



Put yourself in someone else's shoes

Flexible thinking means being able to come up with different ways of looking at the same situation to reduce the intensity of an emotion.

Being skilled at flexible thinking means seeing things from someone else's perspective or putting yourself in their shoes. Building flexibility is a bit like stretching your brain by practicing seeing a situation from lots of different angles. Like brain yoga.

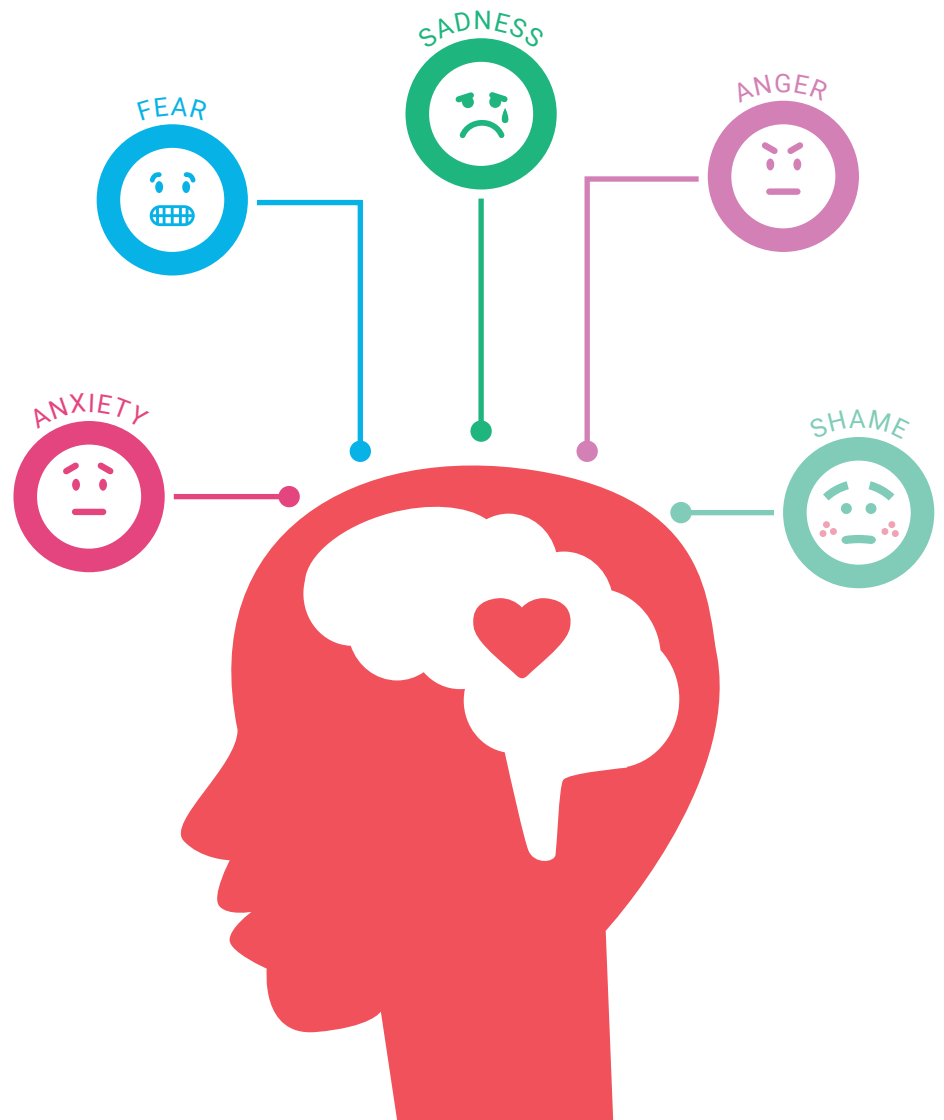
When we have trouble with flexible thinking, we might find it hard to:

- Shake off overwhelming feelings
- Resolve conflict in our relationships
- Problem solve

The opposite of flexible thinking is only seeing a situation from your own perspective. Or doing the same thing over and over, even though this doesn't get you what you want. Why does flexible thinking help us get a handle on feelings? Because how we interpret a situation influences how we feel. And vice versa.

