

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 1

GUIDE

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Breakthrough
ACTION
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Opening the Session

Welcome Women & Congratulate them on Participation

Thank you so much for coming today. You've been invited to take part in this group because you recently had a baby.

- Congratulations. Whether you are a new mom, or you already have children, adding a new baby to the household is a special time.
- Often, it's also very busy, and mothers can forget the importance of taking care of themselves. It's great you made time to come today.

Explain Program Objectives

- It's very common for mothers to feel many emotions -- like stress or sadness – after having a baby.
- Together, we'll learn about steps you can take to help you and other women in your community feel good and be healthy.
- When we are healthy, we're most able to think clearly and make decisions about our future and our lives for ourselves and our family.

Provide Program Overview

We'll have four sessions together:

- In the first session, we'll talk about what it means to take care of ourselves and practice having healthy, productive thoughts
- In the second session, we'll talk more about thinking about the future, and connecting with others
- In the third session, we'll talk about relationships
- In the fourth session, we'll talk more about family planning

Review of Group Guidelines

Open Session and Review Guidelines: Before we start, it is important that we go over some group guidelines to make sure that everyone feels comfortable throughout the sessions. Before each session we will take time to go through all the guidelines to make sure that they are understood and agreed upon.

Guideline	Description
Contribute to the sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This program is designed to support mothers – and it's important that everyone here contributes if it's to be a success. ○ Try to attend every session but it is okay if something comes up and you cannot make it. ○ Be on time for every session: this means arriving 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the session to ensure we can start on time ○ Speak up and participate, so you can get the most from the program ○ Try your best to complete the homework assigned to you each session
Respect and care for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listen to others, you may learn from them ○ Don't judge others, so we all can feel comfortable sharing ○ Respect privacy, and don't share what you hear here with others
Respect and care for yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Let us know if you are uncomfortable or unhappy with any part of the sessions and we will make updates to address your concerns ○ If any one of you need to consult me for any personal issue that requires my support, don't hesitate to talk to me at the end of each session



Ask the mothers: Are there any other guidelines that you can think of that you would like to add?

Invite mothers to introduce themselves : Before we proceed further, let's take a moment to introduce ourselves to one another. As I call on you, please share your name and something that makes you feel happy or joyful.

Invite the women to introduce themselves to each other.

Lesson: Healthy Thoughts

Introduce Lesson and Story of Birhan

Now that we've met each other, it's time to meet Birhan.

Picture 1

Birhan is a woman who lives near this community. She recently had a baby and many things have changed in her life. She has much time to think and is feeling many emotions.

Picture 2

Sometimes Birhan feels happy and connected to others around her. She has **productive thoughts** – or thoughts that help her feel her best and take positive steps for herself and her family.

Picture 3

Other times, Birhan has thoughts which are difficult. Since she has a baby, she feels sad more often than she typically does. She feels stressed about the relationships in her family, and her child's health and well-being, and her family's future. She has **unproductive thoughts, or** thoughts that leads her to feel overly stressed, powerless, or not in control. Unproductive thinking can often lead Birhan to inaction, which in turn can result in avoidable consequences.

Discussion

Birhan recently learned that she can change her thoughts, which often helps her feel better, and take helpful actions. Throughout our sessions together, we'll be following the story of Birhan as she learns to do this. Please note that Birhan is not a real person, she's a character, but let's imagine she is someone like us. In these sessions, we will talk about some tools that you may find helpful in moving away from unproductive thoughts or feelings and instead towards healthy thinking.



Question 1: What do you understand by “helpful, healthy thoughts?” You can give an example if it is helpful.

Question 2: What do you understand by “unhelpful or unhealthy thoughts?” You can give an example if it is helpful.

Learning to have healthy thoughts takes practice. It doesn't happen overnight. Today we'll talk about **three different steps** that Birhan can use to help her have healthy, productive thoughts:

Step 1 is..
Identifying unproductive thoughts

Step 2 is..
Replacing unproductive thoughts with healthy thoughts

Step 3 is..
Practicing healthy thoughts

Step 1. Identifying Unproductive Thoughts

Introduce Step 1, Learning to Identify Unproductive Thoughts

Bihran decides that she wants to try to feel better. Her first step is learning to recognize these types of thoughts which are not productive or helpful for her. Around the world, all kinds of people, men and women, old and young, sometimes have unproductive thoughts. This doesn't mean they are "weak" or bad people – all kinds of people have these thoughts sometimes. Doctors and scientists have studied these thoughts and identified a few types of thoughts which many people have, and which are not productive or helpful for them.

