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QuirkyKid®

POWER UP!

USING PERFORMANCE PSYCHOLOGY
TO COMPETE AT YOUR BEST.

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

THE GOOD THING ABOUT TALKING TO YOURSELF

So far we've set the stage outlining who you are, where you want to go, how you're going to get there and who helps you.

Now we're going to begin to learn the psychological skills that can help you during practice and competition or performance. Let's start by learning about self talk!

Most people talk to themselves, telling themselves things all the time! What kind of self talk do you think you do?

Other times you might tell yourself unhelpful things like:

- > 'I know I'll stuff up the middle part',
- > 'Oh no, my arch-rival is here, I'm going to lose!',
- > 'What if I make a mistake, everyone will laugh at me...',
- > 'If I don't do well, everything is ruined..'

Sometimes you might tell yourself helpful things like:

- > 'stay calm',
- > 'I'm ready!'
- > 'I can do this!'
- > 'I've studied well and I am well prepared'
- > 'Everything will work out'
- > 'Take a deep breath, I'm ok'



It can feel like these words just pop into our heads, but we can learn to say more helpful things and work out what to do when we say unhelpful things. Here's a list of some of the ways self talk can be used to improve your performance:

1. Helpful things can be about what you are **doing with your body** e.g. "stretch!", "relax", "power", "strong arms", "soft hands", "keep it smooth".

a. Choose some words that might help your body do what it needs to do.

2. They can be about what you are **focusing on** e.g. "look around", "read the question", "who's free?", "follow the instructions", "keep your place".

a. Choose some words that might help you focus.

3. They can be about what you are **feeling**, e.g. "stay cool", "my body is telling me it is ready!", "Everyone feels nervous, it's okay to have butterflies".

a. Choose some words that might help you manage your feelings.

4. They can be about **what is happening** e.g. "OK I need to answer 2 out of 5 questions from section A and then 1 out of 2 questions for section B", "play number 5", "My line is coming up".

a. Choose some words that might help you keep track of what's happening.

Me and my worst case scenario!

Often when you say unhelpful things to yourself, you are likely to exaggerate, say something that is not actually true, jump to conclusions, or think about a worst case scenario. What you're saying won't be quite right or won't accurately reflect the situation.

Here's a list of some of the ways that people can change things around in their head – they're called *cognitive distortions*.

1. Jumping to conclusions

Thinking that we know how somebody feels about us, or how things will turn out.

e.g. "The teacher doesn't like me, she's just going to give me bad marks".

2. All or nothing thinking

When you don't perform well, or things don't go your way you believe that you are a complete failure and might as well give up!

e.g. "If I couldn't make the finals here, then I'm never going to make the finals anywhere..."

3. Overgeneralising

When something happens once, we expect it to happen over and over again.

e.g. "The last time I performed here was a disaster, this place has bad vibes for me."

4. Negative filter

Taking in and magnifying the negative details and filtering out all the positive.

e.g. "What a waste of time, I didn't make to the finals."

5. Personalisation

Seeing yourself as the cause of the negative thing.

e.g. "It's my fault our group got a bad mark. I stuffed it up for everyone."

6. Blaming

Putting all the responsibility for the negative thing on someone else.

e.g. "I would have answered correctly if I wasn't distracted by if the audience, they made me lose concentration."

One of the biggest problems with saying negative things or things that are not quite right to yourself, is that you usually feel pretty terrible afterwards!

Telling yourself, "I'm hopeless, I'll never win this competition", can leave you feeling pretty down and demotivated. This often means you feel slow, heavy, tired or clumsy, none of which are going to be very helpful!

We're going to have a look at some examples below and work out how we can counter, or "comeback" when negative self talk pops into our heads.

See if you can spot some of the parts that are “not quite right” with what these athletes and performers are saying to themselves, and if they are using any cognitive distortions? Is there any truth to what they are saying? Where is the evidence to support what they are saying?



