

# SCD Skills Workshop

---

**Student Counselling &  
Development**

**Winter 2020**



# Agenda

**10:00:** Housekeeping

**10:10:** What is Stress

**10:35:** Thought & Mood Connection

**11:00:** Relaxation for Stress

**11:25:** Key Takeaways



# Housekeeping



- Make sure to fill out the attendance sheet
- If at any time you need to leave, please do so in a non-disruptive way
- Latecomers will be asked to return to the workshop on another day
- Facilitators have the discretion to remove participants due to disruptive behaviour
- If at any point you feel unwell or unable to continue, you may speak with the front desk staff about being seen by a counsellor

# Group Norms for a Successful Workshop

- Be respectful of your peers
- Actively engage with workshop material
- Acknowledge the diversity of backgrounds present- everyone has their own story
- Keep the shared personal experiences of your peers confidential
- Your questions and comments are always welcome
- Keep an open mind to learning something new!





# Part 1: What is Stress?



# What is Stress?

---

Stress is an emotional and physical response to demanding situations.

*Adapted from*  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/eustress#good-stress>

## **STRESSOR**

Anything that has the effect of causing stress.

## **STRESS CAPACITY**

The amount of stress a person can carry, since each person has some stress in their lives.

## **STRESS RESPONSE**

The body's reaction to stress (e.g. fight, flight, or freeze).

## **"GOOD STRESS"**

Manageable stress that can lead to growth and enhanced competence.

# Symptoms of Stress

---

*Refer to "The effects of stress on your body" handout for more information.*



## **COGNITIVE**

Poor concentration, inability to focus, racing thoughts, memory deficits



## **EMOTIONAL**

Fear, anxiety, sadness, anger, irritability, frustration, and agitation

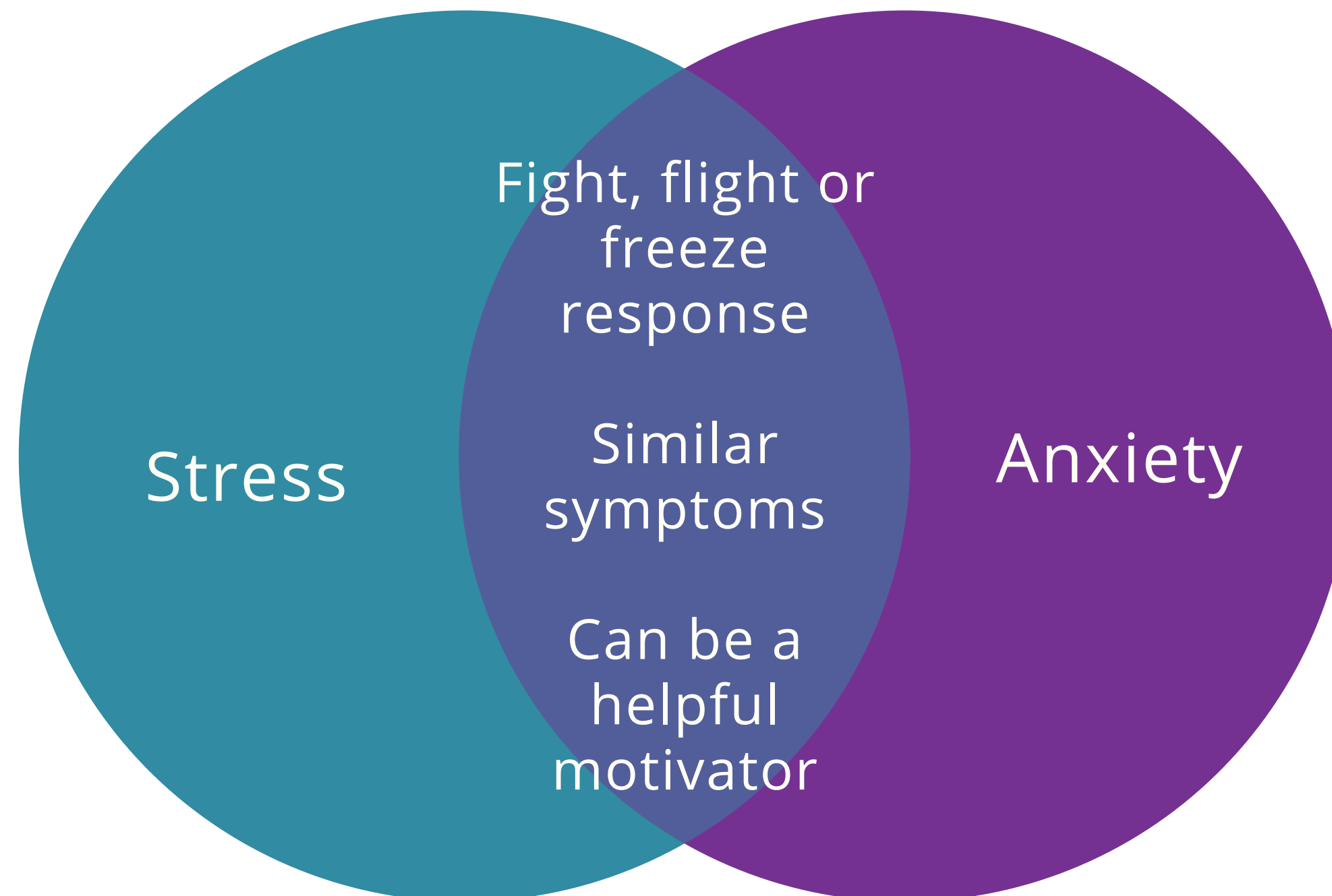


## **PHYSICAL**

Sleep restlessness, headaches, indigestion, muscle tension, fatigue, overeating, loss of appetite

*Adapted from  
<https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/stress-signs>*

# Stress vs. Anxiety





# Stress vs. Anxiety

## **Stress**

Focuses mainly on external stressors that we're finding hard to cope with.

When we are stressed, we usually know what we're stressed about, and the symptoms of stress typically disappear after the stressful situation is over.

## **Anxiety**

A clinical term that focuses on worries or fears about things that could threaten us, as well as anxiety about the anxiety itself.

Anxiety is one of our internal warning systems that alerts us to danger and prepares our bodies to fight back or get out of a dangerous situation.

For the purposes of this workshop we will be focusing on stress rather than anxiety.

