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Information & Support



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## SUPPORTIVE AND LIMITING BELIEFS

Everyone has certain beliefs about themselves and the world around them. Some we are aware of and others are inaccessible to us, yet they influence our lives and the choices we make. What are core beliefs and what impact do they have on us?

### WHAT ARE CORE BELIEFS?

These are our internal judgements that have been formed since childhood and are therefore usually based on childhood interpretations of different situations. Their origins are traced back to interactions with parents, carers, siblings, i.e. the people with whom we spent the most time as a child. Core beliefs have their own distinctive characteristics:

They are in the form of simple affirmative sentences, for example: *I am stupid, the world is dangerous, others are critical.* They can also have a positive tone: *I am special.*

- They are automatic, we don't think about their veracity, we believe in them.
- Mostly we are not aware of them due to the fact that they are deeply rooted in our psyche.
- They usually automatically activate and we often do not notice it. We only feel unpleasant emotions. Sometimes we are able to observe a thought emerging in a specific situation.

### WHY ARE BELIEFS SO IMPORTANT?

Core beliefs have a significant impact on our lives because they act as a kind of 'filter' through which we interpret reality. By perceiving it in this way, we unconsciously make a selection of incoming information. Because of this, we select stimuli that confirm our beliefs and reject those that are inconsistent with them. This mechanism makes us hold on to our core beliefs even more and believe in them, so that they become even more resistant to change.

In a nutshell, when we think of ourselves as *being stupid*, we will only pay attention to our failures and to other people's unfavourable opinions. In the opposite situation, where our core belief is *I am great*, we will be driven by successes and surround ourselves with people who are favourable to us.

Therefore, it is important that beliefs do not hinder our lives, but help us build adequate self-esteem and self-confidence.



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### EAP WEBINARS

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[www.myeap24.pl](http://www.myeap24.pl)
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*Inspire yourself to change for good*





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If you want to work on your beliefs and limitations,  
a book by Steven C. Hayes – *A Liberated Mind* – could be quite helpful

#### RATIONAL BEHAVIOUR THERAPY

One interesting and effective approach to working on core beliefs is Rational Behaviour Therapy (RBT). It is most commonly used for people struggling with cancer, but can also be helpful in other cases.

#### WHAT IS RBT?

As the name suggests, it is a type of therapy. Its origins lie in cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy. The main emphasis in this approach – as well as in RBT – is on analysing thoughts and beliefs when they are unconstructive, unhealthy, may cause suffering and difficulties in daily functioning. The underlying assumption of Rational Behaviour Therapy is that it is not the facts but the subjective interpretation of them that triggers certain emotions. This is more graphically illustrated by the ABCD Model.

#### ABCD MODEL

American physician in the field of psychiatry Maxie C. Maultsby, the creator of RBT, based his idea on the ABCD model, whose individual letters stand for:

- A – activating event (i.e. our perception)
- B – beliefs (emerging thoughts)
- C – emotions (subjective feelings)
- D – behaviour (what we Do)

This model makes it easy to analyse how thoughts influence feelings and behaviour. This allows us to find unhealthy beliefs and try to change them. The '5 questions of healthy thinking' are useful for this.

#### 5 QUESTIONS OF HEALTHY THINKING

We can assess the rationality of beliefs by asking ourselves the right questions. The creator of RBT suggests that we ask ourselves **if my belief**:

1. is based on facts?
2. protects my life and health?
3. allows me to achieve short-term and long-term goals?
4. allows me to resolve conflicts or avoid them?
5. allows me to feel the way I want to feel?

When analysing it, remember that a belief that is supportive meets at least 3 of the above 5 principles included in the questions. All of these points are equally valid and it is worth bearing in mind that people are different and what is 'healthy' for some, is not necessarily so for others.

Rational Behaviour Therapy is not 'positive thinking', but rational, fact-based, objective thinking. In addition, it is an effective and fairly simple tool that you can apply to yourself and improve your wellbeing with it.

*Don't wait, call now! If you are not coping because of internal beliefs, contact a specialist.  
We are here to support you!*