FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

HELPING CHILDREN RECOGNIZE THAT THEY'RE JUST A THOUGHT AWAY FROM CHANGING THEIR DAY

by Teresa Busto, Psy.D

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ON SECOND THOUGHT: FROM IFFY TO WITTY THOUGHTS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Busto is a psychologist licensed in NYS and is certified as a school psychologist. She has been employed in Farmingdale School District since 1997 where, in addition to her job description, she trains both masters and doctoral level students as part of their internship experience.

Since 2002, Dr. Busto has maintained a private practice with offices in both the north and south shores of Long Island, New York. Dr. Busto earned her B.A. in psychology and her Psy.D. in School/Community Psychology, both from Hofstra University. In between time, she has earned her M.S. in School Psychology from St. John's University. Having graduated from programs that emphasize the benefits of learning cognitive behavioral skills, Dr. Busto decided to create a way to deliver said skills to children. Given the complexity of the task, Dr. Busto collaborated with Paula Busto. Paula Busto earned an M.S. in Education and also completed formal study in counseling at C.W. Post College. With 22 years of public teaching experience on both the elementary and secondary levels, combined with Dr. Busto's education and work history, they constructed a digital mental health program called: On Second Thought: from Iffy to Witty Thoughts. This program is based on the work of Dr.'s Albert Ellis, Aaron Beck and David Burns who are pioneers in researching the relationship between unhelpful thoughts and how they affect feelings and behaviors. Dr. Busto and Paula Busto have adapted these concepts and turned them into a kid friendly program. Using colorful and comically illustrated idioms that are couched in interactive activities and real-life stories, children become aware that their first thought may not be the best choice. Participants will understand basic principles of thought and readily learn that: how they think affects how they feel, what they do and what happens. This program further highlights unhelpful and helpful thoughts and offers children the opportunity to recognize the value of replacing an "iffy" thought with a "witty" one.

A letter to Mental Health Providers

Dear Mental Health Provider:

As a working school psychologist in New York, I have developed an empirically based mental health intervention for youth that focuses on emotional well-being. On Second Thought: from Iffy to Witty Thoughts (OST), is a computerized cognitive behavioral program intended to teach the core principles of CBT to upper elementary school-age children that targets dysfunctional patterns of instability in emotion regulation, interpersonal relationships, impulse control and self-image. The aim is to decrease maladaptive behaviors while increasing healthy ways of self- regulation. Additional sections of this program teach understanding and naming emotions, changing unwanted emotions, reducing vulnerability of the mind and managing extreme emotions.

Given the strong relationship with emotional competence and positive academic, adaptive and social behaviors among youth, it is likely that children who receive an intervention focused on emotion regulation will perform better in school, have more positive peer interactions and be more highly self-regulated (Gumora & Arsenio, 2002; Domitrovich, Cortes   & Greenber, 2007).

Prevention Aims: Helps children . . .

Raise thought awareness

Develop a better understanding of the relationship between thoughts, feelings, behaviors and consequences.

Understanding and naming emotions

Reducing vulnerability of the unwanted emotions

Managing extreme emotions

Although OST was originally developed to be delivered on a universal level, small preliminary research studies applying the OST Program to targeted areas of concern (i.e. anxiety & anger), have recently been conducted, lending itself to additional aims in the area of treatment (for additional information on the research conducted to date, visit the OST website at: www.onsecond-thought.com).

Treatment Aims:

A reduction in anxiety

A reduction in anger

A decrease in maladaptive behaviors while increasing healthy ways of self-regulation A

reduction in automatic negative thoughts

An improvement in adaptive skills

An improvement in interpersonal relationships

An improvement in problem solving

An improvement in academic achievement

Behavior Change Strategies:

Emphasis is on the use of psychoeducation as a change strategy

Psychoeducational topics are related to:

Identifying problematic or dysfunctional thinking patterns

Replacing unhelpful thoughts with more helpful

Emotion-regulation

Problem-solving

Interpersonal management skills

With ready-made lesson plans, this program is easy to implement and is interactive and fun for your clients. The program can be delivered on different platforms: Smart Notebook, desktop/ laptops (Mac & Windows), tablets and phones (IOS and Android) as well as the traditional workbook. It's flexible enough whether your sessions are with groups or with individuals.

It is our goal to give you, the mental health professional, a variety of flexible and appealing activities that you can use to structure your clinical sessions.

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 evaluation (to assist in determining if a child can move on to the next activity) 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 teach the ABC Model as outlined by Dr. Albert Ellis:

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 teaches children how a situation precedes a thought. 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 teaches children how our thoughts influence our 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 introduces how feelings and behaviors are connected. 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 message that is to be driven home. 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 it has been miraculous how many children I've worked with have been able to do this independently!). 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 teach the notion of cognitive distortions as outlined by Dr. David Burns

Activity 9: Iffy Thoughts

Activity 9 is where we first introduce our way of expressing Dr. David Burns' cognitive distortions 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 of the idioms representing Dr. Burns' cognitive distortions. 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 help children internalize and gain a deeper understanding of these unhelpful thoughts.

Activity 10: Targeting Iffy Thoughts

In activity 10, children will be presented with the titles, definitions and examples of the Iffy Thoughts (unhelpful thoughts/cognitive distortions) 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 is where we first introduce our way of expressing thoughts that offset the cognitive distortions 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 help children internalize and gain a deeper understanding of 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: WittyQuotes

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 learn how to infer 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 Homework Assignments' Answer Key (for activities 9-11 & 13-18). Answers vary for Activities 1-8 as well as Activity 12. Additionally, there is a folder entitled Student Evaluation.

This form provides the facilitator with questions to assess each child's understanding of the topic taught and to assist in determining whether or not to move on to the next activity.

Materials for Student(s): Included is a folder entitled Homework Assignments and files entitled Student Guide 1, Student Guide 2 and Student Guide 3. The Homework 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 and 2). For efficiency purposes, it is suggested that you print guides 1 & 2 as small print thumbnails whereas guide 3 and the homework 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.

Additional Considerations for those who use the Smart Notebook Version

DUE TO THE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL ON EACH PAGE, IT IS ADVISED TO USE THE FULL SCREEN OPTION WHEN VIEWING THIS PROGRAM.

DO NOT SAVE YOUR CHANGES: When you open an activity, you will find all of the information set in place for new and previous audiences. You can use each activity with children and adolescents of differing experience levels in succession with reassurance that you have the latitude to start at an easier or more challenging place next session by NOT SAVING YOUR CHANGES.

MAKE SURE YOU CLICK AND DRAG ON THE WORDS: On activities where you are required to drag words MAKE SURE YOU PLACE YOUR FINGER, TOUCH PAD OR MOUSE SOMEWHERE ON A WORD OR SENTENCE IN ORDER TO DRAG IT.

The reason for this is that some activities use an eraser to reveal answers and if the white area behind the words is touched, it may be moved incidentally and reveal answers prematurely.