

Using Your Thoughts to Cope with Your Feelings

Activity 22

You Need to Know

When you have feelings that are uncomfortable, you can help yourself feel better by using your thoughts.

Story 1

Carlos found out that when his parents got divorced, his mom was going to move out of their house. She was going to move into another house about a mile away. Carlos would stay with his dad for one half of the week and with his mom for the other half. Carlos listened to his parents' decision and thought:

I don't want my parents to get divorced or my mom to move out. But thank goodness, my mom isn't moving very far away; I will still get to see both my parents every week!

Carlos felt happy.

Story 2

Gina found out that when her parents got divorced, her mom was going to move out of their house. She was going to move into another house about a mile away. Gina would stay with her dad for one half of the week and with her mom for the other half. Gina listened to her parents' decision and thought:

I don't want my parents to get divorced or my mom to move out. This is awful! It will be terrible only being able to only see my mom for half of the week and my dad for half the week!

Gina felt sad and mad.

Neither Carlos nor Gina wanted their parents to get divorced. Neither of them wanted their moms to move out. But Carlos chose thoughts that made him feel happy. Gina chose thoughts that made her feel sad and mad.

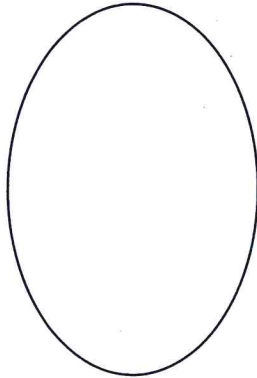
Which would you choose?

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Directions

Draw a sad face above the thoughts on the left, because choosing those thoughts can make children feel bad. On the right, draw a happy face. Then, next to each thought, write a new one that can help children feel good.



I feel so sad because my parents are getting divorced. I'll never feel happy again!

I feel so mad because my dad is moving far away and I can only see him during my summer vacation!

I feel so scared because my parents don't love each other anymore and I think they might not love me anymore either!

I feel guilty because last year I rode my bike into my mom's car. She got so mad. Now my parents are getting divorced, and my mom is moving away. It must be my fault.

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More to Do

Look back at the stories of Carlos and Gina. The very same thing was happening to both children. Why did Carlos feel happy, but Gina felt sad and mad?

Why would choosing the thoughts in the right column on page 71 make kids happier than choosing the thoughts on the left?

What comes first inside of you: your thoughts or your feelings? _____

How can you use your thoughts to help yourself feel better? _____

Write some thoughts you have had about your parents' divorce that make you feel bad.

Now rewrite your thoughts, changing them so that they will make you feel good.

Your thoughts are a powerful tool that you carry with you wherever you go. You can use this tool of choosing your thoughts whenever you want to feel better.