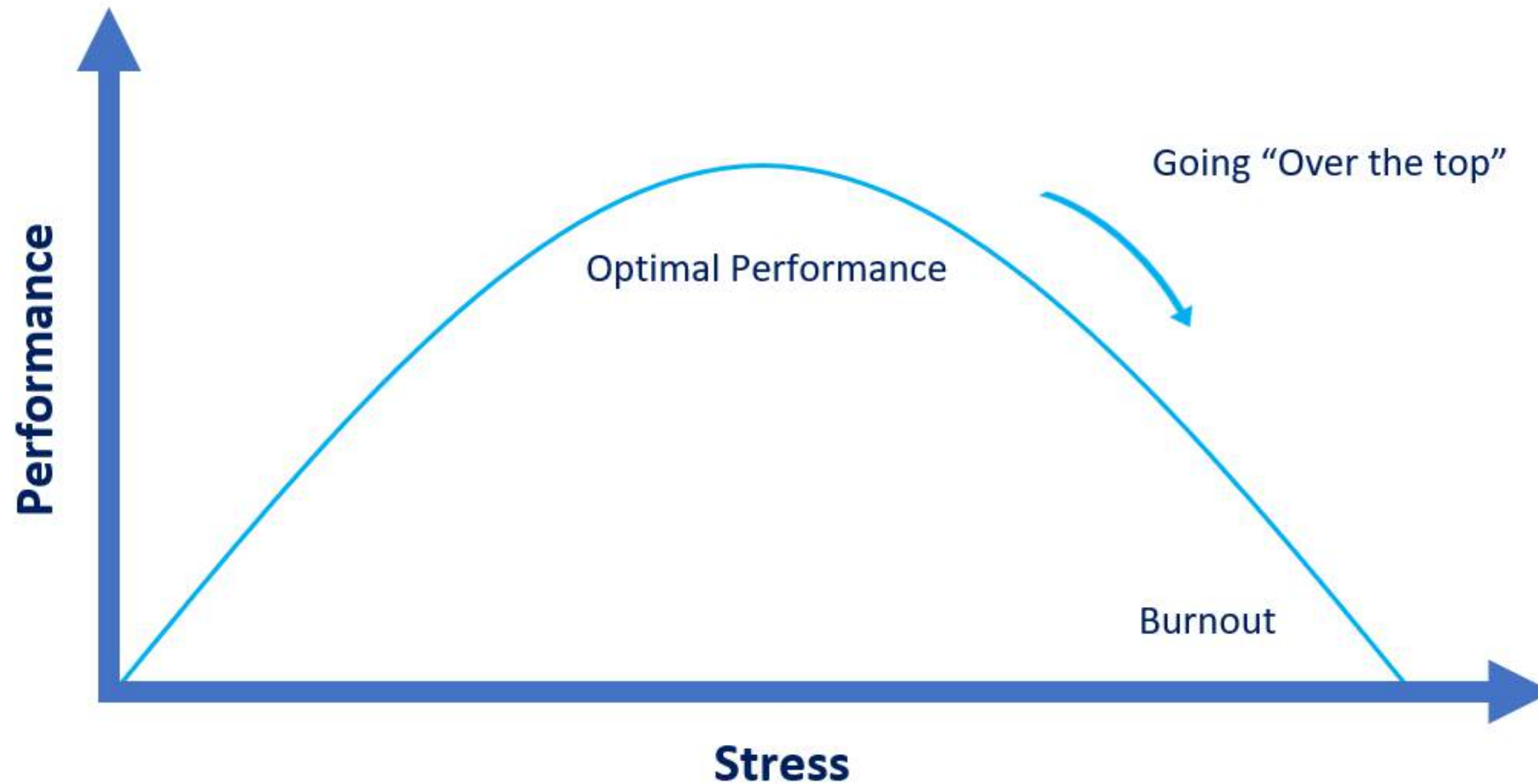
*Adapted from*

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/q-and-a/whats-the-difference-between-anxiety-and-stress>

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/q-and-a/whats-the-difference-between-anxiety-and-an-anxiety-disorder>



# How Stress Affects our Performance





# What burnout can look like at school



## ACADEMIC SIGNS

- Delays starting academic work
- Reduced quality of work
- Missed assignments
- Repeated absences from class



## BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS

- Feeling discouraged about academic progress
- Lack of confidence in your work
- Falling behind on personal hygiene
- Sleep changes



## INTERPERSONAL SIGNS

- Expression of concern by other students
- Withdrawal from others





# Stress Management Strategies

## Meeting Basic Needs

During periods of high stress, many people take shortcuts when it comes to their basic needs (e.g. sleep, healthy diet, exercise, personal hygiene, medication, etc.) which can contribute to additional stress.

## Things to Consider

- What basic needs do you tend to neglect when you are under too much stress?
- What steps can you take to protect these basic needs during periods of high stress?

*Adapted from*  
<https://gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/harvard-resources/signs-stress>



# Stress Management Strategies

## Self-Care

"The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress."

– Oxford Dictionary

## Things to Consider

- What self-care activities do you want to try?



# Stress Management Strategies

## Social Supports

Seeking out support can increase our resilience to stress.

### Things to Consider

- Who can you turn to for support or ask for help?
  - Reach out to an existing relationship you find helpful and nurturing
  - Increase your community involvement such as hobby groups, volunteering, or religious groups
  - Attend a support group and connect with others who are facing similar challenges or life experiences
  - Use professional support when problems are too complicated or too difficult to tackle alone

Adapted from  
<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/stress-management.pdf>

# Now it's your turn!

**Individually, take your worksheet and do your best to answer the following questions:**

- How do I know I am stressed?
- How do I manage stress? Are these strategies working for me?
- Are there healthier strategies I would like to try? (e.g. meeting basic needs, self-care, social support, etc.)?





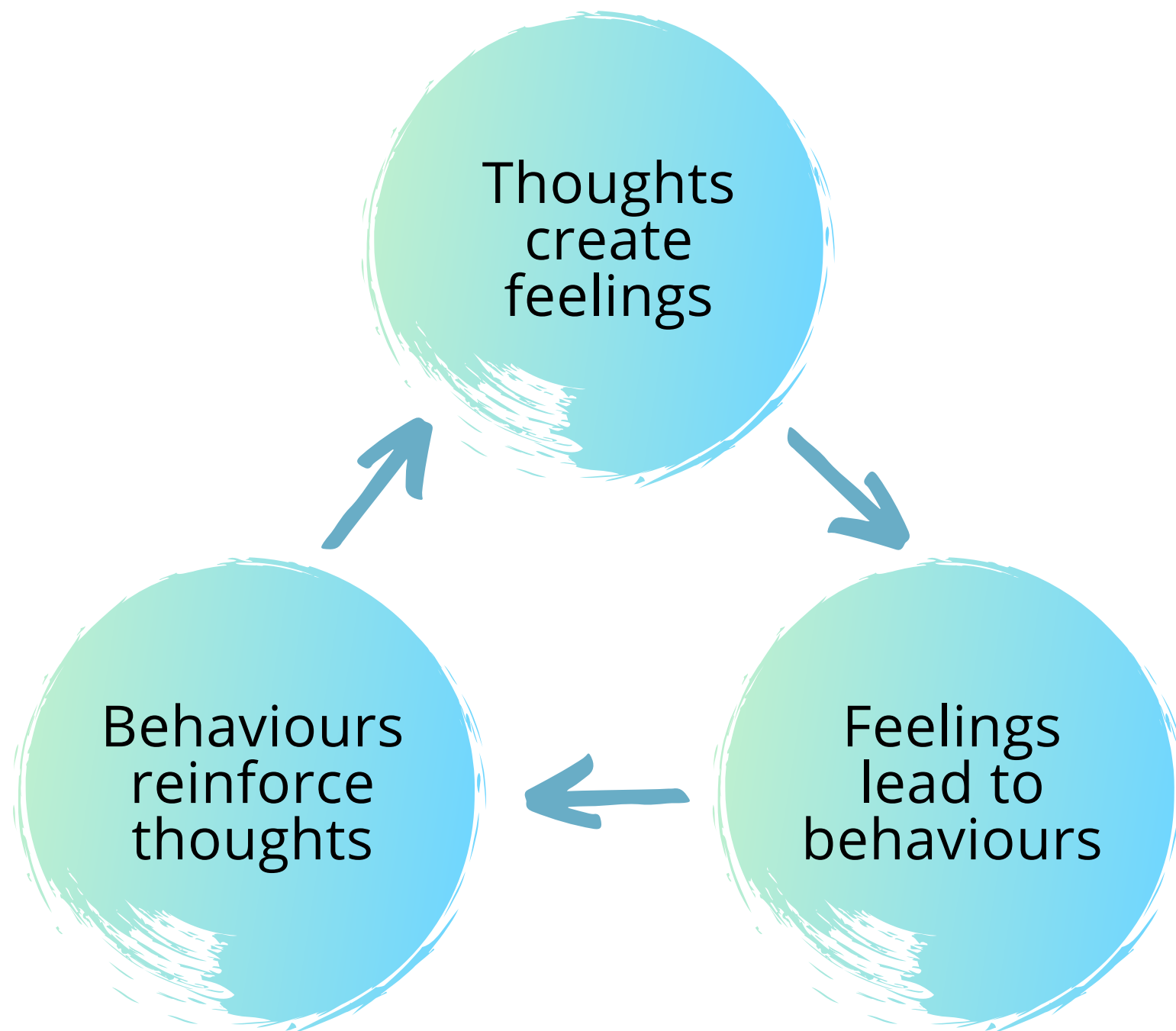
A young man with dreadlocks is the central focus, wearing a bright yellow zip-up jacket with a logo that says "Garbage" and a stylized graphic below it. He is looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. In the background, several other people are visible, but they are out of focus. The overall scene is dimly lit with a blueish tint.

