ON SECOND THOUGHT:

FROM IFFY TO WITTY THOUGHTS

Facilitator's Guide

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Teresa Busto, Psy.D., is a certified school psychologist who has worked in the Farmingdale School District since 1997. In addition to her school-based responsibilities, she has trained master's- and doctoral-level students as part of their internship experiences.

Dr. Busto earned a B.A. in Psychology and a Psy.D. in School/Community Psychology from Hofstra University and an M.S. in School Psychology from St. John's University. Drawing upon her education and school-based experience, she developed a child-friendly way to introduce concepts related to thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and consequences.

Paula Busto earned an M.S. in Education and completed formal study in counseling at C.W. Post College. With 22 years of public-school teaching experience at the elementary and secondary levels, she collaborated with Dr. Busto in developing On Second Thought: From Iffy to Witty Thoughts as an educational program for children.

OST presents concepts related to the connections among thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and consequences in developmentally appropriate language through colorful illustrations, adapted idioms, interactive activities, and relatable situations. Participants are introduced to common patterns of unhelpful thinking and more helpful alternative ways of thinking.

A LETTER TO SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONALS AND EDUCATORS

As a practicing school psychologist in New York, I developed On Second Thought: From Iffy to Witty Thoughts (OST), an interactive educational, skill-building program for upper elementary school-age children.

OST is designed to introduce children to thought awareness, emotional understanding, self-reflection, and the connections among thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and consequences. Through developmentally appropriate lessons and activities, children identify unhelpful thinking patterns and practice developing more helpful ways of thinking.

Additional sections provide opportunities to expand emotional vocabulary, recognize and name emotions, consider factors that may influence emotional reactions, and practice strategies for responding thoughtfully to strong emotions.

Research has identified associations between emotional competence and academic, adaptive, and social functioning among children (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002; Domitrovich, Cortes, & Greenberg, 2007). OST provides structured educational opportunities for children to build emotional vocabulary, recognize and name emotions, consider factors that may influence emotional reactions, and practice thoughtful decision-making.

Conceptual Background

Some concepts used in OST were informed in part by longstanding cognitive models associated with Albert Ellis, Aaron Beck, and David Burns. OST adapts selected ideas into child-friendly educational language, examples, and activities; this attribution is provided as conceptual background and does not characterize OST as a clinical treatment or therapy program.

Program Learning Goals

- Increase awareness of thoughts.
- Explore the relationship among thoughts, feelings, behaviors, & consequences.
- Recognize and name emotions.
- Identify unhelpful patterns of thinking.
- Practice developing more balanced and helpful thoughts.
- Practice strategies for responding thoughtfully to strong emotions.

OST has been the subject of small exploratory academic and school-based studies that form part of the developmental history of the program. These studies should not be interpreted as establishing treatment efficacy. OST is an educational, skill-building program and is not individualized mental health treatment. Additional information about the educational research history of OST is available at www.onsecond-thought.com.

Strategies for Making Helpful Choices

Emphasis is on education and skill development.

Educational topics include:

- Identifying unhelpful thinking patterns
- Considering more helpful alternative thoughts
- Understanding and managing emotions
- Problem-solving
- Building positive interpersonal skills

With ready-made lesson plans, the program is designed to be engaging and straightforward to implement with children and students. It can be used on desktop/laptop platforms (Mac and Windows) as well as with the companion workbook, and may be used with individuals or groups in educational and skill-building settings.

Our goal is to provide school-based professionals and educators with flexible, appealing activities that can be used to structure educational and skill-building sessions with children.

Sincerely,
The OST Team

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How This Program Is Intended To Be Used

Below is an outline of how the program is intended to be used: Each activity begins with a short paragraph intended to be read either by the child/children you are working with, by the facilitator or by taking turns in reading each sentence. Every paragraph ends with three dots (. . .) leading to the next screen wherein the title of the next activity will be displayed. In my experience, most children enjoy participating in reading or contributing to reading the prelude but I typically ask the child to read the title of the activity (I always offer assistance if needed). These titles, then lend themselves to opening up a dialogue about what they may think the answer is (i.e.

