

# I CAN CHOOSE: CBT worksheet

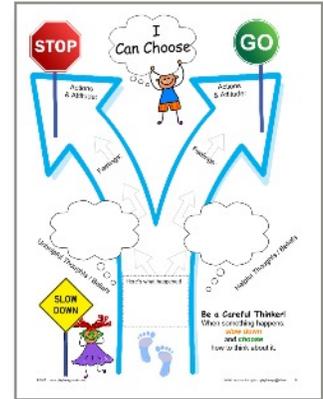
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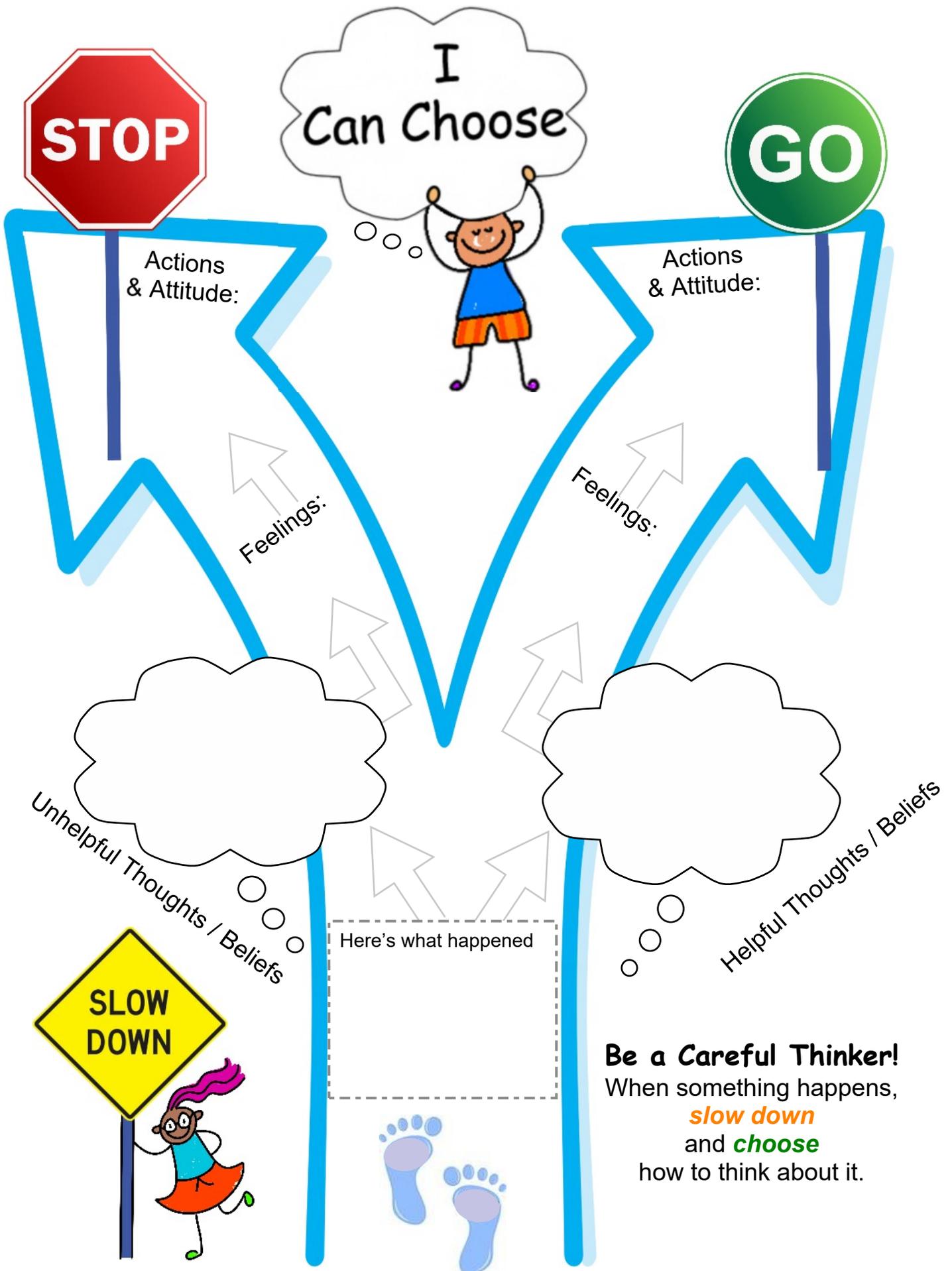
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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

*Cognitive behavioral therapy “helps a person focus on his or her current problems and how to solve them. ... The therapist helps the patient learn how to identify distorted or unhelpful thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, relate to others in more positive ways, and change behaviors accordingly.”*

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies>

**Disclaimer:** This resource provides a child-friendly “tool” for therapists who have previous training and expertise in cognitive-behavioral therapy. This resource is not intended to provide background or training in CBT. It is expected that therapists using this resource already have a sound theoretical understanding of CBT and a repertoire of CBT interventions that they use with clients. This resource is intended to supplement those interventions, by providing a visual tool that makes the principles of CBT more accessible for young people.

## I CAN CHOOSE: CBT worksheet

### RATIONALE:

**Cognitive restructuring** is a core component of CBT in which the client

- 1) identifies the unhelpful thoughts, faulty assumptions, and irrational beliefs that accompany unhealthy stress
- 2) formulates alternative ways of thinking that are more accurate and helpful, promoting cognitive flexibility.

Typically, this restructuring begins during therapy sessions, in the context of a dialog between the therapist and client. In working with child clients, it can be difficult to hold a child’s attention for conversations of this sort, so strategies to make that dialog more concrete and hands-on are helpful.

### GOALS:

With this activity, children:

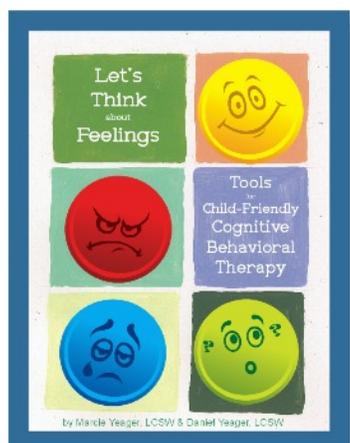
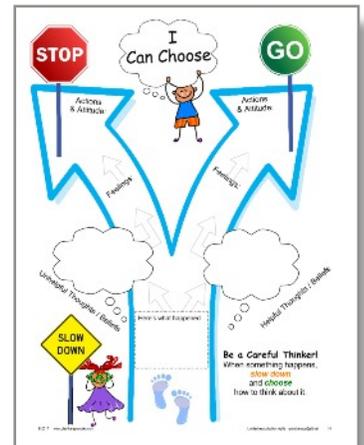
- learn that by changing the way they think about a stressful situation, they can change the outcome.
- enhance cognitive flexibility by brainstorming for “helpful thoughts.”

### HOW TO USE:

A basic CBT technique is teaching clients about the connection between events, one’s subsequent thoughts about the event, and one’s emotions and behavior.

The ***I Can Choose*** worksheet provides a visual demonstration of that connection, using two different “paths” emerging from the same event.

- The path on the left (with the STOP sign at the end) can be used to imagine unhelpful thoughts/perceptions that are likely to lead to unsatisfactory outcomes.
- The path on the right can be used to imagine alternative, helpful thoughts and perceptions that are more likely to lead to satisfactory outcomes.



This worksheet is from the digital book  
**Let’s THINK About Feelings:  
Tools for Child-Friendly  
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

This digital book can be purchased at  
[www.playtherapyworks.com](http://www.playtherapyworks.com)