**Part 2:**

# **Thought & Mood Connection**

# Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection

Just as stress can impact how we feel, the way we think can also affect how we feel.



*Adapted from*  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950/in-depth/art-20043950>



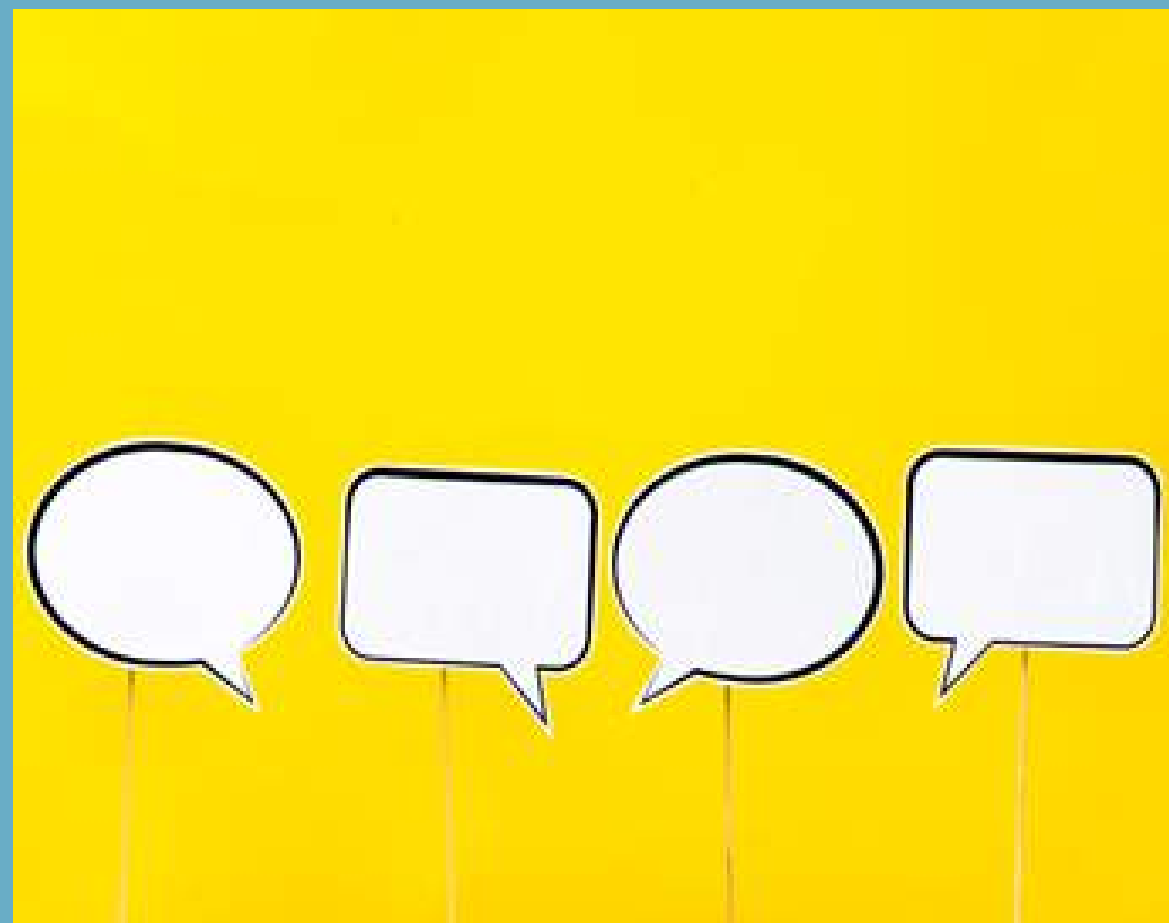
# What is Self-Talk?

---

The way that we talk to ourselves is known as “self-talk”.

## **SELF-TALK**

An internal dialogue which we use to describe and interpret the world around us.



Sometimes, how we talk or think about ourselves affects how we feel about ourselves (both helpful and unhelpful)

# What are Unhelpful Thoughts?

---

Unhelpful thoughts are often negative, unfair, and distorted. There are a number of different ways we can think negatively or unrealistically.

## OVER-GENERALIZATION

---

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, using overly broad examples to draw a conclusion

**For example:**

I didn't do as well as I wanted on the first test so I know I'm going to fail all the rest of my tests.

## DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

---

Discounting all of the good things that you have done/ have happened to you.

**For example:**

Even though my T.A. tells me that I understand the course material, I know I will fail.



# Facts vs. Assumptions

---

Assumptions can sometimes seem like facts and can affect how we feel about ourselves. What is the difference?

## FACTS

---

Facts are verifiable and cannot be changed. Facts usually require you to problem solve.

### **For example:**

I waved to my friend and they didn't wave back.

## ASSUMPTIONS

---

Assumptions are a part of our belief system. They tend to be informed by our emotions.

### **For example:**

I waved to my friend and they didn't wave back because they hate me.

