

WINTER BLUES

COPING WITH SEASONAL DEPRESSION



Kinwell

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Group Agreements

- Arrive on time, let facilitator know of planned absences
- Keep group confidential
- Silence cell phones, close other distractions
- Bring an attitude of acceptance and non-judgment for self and others
- Group is an “open” format, meaning people may join throughout the series
- Respond with chat box and emojis
- Stay on mute unless speaking to the group
- Be on camera

What to Expect

Week 1: Introductions, Learn about SAD, Explore your seasonal patterns

Week 2: Circadian rhythm, Light therapy

Week 3: Mindset, thoughts & beliefs about winter; Challenging automatic thoughts

Week 4: Special guest Valerie Wintler, ARNP, joins us to talk about biological aspects of SAD, medications and supplements that help / don't help.

Week 5: Lifestyle supports: diet, exercise and substances; Stress management; Community and social engagement

Week 6: Create your individualized Winter Blues survival plan

Thoughts and Beliefs About Winter



Automatic Negative Thoughts

- **ABC: Antecedent (event), Belief triggered, Consequence (emotion)**

Example:

- Antecedent: Your partner suggests that you call your brother and see if he wants to go to the gym with you
- Automatic negative thought: “I can’t do that, I’m way too tired and no fun to be around”
- Consequence: Feeling ashamed, or angry your partner doesn’t understand. Missing out on an energizing activity with a change of scene around someone you enjoy. Instead of feeling better, you feel even worse.



Common automatic negative thoughts with SAD

- “I’ll never get out of this cycle of feeling horrible every winter”
- “I hate this time of year”
- “I’m so useless”
- “No one should have to be around me”
- “I don’t like being around other people”
- “My family and friends are only being nice to me because they feel sorry for me”
- “Something bad happens every winter”
- “I should be able to rise above this”
- “I will feel exhausted for the next 4 months”

A winter scene with snow-covered trees and a bench. The image shows a path leading through a forest of snow-laden trees. In the foreground, there is a black metal bench covered in snow, next to a small wooden post. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. The sky is overcast and grey. The overall atmosphere is quiet and serene.

**Unchallenged automatic
negative thoughts can become
self-fulfilling prophecies**

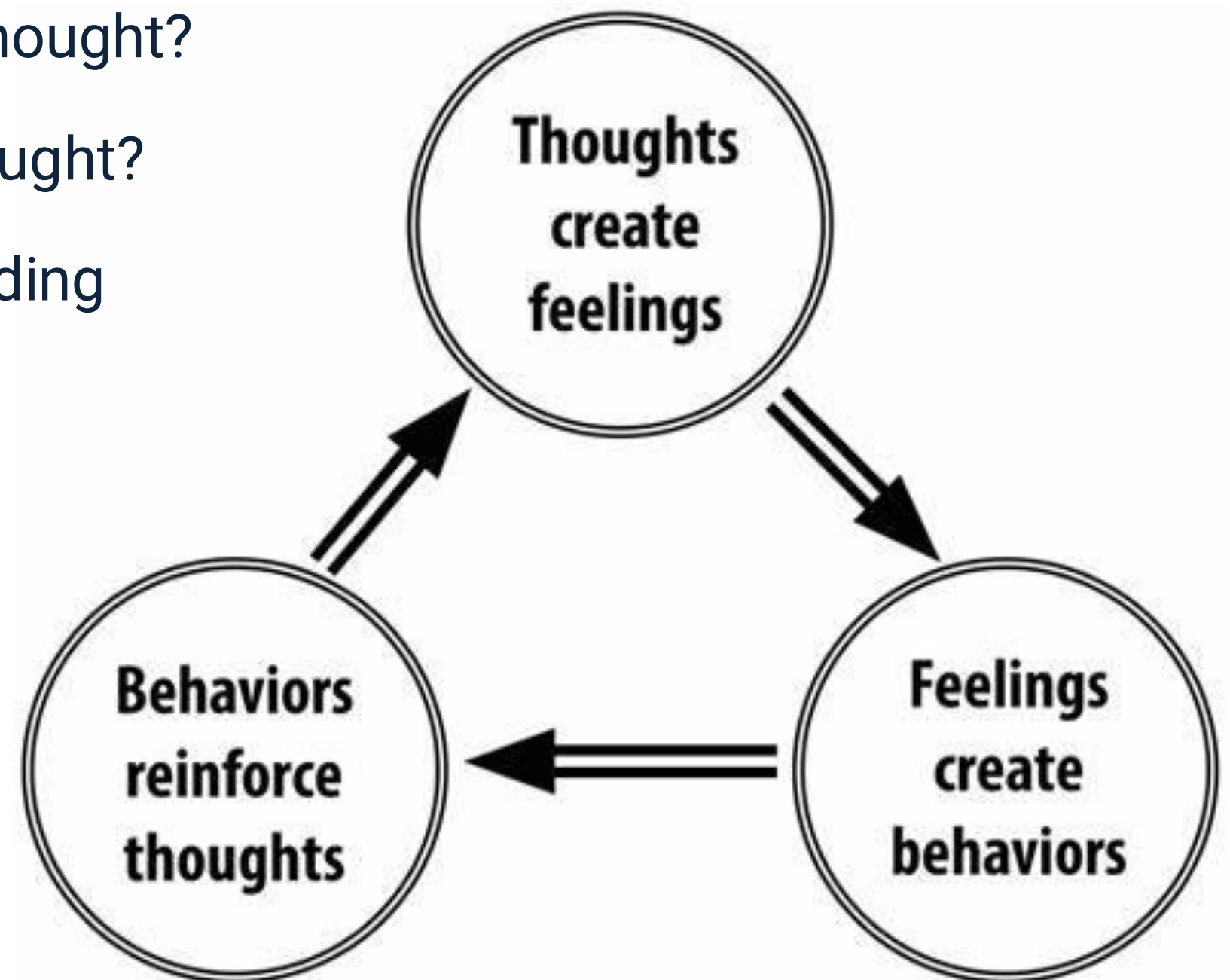
Common pitfalls

- Black-or-white thinking
- Overgeneralizing
- Filtering out the positive
- Jumping to conclusions
- Catastrophizing
- Personalization
- Emotional Reasoning
- Shoulds
- Labeling



Challenging Automatic Negative Thoughts

- What evidence do you have that supports the thought?
- What evidence do you have that refutes the thought?
- What's the worst thing that could happen regarding this thought? The best? The most realistic?



Replacing Automatic Thoughts

- Come up with a new, rational, realistic thought, based on the “cross-examination” you just did
- See how the new thought affects your emotions and mood

If you don't believe pretty strongly in your new thought, it is not a good alternative!

Keep trying to generate new thoughts until you come up with one that changes your emotional response in a positive direction

Event

Thought(s)

Emotion /
Mood

Rational
Thought

Emotion /
Mood

Woke up feeling horrible after a good day yesterday. It's still dark out and looks like it will be a gloomy day.

I'll never get out of this cycle of feeling horrible every winter.

Hopeless, really depressed.

If I get going, I can shrug off this sense of doom and start using some coping methods.

Groggy but with a glimmer of hope; feeling lighter than when I opened my eyes

Mindset and Perception





Cyclical Time, Linear Time, and Embracing Winter

Mindset describes our established attitude

We can shift our mindset through conscious effort

Consider...

- What can you celebrate about winter? About the darkness, short days and long nights?
- What can you embrace about slowing down or feeling less productive this time of year?

Next week...

- Neurobiology of Seasonal Depression
- Medications and supplements
- Q&A with our medical provider special guest