Picture 3

Today we'll talk about seven types of those thoughts. She has seven different types of thoughts which are not productive and aren't helping her. Let's look at them together. *Discuss the first thought type and corresponding example then move to the next thought type and example.*

Thought Type	Examples of Birhan's Thought
1) Always blaming oneself whenever things go wrong	"Life with a new baby isn't what I had imagined, and it's all my fault"
2) Not giving credit to oneself; thinking that good things happen because of luck or someone else	"It's just luck that my baby is healthy today, not because of anything I did."
3) Gloomy view of the future; always thinking that bad things will happen	"Things are hard now, and they will only get worse in the future."
4) Mind reading and assuming others think badly of you	"Everyone in the family is thinking I'm not a good mother"
5) Thinking in extremes	"I'll never be a perfect mother so what's the point in trying"
6) Not believing in one's self	"I don't have what it takes to be a good mother"
7) Giving up before trying	"There's no point in trying to talk to my husband"



Ask the women: Have women in your community ever had thoughts like this? If you are comfortable, share some examples.

After you are done sharing Birhan's thoughts, explain:

- These types of thoughts are not productive or helpful for Birhan. They make Birhan feel like she can't take steps for herself or her family. They prevent her from talking to others and make her feel alone.
- Around the world, many women have these kinds of thoughts sometimes, especially after giving birth. These are common kinds of thoughts, and if someone has them it doesn't mean that they are good or bad. Bihran is having these thoughts, but it doesn't mean that she's a bad mother.
- We're talking about this because when we identify these types of thoughts, it helps us to then consider other ways of thinking that may be more productive and helpful for us and kind to ourselves.

Step 2. Replacing Unproductive Thoughts

Introduce Step 2, Replacing Unproductive Thoughts

Now that Birhan has learned to identify unhealthy thoughts, the second step is learning to replace unproductive thoughts with productive thoughts. When Birhan can recognize unproductive thoughts, she can learn to replace them with other thoughts that are more helpful.

Ask the women: Imagine that Birhan is your friend and tells you about the unproductive thoughts that she has. What other alternative thoughts might you suggest to her, which would be helpful for her?

Go through each thought type, and the example thought that Birhan is having. As you share unproductive thoughts, see if women have suggestions for alternative thoughts. If they have no suggestions, you can read from the “alternative thoughts” column.

Thought Type	Examples of Birhan's Thought	Alternative thoughts
1) Always blaming oneself whenever things go wrong	“Life with a new baby isn’t what I had imagined, and it’s all my fault”	“Life with a new baby is different than I thought it might be. Many of the reasons for the difficulties aren’t my fault, but are beyond my control.”
2) Not giving credit to oneself; thinking that good things happen because of luck or someone else	“It’s just luck that my baby is healthy today, not because of anything I did.”	“The steps I’m taking to support my baby make a difference”
3) Gloomy view of the future; always thinking that bad things will happen	“Things are hard now, and they will only get worse in the future.”	“Things are hard now, but they could improve, especially if I take steps to make them better”
4) Mind reading and assuming others think badly of you	“Everyone in the family is thinking I’m not a good mother”	“The people who care about me want the best for me” “Other people have their own worries and are not thinking so much about me.”
5) Thinking in extremes	“I’ll never be a perfect mother so what’s the point in trying”	“The steps I take for my own health and my baby’s health matter”
6) Not believing in one’s self	“I don’t have what it takes to be a good mother”	“I can learn skills to help me be a good mother.”
7) Giving up before trying	“There’s no point in trying to talk to my husband”	“It’s important to try for myself and my baby.”



If there’s time, ask: Would anyone like to share an unproductive thought that they, or someone they know, might have sometimes? If you are open to sharing, the group can help you think about alternative or healthy thoughts that could work to replace unproductive thoughts.

