



Changing Patterns of Behaviors: Rewrite the Narrative

Bernice Simmons, LPC, CCTP
Ministry Director



You will learn how . . .

1. your questions can help your clients recognize their internal narrative and how it is affecting their behaviors or patterns
2. to help your clients see their needs and how their needs can be met by you
3. to help your clients move from survival brain to the higher-level brain and out of survival mode
4. to help them rewrite the narrative following trauma
5. this new narrative can change their life outcome



T

Think



F

Feel



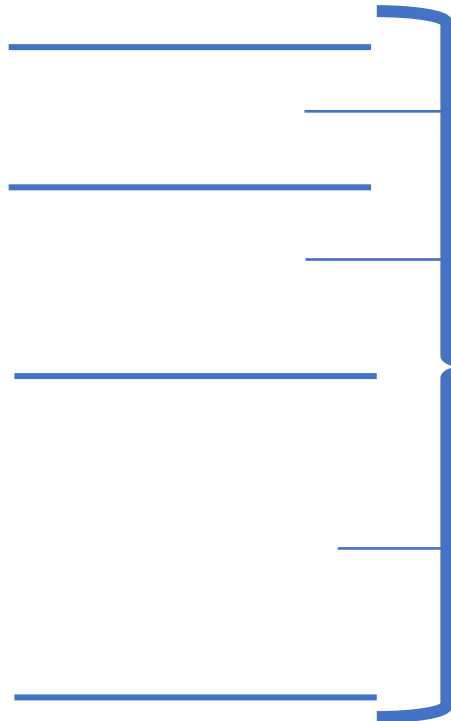
B

Behave



BR

Body Response

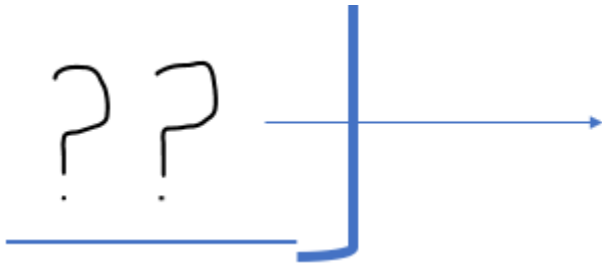


We know we have these thoughts right away.

With a little investigation we can realize we have these thoughts.