# Now it's your turn!

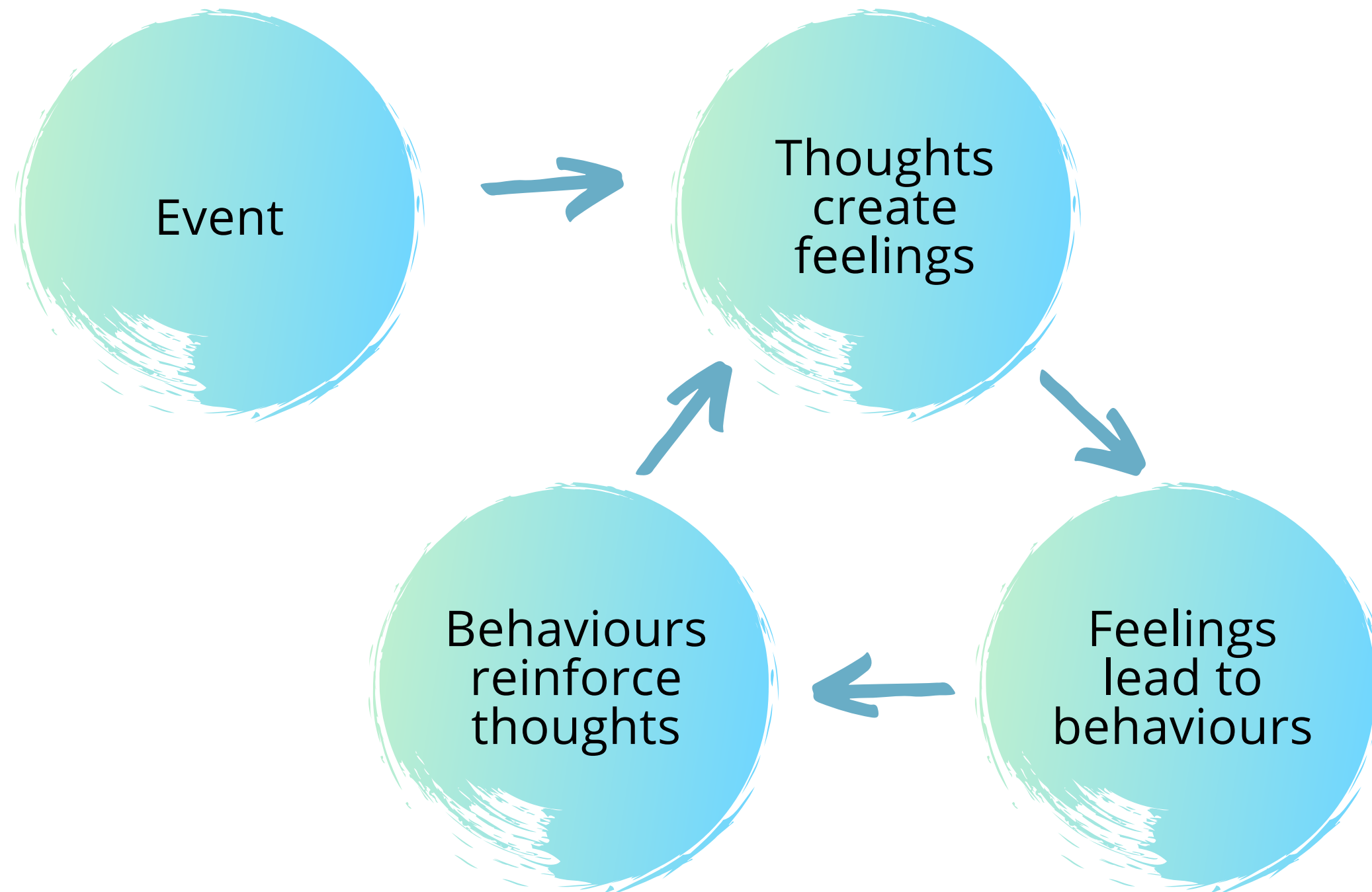
Are the following statements facts or assumptions? Share your thoughts with the group!

- I am late for class
- I believe my professor does not like me
- I will always fail an exam