Example one – About Sam
Sam is a 10-year-old violin player who has been playing since he was 4. He is auditioning for a music scholarship and has been practicing for over an hour most days as well as working on his audition pieces with his teacher. He has achieved a lot and plays in two different youth orchestras where he had to audition to be accepted and has won several competitions playing solo.
However, Sam says to himself, “I am hopeless at the violin! and I never do well! Plus it’s so stupid that my audition is at 4pm, the organisers are making it impossible, it will be their fault if I stuff up!”

Now, lets analyse what Sam is saying to himself, thinking about what we have learned in the story. Complete the questions below by discussing with your group.

1. What are some of the things that are “not quite right” with what Sam is saying? Is he using any cognitive distortions? Is there any truth to what he is saying? What evidence does he have to support it?

2. How might Sam feel after he has said these things in his head?

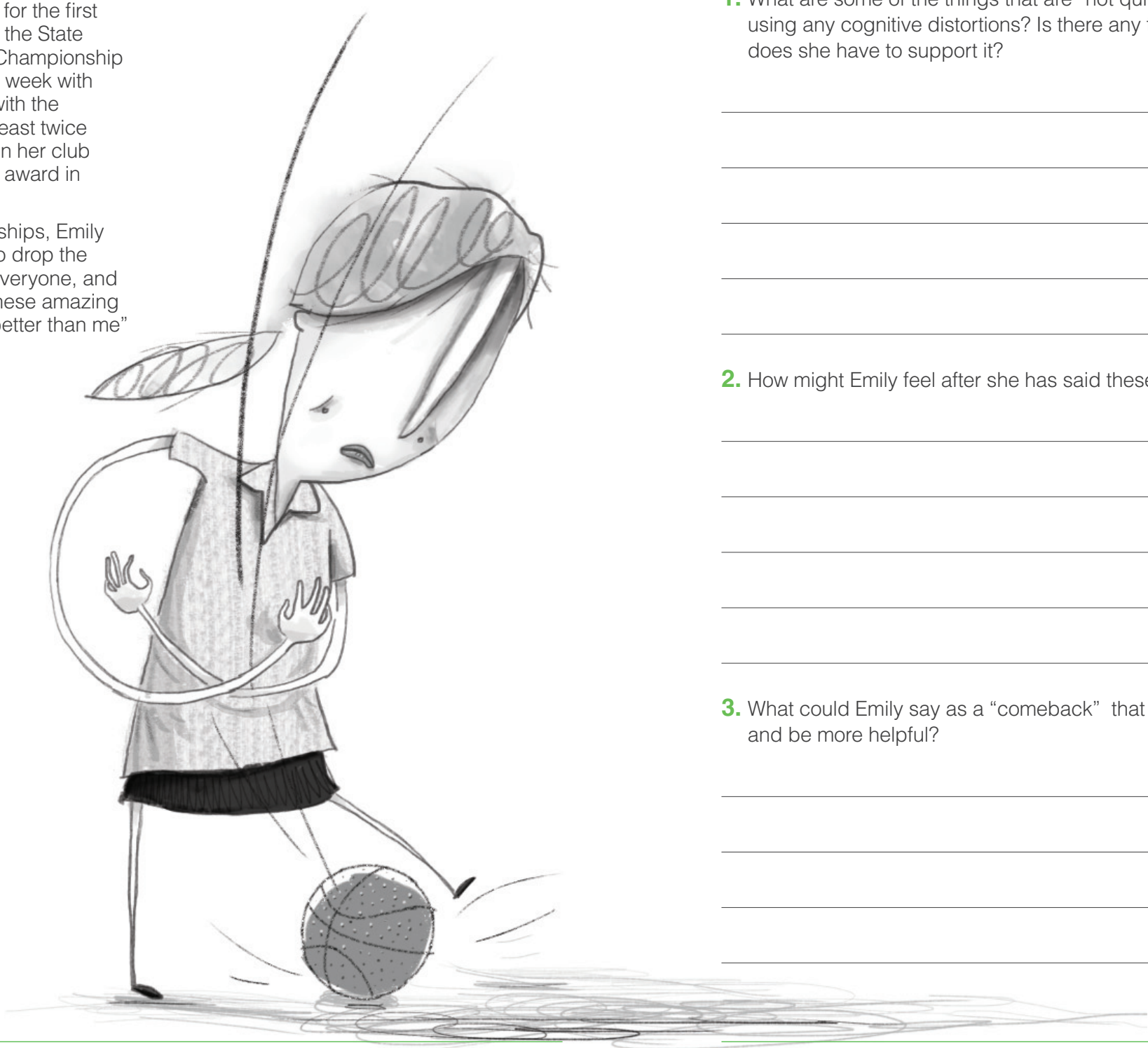
3. What could Sam say as a “comeback” that more accurately reflects the situation and would be more helpful?