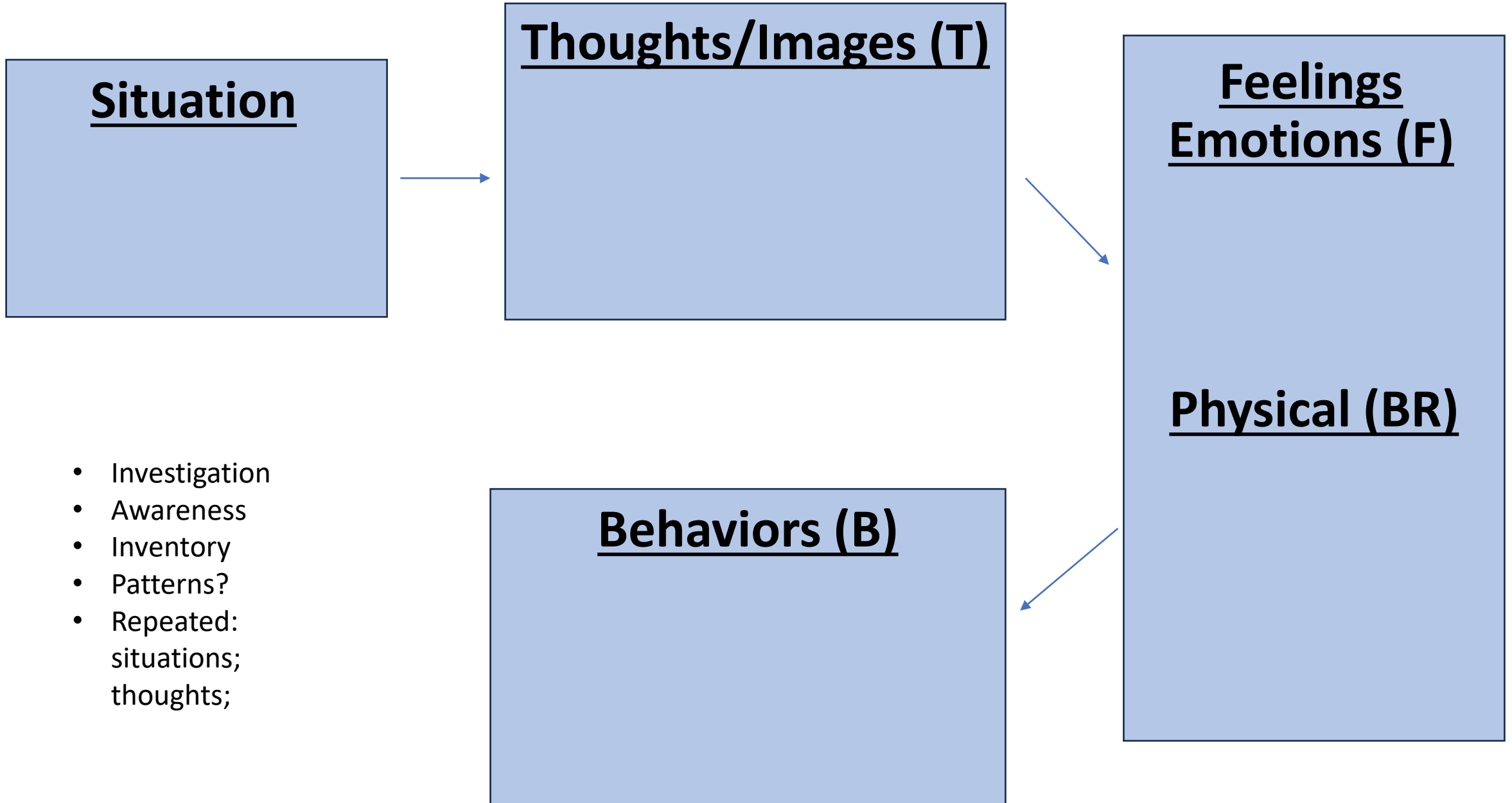
These take more work to discover. These have been here since childhood and seem like absolutes that we don't realize we think but rather are just life truths. They are also disorganized and a jumbled mess. Internal narrative that takes the most work to rewrite, but must be discovered and rewritten if false. "core truths" = lies



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We want to help them clear the clutter. We ask questions and help investigate and clean out with them to determine what thoughts are guiding their patterns of behavior and determine whether to keep those thoughts or not.



- Investigation
- Awareness
- Inventory
- Patterns?
- Repeated: situations; thoughts;

What to Ask? Help them investigate

- Are there repeated situations that bring you down a problem pattern? What do those situations remind you of? How have you handled those in the past? How did that turn out? What (if anything) can you change in your situation to protect yourself from this pattern in the future?
- What are the thoughts that come to you in many situations? Where do you think those thoughts came from? Do you hear that thought in first person, second person, or third person? Who has told you that before? How do you picture yourself in difficult situations? What are your assumptions about you, the other person, and the circumstances?
- Do you have the same emotions in multiple situations? Are you familiar with feeling words? Can you feel degrees of a feeling or is it all or nothing? If you feel this what might you be thinking?
 - “I feel like/as if/that...” = thought
- What might you have been thinking and feeling that would have convinced you to behave that way? When else have you behaved that way? What did that behavior offer you? What were the benefits and the downfalls of that behavior?
- How is your body reacting? What part of your body reacts to what emotion? Do you notice what your body is doing? What is the reason, you think, that your body is reacting that way? If your body does this what might you be thinking and feeling
- What have you experienced in your history that is similar to this situation or where you have felt and reacted similarly?



As they answer these questions you and they will begin to see connections as well as distortions to rewrite.

