

THE ABCs of Childhood Irrationality and Emotional-Behavioural Problems

(Bernard)



FEELING DOWN

I. Activating Events: loss of parental love – desertion/ neglect or death
Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
My parent doesn't love me.
It's my fault my parent never wants to see me.
I cannot do anything to get his/her to love me.
I cannot be happy without his/her love.
Life is not worth living if I cannot have his/her love.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I need my parent's love.
Evaluations:
I cannot bear to live without her love.
This is terrible.
This proves how unlovable and hopeless I am.
II. Activating Events: poor school performance
Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I'm not good at any of my schoolwork and never will be.
I am hopeless in everything I do.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I should/must achieve in my schoolwork.
Evaluations:
It is awful to make mistakes and do so poorly.
I really can't stand it.
This proves I am really a total failure.
III. Activating events: social rejection, teasing,
no one to play with, loss of boyfriend/girlfriend
Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
Everyone is against me. Everyone is teasing me.
No one likes me. I'll never have any friends.
I can't be happy without his/her love or attention.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I need people to like and approve of me.
Evaluations:
It is awful to be criticized, laughed at and alone.
I can't stand it. T
his proves that I really am a hopeless person.

ANGER

Inferences (predictions, conclusions):
This is unfair. I am never able to do what I want.
Everyone else gets what he or she wants.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):

People should treat me fairly, considerately and with respect.
I must have what I want.
I shouldn't have to obey rules all the time.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
This is awful, terrible.
I can't stand it.
This person is totally bad and deserves to be punished.

PROCRASTINATION

Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
Difficult tasks are impossible.
Everything will turn out okay whether I work or not.
To do this work would be a violation of my personal integrity.
Nothing I do at school will benefit me.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I shouldn't have to do things I do not feel like doing.
Life should be comfortable and fun and never boring.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
This work I have to do is the worst thing in the world.
I can't stand having to do it.
The world is crap in forcing me to do this work.

PERFECTIONISM

1. Compulsive Effort
Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I will not be able to do this successfully.
By putting in maximum effort, I can be perfect.
Mistakes show that I cannot do things perfectly.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I really should do things perfectly.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
It would be a catastrophe to not to be able to do this perfectly.
This is too unbearable to tolerate.
To be imperfect would prove I am a failure.
2: Lack of Effort
Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I will not be able to do this perfectly.
By putting in minimum effort, I have a ready-made excuse for not doing things perfectly (I didn't try).
Why bother doing things if I cannot do them perfectly?
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I really should do things perfectly.

Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):

It would be a catastrophe to not to be able to do this perfectly.
It is awful to make mistakes.
It's too unbearable to tolerate.
To be imperfect would prove I am a failure.

SOCIAL ANXIETY

Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I'll say something stupid or not know what to say.
People will think I'm stupid. No one will want to speak with me.
I'll be too uncomfortable.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I need people to like and approve of me. I need to be comfortable.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
It is awful to be laughed at or criticized by others.

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I'll make mistakes.
I have no talent in doing this and never will have.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I must perform well at all times.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
It would be a catastrophe and intolerable not to not perform well.

SECONDARY EMOTIONAL STRESS

Inferences (conclusions, predictions):
I am the only person with this problem.
There must be something wrong with me.
I'll always have this problem.
Absolutes (shoulds, oughts, musts, needs):
I shouldn't have this problem. I need people to think highly of me.
Evaluations (derivatives of the absolutes):
It's awful to have this problem.
I can't stand it if people see I have a problem.
I cannot stand myself for having this problem.
I must be a real loser.