Real-world experimentation and positive reinforcement

# Basic Problem-Solving Interventions (RIBEYE)

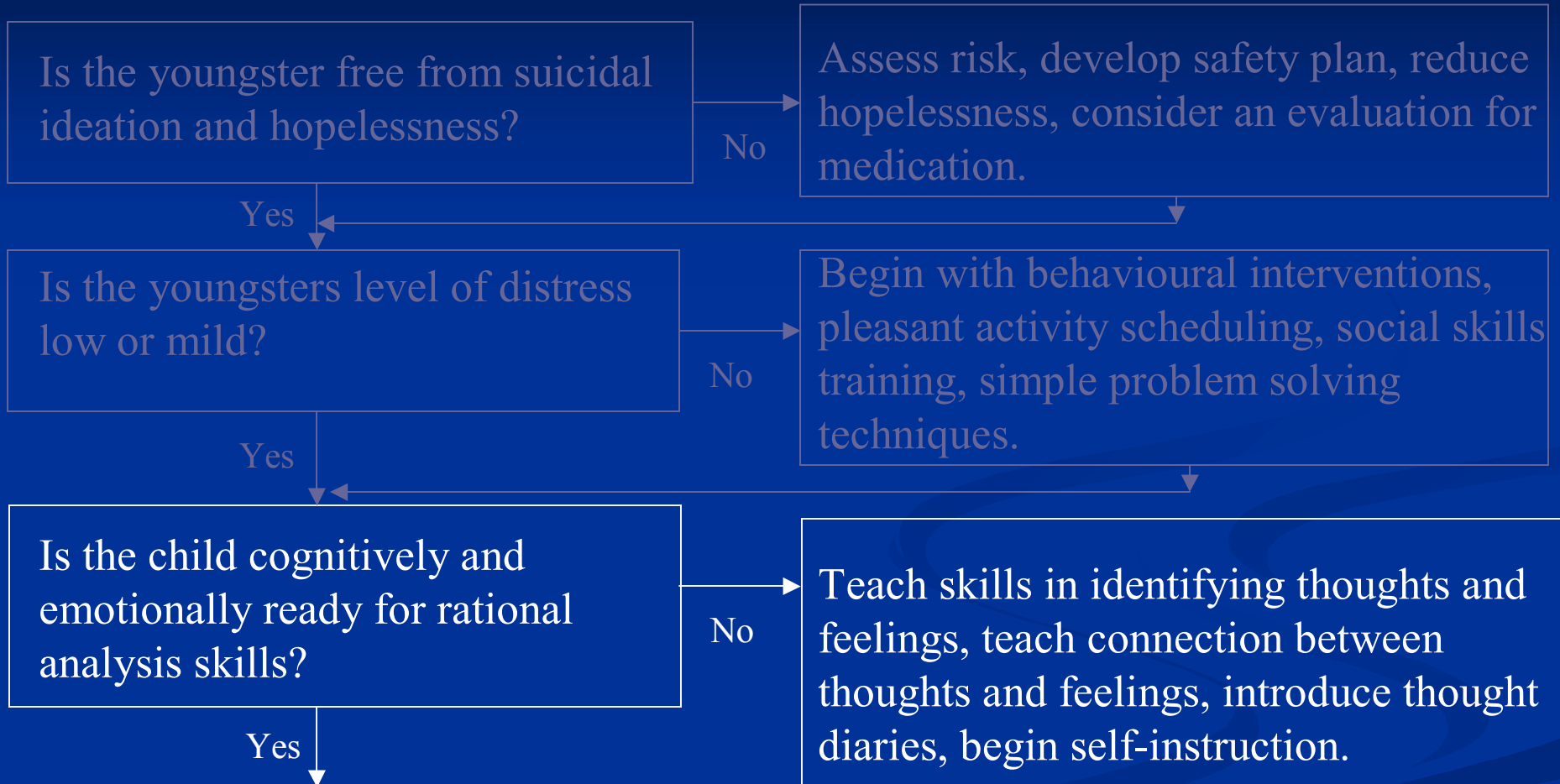
1. **R**elax
2. **I**dentify the Problem
3. **B**rainstorm Possible Solutions
4. **E**valuate their strengths and weaknesses
5. say **Y**es to One (or Two)
6. **E**ncourage yourself for success

# Affect Regulation

- Inability to effectively regulate moods
  - Emotionally labile, moody, volcanic
- Emotion Thermometer
  - Describe feelings when you are “about to lose it...your feelings are out of control.”
- Anchors
  - Identify cues that mood is beginning to escalate.
  - Identify what needs to be done to prevent outburst.

