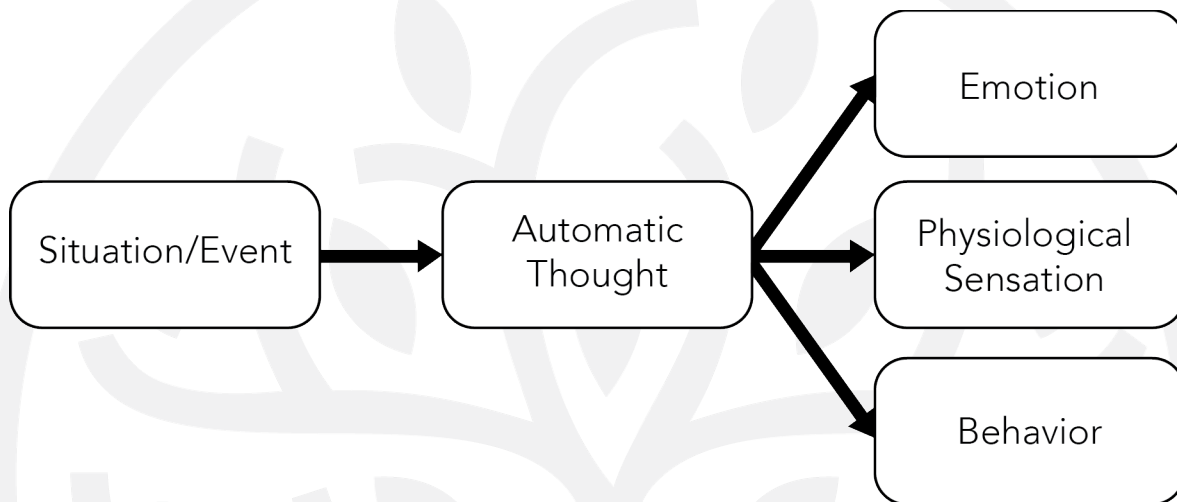




UNDERSTANDING THE COGNITIVE MODEL

According to the cognitive model, for every situation that we experience in life, we have automatic thoughts, which influence how we feel, how our body responds, and how we behave. Here is what the cognitive model looks like:



Automatic thoughts are powerful because the manner in which we interpret a situation drives how we react to that situation. For example, let's say that a dog is running toward you on the street (*situation/event*). If you think to yourself, "That dog is going to bite me!" then you'd probably feel scared (*emotion*), your heart would start racing (*physiological response*), and you would probably run away (*behavior*). However, in the exact situation, if you were to think, "What a cute dog!" then you might feel happy (*emotion*), you might smile (*physiological sensation*), and you might approach the dog to pet it (*behavior*).

As another example, let's say you are meeting a friend for dinner, who is now 30 minutes late (*situation/event*). If you think to yourself, "She isn't coming," then you'd probably feel disappointed (*emotion*), a tear might well up in your eye (*physiological sensation*), and you might decide to head home (*behavior*). Alternatively, in the same situation, if you were to think, "She's probably running late as usual or traffic must be horrendous for her to be this late," then you might feel accepting (*emotion*), relaxed (*physiological sensation*), and decide to sit at the bar and have a drink until she gets there (*behavior*).



MONICA MORALES POLONYI, PhD, CEDS, LPC-S
250 Ed English Drive, Bldg 3, Suite B4
Shenandoah, TX, 77385-8020
(P) 832-998-0028 (W) www.drpolonyi.com

Therefore, the exact situation can result in different emotional, physiological, and behavioral reactions – depending on the automatic thoughts that you have about the situation. Let's practice. For the three situations that follow, try interpreting each situation from two different perspectives. For each situation, come up with two different automatic thoughts that someone might have about the situation, as well as the ensuing emotions, body sensations, and behaviors that are associated with that automatic thought.

Situation 1: You text your friend, and two days pass without a response.

Interpretation 1:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____

Interpretation 2:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____

Situation 1: Your boss requests a meeting.

Interpretation 1:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____



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Interpretation 2:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____

Situation 3: You arrive home, and multiple unknown cars are in your driveway.

Interpretation 1:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____

Interpretation 2:

Automatic thought: _____

Emotion: _____

Physiological sensation(s): _____

Behaviors: _____