

Creative Interventions Clearinghouse

The Good, the Bad, and You: Using Creative REBT With Children

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Purpose:

The purpose of this creative intervention is to use rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) in a way that increases children's understanding that thoughts cause feelings by using appropriate learning tools for their developmental level.

Materials Needed:

Paper, drawing materials (pen, pencils, markers, crayons), textured crafts (glitter, sands, stones, cloth, etc), tape

Procedures:

1. Draw the following on a piece of paper:
 - a. Two medium sized square, in the two upper corners of the paper. These represent the activating events.
 - b. In the middle of the page draw the outline of a person (or a stick figure).
 - c. Draw a brain shaped like a cloud in the middle of the figure's head. This represents beliefs.
 - d. Draw a heart hear the person's chest. This represents consequences.
 2. The child chooses one textured craft material that feels "bad" and one that feels "good." Tape the "good" material to the left square and the "bad" material to the right square.
 3. The child then touches the "good" square and tells you what they are thinking about.
 4. Draw a line from the "good" square to the brain. Write the child's words, verbatim, on the line. Read the words to the child and ask, "What do you feel when you hear those words?"
 5. Draw a line from the brain to the heart and write the feelings on the line. Ask, "Where do you feel those feelings in your body?" Draw a line from the heart to the area of the body that the child identified.
 6. Explore with the child how touching the "good" square caused them to think the positive words written down, and then caused them to feel certain feelings in different parts of their body. The child should point to each part of the diagram while having this discussion.
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7. Repeat these steps, this time using the “bad” square.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

What are the “good” words?

Where do you feel the “good” words in your body?

Encourage the child to practice repeating the “good” words and pointing to where they feel them by looking in the mirror each day.

Practice Setting:

Mental Health Agency/Private Practice

For full article and case examples, please see Grey, E. (2010). Use Your Brain: A neurologically driven application of REBT with children. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 5(1), 54-64