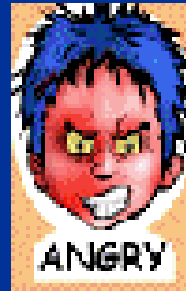


# Choosing an Intervention Strategy



# Identifying Feelings

- Adopting simple classification strategy for emotions
- Feeling Faces



- Then taught to rate intensity

None

1

Kind of

3

A lot

5

# Identifying Thoughts

1. Introduce the concept of an internal dialogue
2. Have the child think of a recent example when something went wrong
3. Ask child what they were thinking when that happened

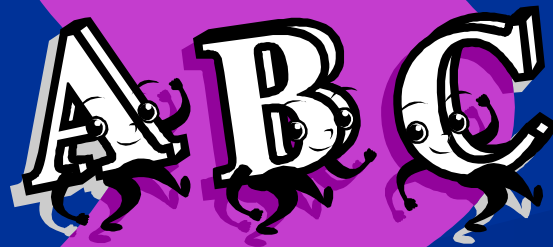
# Connecting Thoughts to Feelings

- ABC Model

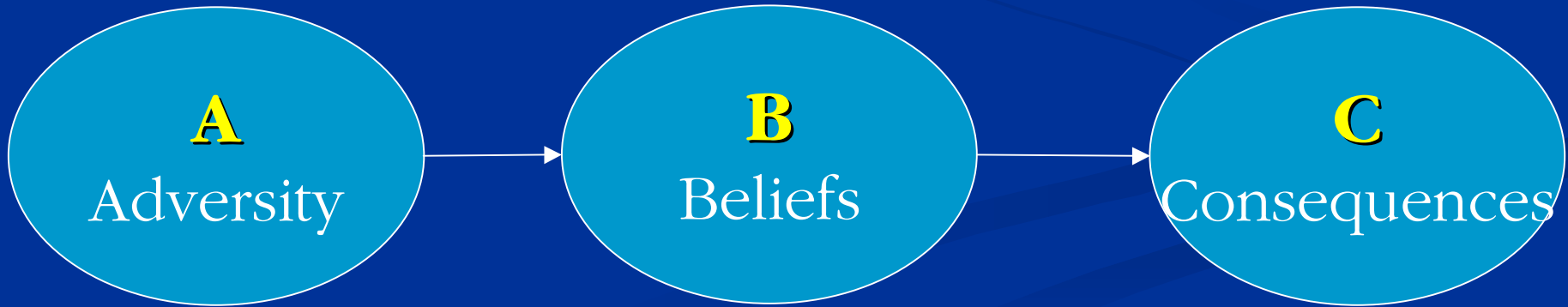
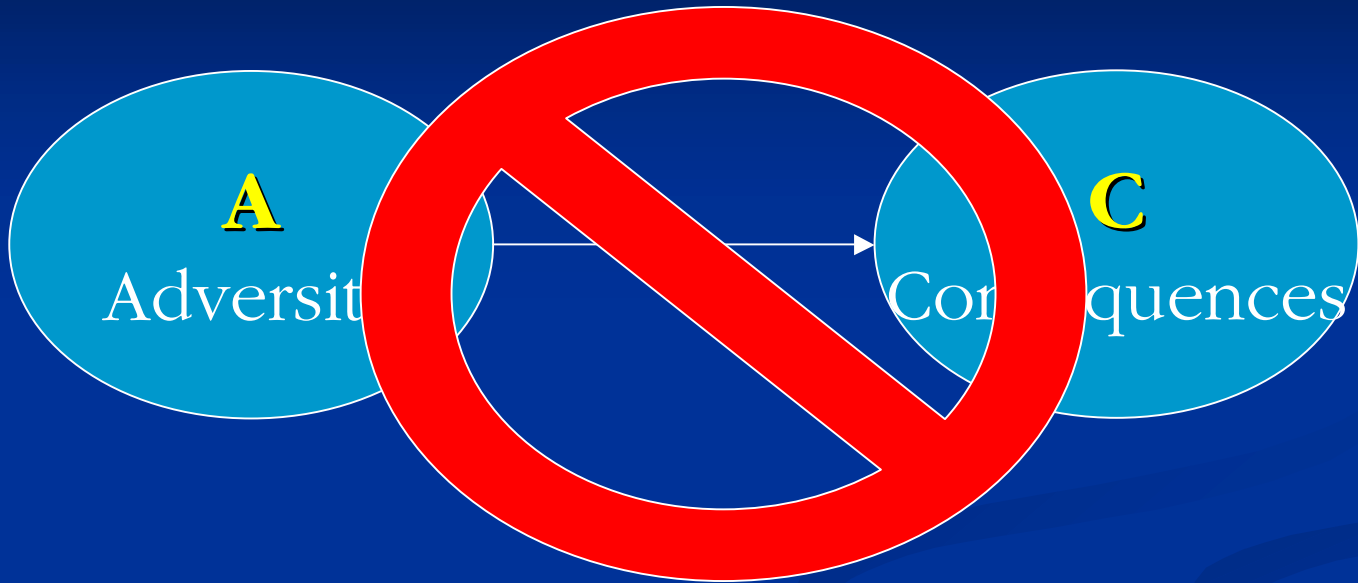
A = ADVERSITY (Any negative event)