Step 3. Practicing Healthy Thinking

Introduce Step 3:

Now, let's talk about the third step: how to practice healthy thinking. Let's talk again about Birhan. She thanks her friend for the advice and says that she will try to practice having healthy thoughts. We'll continue to follow her story throughout our time together. Birhan notices that if she makes time for certain activities, it's easier for her to have healthy thoughts. Below are some of the activities that Birhan decided to try to do:

Image	Action
Picture 4	Birhan makes time to see and talk to a supportive friend
Picture 5	Birhan makes time to rest, relax, breathe, go to church or mosque and pray
Picture 6	Birhan makes time to play and talk to the new baby.
Picture 7	Birhan makes time to speak with her husband about her hopes.
Picture 8	Birhan sets a "worry time" of about 10 minutes every day to think about her worries. If a worry comes up before her worry time, she tells herself to STOP her negative thoughts until her worry time.
Picture 9	When Birhan feels weak, she looks at something that reminds her of her strengths, like a list or a picture.
Picture 10	Birhan makes time to speak with a healthcare worker
Picture 11	Birhan visits and supports a friend in need.

Birhan decides that even though she is very busy, she is going to try and prioritize making time for these activities. Taking care of her own thoughts and feelings is important for her health.

Ask the women:



1. What other activities might help Birhan feel good and have healthy, productive thoughts?
2. What activities help you to feel good and have healthy, productive thoughts?

Introducing Homework, Summary and Closing

Homework

Introduce Homework:

For homework this week, we're going to work on step 3: finding activities that help us feel good and practicing healthy thoughts.

- Throughout the week, try to do at least one activity each day that helps you feel good and think healthy. Put an X next to the activity each time you do it. If you don't do an activity, you can leave that spot blank.
- Do as much as you can, and we can talk about the chart next time we meet.
- Feel free to talk with people who care about you and might help encourage you with the homework. If you don't want others to see the homework form and your responses, make sure to keep it confidential and in a safe place away from others.

Show women the chart on the homework sheet.

Ask the women: Do you have any questions regarding the chart? Are there any challenges you see in completing the homework?

Closing

Thank you so much for joining the discussion today. Today, we spoke about many things.

Healthy, productive thinking is the type of thinking that helps us feel our best and take action for ourselves and our families. Three steps can help us have healthy, productive thinking:

- Step one is learning to identify unproductive thoughts
- Step two is replacing those thoughts with healthy thoughts
- Step three is practicing healthy thoughts, by making time for activities which make you feel good.

Thank you so much for coming to the session and looking forward to seeing you again next time! If anyone has any concerns or questions, or just wants to talk a little more, I'll remain behind for a few minutes and would be happy to talk to you. We're looking forward to seeing you next time.

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 1

VISUAL AID

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Breakthrough
ACTION
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE





Birhan, A new mother



Birhan when she's having helpful,
productive thoughts.



Birhan when she's having unproductive thoughts



Birhan makes time to see and talk to a supportive friend



Birhan makes time to rest, relax, breathe,
go to church or mosque and pray



Birhan makes time to play and talk to the new baby.



Birhan makes time to speak with her husband about her hopes.



Birhan sets a “worry time” of about 10 minutes every day to think about her worries. If a worry comes up before her worry time, she tells herself to STOP her negative thoughts until her worry time.



When Birhan feels weak, she looks at something that reminds her of her strengths, like a list or a picture.



Birhan makes time to speak with a healthcare worker.



Birhan visits and supports a friend in need.

Homework #1

Throughout the week, try to do at least one activity that helps you feel good and think healthy. Put an X next to the activity each time you do it. If you don't do an activity, you can leave that spot blank.



Homework #1

Throughout the week, try to do at least one activity that helps you feel good and think healthy. Put an X next to the activity each time you do it. If you don't do an activity, you can leave that spot blank.



MOTHERS TIME SESSION 2

GUIDE

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Breakthrough
ACTION
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Mother's Time: Session 2

Thinking Healthy About Yourself

Objectives

- Review Homework assignments from Session 2, and reflect on how any activities helped her mood
- Review three steps of healthy thinking
- Learn to identify unhelpful thoughts about herself and the future, and how replacing those thoughts may help her take positive action

Session Structure

- A** Introduction and Welcome Back
 1. Reminder of group guidelines
 2. Review of homework
 3. Review key concepts from Session 1
- B** Stories: Thinking Healthy About the Future
 1. Birhan Thinks about the Future
 2. Birhan Feels Alone
- C** Noticing Your Thoughts
 1. Practicing noticing your thoughts: homework
 2. Closing summary

Materials You'll Need

- Mother's Time Facilitator Guidebook)
- Copies of homework worksheets (enough for all participants)
- Session 2 Visual Aid

Notes for using this guide:

Regular text: Messages for mothers

Bold and italicized text: Instructions for HEW

Picture



Refer to a picture in visual aids.