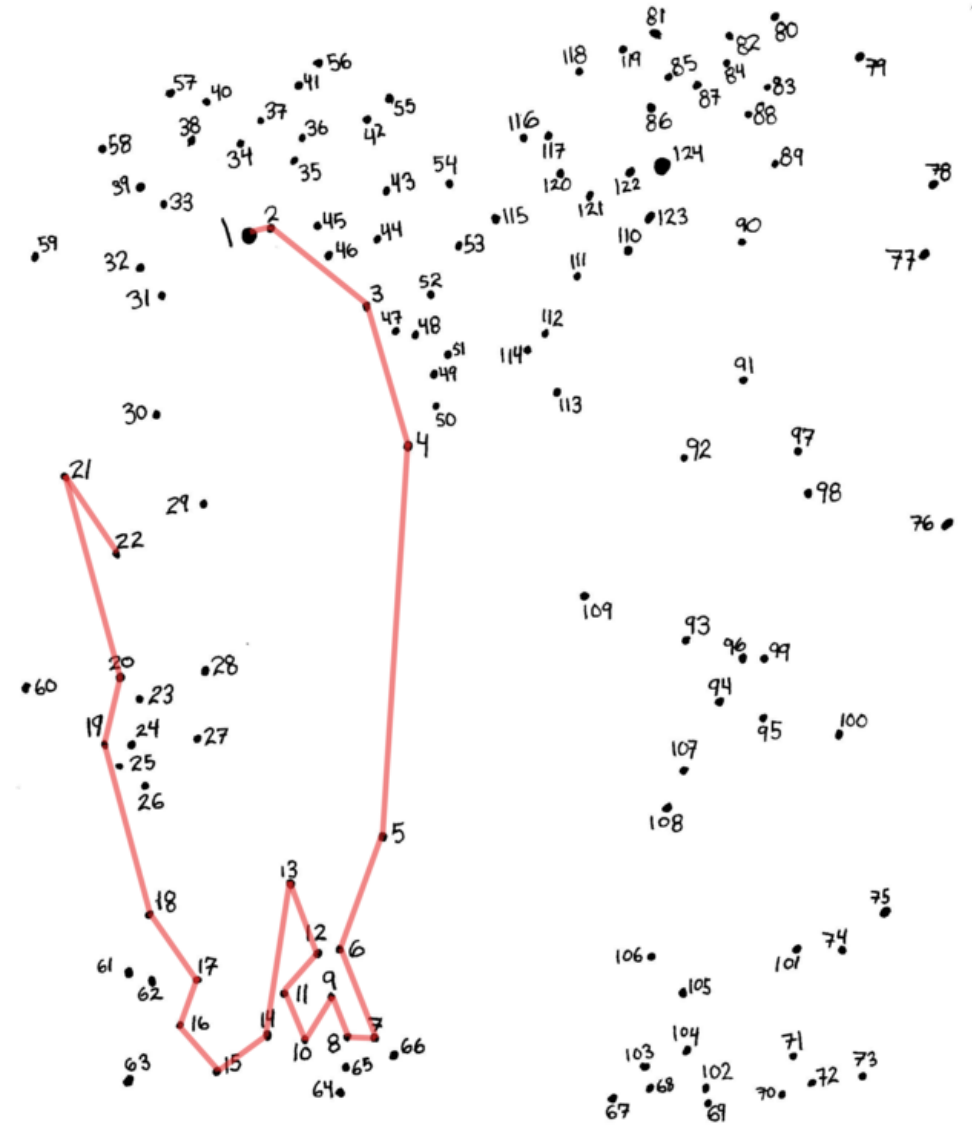
You will help them see what was missing in their past; what is missing now and how you can fill that need through your ministry/organization/service.

Validate what they have experienced and invite them to change some statements that you can readily see are not true or accurate or necessary anymore.

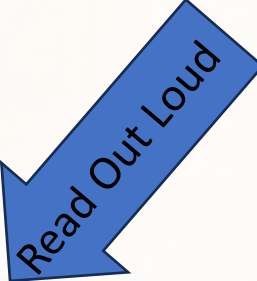
- “Considering what you have experienced before this makes sense.”
- “Would you be willing to say that differently?”
(offer suggestions)
- If they speak in third person invite them to say it again in first person.
- If they use a superlative invite them to say the sentence without the superlative and maybe add the words, “right now”, “today” or “this time”.

You are helping them turn lies/distortions into Truth

Help them see the whole and real picture!



Rewriting The Narrative



1. I'm not loveable

2. I can't trust anyone

3. I have to keep this a secret or I will be rejected

- 1.a. I am loveable
- 1.b. God loves me
- 1.c. My parents/friends/husband/kids/coworkers/counselor show me love
- 1.d. I do loving behaviors
- 1.e. The other day my friend did something that showed me love.

