

# Model of Emotions: Problem Solving

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Coping Skills Class



# Model of Emotions: What is it?

The Model of Emotions describes how an emotional experience unfolds.



# Model of Emotions: How to Use It

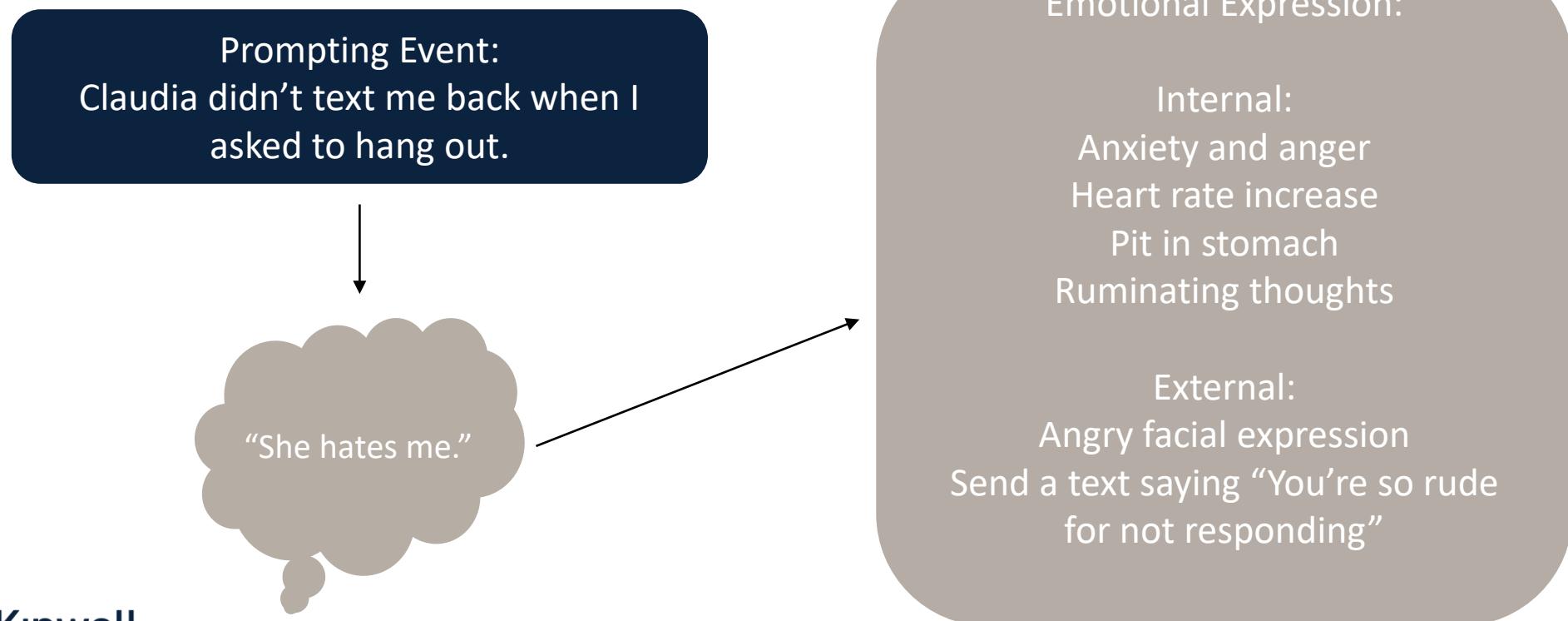
Each part of the Model of Emotions provides an opportunity to use a skill and regulate our emotions.



