April, 2012

Ascension Counseling Center

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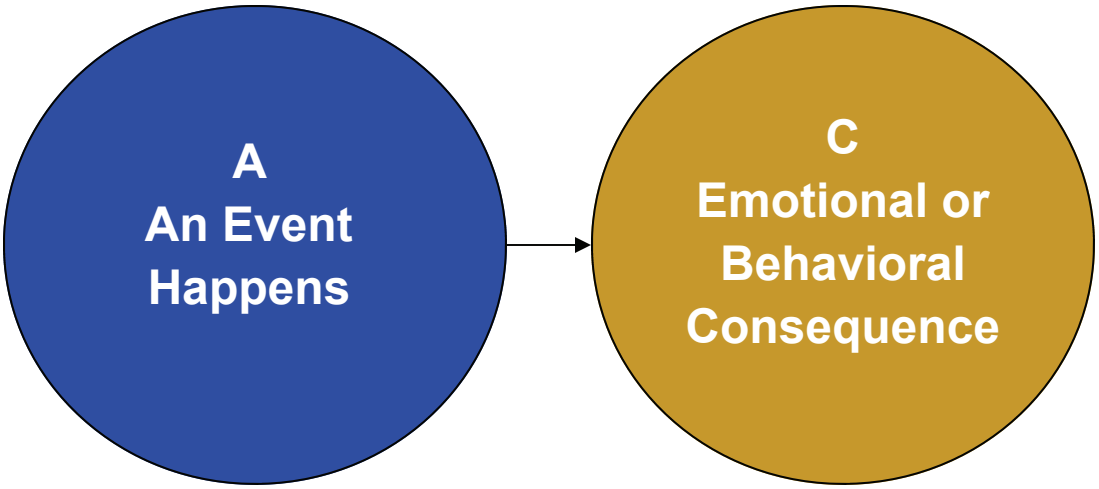
Think Your Way To Emotional Health

Many of us think that our emotional responses are automatic and that we have no control over them. "That's just how I feel." "I can't help it." "I'm entitled to my feelings." We believe that something happens and then we have an emotional response. If we were to draw it out, it would look like this:

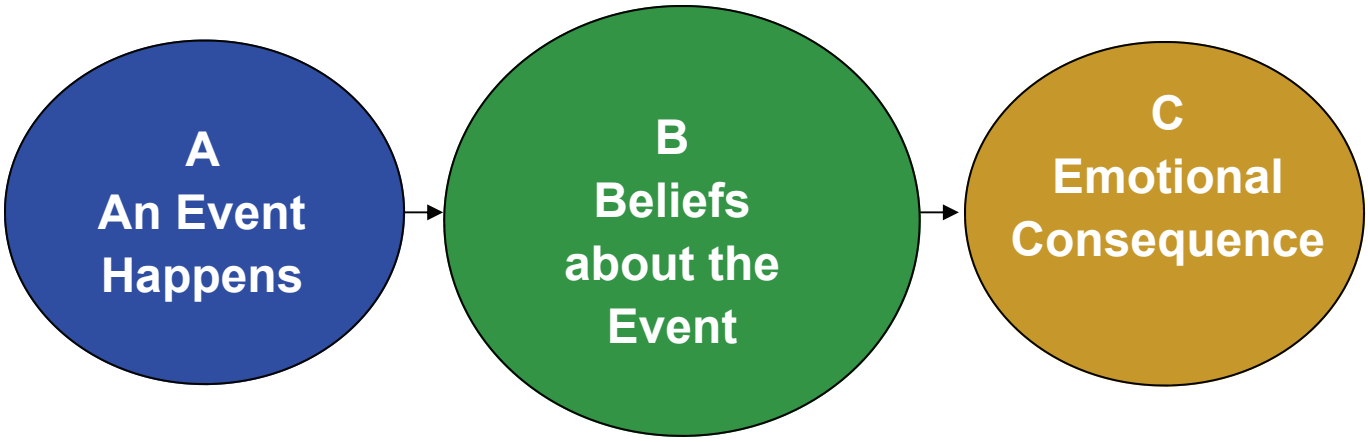


But have you ever wondered why two people might observe the same thing happen and both of them respond differently? One person who sees a large dog coming toward them will run away and the other will pet the dog. A waiter may take too long to come to your table to take your order and one person will become angry and complain until the waiter arrives and the other will wait patiently making conversation with their partner. If we had no control over our emotions, then every one of us would respond the same to the same situation. What accounts for that difference?

Our beliefs about the situation!

We are thinking about and interpreting every situation or event that happens. But, as with so many of our brain's functions, we are often not even aware of it. Our thoughts are so automatic and so instantaneous that we aren't even aware that we've thought about, interpreted, and made a conclusion about the situation that results in an emotional response. If we were to draw this out, it would look like this (see page 2).

