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Cost Benefit Analyses

Many of us use maladaptive behaviour for short-term gains purposes, e.g., arriving late instead of early to a lecture to avoid the anxiety of talking to others. Such strategies are typically unhelpful as they do not foster personal growth or coping skills, merely promoting safety behaviour. Performing a Cost Benefit Analyses (CBA) can help effect understanding of the behaviour and then behaviour change.

CBAs can give clarity on all aspects of behaviour:

- Actions: How helpful is this act to me? Is it a short-term or long-term benefit?
- Thoughts: How helpful are my thoughts, attitudes, beliefs is this situation? What do I get from these—positively and negatively? Do they help or hinder me?
- Emotions: How helpful is this feeling to me? Does feeling angry or affronted help or hinder me overall? How are my emotions affected by actions and thoughts?
- Physiology: What is happening in my body? How do my actions and thoughts affect my body? How is this helpful or harmful for me?

Consider the following when completing a CBA:

- Evaluate the pros and cons in the short-term and long-term
- Evaluate the pros and cons for me and others
- Write statements in pairs when thinking about trying to change behaviour, i.e., what am I currently doing, thinking/believing, feeling, and their alternatives

Consider the following when you have completed a CBA:

- Review it objectively and compassionately (i.e., with perspective and fairness, not prejudice)
- What are the benefits of remaining the same or changing
- What are the costs of remaining the same or changing
- Remember, tolerance of discomfort in changing behaviour is key to successful behaviour change
- Keep your records and look back over them to help gauge progress

CBA	
Costs and Benefits of saying what I think vs paying more attention in conversation	
Costs	**Benefits**
I'll say something stupid	I won't have to think as much and I can relax
I won't say the best thing	I can be spontaneous

CBA	
Costs and Benefits……	
Costs	**Benefits**

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Based on work of Branch & Wilson (2012)