

Skills for Well-Being Group

Week 3: Stress and your Thinking
Working with Unhelpful Thoughts

Review from last week

- How have people been getting on with the activity diary?
- How have people been getting on with using the relaxation techniques from last week?
- Any barriers/ issues?
- Any questions from last week?

Aims of session 3.

- To explore the link between stress and thinking.
- To learn about common types of stress related thoughts.
- To learn methods to help work with thoughts.

Five Factor Model

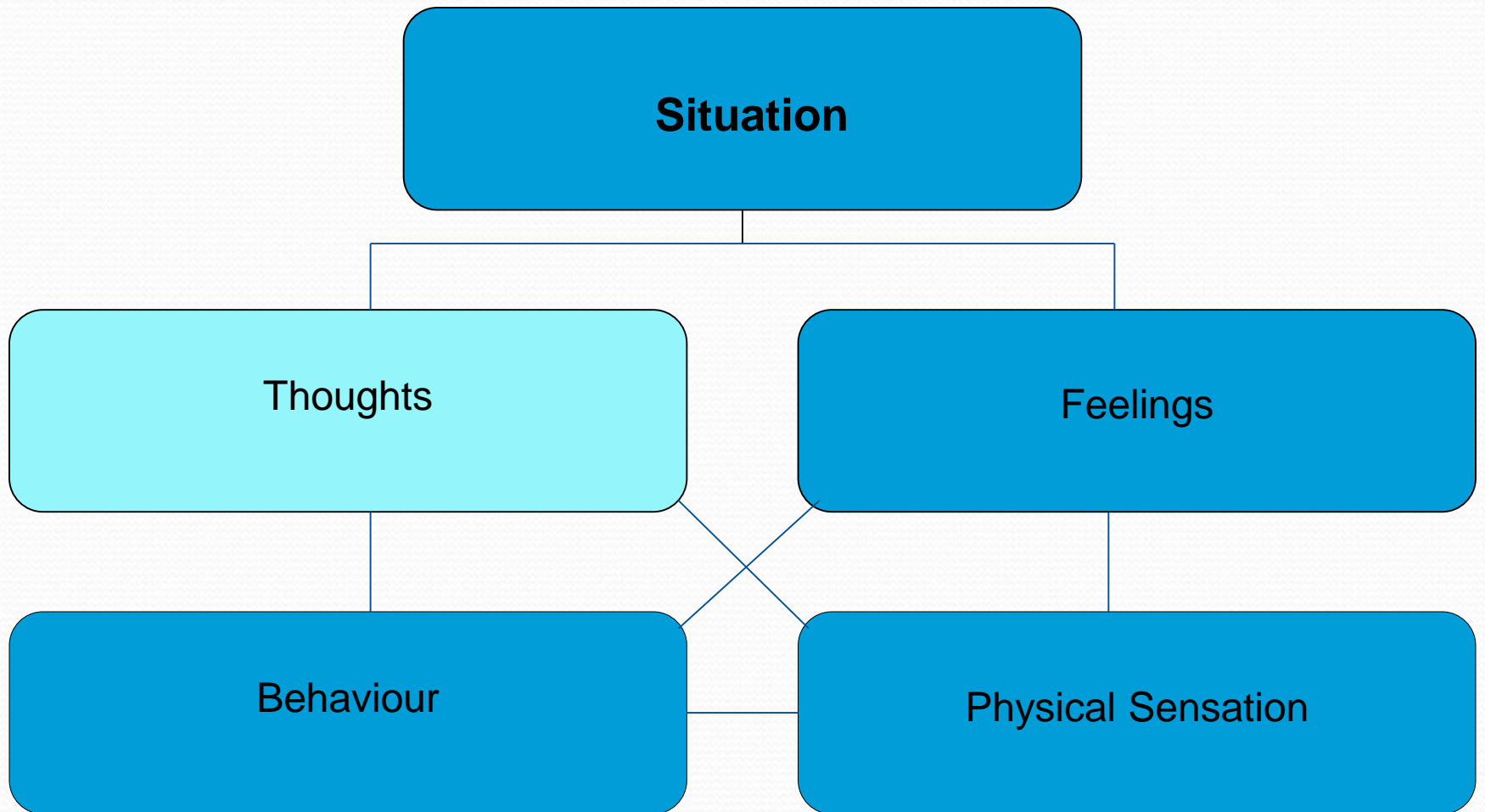
Situation

Thoughts

Feelings

Behaviour

Physical Sensation



Five Factor Model

Situation:

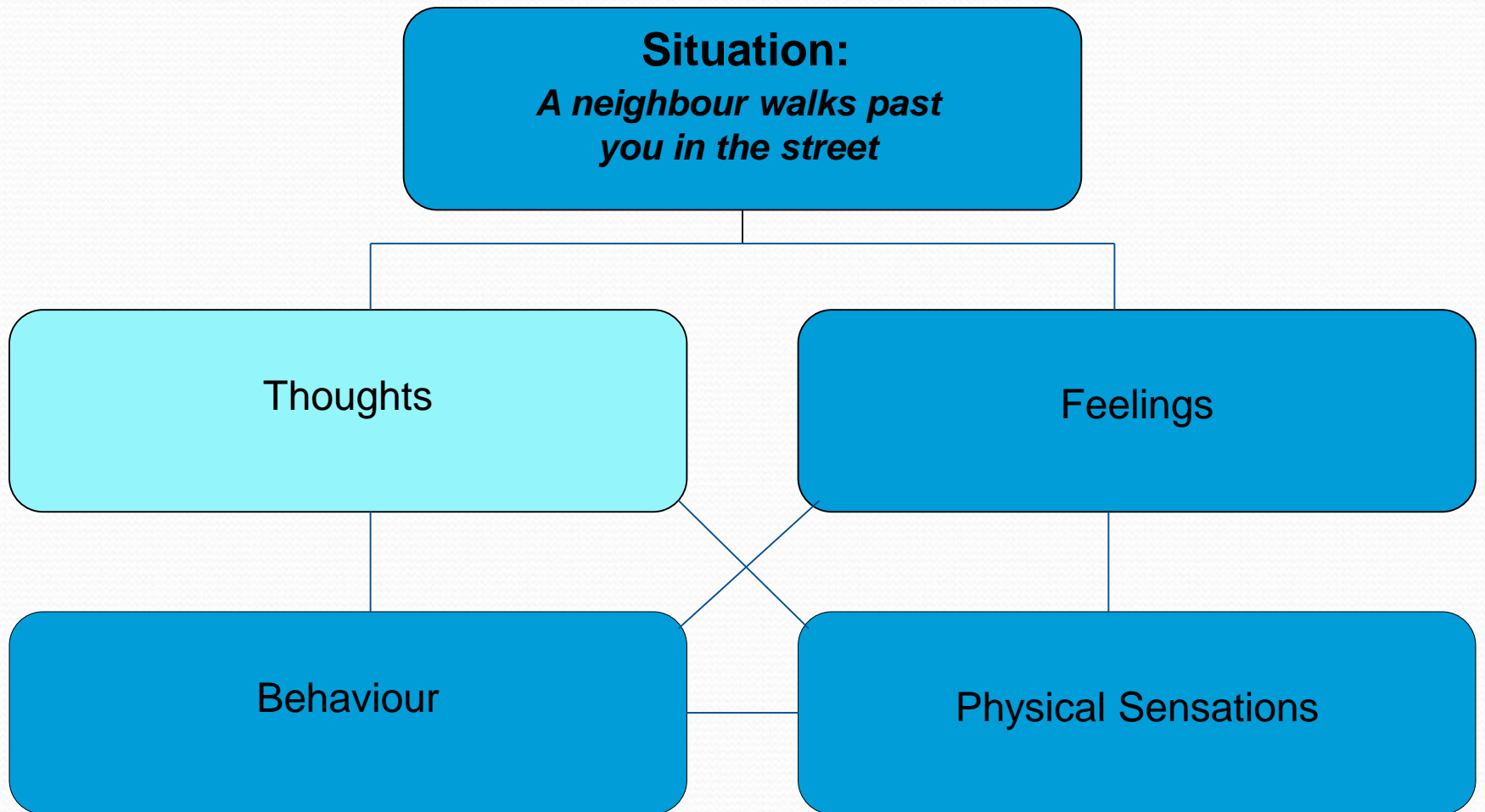
A neighbour walks past you in the street

