

PARENT INFORMATION 3

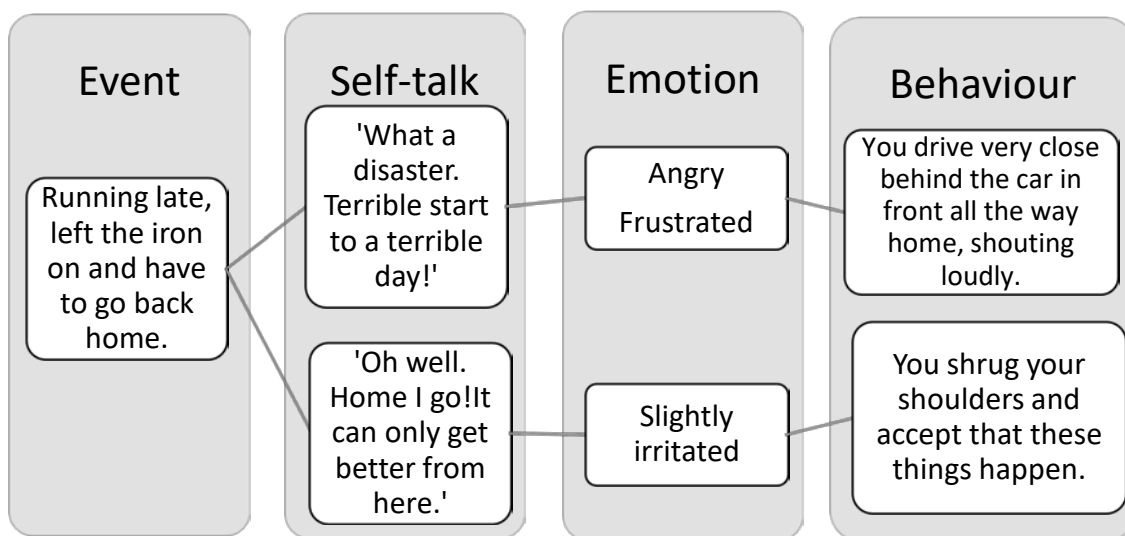
The Triple B 4 Brain – Thinking About Our Thinking

Your child has been learning about the power of their internal dialogue – or self-talk. All day, every day human beings have thousands of thoughts whizzing around their brain. Thoughts that support learning, thoughts about social interactions, thoughts about what's happened. It's a 'Thought Super-Highway' in most people's heads a lot of the day, and that requires careful 'thoughts traffic management.'

Thinking can be positive and helpful – your child now calls that 'Supa Thinking'; negative and unhelpful thoughts are called 'Stinking Thinking.'

Thinking is part of a very important process that governs feelings and behaviour. When something happens – an **Event**, you say something to yourself – **Self-talk or Thinking**, you develop an **Emotion or Feeling** (which might grow into a mood if it hangs around) which usually leads to a certain way of **Behaving**.

Here's an example: *You're on the way to work and you realise that you haven't switched off the iron. You were already late when you left the house.*



We teach children to think about – and change - their self-talk, which helps to shift the intensity of their feelings, and then also their behaviour, as in the example. A HIGHWAY HERO can change their self-talk from Stinking Thinking to Supa Thinking.

The automatic tendency for most children (and adults) when they face a difficulty, is to engage in Stinking Thinking - negative and unhelpful - and this can become habitual. A child who has difficulty breaking a pattern of negative self-talk will sustain that negative emotion - which can grow into a mood. Changing a child's mood is often dependent on being able to change their self-talk from the Stinking Thinking of, 'It's not fair,' or 'It always happens to me!' to, 'It's not that bad, or 'I'll be alright.'

Being able to monitor and manage their self-talk develops as children mature, and will do so much faster if they're taught how to change their self-talk from Stinking Thinking to Supa Thinking.

It's important to talk with your child about ways that they can change their self-talk into accepting and straight-forward – rather than exaggerated or dramatic internal dialogue. Your child has learned some tips, tricks and TOOLS this week about this, and you can help them extend their learning at home. Here are a few ways to help your child move from Stinking Thinking to Supa Thinking:

1. Model it yourself. Say out aloud to your child an occasion when you've had some Stinking Thinking, e.g., "I was late this morning because I left the iron on - and I had to come home. I was telling myself how silly and careless I was and it made me frustrated and angry." Follow that up with what you said to yourself to change your thinking. "So, I said to myself, 'Oh well, guess I'm going to be late. Nothing I can do about it; better than having a fire at home; it will be OK.'" The more your child sees and hears you changing your self-talk, your emotional response and your resulting behaviour, the more likely that they will imitate it.
2. Make some Supa Thinking posters and put them up in your child's room, the bathroom or behind the toilet door.

I'LL BE OK.

IT WILL GET BETTER.

(CALM DOWN; IT'S OK.

EVERYONE FEELS SAD SOMETIMES.

IT WILL PASS.

BREATHE, JUST BREATHE.

TOMORROW IS ANOTHER DAY.

THIS TOO SHALL PASS.

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER – EVEN FEELINGS.

3. Encourage your child to journal – and this needn't be boringly writing their deep thoughts into a leather-bound book; a pile of post-it-notes is perfect. On one side your child writes or draws their Stinking Thinking, and on the other, they write or draw their Supa Thinking. Your child might want to put their Stinking Thinking post-it-note into the bottom drawer in their bedroom, and then move it up to the top drawer when their thinking changes into Supa Thinking.

REFLECTION POINT:

Shakespeare said, 'Things are neither good nor bad, it's thinking that makes them so.' This holds true in adult life when we engage in unhelpful internal dialogue (Stinking Thinking) about things children have done, happenings at work, social issues, partner issues... Changing the way you say things to yourself is a critical starting point in developing your resilience.