**Healthy Explanations**

When bad things happen, there are healthy ways to explain why they happened and unhealthy ways to explain them. Unhealthy ways (ways that lead to depression) include explanations that are Stable, Global, and Internal. While healthy (non-depressive) explanations are Unstable, Specific, and External. In this worksheet, we will work on changing an unhealthy explanation to a healthy one.

**Definitions:**

Stable vs. Unstable 🡪 Stable in this case means something that doesn’t change. It is “steady.” Stable explanations are ones where we tell ourselves, “This always happens,” or “This happens most of the time.” An unstable explanation is one that “Just happens sometimes,” or “not very often.”

Global vs. Specific 🡪 Global means “everywhere”. Global explanations are ones where we tell ourselves, “This happens everywhere I go – at home, school, work, everywhere. Specific explanations are ones where we tell ourselves that something happens only in specific places or specific situations, not everywhere.

Internal vs. External 🡪 Internal means inside of us. Internal explanations are ones where we tell ourselves that it’s our fault the bad thing happened, or that bad things are focused on *us* and *only us*, while external explanations place the blame somewhere else, or nowhere at all (it’s no one’s fault, this just happened).

Now, let’s practice turning unhealthy explanations into healthy ones. The two are done for you as examples.

You texted your friend to hang out this weekend, but your friend said they can’t because they have to “do something with their parents.”

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| **Stable** | **Global** | **Internal** |
| *I don’t know why I bother. This always happens.* | *No one ever wants to hang out with me.* | *Did I do something wrong?* |
| **Unstable** | **Specific** | **External** |
| *It didn’t work out this time, but maybe next time* | *I could try my other friends and see if they want to hang* | *Don’t his/her parents know I’d be way cooler to hang with? (making a joke and placing blame on parents)* |

Someone started a nasty rumor about you online. It’s not true, but they posted it anyway.

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| **Stable** | **Global** | **Internal** |
| *This will never go away. It’s out there, now, and I’m gonna have to hear about this forever!* | *Everyone is gonna see this!* | *This would be something that happens to me. I’m the unluckiest person in my school!* |
| **Unstable** | **Specific** | **External** |
| *Okay. This sucks for now, but it will go away. People will forget about it eventually!*  | *Maybe a lot of people saw it, but only a few are going to believe it, and the people that matter most (my friends and family) will know better than to believe this rumor is true.* | *I feel sorry for the person who started the rumor. They shouldn’t have done that, but that was their choice. It’s not my fault what they choose to do or not do.* |

*Continue on reverse/next page*

**Now you try some. Try changing the unhealthy thoughts below into healthier thoughts.**

You just had a huge fight with your girlfriend/boyfriend. About an hour later, you tried to call him/her, but she didn’t answer.

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| **Stable** | **Global** | **Internal** |
| *It’s over. We fight more and more. This relationship is everything to me and there’s no way things can get better after that fight.* | *I ruin* ***all*** *my relationships. (This one is Global AND Internal).* | ***I ruin*** *all my relationships. (This one is both Global AND Internal).* |
| **Unstable** | **Specific** | **External** |
|  |  |  |

You flunked Algebra and now you have to take Summer School to get caught up.

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| **Stable** | **Global** | **Internal** |
| *I hate Math. I’ll never get it; I’m just going to fail it again. Why should I even bother trying?* | *I suck at life!* | *Everyone else gets this stuff. Why can’t I?* |
| **Unstable** | **Specific** | **External** |
|  | *I suck at Math! But I’m pretty good at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.* |  |