Discussion Question

Introduction and Welcome Back

Reminder of Group Guidelines

Open the session: Thank you for coming in today, it's great that you were able to make time to meet again. Before we begin, let's take some time to go over our guidelines.

Ask if anyone can remember the three types of guidelines and remind women about them.

Contribute to the sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program is designed to support mothers – and it's important that everyone here contributes for it to be a success. • Try to attend every session, or let us know if you can't make it • Be on time for every session: this means arriving 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the session to ensure we can start on time • Speak up and participate, so you can get the most from the program • Try your best to complete the homework assigned to you each session
Respect and care for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others, you may learn from them • Don't judge others, so we all can feel comfortable sharing • Respect confidentiality, and don't share what you hear with others
Respect and care for yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let us know if you are uncomfortable or unhappy with any part of the sessions and we will make updates to address your concerns • If any one of you need to consult me for any personal issue that requires my support, don't hesitate to talk to me at the end of each session

Review Homework

Ask if women would like to share from their homework sheet. Praise women who completed it.

Ask a few discussion questions:

- ? What activities were you able to do?
- Did you notice any difference in your mood when you were able to do an activity?
- What worked well overall, and what did you find to be challenging?

Listen to the women, congratulate them on their work and the progress made and take some time to review the points from the last session.

Story 1: Birhan & the Future

Part 1: Identifying Unhealthy Thoughts

Introduce Story of Birhan

Today, we will once again revisit Birhan, the mother we spoke about last time. Right now, Birhan is having trouble with unproductive thoughts about the future.

- An important aspect of healthy thinking is thinking about what you want in the future, and how you can take action to achieve it.
- But when we are feeling stressed or sad, it can be difficult to think about the future.
- The first step to Birhan changing your thoughts is noticing your thoughts.

Story: Birhan & the Future

Picture 1a

Birhan is having an unhelpful **THOUGHT**: I don't have any control over what life will be like for me or my family in the future.



Picture 1b

Because she has this thought, Birhan can't take **ACTION** and says, "There is no point in planning ahead!"



Picture 1c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan doesn't make plans for the future. She doesn't identify steps she can take to improve her life.



Ask the group: What did you understand from the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Story: Birhan & the Future

Part 2: Replacing Unhealthy Thoughts with Healthy Thoughts

Continue the story:

Birhan is learning to identify thoughts which are not productive and replace them with thoughts which are more productive, and she decides to do this with her thoughts about the future. Let's look together at what she is doing. *Refer to visual aid.*

Story: Birhan & the Future

Picture 2a

Birhan tries replacing her unhelpful **THOUGHT** with a helpful one: I face many challenges, but the choices I make matter for me and my family.



Picture 2b

This thought helps her take **ACTION**. She takes time to reflect on what she wants in the future, and thinks about steps she can take to improve life for herself and her family.



Picture 2c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan's actions help her make the future that she wants.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Now, let's talk a bit more about this example.

Discussion Questions

Birhan & the Future

Ask the following discussion questions:

- ?** What is the difference between Picture 1a and Picture 2a (*show the pictures*)? How do these differences in thought impact Birhan's actions? How do the thoughts impact her future?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - In Picture 1a, Birhan allows the challenges she has in her life to dictate her actions and how she thinks about her future. This makes it hard to solve problems and prepare for the future.
 - In Picture 2a, Birhan recognizes the challenges she has in her life, but also can recognize the choices she makes matter. She takes time to reflect on what she wants, which helps her prepare for the future.

- ?** What are the thoughts that you have sometimes about your own future? How do these thoughts make you feel? How do they affect your actions?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - An answer like, "I don't have any control over my future" might make a woman unmotivated or afraid to take action to plan for what she wants.
 - An answer like, "The future won't turn out like what I imagine, so there's no point in trying" could make a woman feel hopeless and unable to take small steps which could help her life improve.

- ?** What are some thoughts about the future which might be helpful and productive? How might these thoughts make you feel, and how could they impact your actions?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - An answer like, "If I work to be well prepared for the future, I may feel better about the challenges that I have now" might help a woman feel motivated and take some small steps to improve her life.
 - An answer like, "I cannot control everything in my life right now, but there are things that I can control, and actions I can take that will be helpful for my family later on" might help a woman feel hopeful and support her in taking action.