Where Do Feelings Come From?). Some students want to share their ideas right away but I typically ask them to “hold on” to what they think the answer is as we will find out at the end of the lesson. *Keep in mind, many times, dialogues ensue as a result of the topic being taught (i.e. children begin to talk about their rationale behind (i.e. How Do Your Thoughts Make You Feel?) and serve as a great opportunity to have an open discussion about their perception, during as well as over the course of the time spent with the child/children. Please note, there’s an introduction to parents and caregivers, answer key (for the OST Program), homework assignments (to be distributed upon the completion of each activity), answer key for homework assignments, student understanding check (to help the facilitator determine pacing and whether additional practice may be helpful) as well as student guides (clearly outlined within the program and below as to when to distribute) and a certificate of completion. If you purchased the Smart Notebook or desktop/laptop (for Mac or Windows) versions, you have received these files in a separate link along with your purchase of the program, others can access this information from the toolbar on the website (www.onsecond-thought.com) entitled printable documents

Activities 1-8 are intended to introduce and provide practice with the sequence of situations, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and consequences.

The situation-thought-feeling-behavior sequence used in these activities is informed by Albert Ellis's ABC model and related cognitive models describing connections among events, interpretations, emotions, and responses.

Activity 1: Where Do Feelings Come From? Activity 1 begins by introducing a wide array of emotions to children

This is achieved by presenting children with a vast amount of animations depicting a myriad of feelings. Children then try to figure out the feeling displayed on the animation introduced by unscrambling letters presented beneath each character (I assist by giving clues if a child is uncertain). As with all of the activities, the words start out with more basic and familiar words and then progress on to more sophisticated and varying degrees of words that some children will benefit from with assistance. Then, a sentence is read (i.e. It's pizza day in the cafeteria today, I feel . . .) and (hopefully more than one person-many times I act as the second person when working individually with a child). Participants choose how they might feel all the while I highlight that there aren't any right or wrong answers.

The final screen asks children to attempt to figure out by what they've done in the activity and by using the scrambled letters beneath the box as to where feelings come from. Once the child/children have unscrambled the letters (I assist by giving clues if a child is uncertain), we tap the box to reveal the visual to pair with the words (our thoughts).

Activity 2: What's On Your Mind? Activity 2 introduces the idea that a situation can be followed by different thoughts

This is achieved by presenting 8 hypothetical situations and thoughts side by side on each screen. The facilitator reads the first situation from the left-hand column and then all of the thoughts that the child needs to choose from the right-hand column. It is now the child's turn to hazard a guess as to which thought might follow the situation at hand. At times, more than one thought may be paired with more than one situation (but not all of the situations) so that's what requires the student to put some careful thought into his/her response.

Activity 3: How Do Your Thoughts Make You Feel? Activity 3 explores how thoughts can influence feelings

This is achieved by displaying 5 animated characters (per screen), previously seen in activity 1, along with 5 possible thoughts. The facilitator then reads the first thought along with all of the possible feelings to choose from beneath. Then, the child taps the thought first and then taps the feeling he/she thinks might result from the thought read.

Activity 4: What Do You Do With Your Feelings? Activity 4 explores connections between feelings and behaviors

This activity has two parts, In the first part, I have the child read the feeling word displayed underneath the animated character (previously seen in activity 1). I then read all of the possible behaviors listed on the screen. As I read each (behavior) sentence, the child can either choose to “keep” or “eliminate” that (behavior) sentence in order to assist in narrowing down the options or go right to their choice of the correct answer. In the second half of the activity, there are 4 animated characters (from activity 1) displayed at the top of the screen and a sentence. The sentence with the missing feeling word is then read. The child needs to pick from the feelings displayed in the characters above that best fit in that sentence.