- 2.a. Some people are trustworthy. Some are not.
- 2.b. This person today, acted untrustworthy. The other day my mom acted trustworthy.
- 2.c. I can trust myself/spouse/friend/doctor/etc
- 2.d. I trusted my friend/spouse/mom/dad/etc when I told them my story
- 2.e. I can identify who is able to be trusted and who is not

- 3.a. I can find a safe person to tell who will not reject me
- 3.b. I don't HAVE to keep this secret, but I can choose carefully who gets to know this
- 3.c. If someone responds poorly to this secret that is about them and their struggle not a rejection of me
- 3.d. I carefully choose who receives this treasure of mine
- 3.e.

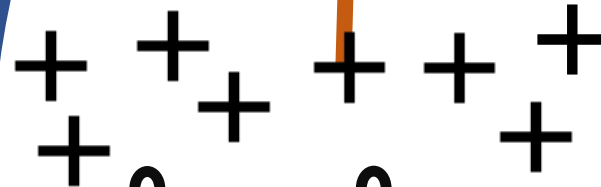
Past

Future

Situation

Thoughts and images:
memories; internal narratives, images of self, feelings, known thoughts, subconscious thoughts, unconscious thoughts.

God-given Reason
Choose Behavior and Manage Thoughts



Emotional

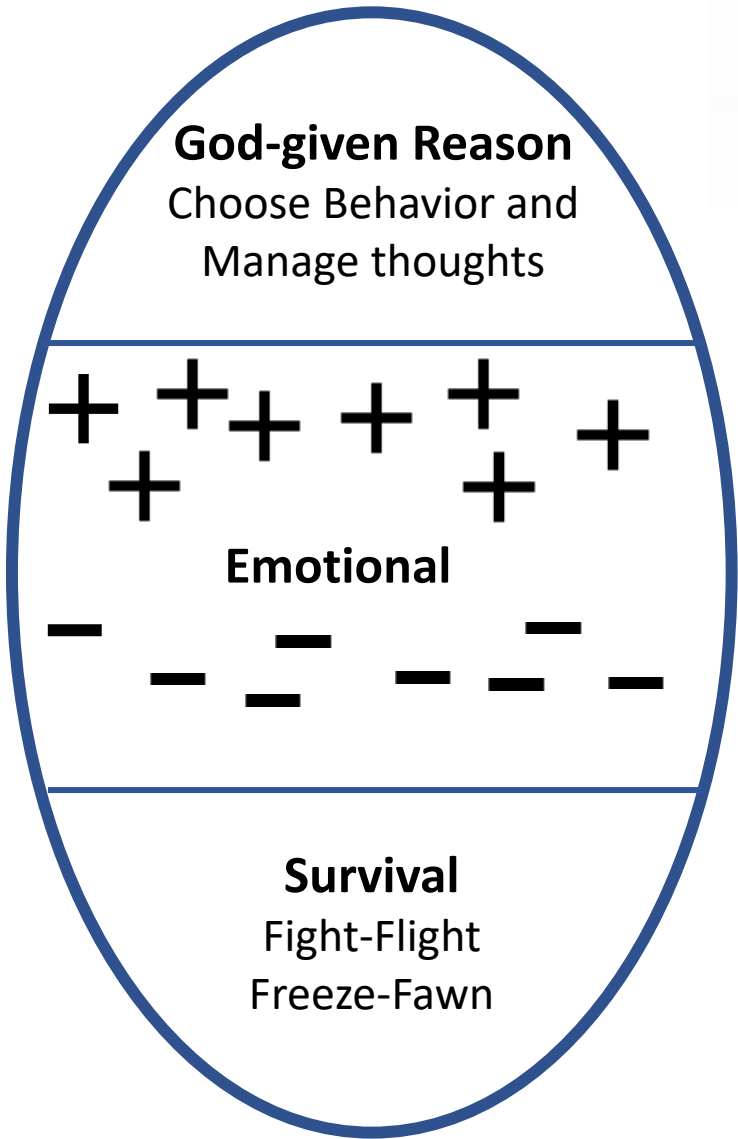
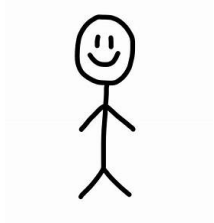
Survival
Fight-Flight
Freeze-Fawn

Dopamine
Norepinephrine
Serotonin
Oxytocin
Acetylcholine
GABA
Glutamate

Needed for all bodily systems

Adrenaline & Cortisol

Needed for certain situations



T → **F** → **B** → **BR**



Thank You

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