HOW WE THINK ABOUT A SITUATION INFLUENCES HOW WE FEEL

How we feel can influence what parts of a conversation we remember or what we focus our attention on. Developing skills in flexible thinking breaks the emotion-thinking cycle, making emotions feel less intense.



Ask yourself if the story your mind is telling you is:



- The most helpful?
- Something a person we admire would use?



FLEXIBLE THINKING

Practice putting yourself in someone else’s shoes. Flexible thinking helps us interpret a single situation in lots of different ways. When we do this, we can influence how strong our feelings are about it.

Look at the scene and come up with 4 different stories that answer these questions:

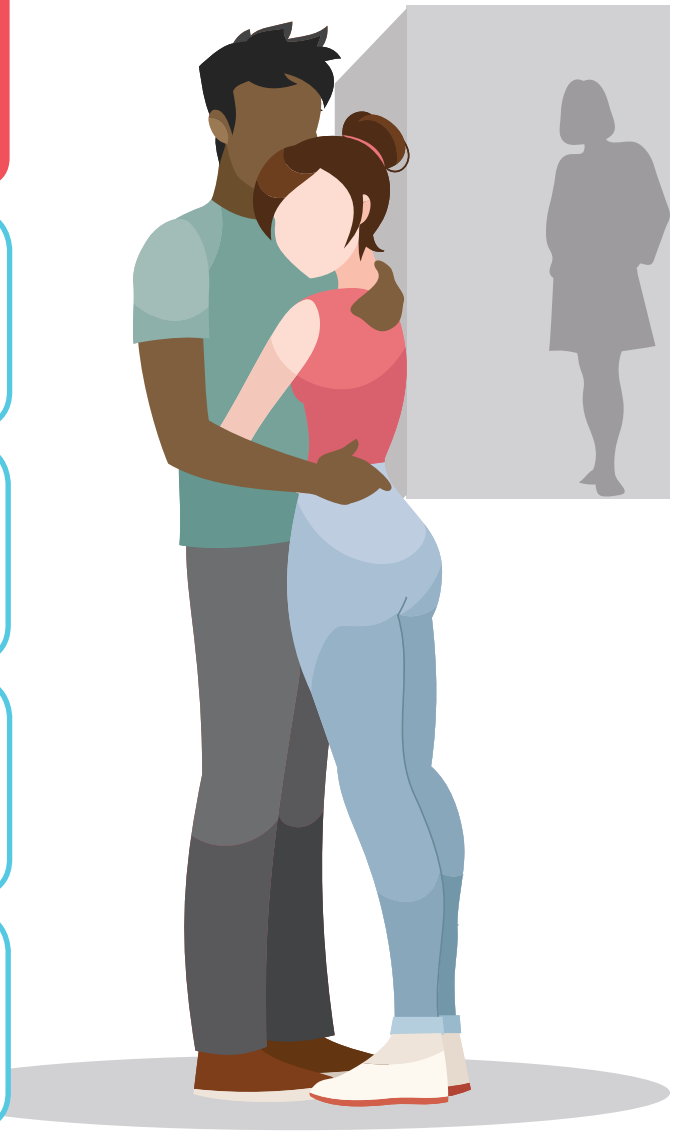
- What’s happening in this picture?
- What might the people be thinking?
- How might the people be feeling?

• Story 1

• Story 2

• Story 3

• Story 4



PRACTICE & REFLECT

Each day this week, practice looking at one situation from two different angles, like telling 2 stories about the same event.

MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1	<input type="radio"/> Story 1
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When we feel overwhelmed by strong emotions, it can be hard to step back and look at what is happening in a different way. It could be helpful to practice mindful breathing, a mindful lean, or use 5-4-3-2-1.