Activity 5: From Thoughts to Feelings to Behaviors In activity 5, children are introduced to the notion of the sequence: thought, feeling, and behavior

The facilitator reads the series of scrambled words at the bottom and highlights through the instructions that in the first 10 slides, the child is required to create a sentence with the same color words. Then the child places that newly created sentence in the box that is reflective of that color (i.e. the word thought is in blue, the "blue" sentence now goes in that box that has the corresponding word written in blue). The child follows suit with the remaining categories (feeling, behavior). This activity also becomes more challenging, every 10 screens, as the child starts with hints wherein the colors of the sentences are initially paired with the category they go in and then become less and less obvious as the child progresses.

There is a timer that may be used for some versions. Children may like to keep track of their own personal time and make a concerted effort to "beat their own time" on subsequent screens.

Activity 6: Behaviors Lead to Consequences In activity 6, the child pairs behaviors and consequences together

Here, the facilitator continues with the approach of reading all of the choices and then the child attempts to find the best matching behavior and consequence. This activity also becomes more challenging by increasing the amount of possible choices on each screen.

Activity 7: Train of Thought Activity 7 is the first time the child will have sentences/a word all together on the screen reflecting: situation, thought, feeling, behavior and consequence presented in a mixed-up order

Again, the facilitator reads all of the choices on each screen and then the child is required to try to identify and place the correct sentence/word in the correct place. It is important to keep in mind that the child whose turn it is, tries to go in order (situation, thought, feeling, behavior, consequence) as the sequence is part of the sequence that is being reinforced. Many times, children will start with the feeling, as it is the only single word and then continue from there; rather, you want to encourage going "in order".

Activity 8: Train of Thoughts In activity 8, the child is now presented with the notion that just one situation can lead to more than one thought, feeling, behavior and consequence

Here, like some of the other activities, there's a hint button that supports the child in identifying the situation (out of context it's a bit tricky to find the situation and consequence so support may be needed but some children may be able to complete this independently, while others may benefit from facilitator support.). This activity is perhaps the one wherein the answer key is most helpful for the facilitator. Again, the facilitator begins by reading all of the sentences/words and then, if necessary, gives hints by modeling the first sequence and/or providing the next line in the sequence (whether it be the thought, feeling, behavior or consequence).

Activities 9-12 are intended to introduce common patterns of unhelpful thinking.

Several Iffy Thought categories were adapted from commonly described unhelpful thinking patterns associated with the work of David Burns. OST presents these concepts through its own child-friendly terminology, figurative language, and educational activities.

Activity 9: Iffy Thoughts Activity 9 is where we first introduce our way of expressing unhelpful thinking patterns through figurative language.

In tandem with using the phrase “Iffy Thoughts,” it may be useful to further describe these as unhelpful thoughts. The facilitator reads the definition and example, and then the child is presented with the task of unscrambling the letters to form the title of each idiom representing an unhelpful thinking pattern.

As in previous activities, the child gathers hints from the animations, definitions, examples, and letters separated by color per word. The three activities that follow provide additional practice identifying and understanding these unhelpful thoughts.

Activity 10: Targeting Iffy Thoughts In activity 10, children are presented with the titles, definitions, and examples of the Iffy Thoughts (unhelpful thinking patterns) they just learned.

The child will see images quickly passing on the screen and will tap the screen (will say stop if you have control over the screen). Then text will appear which will be read by the facilitator (or child if he/she wishes). The child will then pick the best option. This activity serves as a review and is intended to reinforce the understanding of these unhelpful thoughts.

