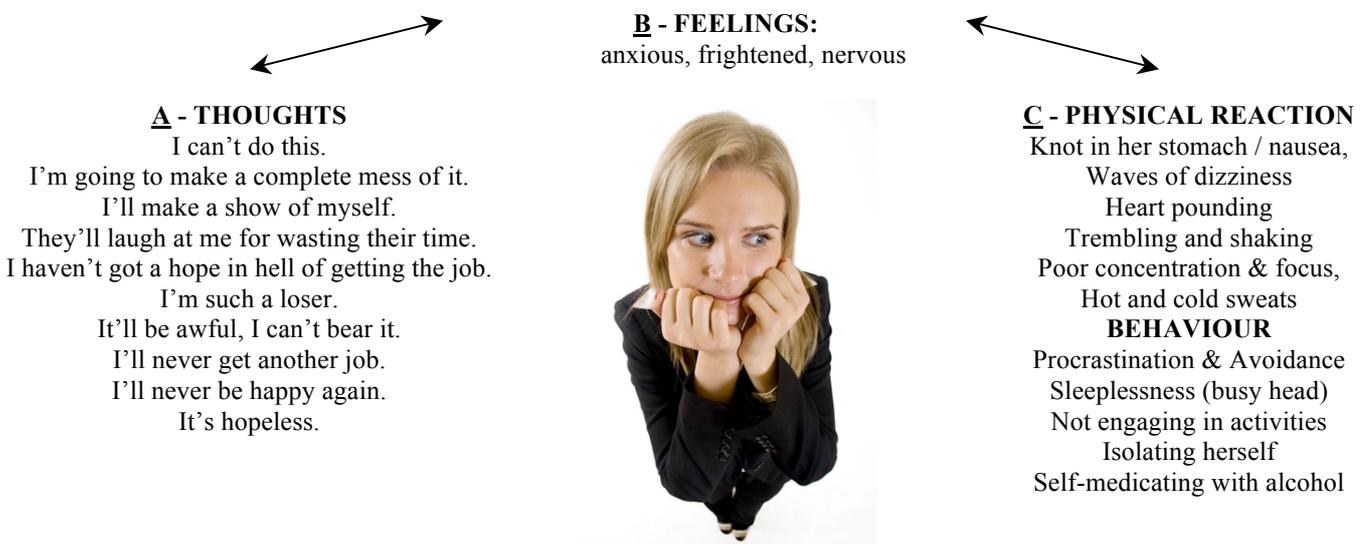


CBTandFeelingGood.com – Handout – ABC Case Study & exercise: ‘The Interview’

Patricia is a casualty of the recession. She lost her job. Her local government employment service has set her up with an interview. She had 10 days to prepare. She spent the 10 days worrying herself into anxiety – with negative thinking thought loops– which affected her mentally and physically... When her worry turned to anxiety, and the anxiety turned to a panic attack two days before the interview, she pretended she was sick (well, she actually **was** by then!) and cancelled the interview. Have a look at the kind of negative automatic thoughts Patricia uncovered during CBT homework:



Patricia has a negative ‘self-talk’ pattern. Her thoughts are irrational and not based on evidence. She is not living in the present – but rather is sacrificing the present by becoming consumed about worrying about the future. The future does not exist yet, and short of having a crystal ball, none of us know for sure what is going to happen. We live right now in the present – to sacrifice the things we enjoy doing, and interaction and fun, so that we can obsess and upset ourselves about an incident in the future is irrational. Patricia views the interview as an extreme hazard to her, something to be feared, like a lion or tiger coming to eat her... something that has the power to destroy her. But in actual fact, it is not written in stone anywhere that Patricia **MUST** perform **ABSOLUTELY PERFECTLY** in this interview. It is not declared by the stars that Patricia **MUST** get this job, or else **THE WORLD AS SHE KNOWS IT WILL END**. It is not the only chance Patricia will ever have to work again. It is likely that nobody but Patricia and the interviewer will ever know or care about the tiny minutedea of the actual interview itself... she will either be the best fit for the job according to the fallible interviewer(s) and their criteria (which she has no knowledge of), or she won't! *C'est la vie*. **Disputing the irrational negative absolute thoughts with actual evidence based thinking is required here.** Have a go yourself – I'll start you off:

<i>I can't do this. / Well I'm not confident about doing it well, but of course I CAN do it. I CAN attend / turn up and talk to the interviewer, whatever the outcome might be.. It just increases my discomfort to exaggerate with irrational statements...</i>
I'm going to make a complete mess of it. /
I'll make a show of myself. /
They'll laugh at me for wasting their time. /
I haven't got a hope in hell of getting the job. /
I'm such a loser. /
It'll be awful, I can't bear it. /
I'll never get another job. /
I'll never be happy again. /
It's hopeless. /