B = BELIEFS (Beliefs and Interpretations about A)

C = Consequences (Behavior and Feelings following A)



# ABC MODEL



# Daily Thought Record (DTR)

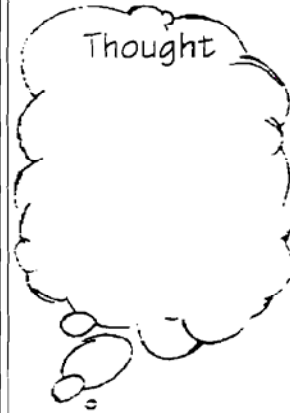
- DTR contains three columns:  
(1) Situation, (2) Feeling, (3) Thoughts
- 1. Situation – Objective description of what is happening
- 2. Feelings – Feeling word and Intensity
- 3. Thoughts – “What is going through my mind?” (Cardinal question)

# Daily Thought Record - Example

Situation	Feeling	Thought
My teacher is mean and says I am dumb.	Sad (8)	He does not like me.

Situation	Feeling	Thought
My teacher told me I was not paying attention in class.	Sad (8)	He doesn't like me. He was mean to tell me this. He made me feel dumb and I don't think I can do my work and he'll keep thinking I'm dumb.

Problem:



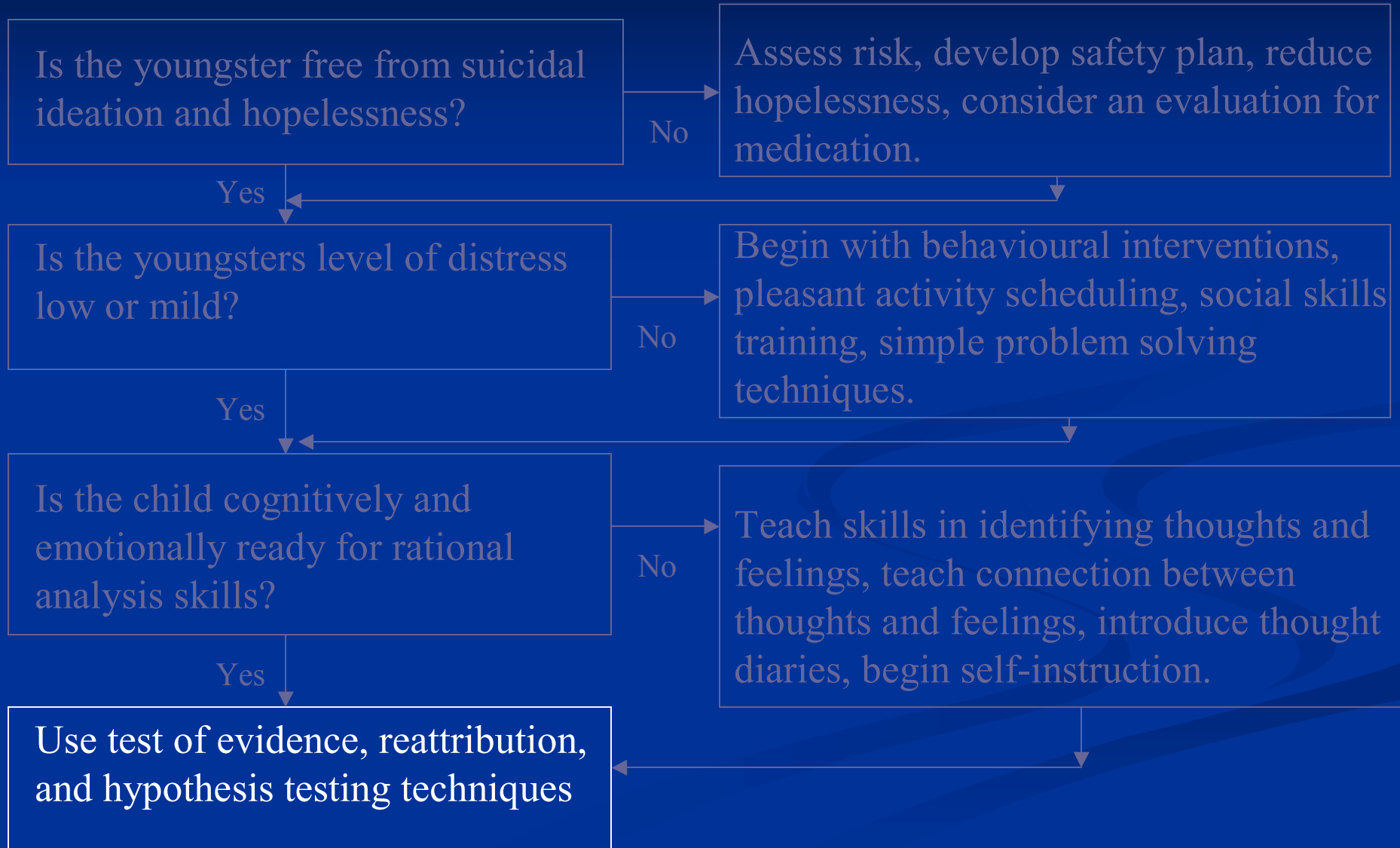
# Self-Instruction

- Change internal dialogue without in-depth rational analysis
  - Focus: Replace maladaptive thoughts with more adaptive
- Three stages:
  1. Preparation: Ready self for distressing situation
  2. Encounter: Develop self monologues that decrease distress
  3. Self-reward stage: Reinforce positive coping

# Decatastrophizing

- Useful if children tend to make dreadful prediction about magnitude and probability of dangers
- Series of sequential question
  - “What’s the worst that could happen?”
  - “What’s the best that could happen?”
  - “What’s the most likely?”
- Can also problem solve
  - “If the worst thing happened, how could you cope with it?”