# Prompting Events: What are they?

**Prompting events are the situations or circumstances that most recently precede our emotional reaction.**

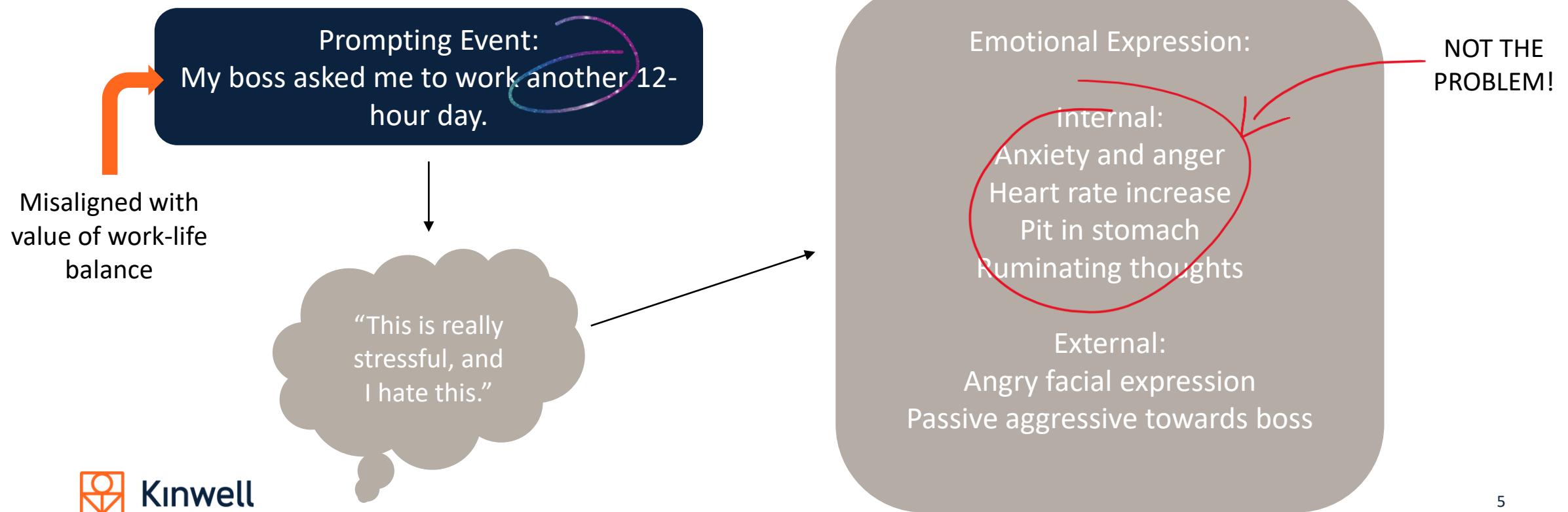
Prompting events can be external (work, other people, living situation) or internal (intrusive thoughts, memories, flashbacks).



# Prompting Events: When are they the problem?

**Prompting events can be just as much a contributor to emotional dysregulation as interpretations.**

While how we interpret a prompting event determines how we feel about a situation, sometimes our interpretation isn't the problem; rather, we are experiencing a **misalignment in our values**.



# Prompting Events: What are some you experience?

**The first step to targeting prompting events is awareness.**

What are the potentially **modifiable** prompting events that are causing you stress or having an otherwise negative impact on your life right now? Most importantly, what values are they taking you away from?

## External Prompting Events:

Mom calls me 3x a day

Cat wakes me up in the middle of  
the night

Wish I had more friends

Stressed about money

## Internal Prompting Events:

Recurring thought that I am not  
good enough

Chronic pain

Chronic illness

Frequent memories of the past

# Prompting Events: The Problem Solving Skill

**Problem solving is the skill to use when the prompting event is the problem.**

Problem solving is a skill we use each and every day. We can use our problem solving skills more intentionally once we know that it's the prompting event that's causing negative impact.

## The Problem Solving Skill



**Step 1. FIGURE OUT and DESCRIBE the problem situation**

**Step 2 CHECK THE FACTS (all the facts) to be sure you have the right problem situation!**

If your facts are correct and the situation is the problem continue with STEP 3

If your facts are not correct go back and repeat STEP 1

**Step 3. IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL in solving the problem**

- Identify what needs to happen or change for you to feel ok
- Keep it simple, and choose something that can actually happen

**Step 4. BRAINSTORM lots of solutions**

- Think of as many solutions as you can. Ask for suggestions from people you trust
- Do not be critical of any ideas at first. (Wait for Step 5 to evaluate ideas.)

**Step. 5 CHOOSE a solution that fits the goal and is likely to work**

- If you are unsure, choose two solutions that look good
- Do PROS and CONS to compare the solutions
- Choose the best to try first

**Step 6. Put the solution into ACTION**

- ACT! Try out the solution.
- Take the first step and then the second...

**Step 7. EVALUATE the results of using the solution**

It worked? YEAI! It didn't work? Go back to **STEP 5** and choose a new solution to try.

# Problem Solving: Step 1. Describe the Problem

**The first step is to identify a prompting event or problem that's causing trouble.**

Make sure you pick a situation that is not only causing distress, but is modifiable in some way and doesn't solely cause distress because of how you are interpreting the problem.

## **The Problem:**

My cat keeps waking me up at 6:30 in the morning by meowing really loudly. This is so annoying and it always makes me have a terrible day. If this keeps happening I won't be able to get all my work done and could lose out on a promotion.