If necessary, explain:

- There are so many things happening in this country, and in the world, that sometimes it's normal to feel that we don't have control over our futures. But the choices you make still matter and make a difference to you and your family.
- The small steps you make to help your health and your family's health matter a great deal. If you've taken some steps for your family recently, take time to recognize and celebrate your efforts.

Story 2: Birhan Feels Lonely

Part 1: Identifying Unhealthy Thoughts

Introduce a new story.

Let's discuss another story about Birhan. As a new mother, Birhan is adjusting to life, and is surprised that she feels isolated more than she used to. Let's discuss another story about Birhan's unhelpful and productive thoughts.

Story: Birhan & the Future

Picture 3a

Birhan is having an unhelpful **THOUGHT**: My husband's away from home, and it's hard to contact him. I'm isolated and must deal with all problems alone.



Picture 3b

Because she has this thought, Birhan has a deep **FEELING** of loneliness, which makes it hard for her to connect with others. .



Picture 3c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan doesn't benefit from friends who would like to support her.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Story: Birhan Feels Lonely

Part 2: Replacing Unhealthy Thoughts with Healthy Thoughts

Introduce a new story.

Let's discuss another story about Birhan. As a new mother, Birhan is adjusting to life, and is surprised that she feels isolated more than she used to. Let's discuss another story about Birhan's unhelpful and productive thoughts.

Story: Birhan Feels Lonely

Picture 4a

Birhan tries replacing her unhelpful **THOUGHT** with a productive one: It's hard to connect with my husband when he's away – but that doesn't mean that I'm alone.



Picture 4b

Because she has this thought, Birhan feels more motivated to take **ACTION** when she feels like she needs to talk to someone, and decides to seek support from others in the community.



Picture 4c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan finds a friend who listens to her, offers to help with challenges, and helps her feel less isolated.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Discussion Questions Story” Birhan Feels Lonely

Now, let’s talk a bit more about this example:

Ask the following discussion questions:

- ? What is the difference between Picture 3a and Picture 4a (*show the pictures*)? How do these differences in thoughts impact Birhan’s actions? How do the thoughts impact her future?
 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting.*
 - In Picture 3a, the challenges Birhan feels about connecting to her husband lead her to feel disconnected from everyone.
 - In Picture 4a, Birhan recognizes the challenges she has in connecting with others, but makes it a priority, and benefits from a friend who likes listening and wants to help.
 - What are the thoughts that you have sometimes about connecting with others? How do these thoughts make you feel? How do they affect your actions?
 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting.*
 - An answer like, “I’m isolated and stuck” might make a woman unmotivated to connect with others – which makes her continue to feel isolated.
 - An answer like, “connecting with others during this time can be challenging, but it's important I make an effort” could help motivate a woman to seek out connections.

- ? What are some thoughts about connecting with others which might be helpful and productive? How might these thoughts make you feel, and how could they impact your actions?
 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting.*
 - An answer like, “staying home alone isn’t good for me, and I need to make it a priority to connect with others who support me” might help a woman feel motivated and take some small steps to improve her life.
 - An answer like, “I’m not alone, and connecting with others might help me feel supported” could be helpful as well.

If necessary, explain:

- Sometimes when we are feeling down it’s hard to socialize with others – making us feel even more isolated. It’s important to make an effort to break this loop.
- It’s normal for women to feel isolated after giving birth. If you’ve taken time to find support in your community, that’s wonderful, take time to recognize and celebrate your efforts.

Preparing for Homework

Now, prepare the mothers for their homework using the bullet points below:

- As we discussed last time, it can take time and practice to support healthy thinking, especially when you have a baby.
- One skill that can help us have helpful thoughts is learning to notice your thoughts.
- This week, we'll practice noticing your thoughts each day, using a new homework tool.

Show the homework to women and explain it:

- At the end of each day, take time to notice how you are feeling – sad, just ok, or happy. Fill in the cloud if you are sad, the cloudy sky if you are ok, and the sun if you are feeling good or positive.
 - In the first row, you can see an example of filling out the cloudy sky to show an ok day.
- Try to find time for activities that help you feel good.
- If you don't want others to see the homework form and your responses, make sure to keep it confidential and in a safe place away from others.