Emotional Health (Continued)



We call this the “A, B, C Model of Emotional Upset”. It reminds us to look at our thought process when trying to handle our emotions. If we only look at our emotional life and not our thought life we will have a difficult time making the changes we desire.

So, how do we do this? By pausing when we feel an emotion we want to change and paying attention to the thoughts that are running through our heads. Write them down if you need to or speak them out loud to make them more obvious. If we use our previous examples, someone who runs away from a dog might be thinking, “Ooh, dogs are dangerous and this one will hurt me.” The person who pets the dog instead might be thinking, “That dog’s tail is wagging so he is friendly and wants to be petted.” The person who gets angry at the slow waiter might be thinking “Why do I have to wait everywhere I go? Doesn’t anyone care about good service any more?” The person who is patient might think something like, “We’re not in a hurry. We’re just here to relax anyway and I’m enjoying myself.”

If you want to have more balanced emotional health I encourage you to think about your thoughts. In terms of changing intense emotional reactions, the important thing is not whether your thoughts are right or wrong. What’s important is whether your thoughts are helpful to you or hurtful. Maybe your waiter doesn’t care about giving good service. Even if that thought is true, it is hurtful to you if it ruins your attitude and your meal for you and your dining companion. When you notice you’re stewing over your thoughts, that’s the time to recognize you need more helpful thoughts. Come up with an alternative explanation. Your waiter may be slow because someone else didn’t show up for work and he/she is covering twice the number of tables and doing a good job of it. Then realize that even if you get bad service you can still have a good time.

Changing your unhelpful thoughts into helpful ones is the key to changing troubling emotional responses to the things that people say and do.

Milestones

All Clinical Staff attends Behavior Challenges Seminar

All of the clinical staff attended Successful Inclusive Strategies Addressing Behavior Challenges at Home, In School & In the Community, an all-day seminar with Dr. Patrick Schwartz.

Stacy House obtains Counselor License

Stacy House completed all State of Louisiana requirements to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. Licensure requirements include a Master's Degree in Counseling, passing the Counselor Exam, and two years of supervised practice. Congratulations, Stacy!

Stephanie Turner passes Counselor Licensure Exam

Stephanie Turner has passed the Counselor Licensure Exam. She is in the process of becoming a Licensed Professional Counselor. She will complete her two years of supervised practice soon. Congratulations to Stephanie on passing the exam, an important step toward licensure.

All Clerical Staff attends training in new Medicaid Clinical Advisor software

All of the clerical staff attended an all-day training in Baton Rouge in using the new Clinical Advisor software that is being utilized by Medicaid.

Courtney LeBlanc Joins Our Staff

Courtney LeBlanc, Counselor-Intern, has been hired as a mental health and substance abuse counselor. Some of you will remember Courtney from when she was a counselor intern here last year from L.S.U. She did an excellent job when she interned here and both the clients and staff enjoyed working with her. We are happy to have her back with us as a permanent part of our staff.

Seasonal Bulletin Boards

Andrea Gaines, Secretary, has taken on the task of updating our waiting room bulletin board. When it always remains the same people get in the habit of ignoring it. By updating it frequently she is increasing the likelihood of people seeing the new notices that appear on it, and is also making our waiting area more attractive. See the picture below of the March board. It's worth a trip to our building now just to see the new bulletin boards each month.

If you have a mental health, substance abuse, or behavioral health problem we might be able to help you with, please call our Intake Coordinator, Sarah, at 225/621-1113. We help people just like you every day.

www.AscensionParish.Net/MH

Ascension Counseling Center

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HELPING INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES CHANGE BEHAVIORS, CHANGE LIVES.

Ascension Counseling Center provides comprehensive therapeutic services to individuals and families in an effort to foster healthy coping skills that will improve their quality of life.

HOURS

Gonzales:

Business Hours
Mon - Thur: 8 am - 5:30 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon
Counseling Hours
Mon - Thur: 7 am - 8 pm; Fri: 8 am - noon
Psychiatrist Hours
Monday and Tuesday: 8 am - 6 pm

Donaldsonville:

Business Hours
Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Counseling Hours
Wednesday: 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

MONTHLY EVENTS

Mondays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.

Tuesdays:

- ***Women's Empowerment Group,*** 10 - 11:30 am, Gonzales.
- ***Nurturing Parenting, adult & children groups***: 5 - 7:30 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anger Management Class,*** 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Stop Smoking group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.

Wednesdays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 1 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville.
- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 4 - 6 pm & 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Living Strong Cancer Survivors group***, 3 - 4 pm, Donaldsonville. 2nd Wed of each month.
- ***Grandparents Raising Grandchildren***, 10:30 am - noon, lunch provided, Donaldsonville, 3rd Wed of each month

Thursdays:

- ***Adult Substance Abuse Treatment group:*** 6 - 8 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment group***, 4 - 6 pm, Gonzales.
- ***Anxiety Reduction group***: 4 - 5 pm, Gonzales.