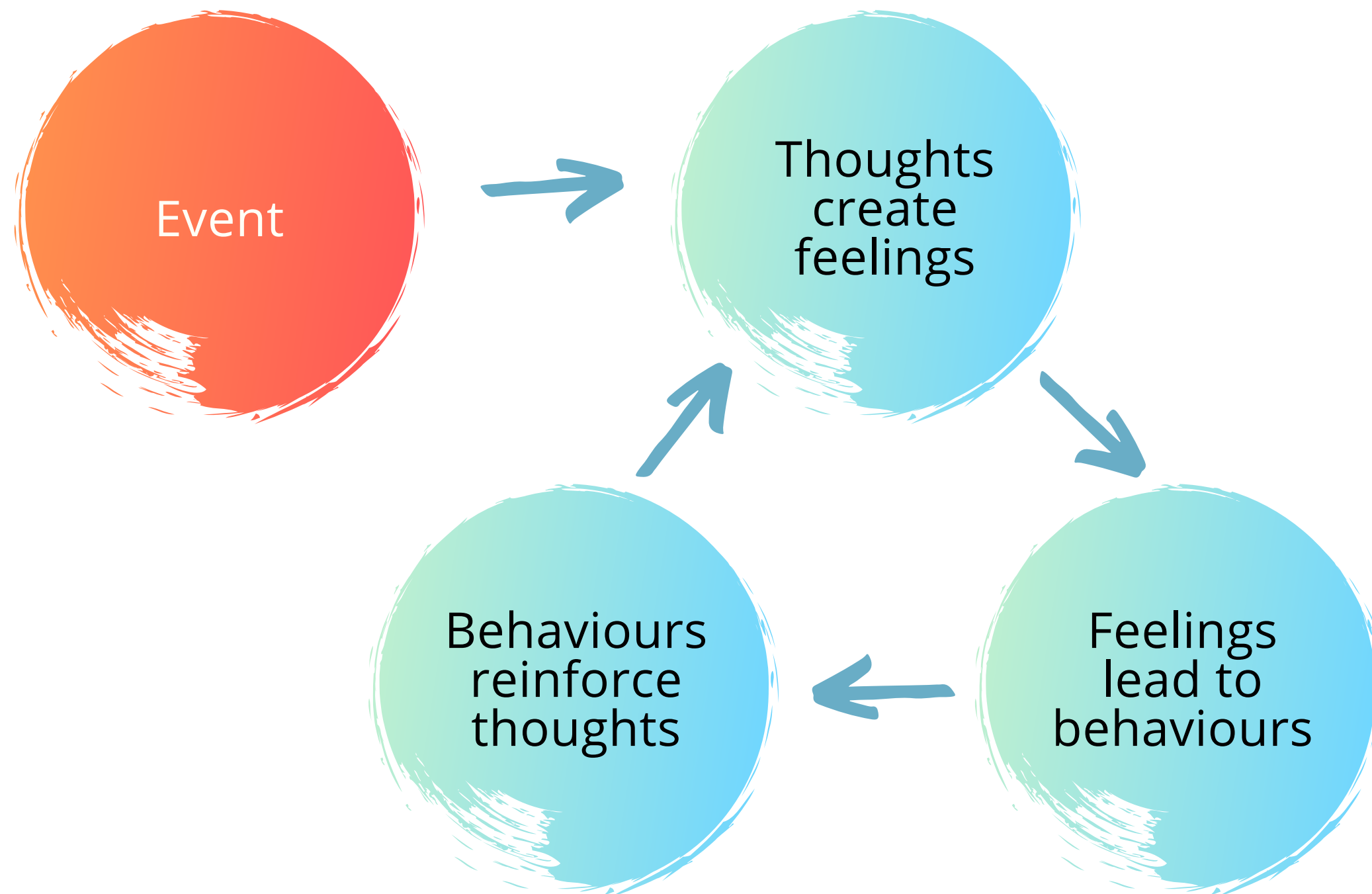




# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection



# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection

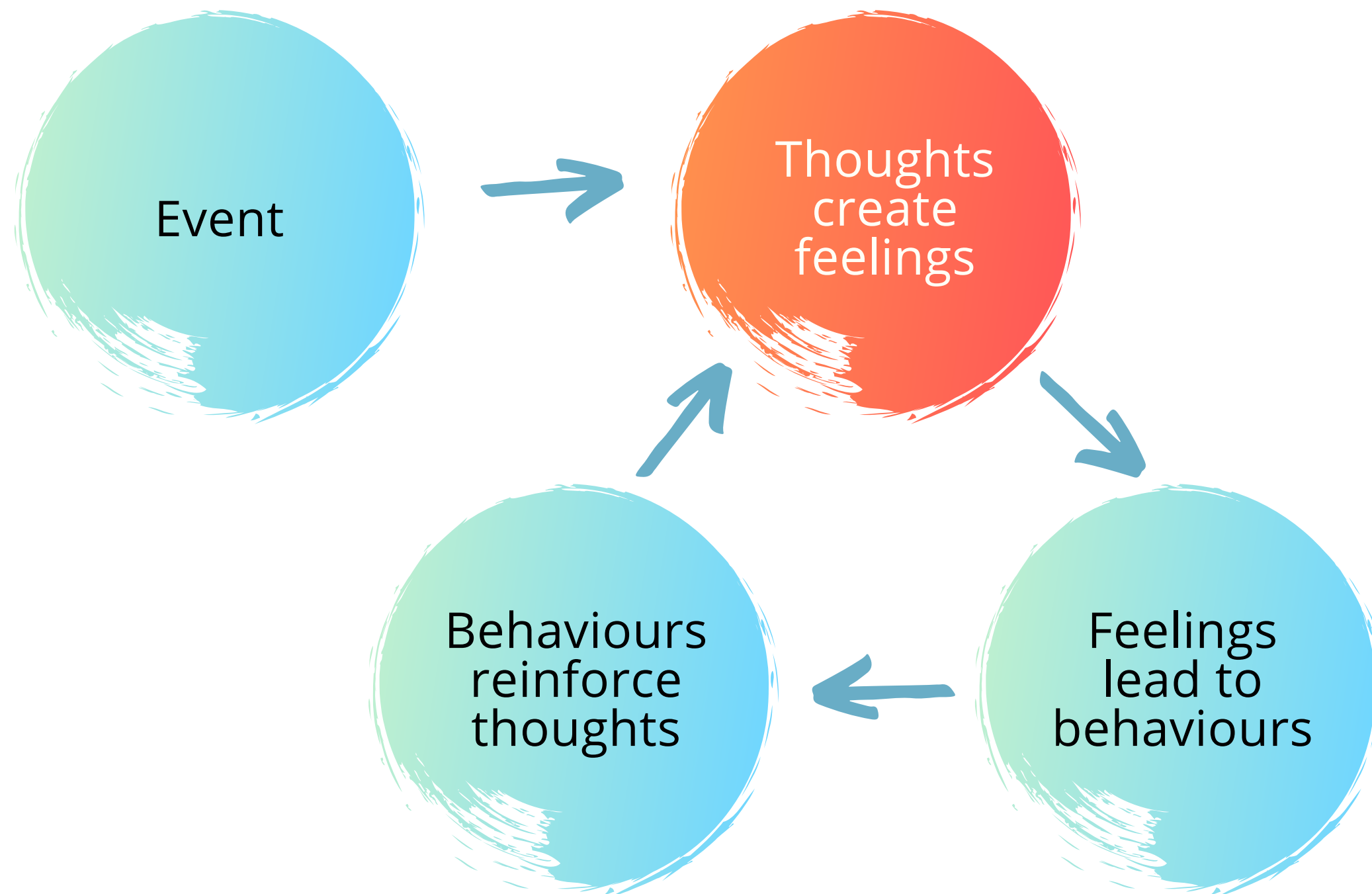


When we feel overwhelmed in the moment with stress there is usually an event that gets us stuck in unhelpful thoughts.

Let's say your friend is on the other side of a sidewalk and you wave and they do not wave back.



# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection

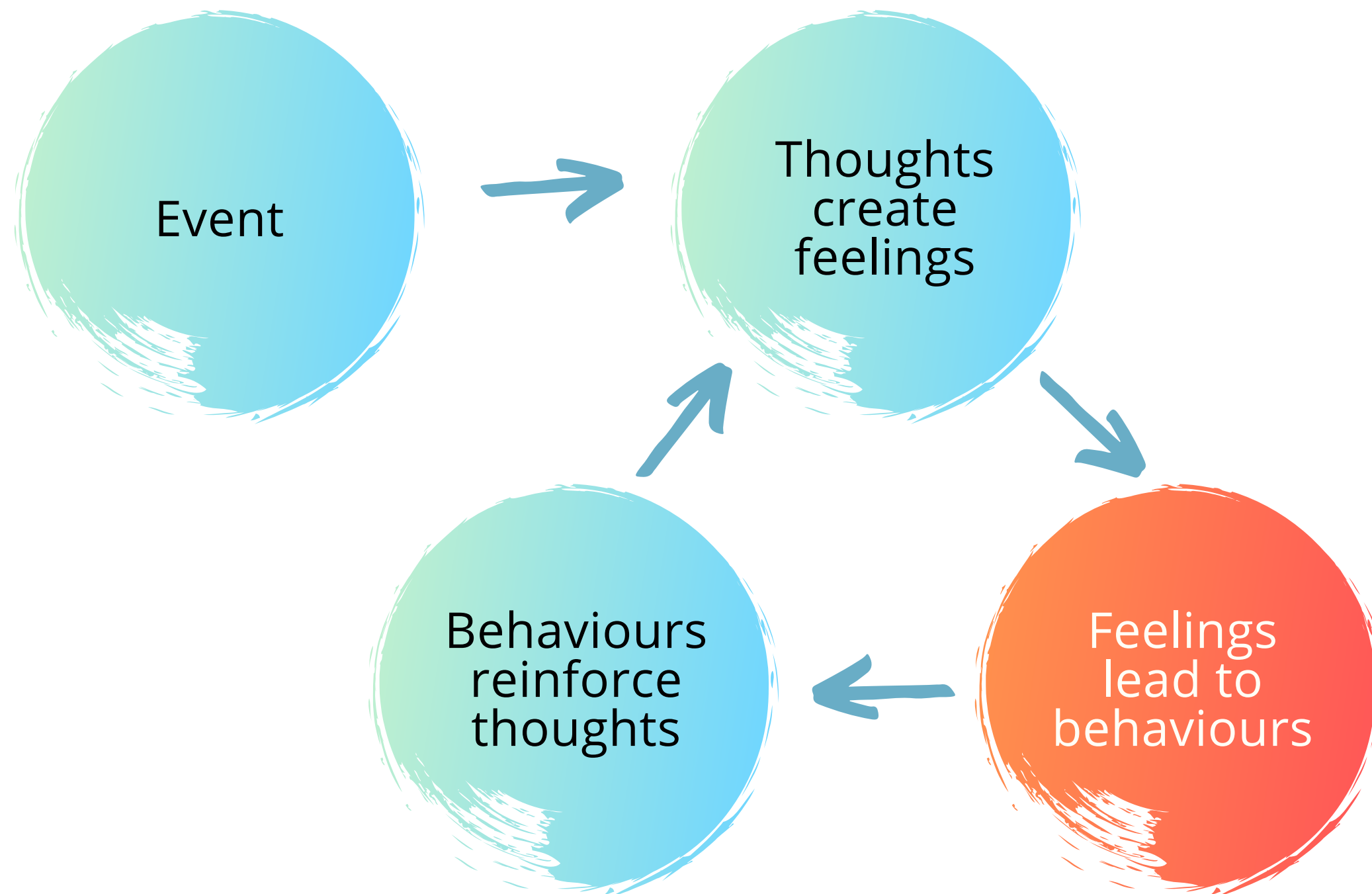


If you experienced this event what may your unhelpful thoughts be?