Activity 11: Searching for Iffy Thoughts Practicing identifying these unhelpful (Iffy) thoughts in sentences is what activity 11 is about

Here, the child/children will be presented with a sentence which can be read either by the facilitator or the child. Also, on the screen are options of unhelpful (Iffy) thoughts to choose from which are read aloud after the sentence. Distribute Student Guide 1 which will be used to assist your audience in recalling the definition of each unhelpful thought. Even though your audience has the guide, further reiteration of and examples of the unhelpful thought may prove beneficial when the child is deciding on which unhelpful thought may be the answer. Using Student Guide 1, the child can either choose to take an educated guess at the correct answer or choose to keep or eliminate as each Iffy Thought is read.

This is a nice opportunity to ask why he/she chose to keep or eliminate as he/she categorizes each Iffy Thought (keep or eliminate category).

Activity 12: Expanding Your View of Iffy Thoughts Although there are some more advanced aspects within the program, activity 12 is likely one of the more challenging lessons

Subsequently, this activity may require more support from the facilitator. This additional support may take the form of explaining words and or phrases as well as reiteration of the unhelpful thoughts learned and provided in the Student Guide 1. Start by disseminating Student Guide 1, then read the 5 phrases/words and ask the child to look at their Student Guide 1 for each definition if needed while you read each one of the choices.

Whoever's turn it is, the child can choose to keep or eliminate the unhelpful thought to assist in narrowing down his/her choices or directly take an educated guess at the correct answer.

Activities 13-16 are intended to teach the notion of helpful thoughts Activity 13: Witty Thoughts In line with activity 9, activity 13 introduces thoughts that offer more helpful alternatives to unhelpful thinking patterns through figurative language.

In tandem with using the phrase “Witty Thoughts”, it may be useful to further describe these as helpful thoughts. The facilitator reads the definition and example and the child is presented with the task of unscrambling the letters to form the title of each of the idioms representing these more helpful thoughts. As in previous activities, the child gathers hints from the animations, the definitions and examples as well as the letters which are separated by color per word. The 3 activities that follow are intended to provide additional practice identifying and understanding these helpful thoughts. This activity serves as a review and is intended to reinforce the understanding of these helpful thoughts.

Activity 14: Targeting Witty Thoughts Activity 14 is in line with activity 10, wherein children will be presented with the titles, definitions and examples of the Witty Thoughts (helpful thoughts) they just learned

The child will see images quickly passing on the screen and will tap the screen (will say stop if you have control over the screen). Then text will appear which will be read by the facilitator (or child if he/she wishes). The child will then pick the best option. This activity serves as a review and is intended to reinforce the understanding of these helpful thoughts.

Activity 15: Exploring Witty Thoughts Practicing identifying these helpful (Witty) thoughts in sentences is what activity 15 is about

Here, the child/children will be presented with a sentence which can be read either by the facilitator or the child. Also, on the screen are options of helpful (Witty) thoughts to choose from which are read aloud after the sentence. Distribute Student Guide 2 which will be used to assist your audience in recalling the definition of each helpful thought. Even though your audience has the guide, further reiteration of and examples of the helpful thought may prove beneficial when the child is deciding on which helpful thought may be the answer. Using Student Guide 2, the child can either choose to take an educated guess at the correct answer or choose to keep or eliminate as each Witty Thought is read. This is a nice opportunity to ask why he/she chose to keep or eliminate as he/she categorizes each Witty Thought (keep by "skipping over" it or eliminate by tapping on the thought to see if it disappears).

Activity 16: Witty Quotes Begin activity 16 by distributing Student Guide 2 to your audience

Here, the facilitator or child if so desires, will read the quote in the middle of the screen. The child who's turn it is will practice inferring from the quote which definition is implied within. Hints from the facilitator can help support this deeper understanding until the child becomes more familiar with the concept along with eliminating some helpful thoughts presumed to be incorrect.