Distribute 1 homework sheet to each woman, and ask:



- Do you have any questions regarding the chart?
- Do you anticipate any challenges that might come up for you in completing this homework? What could we do to resolve them?

Closing the Session

Summarize the Session

Thank you so much for attending today's session. In summary, here's what we did today:

- We looked at our activity log and talked about how different activities make us feel.
- We talked more about Birhan and looked at two examples of her thoughts about the future, and her thoughts about her husband.
 - We talked about unproductive thoughts she might have about these topics.
 - We talked about how she notices her unproductive thoughts, and tries to switch to having more productive thoughts
- We shared a few examples from our own lives

Thank Participants and Close the session

Thank you so much for coming to the session and looking forward to seeing you again next time! If anyone has any concerns or questions, or would just like to talk a little more, I'll remain behind for a few minutes and would be happy to talk to you.

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 2

VISUAL AID

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



Story: Birhan & the Future

PICTURE 1a.



I don't have any control over what life will be like for my family in the future.

THOUGHT

PICTURE 1b.



There is no point in planning ahead.

ACTION

PICTURE 1c.



Birhan doesn't make future plans. She doesn't identify steps to improve her life.

CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & the Future

PICTURE 2a.



I face many challenges, but the choices I make matter for me and my family.

THOUGHT

PICTURE 2b.



I'll take time to reflect on what I want my family to look like in the future.

ACTION

PICTURE 2c.



My actions help me make the future that I want.

CONSEQUENCE



Story: Birhan & the Future

PICTURE 3a.



PICTURE 3b.



PICTURE 3c.



My husband's away from home, and it's hard to get in touch with him.

I'm isolated and lonely. I must deal with any problem I'm having on my own.

Birhan continues to feel lonely and doesn't benefit from friends who would like to support her.

THOUGHT



ACTION



CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & the Future

PICTURE 4a.



It's hard to connect with my husband when he's away – but that doesn't mean that I'm alone.

THOUGHT

PICTURE 4b.



If I'm unable to reach my husband and need to talk to someone, I'll seek out support from others in my community.

ACTION

PICTURE 4c.


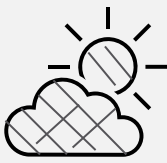
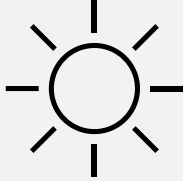


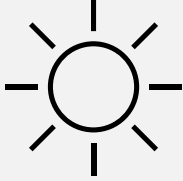


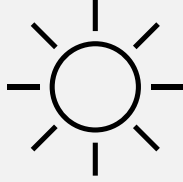


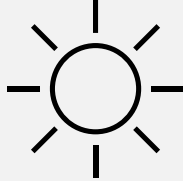


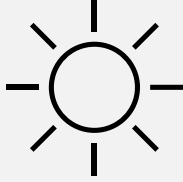


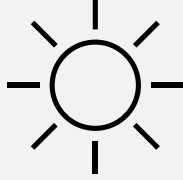


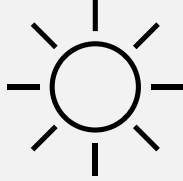


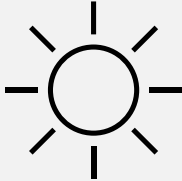


Birhan finds a friend who listens to her, offers to help with challenges, and helps her feel less isolated.

CONSEQUENCE

Homework #2

At the end of each day, take time to notice how you are feeling. Fill in the cloud if you are sad, the cloudy day if you are just ok, and the sun if you are feeling good.

Day	Mood		
EXAMPLE			
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 3

GUIDE

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Breakthrough
ACTION
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Mother's Time: Session 3

Thinking Healthy About Relationships

Objectives

- Review Homework assignments from Session 3, and reflect on what she noticed by tracking her mood
- Review three steps of healthy thinking
- Learn to identify unhelpful thoughts about relationships and communication discuss how to replace those thoughts
- Reflect on people in the social network who offer support

Session Structure

- A** Introduction and Welcome Back
 1. Reminder of group guidelines
 2. Review of homework
 3. Review key concepts from Session 1 and 2
- B** Stories and Activities: Relationships and Support
 1. Story: Birhan and Her Husband
 2. Activity: People Who Support Me
- C** Noticing Your Thoughts
 1. Tracking mood and activities: homework
 2. Closing summary

Materials You'll Need

- Mother's Time Facilitator Guidebook: Session 3
- Copies of homework worksheets (enough for all participants)
- Session 3 Visual Aid

Notes for using this guide:

Regular text: Messages for mothers

Bold and italicized text: Instructions for HEW

Picture

Refer to a picture in visual aids.