1. My friend doesn't like me
2. What is wrong with my friend?

You may feel sad or rejected...

# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection

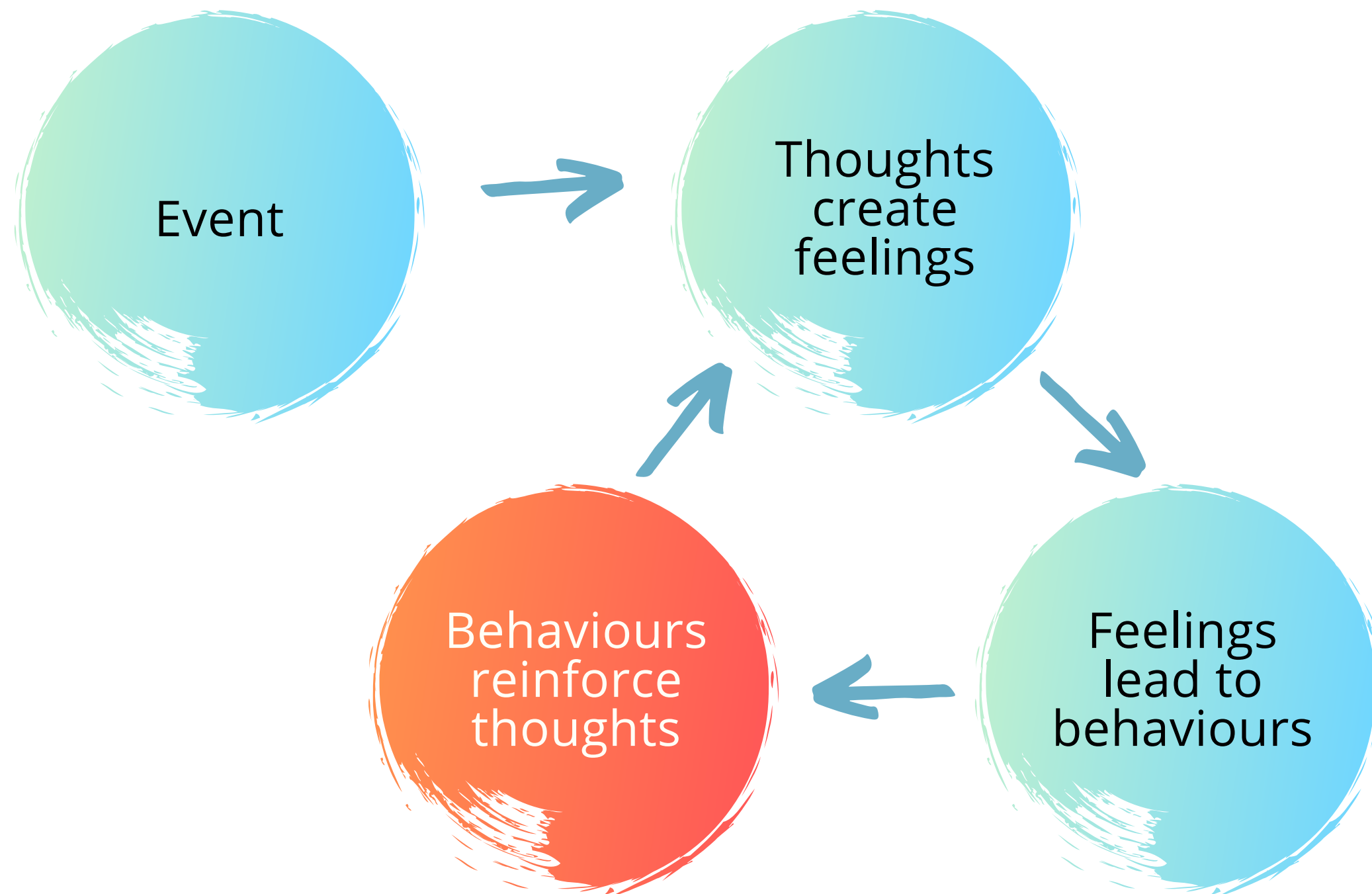


If you feel sad and rejected, what would you do?

Let's say you isolate yourself or avoid your friend...



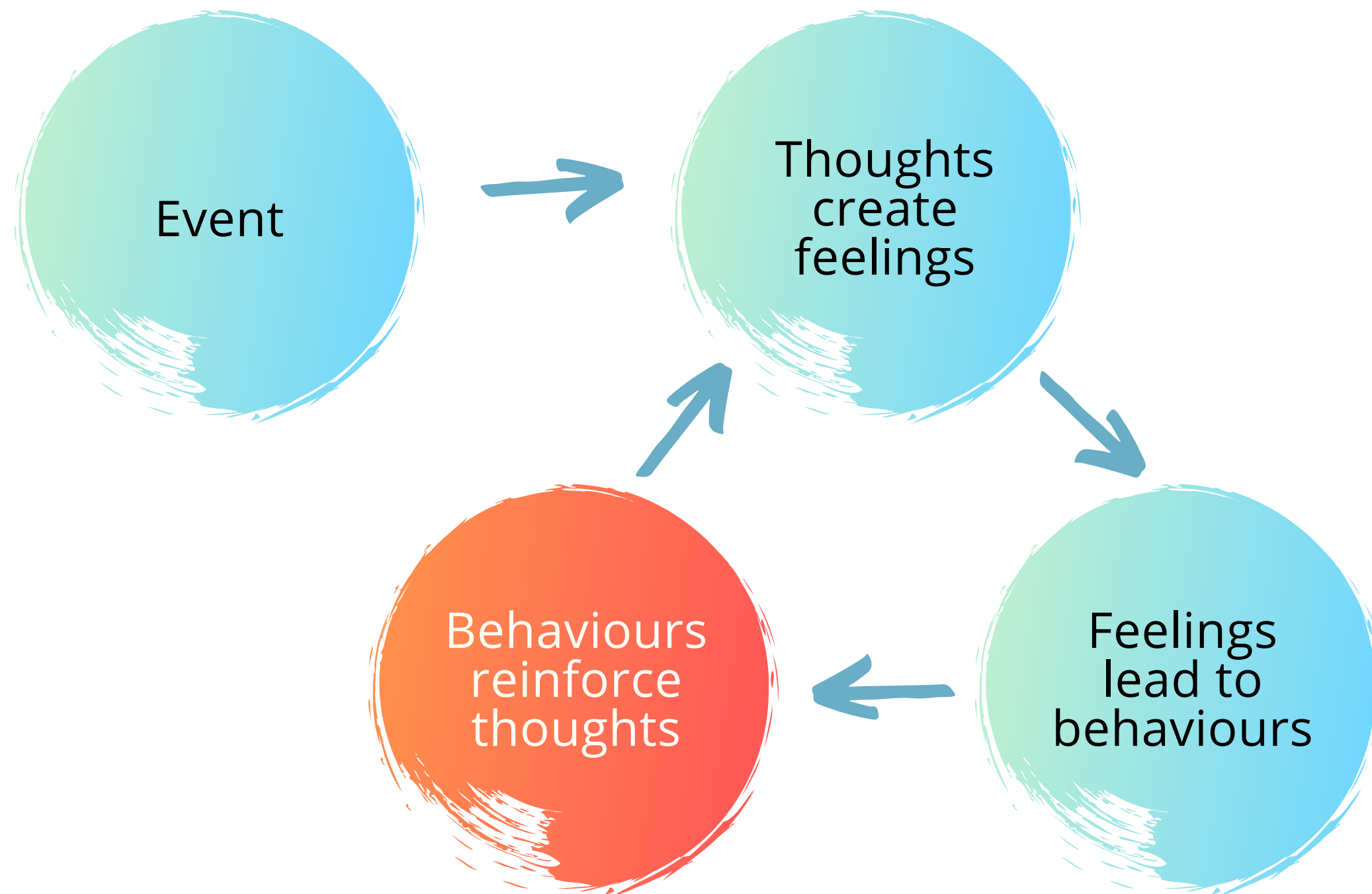
# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection



These behaviours may lead to more unhelpful thoughts such as:

- *"Why isn't anyone reaching out to me?"*
- *"What is wrong with me?"*

# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection



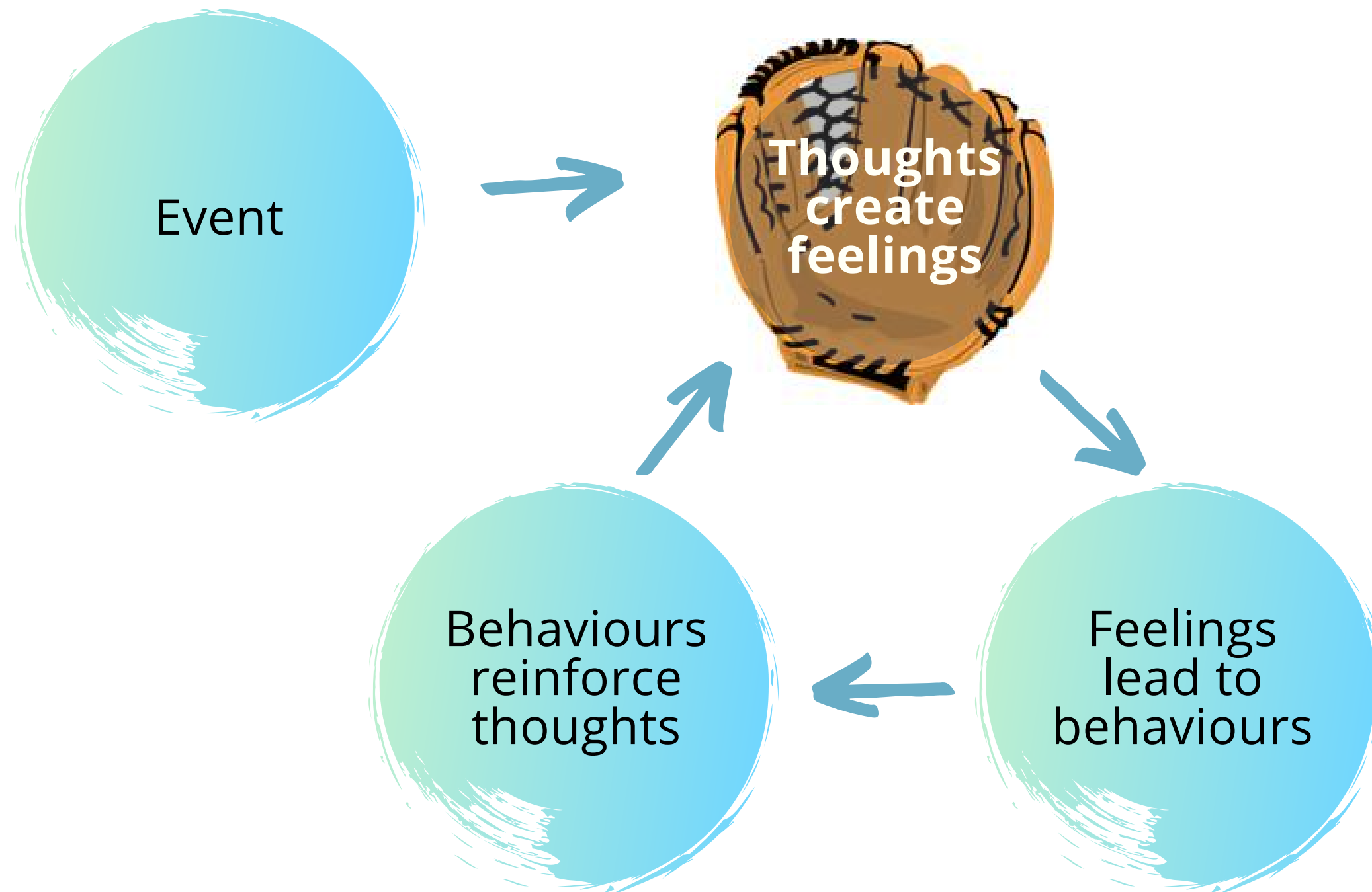
When you are stressed out, you likely engage in negative activities that keep you stuck. These behaviours reinforce unhelpful thoughts and negative behaviours that keep you stressed out.

## For example:

- Not reaching out to your friend
- Isolating yourself
- Giving up on your friendship



# Let's look at the Thought, Feeling, Behaviour Connection



So what can you do about it?

First you have to catch your thought! Then, follow the three steps on the following slides to Challenge Your Thought



# Challenging Your Thoughts

**STEP 1:**

**EXAMINE YOUR  
THOUGHT**

**STEP 2:**

**LOOK FOR AN  
ALTERNATIVE  
EXPLANATION**

**STEP 3:**

**PUTTING IT IN  
PERSPECTIVE**





# Challenging Your Thoughts

## STEP 1:

### EXAMINE YOUR THOUGHT

#### For Example:

- What is the evidence for and against my thinking?
- Is my thought factual or my interpretation?
- Am I jumping to conclusions?
- How can I find out if my thought is true?

*Adapted from*  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950/in-depth/art-20043950>

# Challenging Your Thoughts

## STEP 1:

### EXAMINE YOUR THOUGHT

#### Evidence For

- No Wave
- No eye-contact

#### Evidence Against

- It was a busy street
- My friend doesn't have good eyesight
- I generally have a good relationship with my friend

*Adapted from*  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950/in-depth/art-20043950>



# Challenging Your Thoughts

## STEP 2:

### LOOK FOR AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION

#### For Example:

- Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
- If I look at this situation positively, how is it different?
- How would a friend see my situation?

*Adapted from*  
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950/in-depth/art-20043950>



# Challenging Your Thoughts

## STEP 3:

### PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE

#### For Example:

- What is the worst thing that could happen?
- What is the best thing that could happen?
- What is most likely thing to happen?
- Is there anything good about this situation?
- Will this matter in a year from now? Five years?

*Adapted from*

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/positive-thinking/art-20043950/in-depth/art-20043950>



# Challenging Your Thoughts

**If you feel like you're getting stuck, try a change of scenery by practicing one or some of the following:**

- Challenge your negative thoughts
- Do something nice for a friend
- Go out and socialize
- Go for a walk
- Meditate for a few minutes
- Listen to uplifting music



# Now it's your turn!

**Come up with a balanced thought by considering the most balanced, realistic, or objective way to see a situation.**

For example:

**Fact:** I was walking on campus and waived at my friend who was driving in their car. My friend did not respond.

**Assumption:** My friend is upset at me and doesn't want to talk to me anymore. Maybe I should cancel our plans to spend the weekend together.

**Balanced thought:** The street was busy and maybe they didn't see me. Up until this point our friendship has been good. I will call my friend later and let them know I saw them earlier.