Example two – About Emily

Emily is a 13-year-old netballer, who has been playing since she was 7. She plays for her club team in the first division. This year she has been selected for the first time to play for her region in the State Age Championships in the Championship Division. Emily trains once a week with her club and twice a week with the regional team and plays at least twice on a Saturday. Emily has won her club team's most valuable player award in the last two seasons.

At the State Age Championships, Emily says to herself, "I'm going to drop the ball and ruin the game for everyone, and then we'll lose! Look at all these amazing players, they are so much better than me"



Now, lets analyse what Emily is saying to herself, thinking about what we have learned in the story. Complete the questions below by discussing with your group.

1. What are some of the things that are “not quite right” with what Emily is saying? Is she using any cognitive distortions? Is there any truth to what she is saying? What evidence does she have to support it?

2. How might Emily feel after she has said these things in her head?

3. What could Emily say as a “comeback” that would more accurately reflect the situation and be more helpful?

Be your own “Comeback King” or “Comeback Queen”

Let’s think about some of the unhelpful things you might have said to yourself in the past, and how you could get yourself out of that situation.

Consider the following:

1. Were there any things that were “not quite right” with what you were saying?
2. Did you use any cognitive distortions?
3. What kinds of things could you have said as a “comeback” that would have more accurately described the situation and been more helpful?
4. How do you think this could have changed how you feel?

Let’s practice the thought process involved in “coming back”.

1. Fill in activity sheet in pairs.
2. Share with the whole group, focusing on helpful ways you can “come back”.



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Doodling here

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ABOUT QUIRKY KID

The Quirky Kid Clinic is a unique place for children and adolescents aged 0-18 years. We work from the child's perspective to help families find their own solutions.

We offer counselling and therapy, assessments, practical workshops, youth mentoring as well as developing and publishing therapeutic resources.

Our offices are located in Sydney, Wollongong and Richmond (Canada).

For more information about us visit <http://quirkykid.com.au>

About our Workshops

We enjoy developing and presenting **interactive workshops** for toddlers, children, adolescents, families and professionals.

Our workshops have been creatively developed by **Kimberley O'Brien and our team** over 15 years in the Child and Family field.

We **strive for innovation** to ensure our programs are **inspiring, practical and effective** for small groups in the clinic setting or demonstrative for large audiences in an auditorium.

Quirky Kid workshops draw on our micro-skills in working with children combined with current **research and practices in Australia, the USA and UK.**

Our clinic-based workshops interactively address many common childhood issues such as managing anxiety, improving social skills, understanding separation and divorce, building self esteem and making yourself happy.

We work from the **child's perspective** and use **evidence-based group work techniques** to encourage participation and learning in a therapeutic environment.

About our Resources

Here at the Quirky Kid Clinic we love therapeutic resources and go to great lengths to personally develop and produce our hand-packed kits.

We are committed to providing parents and professionals around the world with creative and effective therapeutic tools that are tried, tested and loved in classrooms, clinics and loungerooms around the globe.

We are constantly inspired by the young clients who visit us at Quirky Kid HQ and draw on their influences when developing our products.

Similarly, we would love to hear about your experiences with our materials.

Email us at feedback@quirkykid.com.au

QuirkyKid®

Stay updated on all the latest innovations in therapeutic resources from the Quirky Kid Clinic at www.quirkykid.com.au/shop

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