ON SECOND THOUGHT:

FROM IFFY TO WITTY THOUGHTS

Introduction to Parents and Caregivers

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As a parent or caregiver, you can help your child examine the thoughts that come up during uncomfortable situations that may occur at school, at home, or on the playground. For example, imagine your child is sitting in the school lunchroom. Someone your child knows walks past without saying hello. Your child thinks, "He always ignores me," or "He doesn't like me." How might that thought make your child feel? Let's suppose it leads to feelings of anger. Your child may then ignore the person the next time they meet or come home upset and withdraw for the evening.

This is an example of an everyday situation in which a child's interpretation of an event can affect how the child feels and responds.

As a parent or caregiver, you may naturally try to comfort your child by saying things such as, "Don't worry; everything will be okay," or "Next time, just avoid him." At other times, adults may offer explanations that make sense to us but are difficult for a child to use in the moment.

One useful educational framework is to help children look more closely at the thoughts that come up in everyday situations and notice how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can influence one another.

For example, a child may think, "I got the worst grade in the class." That thought may contribute to feeling sad, and the child may respond by putting their head down on the desk. Now consider a different thought: "If I didn't do as well as I hoped this time, I can study differently next time." That thought may be associated with a different emotional response and a different way of approaching the situation.

The important difference is not that a child must think positively, but that the child is learning to examine whether a thought is reasonable, balanced, and supported by the situation.

Recurring patterns of unhelpful thinking can make it harder to view a situation in a balanced way. On Second Thought presents these patterns in child-friendly language and uses familiar idioms to help children recognize different ways of thinking.

On Second Thought identifies a set of unhelpful thought patterns called Busto & Busto's Iffy Thoughts. Children are then given opportunities to question or challenge these Iffy Thoughts and to consider more balanced alternatives, which the program calls Witty Thoughts.

Learning to notice and question unhelpful thoughts takes practice. Parents, caregivers, and other supportive adults can reinforce the vocabulary and concepts introduced in the program by giving children repeated opportunities to use them in everyday situations.

Ways to reinforce the concepts in this program

1. Set aside a comfortable time to talk with your child and complete the activities. It is not necessary to do many activities at once.

2. Refer to the concepts during everyday conversations so your child has additional opportunities to practice them.

3. Consider making the vocabulary a family activity. Using the same terms together can make the concepts easier and more natural to discuss.

4. If you choose, you may also use the optional On Second Thought card activities as another lighthearted way to practice the program's vocabulary and concepts together.

A Note for Parents and Caregivers

On Second Thought: From Iffy to Witty Thoughts is an educational, skill-building program intended to introduce children ages 7-11 to concepts related to thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and consequences in an age-appropriate way. This material is intended for educational purposes only and is not intended to provide medical or psychological advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is not a substitute for individualized professional mental health care. Some children may continue to have difficulty with distressing or persistent thoughts, feelings, or behaviors. In those situations, parents and caregivers may wish to consult an appropriate qualified professional for additional support and guidance.



A different thought can help you see your day in a new way.