

# CHILD + YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Helping our children understand the relationship between their **thoughts, emotions, and actions** is important. Learning about emotions can improve children's mental health and help build coping skills.

As parents and caregivers, we can help children learn about their feelings. Learning, managing, and expressing emotion takes practice. The following activities were created for children in grade 7 and above. The activities included are only a sample of the resources available online.

For more information related to children's emotions, please visit School Mental Health Ontario at School Mental Health Ontario ([smho-smsso.ca](http://smho-smsso.ca)).

## BELLY BREATHING

Deep breathing is a technique that helps children connect their mind and body. Deep breathing can help children become more aware of their feelings and help with controlling their emotions.

The following Belly Breathing activity can be used to guide your deep breathing practice. This activity can be done anywhere and anytime to encourage calm feelings.

Use the following prompts and practise often to help your child feel the benefits of deep breathing.



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# BELLY BREATHING EXERCISE

In a **sitting position**, put one hand on your **chest**, and one hand on your **belly**

Take a **deep breath** through your **nose**. Feel the air moving through your **lungs**. Slowly exhale from your **mouth**

Take a **second breath**. Imagine bringing the air into **your belly**. See if you can make your belly **move more** than your chest

**Breathe in** for four seconds. **Hold** the air in for four seconds. Feel the movement of the air in **your belly**. **Breath out** slowly for four seconds

**Repeat**



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# THE TEA TRIANGLE

Understanding the relationship between thoughts, actions, and behaviours is important to stop potentially harmful thought cycles.

Try using the TEA Triangle (Thoughts, Emotions, Action) with your child to help them manage their feelings. This tool can also help your child recognize the feelings of others without judgment, and promote empathy, which is important to developing healthy relationships.



## Follow these steps to use the TEA Triangle:

1. Ask your child to draw a large triangle on a blank piece of paper.
2. Label each point of the triangle. One point of the triangle should be labeled as **Thoughts**, one point as **Emotions**, and the last point should be labeled **Actions**.  
*Note: See the purple diagram for an example.*
3. Ask your child to think of a situation happening in their life. Examples of situations include a sports competition or a friend's birthday party.
4. Ask your child to write the thoughts and feelings they have towards the situation.
  - a. Are they nervous because they want to do well at the competition?
  - b. Are they excited for the party and looking forward to seeing their friends?
5. Finally, ask your child what actions they are taking to prepare for the event. Are they doing anything to help settle their thoughts and emotions?

Practising the TEA Triangle for a range of situations can help your child recognize how their emotions impact their daily thoughts and actions. Try using the TEA Triangle to discuss a range of situations, such as exciting or frustrating experiences.

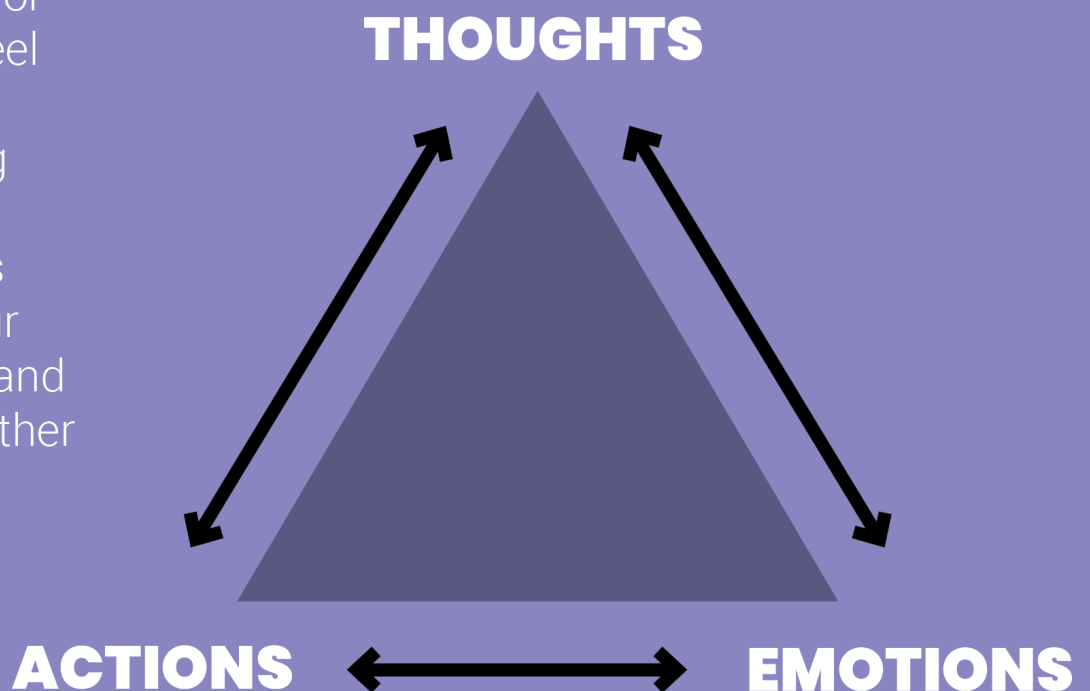
If you have any questions, or are looking for more information, contact Public Health Sudbury & Districts by phone at **705.522.9200**, ext. **278** (toll-free **1.866.522.9200**) or email [mhsu@phsd.ca](mailto:mhsu@phsd.ca).



# THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, ACTIONS

Our thoughts, emotions and actions all influence one another which impacts the way we think feel and act every day. Sometimes they interact and influence in a good way, and sometimes in a not so good way.

For example, if you think you're not prepared for a final exam, you'll feel nervous, and maybe you'll act by studying a bit more than you normally would. This is great because your thoughts, emotions and actions worked together to make you more prepared for your exam.



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