Thoughts

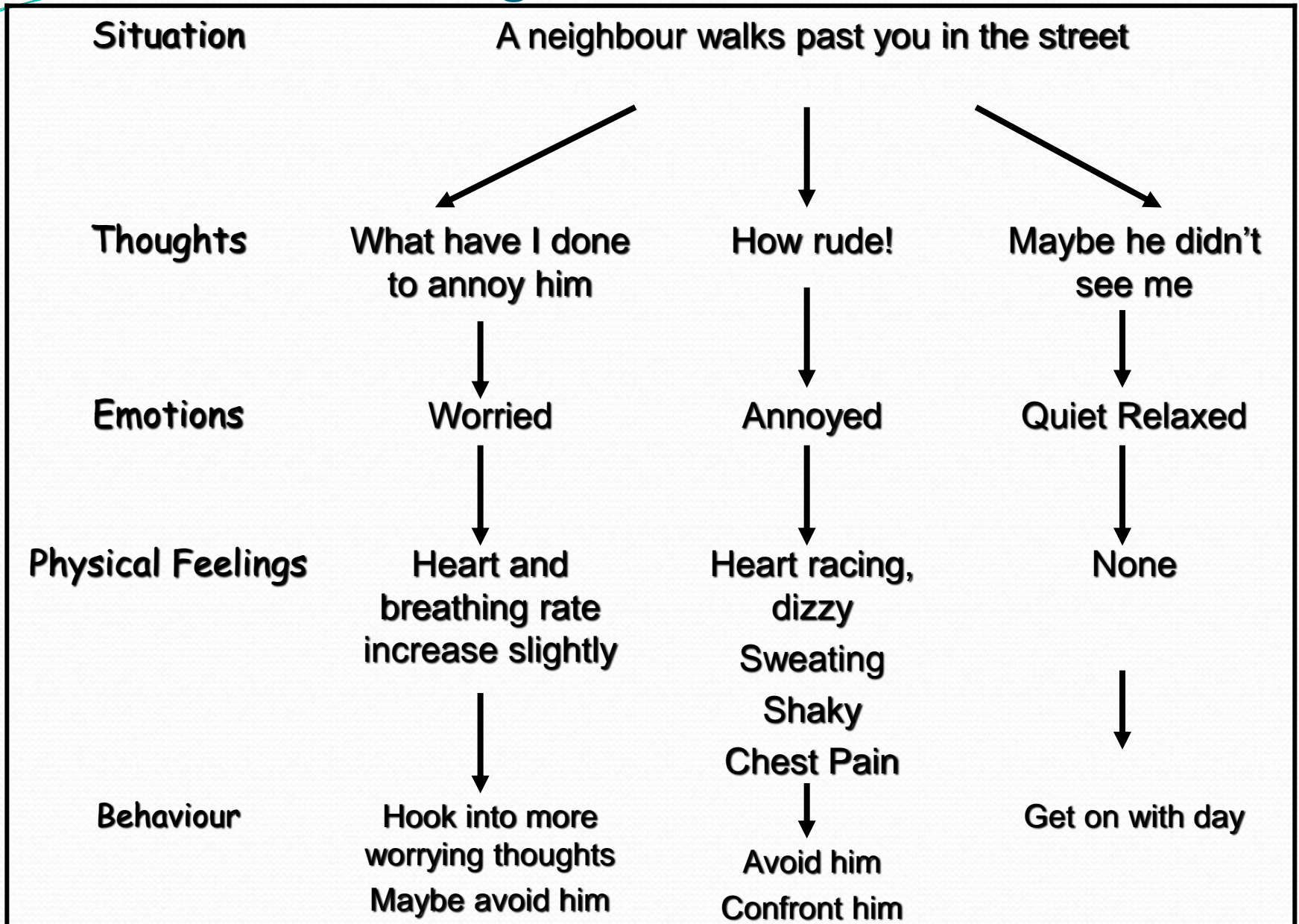
Feelings

Behaviour

Physical Sensations



Link Between Thoughts and Stress



It's the Thought that Counts

- We can see the same situation can generate different thoughts
- We don't see things as they are but as we are
- We can all fall in to unhelpful *patterns of thinking*

Common Features of Stress Related Thoughts

Thoughts which might make us feel stressed tend to have certain features:

- Negative
- Automatic: they just pop into your head, you don't decide to think about them
- Reasonable at the time and you tend to accept them without question.
- Biased: although they seem accurate, they are likely to be distorted and inaccurate.
- Repetitive
- Predictive

Worry and Rumination

- Worry tends to focus on things that can go wrong in the future; resulting in anxiety.
- Rumination tends to focus on past events with an “If only” outlook; resulting in low-mood.
- Worry/Rumination without action can become repetitive, unhelpful and increase distress

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

- All or Nothing Thinking
- Mental Filter
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Emotional Reasoning
- Labelling
- Over generalising
- Disqualifying the positives
- Catastrophising and Minimising
- Shoulds and Musts
- Personalising

Break



Standing Back From Thoughts

- We tend to accept our thoughts as absolutely true and very important
- To be able to change how we relate to our thoughts we have to learn how to stop, stand back from our thoughts and approach them in a different way

Standing Back From Thoughts

- Challenging Your Thinking
- The Buses Technique
- Worry Time

Challenging Your Thinking

- Label thoughts into unhelpful categories
- Look at the evidence
- Check thoughts and feelings with other people who cope with similar situations
- Challenge your beliefs about the consequences
- Look at different ways to interpret the situation
- Ask yourself if you are being realistic
- Ask yourself is it helpful

Challenging Your Thinking

Situation What happened? Where? Who with?	Automatic Thoughts	Emotional and Physical Response	Unhelpful Thinking Style	Evidence that supports the thought	Evidence that does not support the thought	Alternative more balanced thought
My neighbour walked past me in the street	What have I done to annoy them?	Worried Anxious Increased heart rate Poor concentration	Catastrophising Jumping to conclusions	They walked past me without acknowledging me	They have never done that before I can't think of anything that I have done wrong I do not know of they are stressed or not	My neighbour did not acknowledge me but this is out of character for them. Maybe they are having a bad day. I will check in on them later on.

Buses



Letting the thought pass

- Bring attention back to what you are doing at present
- Breathing techniques
- 5,4,3,2,1
- Relaxation

Worry Time

- Set aside 20 minutes each day for worrying
- If a worry comes up during the day, postpone it to this time
- Only worry for the 20 minutes, anything you did not worry about postpone to the next day
- If when you get to worry time an issue no longer worries you – don't worry about it!
- Use “Dealing with worry” guide to help think through the worries you're having
- Don't do it too close to bed time
- Use “Dealing with Worry” booklet to process your worries

Homework

- Continue relaxation practices
- Complete Thought Record Sheets and Activity Diaries
- Read through the Handouts
- Thank you for coming. We will see you next week.