# Choosing an Intervention Strategy



# The Daily Mood Log

**STEP ONE:** Describe the upsetting event

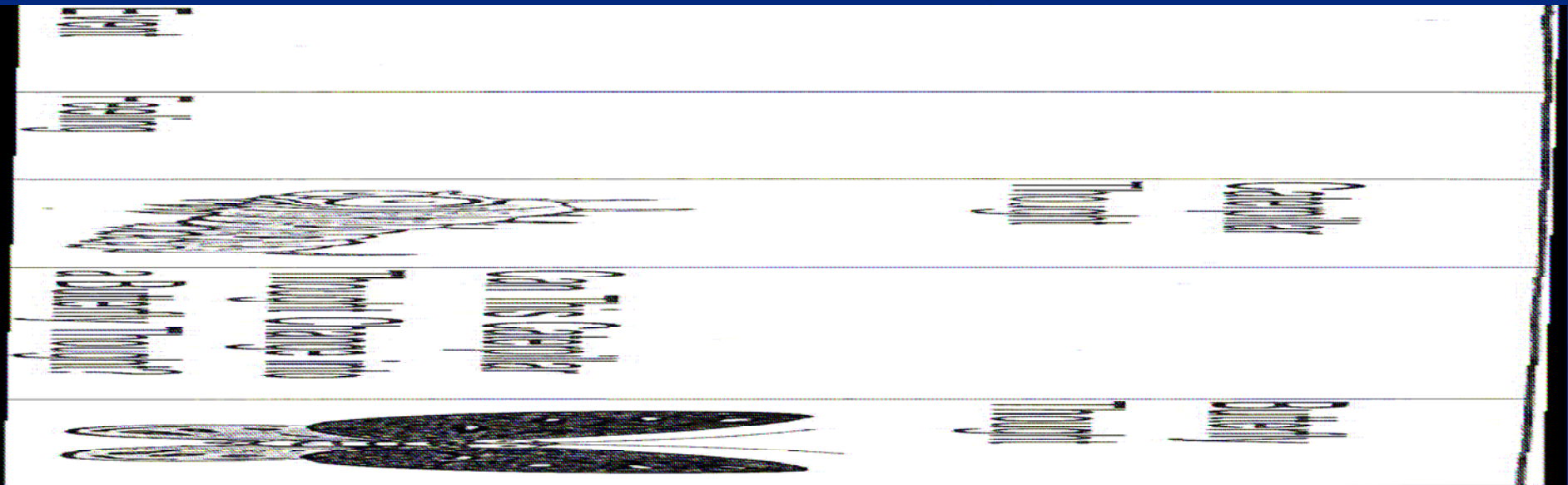
---

**STEP TWO:** Record your negative feelings and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

Emotion	Emotion	Emotion
Rating 1.	Rating 3.	Rating 5.
2.	4.	6.

**STEP THREE:** The Triple-Column Technique

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses
Write your negative automatic beliefs and estimate your belief in each one (1-100).	Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought.	Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0 to 100).



# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion

# Identifying Distortions

1. All-or-nothing thinking
2. Overgeneralization
3. Mental Filter
4. Discounting the Positives
5. Jumping to Conclusions
6. Magnification or Minimization
7. Emotional Reasoning
8. “Should Statements”
9. Labeling
10. Personalization and blame

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine the Evidence

# Test of Evidence

- Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it.
- Useful strategy to test overgeneralizations, faulty conclusions, and ill-founded inferences



# Test of Evidence

1. Reasons for conclusions  
“What convinces you 100% that your thought is true?”
2. Search for contrary evidence  
“What facts make you less certain about your conclusion?”
1. Alternative explanations  
“What is another way of looking at \_\_\_\_\_ other than your conclusion?”
2. Derive conclusion based on facts and plausible alternative explanations

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method

# The Double-Standard Method

- Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh, condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique

# The Experimental Technique

- Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought.

- Ex: “I am about to die of a heart attack!”

Experiment: Jog or run up and down several flights of stairs – This will prove your heart is healthy and strong.

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray

# Thinking in Shades of Gray

- Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range from 0 to 100.
  - When things do not work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure.
  - See what you can learn from the situation.

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method

# The Survey Method

- Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic.
  - Ex: If you believe that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they ever felt that way before a talk.

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms

# Define Terms

- When you label yourself as “stupid” or “inferior” or “a loser,” ask what is the definition of “stupid.”
  - Apply definition universally

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms
8. The Semantic Method

# The Semantic Method

- Simply substitute language that is less colorful and emotionally loaded.
  - This method is helpful for “should statements.”  
Ex: “I shouldn’t have made that mistake!”  
“It would have been better if I hadn’t made that mistake.”

# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

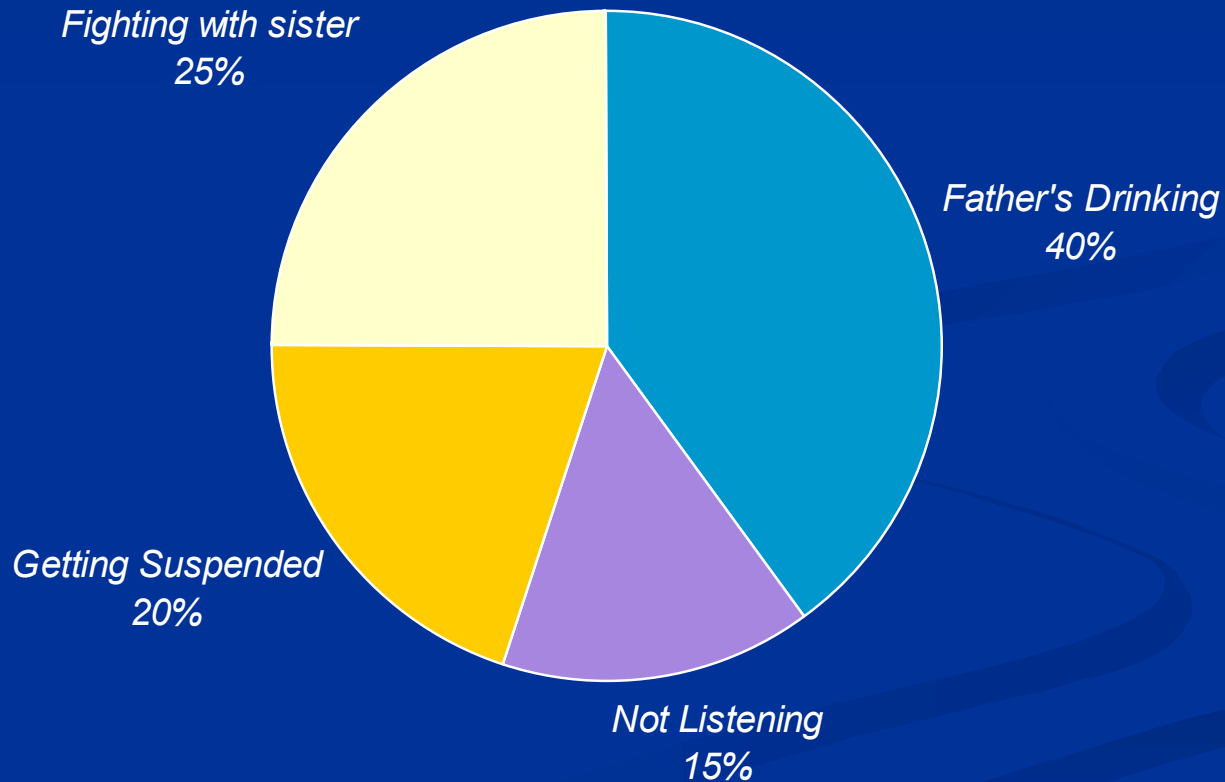
1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms
8. The Semantic Method
9. Re-Attribution

# Re-attribution

- Instead of automatically assuming that you are “bad” and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to it.
  
- Responsibility pie
  1. List all possible reasons for event
  2. Allocate portion of pie to each cause

# Responsibility Pie

## ■ Event: Parents getting separated



# Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence – Test of Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms
8. The Semantic Method
9. Re-Attribution
10. Cost-Benefit Analysis

# Cost-Benefit Analysis

The attitude or belief I want to change:

---

## Advantages of Believing This

1. It will feel good when people approve of me.
2. I'll work hard to make people like me.
3. I'll be very sensitive to other people's feelings

35

## Disadvantages of Believing This

1. I'll feel lousy when people don't like me or approve of me.
2. Other people will control my self-esteem.
3. People will not respect me in the long run if I don't stand up from what I believe in.
4. I may be less sensitive to other people because I'll be so worried about criticism or conflict.

65

**Revised Attitude:** It can be great to have people like me and approve of what I do. When people are more critical of me, I can understand their point of view.

# The Daily Mood Log

**STEP ONE:** Describe the upsetting event

---

**STEP TWO:** Record your negative feelings and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

Emotion	Emotion	Emotion
Rating 1.	Rating 3.	Rating 5.
2.	4.	6.

**STEP THREE:** The Triple-Column Technique

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses
Write your negative automatic beliefs and estimate your belief in each one (1-100).	Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought.	Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0 to 100).