Activities 17-19 are intended to help children practice using/replacing an unhelpful thought with a more helpful one

Activity 17: Iffy and Witty Thoughts Activity 17 is perhaps one of the more challenging activities in the program

Here the Student Guide is quite important. So, start by distributing Student Guide 3 along with a pencil with eraser. The notion of this activity is that a card was "picked" out of the deck of both Iffy (13 cards) and Witty (10) cards from the program. The child, then needs to "guess" whether the "chosen" card is an Iffy or Witty Thought which he/she will indicate on his/her Student Guide 3 (with an x). Then the child needs to take up to two more guesses as to the definition of this "chosen" card (mark an x by the definitions that were picked and not correct). Then the child moves on to the third screen (with the titles) and continues to place an x next to the title(s) that were not correct.

The screen then reverts back to the definition screen wherein the child will look at their Student Guide 3 and pick definitions not yet picked. He/she will follow suit with the title screen until he/she figures out the final answer. Once the correct answer is revealed, the child needs to erase all of the x's with the exception of the definition and title that was the final answer (so as not to choose that one for the next set of choices).

Activity 18: More Iffy and Witty Thoughts In activity 18, the facilitator can choose to read each sentence presented or ask the child if he/she would like to read

The reader will now state the first sentence in its entirety and then proceed to the amended sentence with a hint given for the missing word. With the hint in mind, the child will now attempt to make an educated guess at the missing word by pressing the letters in the box that create the word in mind. The facilitator may wish to model the first item. There is a timer that may be used. Children may like to keep track of their own personal time and make a concerted effort to "beat their own time" on subsequent screens.

Activity 19: Even More Iffy and Witty Thoughts Activity 19 can be read by the facilitator, the child, and/or all of the above (taking turns)

Begin by distributing Student Guides 1 & 2 to your audience, reading the title of the story and the Iffy and Witty Thoughts below to choose from. With the Student Guides in hand, you can call on one child at a time to choose which Iffy or Witty Thought from the word bank below best fits in the sentence (by referencing the Student Guides). Another approach can be to have the reader(s) begin by reading/taking turns (by paragraph) the story and saying “blank” for each missing word.

Now the story can be re-read and the person whose turn it is, will take their best guess at the correct answer.

Considerations On Using This Program

As with all activities, keep your audience in mind (i.e. younger versus older students) and assist as needed. Considering this, Activity 12 may prove to be challenging to younger students and therefore requires modification (i.e. you may need to spend extra time on connecting some of the more challenging words/phrases to the less difficult ones, etc.).

Printable Documents Folder

(contains the following smaller folders as well as files listed: Materials for Facilitator(s): Most activities provide instant feedback for self-correction. However, there is a file entitled Answer Key provided. This allows the facilitator to choose which answers he/she may like to print for easy reference when guiding students of various levels. There is also a folder entitled Home Practice Assignments' Answer Key (for activities 9-11 & 13-18). Answers vary for Activities 1-8 as well as Activity 12.

Activities 1-8 as well as Activity 12

Additionally, there is a folder entitled Student Understanding Check. This form provides the facilitator with questions to review each child's understanding of the topic and to help determine pacing and whether additional practice may be helpful. Materials for Student(s): Included is a folder entitled Home Practice Assignments and files entitled Student Guide 1, Student Guide 2 and Student Guide 3. The Home Practice Assignments are intended to be printed and distributed to students following the completion of each activity. The printable Student Guides are intended to be printed and distributed for student use with the following: Activities 11 & 12 (Student Guide 1), Activities 15 & 16 (Student Guide 2) as well as Activity 17 (Student Guide 3) and 19 (Student Guides 1 & 2).

For efficiency purposes, it is suggested that you print guides 1 & 2 as small print thumbnails whereas guide 3 and the home practice assignments are best printed as full pages and intended for multiple duplication. Furthermore, an additional file entitled Certificate of Completion (pdf) is included for distribution to each student upon finishing this program. Most activities... in this program are designed to be completed over the course of two 30-minute sessions. However, this depends upon the instructor's teaching style and audience skill level. Given this, there are exceptions. You may wish to combine activities 9 & 10 in the same session as well as combining activities 13 & 14 in the same session.