# Problem Solving: Step 2. Check the Facts

**The second step is to make sure you have an accurate assessment of the problem.**

Describing a problem effectively requires remaining objective, exploring and gathering the facts of a situation, and being mindful of any interpretations/assumptions you're making.

## The Real Problem:

My cat keeps waking me up at 6:30 in the morning by meowing really loudly. This is so annoying ~~and it always makes me have a terrible day. If this keeps happening I won't be able to get all my work done and could lose out on a promotion.~~



Misaligned with value of rest

# Problem Solving: Step 3. Identify the Goal

**The third step is to set a goal.**

Ask yourself the following: if the problem got resolved, how would you know? And then, what would need to change in order to experience this relief?

## The Goal:

If the problem were better, I would be asleep until my alarm goes off at 7:30am.

There would have to be no meowing or I would have to not hear the meowing.



Aligned with value of rest

# Problem Solving: Step 4. Brainstorm Solutions

**Next, brainstorm as many solutions to the problem as you can.**

The brain does not like to feel trapped. Brainstorming solutions to a problem that makes you feel trapped can be relieving in and of itself. Try not to evaluate solutions as you think of them.

## The Goal:

If the problem were better, I would be asleep until my alarm goes off at 7:30am.

There would have to be no meowing or I would have to not hear the meowing.

## Solution Brainstorm:

Get rid of the cat

Keep the cat in another room over night

Wear noise canceling headphones

Play with cat before bed to tire them out

Get an automatic feeder

Play music out loud while I sleep

Keep the door closed

Spray cat with water

# Problem Solving: Step 5. Pick a Solution

The fifth step is to choose a solution to try.

If you aren't sure which solution is best to try first, pick a couple options and evaluate them with a pros and cons list.

## Solution Brainstorm:

Get rid of the cat

Keep the door closed

Get an automatic feeder

Keep the cat in another room over night

Spray cat with water

Wear noise canceling headphones

Play music out loud while I sleep

Play with cat before bed to tire them out

## Solution 1: Get automatic feeder

Pros	Cons
Cat will be eating before I wake up	Cost of feeder
Saves me time in morning	
Cat likes dry food	

## Solution 2: Wear noise canceling headphones

Pros	Cons
Could drown out meowing	Cost
Could listen to meditations	Discomfort
	Might not drown it out

# Problem Solving: Step 6. Put it in Action

**Time to put the solution into action.**

One way to start putting a solution into action is breaking it down into baby steps and taking it one step at a time.

## **Solution: Get an automatic feeder**

1. Research different feeders
2. Ask friends which feeders they use
3. Pick a feeder that fits my budget
4. Order feeder
5. Buy dry food
6. Pick a place for automatic feeder
7. Set up feeder with food
8. Decide how much feeder should dispense
9. Program settings to dispense food at 6:15am

# Problem Solving: Step 7. Evaluate Solution

**Take time to evaluate whether the solution you chose sufficiently addressed the problem.**

Revisit the goal you made in earlier steps of this process. After you implemented the solution, was the goal met? Did the problem get better? If so, yay! If not, repeat problem solving process or pick a new solution to try.

## **The Real Problem:**

My cat keeps waking me up at 6:30 in the morning by meowing really loudly. This is so annoying.

## **The Goal:**

If the problem were better, I would be asleep until my alarm goes off at 7:30am.

**There would have to be no meowing or I would have to not hear the meowing.**

## **The Solution:**

Get an automatic feeder.

## **The Result:**

I am asleep until my alarm goes off at 7:30am.

**My cat no longer meows early in the morning.**

Goal is met, what needed to change changed

# Problem Solving: Practice!

Let's practice this skill with a problem of your very own.

New skills take practice, and it can be better to start with something small or straight forward. Pick a relatively simple prompting event in your life that is causing you some trouble and go through these steps.

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# Problem Solving: Make a Goal!!

**It's important to practice new skills as often as you can in order to get even better at them!**

Make a goal to work through the problem solving skill with a problem in your life, or to take action steps towards the solution you just picked.

When making goals, consider using the SMART framework.

By next weekend, I will have picked one prompting event to try and problem solve.

## Setting SMART goals

BiteSize Learning



### Specific

The goal is concrete and tangible - everyone knows what it looks like.



### Measurable

The goal has an objective measure of success that everyone can understand.



### Attainable

The goal is challenging, but should be achievable with the resources available.



### Relevant

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives like the overall mission.



### Timely

This goal has a deadline or, better yet, a timeline of progress milestones.