

# Handling Distress

From time to time we get distressed. That is, things happen that make us upset, sad, worried, or angry. It's good to know what to do when this happens.

## Step 1:

### Rate how distressed you are.

Out of 10, how distressed are you? (10 is as distressed as it's possible to be, 0 is no distress at all.)



## Step 2:

### What's happened?

Maybe someone has said something that has upset you. Maybe a friendship has broken. What's happened?



## Step 3:

### What are you thinking?

Sometimes our thoughts get really carried away. See the example.



## Joe

Joe asked his friend Ken to help him clean up his room. Ken said no because he had to do something else.

Joe is now really distressed, saying that nobody likes him.

This is strange, because there are several people who like Joe quite a lot.

Slowly, Joe realises that there are people who like him, and he's much less upset. (Even so, he is still slightly miffed that Ken won't help him clean up his room!)

## Step 4:

### Check your thinking.

For example, if you think no one likes you, then look for reasons why you think this. (In Joe's case it was because Ken wouldn't help him clean up his room.)

Then check for anything that goes against what you're thinking. (In Joe's case he could think of several people who liked him quite a lot.)



## Step 5:

### See how well you've done.

If you've done all the steps, you will probably be less distressed now. So you can give it a number out of 10 again. Remember, that 10 is as distressed as anybody in the world, 0 is no distress at all.



## Sam

Sam is really angry because Tim won't lend him any money.

He rates his distress as 8 out of 10.

Sam is thinking that everybody's against him.

But then, he checks his thinking. He is only thinking that everybody's against him because Tim won't lend him any money. Against that, he can think of several people that have done him a good turn in the past.

Realising that he is wrong to think that everyone is against him, Sam feels less distressed. Still a bit though, he rates it at 2 out of 10.

## Discussion

- Do you ever get distressed?
- Do you ever try to work out what you're thinking when you're distressed?
- Do you think you can change your thinking, just like Joe and Sam in the examples?
- How easy will it be to do the project?

## Project

Spot when you're distressed, this coming week. Try and handle it in the same way as Joe and Sam did in the examples. Get someone to help you if you want to.