

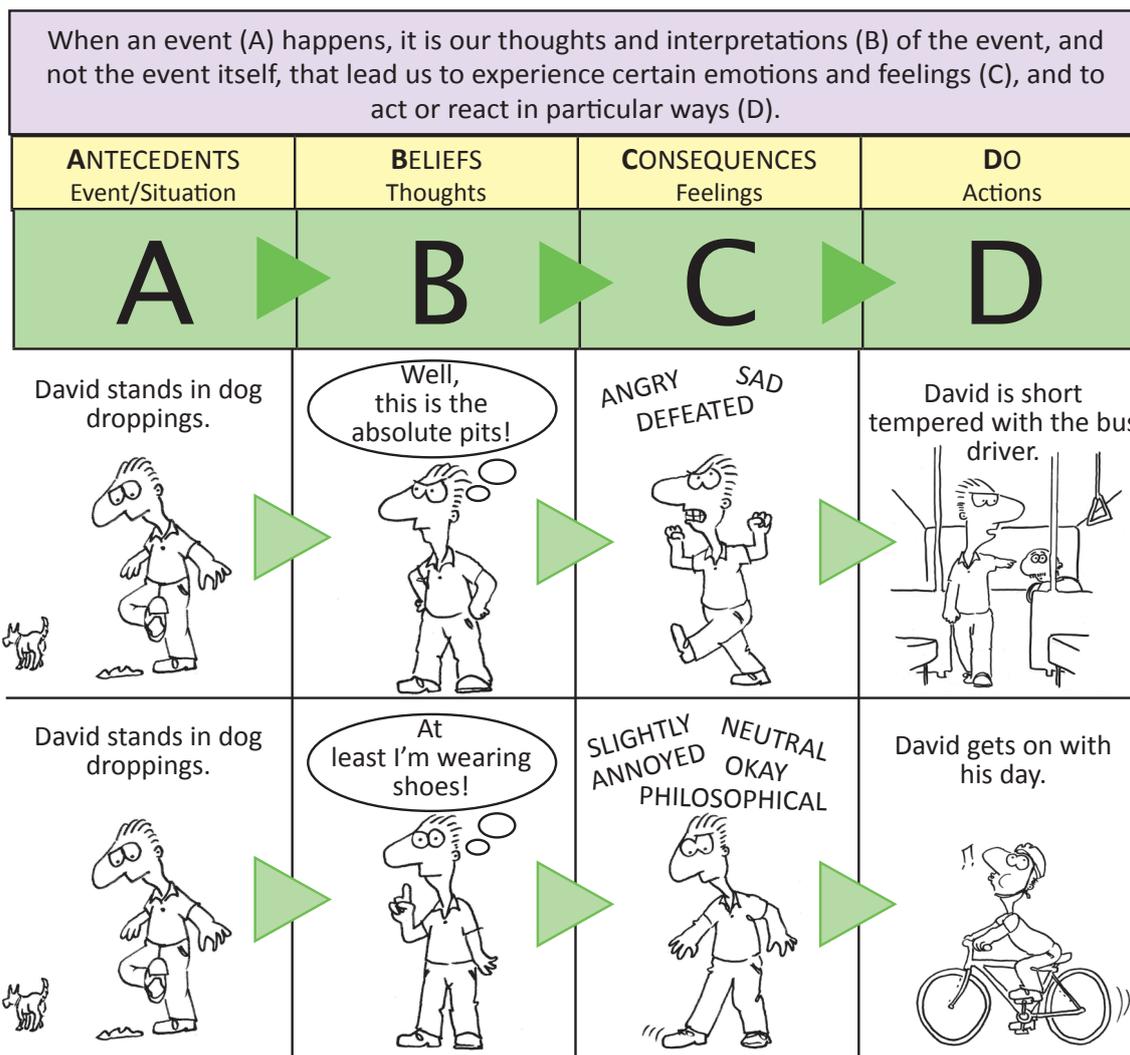


# Important Concepts

**Essential Skills** – like all of SenseAbility – is based on cognitive-behavioural principles. This evidence-based approach says that our thoughts play a central role in influencing our feelings and our consequent behaviour. In other words, when an event happens to us, it is our interpretation of and thoughts about the event – **not** the event itself – that leads us to feel certain emotions and act in particular ways.

In a school setting, an example of the A-B-C-D principle (shown below) might be when two students receive exactly the same exam score, yet have completely different emotional and behavioural reactions. One student might be disappointed and upset because he/she thinks it is not the top mark and therefore he/she did not perform effectively, where the other may be delighted because it is a better mark than he/she usually achieves. A clip demonstrating this is included on the Essential Skills DVD (HelpfulThinking & Self-talk, Unit 1, Clip #2).

### EXAMPLE OF A-B-C-D MODEL



NB: If you want to use the A-B-C-D Model as a hand-out or for overhead data projection, it is also included in PDF on the SenseAbility CD.

**Very importantly, this model proposes that while we often can't change events, we do have the power to change the way we think about those events, and therefore how we feel and how we behave. Put simply, the A-B-C-D approach means that changing the way we think can help make us feel better.**

Many of the DVD clips, classroom activities and discussion cues included in this module relate directly to this A-B-C-D Model. These will often include questions about what the students were thinking during the activity they just performed or the event being discussed, and how those thoughts affected the way they felt and what they did as a result. It is important for you to keep this thought-feeling-action link at the front of mind. The concept is covered in detail in HelpfulThinking & Self-talk – Unit 1 (p.11).