# Now it's your turn!

## Individually, take your worksheet and try this exercise:

Think about a mild to moderately stressful event where you had an unhelpful thought and write this down.

Using that thought, answer the following questions:

- What evidence for or against do I have to support my thought?
- Is my thought factual or an interpretation?
- What would I say to friend who was thinking this way?
- If I look at this situation differently what might it look like?
- Will this matter in a year from now? How about five years from now?





A photograph of three people in a cafe setting, smiling and holding coffee cups. The image has a blue tint and a semi-transparent dark blue horizontal band across the middle. The text 'Part 3: Relaxation for Stress' is overlaid on this band in white, bold font. The background shows a window with a decorative lattice pattern.

**Part 3:  
Relaxation for Stress**





# Relaxation Strategy

## **Mindfulness & Meditation**

By calming our breathing and relaxing our muscles, we can reduce symptoms of stress in our body.

## **Some Exercises to Try**

- Deep breathing (4:4:4 breathing)
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness meditation
- Grounding techniques (e.g. 54321)

For more information, refer to the SCD Skills Workshop Toolkit for instructions and relaxation resources (e.g. apps)



# Now it's your turn!

Turn to your worksheet and write down three skills you can takeaway from this workshop and start practicing today.





# Resources

# Resources on Campus

Student Accessibility  
Services

Career Centre

The Centre for Sexual  
Violence Response,  
Support & Education

Learning Skills Services

Health Education &  
Promotion

The Wellness Hub

Academic Advising

Centre for Human  
Rights, Equity and  
Inclusion

Graduate Student  
Support



# Resources on Campus



## Good2talk.ca

Free, confidential helpline for post-secondary students in Ontario.

- Information & referrals to services on and off campus
- Speak anonymously with a professional counsellor.

## Big White Wall®

## Bigwhitewall.ca

Online mental health support community

- Anonymous peer support
- 24/7 moderation
- Self-improvement tools & resources



## Bouncebackontario.ca

Program for mild to moderate depression and anxiety

- Online videos
- Telephone coaching
- Interactive booklets

# Announcements & Reminders

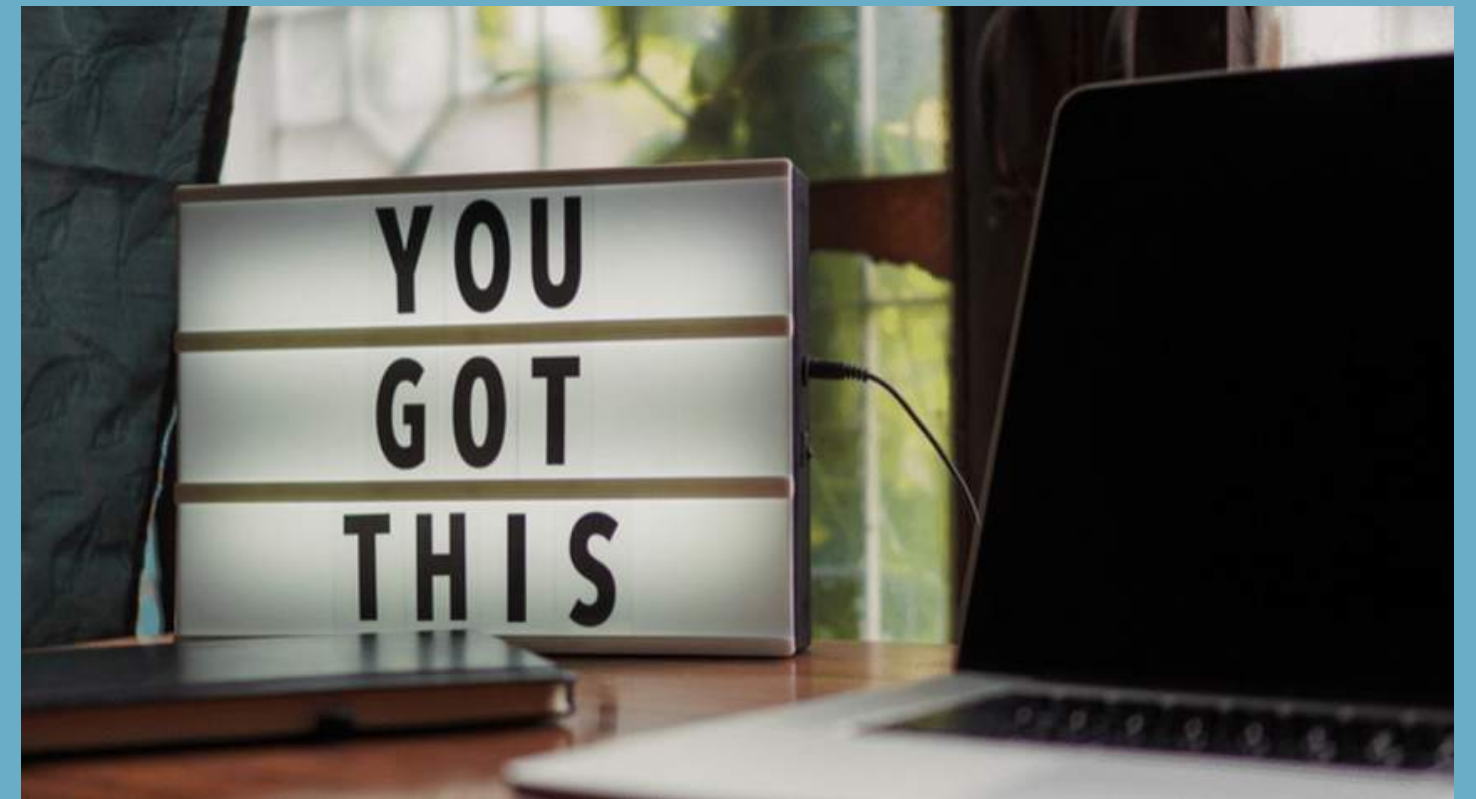
## Let us know what you think!

Please take a few minutes to fill out our anonymous workshop feedback form.

## Grab a USB Stick on your way out!

- Meditations
- SCD Skills Workshop slides
- SCD Skills Workshop Handout
- SCD Skills Workshop Toolkit
- BounceBack Program Pack
- BounceBack Journal
- Infographics

**Believe in yourself!**



**Student Counselling & Development**

N 110, Bennett Centre for Student Services

Telephone: 416-736-5297



# Additional Sources

Gannett Health Services. (n.d.). Understanding and managing stress at Cornell [PDF file].

Retrieved from <https://health.cornell.edu/sites/health/files/pdf-library/understanding-managing-stress.pdf>

Harvard Health Letter, Harvard Health Publications. (2014). 4 fast mood boosters. Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/4-fast-mood-boosters->

Martin, B. (2018). Challenging negative self-talk. Retrieved from <https://psychcentral.com/lib/challenging-negative-self-talk/>

Mayo Clinic. (2017). Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress. Retrieved from

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/art-20043950>

Robinson, L., Segal, R., Segal, J., & Smith, M. (2019). Relaxation techniques for stress relief. Retrieved from

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm>

Therapist Aid LLC. (2017). Stress management [PDF file]. Retrieved from <https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/stress-management.pdf>

The effects of stress on your body. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/effects-on-body#1>

Yerkes, R. M., & Dodson, J. D. (1908). The relationship of strength of stimulus to rapidity of habit-formation. *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology*, 18, 459–482.