Discussion Question

Introduction and Welcome Back

Reminder of Group Guidelines

Open the session: Thank you for coming in today, it's great that you were able to make time to meet again. Before we begin, let's take some time to go over our guidelines.


Ask if anyone can remember the three types of guidelines and remind women about them.

Contribute to the sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program is designed to support mothers – and it's important that everyone here contributes for it to be a success. • Try to attend every session, or let us know if you can't make it • Be on time for every session: this means arriving 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the session to ensure we can start on time • Speak up and participate, so you can get the most from the program • Try your best to complete the homework assigned to you each session
Respect and care for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to others, you may learn from them • Don't judge others, so we all can feel comfortable sharing • Respect confidentiality, and don't share what you hear with others
Respect and care for yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let us know if you are uncomfortable or unhappy with any part of the sessions and we will make updates to address your concerns • If any one of you need to consult me for any personal issue that requires my support, don't hesitate to talk to me at the end of each session

Review Homework

Ask if women would like to share from their homework sheet. Praise women who completed it.

Ask a few discussion questions:

-  Were you able to track your mood? What was easy about this activity, and what was difficult?
- What did you learn by following your mood?
- What happened on days when you had a lower mood? What happened on days when you had a better mood?

Listen to the women, congratulate them on their work and the progress made and take some time to review the points from the last session.

Reminder: Key Concepts

Recall Key Concepts

Today we'll discuss another story about Birhan and do a discussion activity. Before we do that, let's review some of the key concepts we've learned so far.

Ask if anyone can recall any the key concepts in outlined boxes on the left. If people cannot remember how to define these concepts, you can use the definition on the right, next to the box.

Unproductive Thoughts

Unproductive thoughts are thoughts that make us feel overly stressed, powerless and not in control. Unproductive thinking can lead to inaction, which can result in avoidable consequences.

Healthy Thoughts

Healthy thoughts help us feel our best and act for ourselves and our family.

Ask women to share examples of unproductive and healthy thoughts. Then, recall the three steps of learning to think healthy. Refer to session 2 guide for examples of unhealthy thoughts if needed.

We've discussed that it takes practice to have healthy thoughts – it's not something which comes naturally. Can anyone remember the three steps of thinking healthy?

As necessary, remind people of the three steps using the boxes below.

Step 1 is..

Identifying unproductive thoughts

Step 2 is..

Replacing unproductive thoughts with healthy thoughts

Step 3 is..

Practicing healthy thoughts

Story: Birhan & her Husband

Part 1: Identifying Unhealthy Thoughts

Introduce Story of Birhan

Today, we will once again revisit Birhan, the mother we spoke about last time. Right now, Birhan is having trouble with unproductive thoughts about her relationship.

- An important aspect of healthy thinking is thinking about what you want and need, and how you can communicate that.
- But when we are feeling stressed or sad, it can be difficult to communicate with others.
- Last time, Birhan was thinking about what she wanted in the future. She was also feeling lonely, in part because her husband was away. Her husband was now back, but she's struggling with thoughts on how to communicate her hopes for the future with him.

Show the visual aids as you tell the story.

Story: Birhan & her Husband

Picture 1a

Birhan is having an unhelpful **THOUGHT**: If I try to talk to my husband about the future, the conversation will be very difficult. There's no point in trying.



Picture 1b

Because she has this thought, Birhan can't take **ACTION** and communicate her vision of the future. Instead, Birhan thinks, "I'll keep my thoughts to myself to avoid any disagreements."



Picture 1c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan and her husband don't know each other's hopes for the future, and don't understand one another.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Story: Birhan & her Husband Part 2: Replacing Unhealthy Thoughts with Healthy Thoughts

Continue the story:

As you know, Birhan is learning to identify thoughts which are not productive and replace them with thoughts which are more productive, and she decides to do this with her thoughts about communicating with her husband. Let's look together at what she is doing. *Refer to visual aid.*

Show the visual aids as you tell the story.

Story: Birhan & her Husband

Picture 2a

Birhan tries replacing her unhelpful **THOUGHT** with a helpful one: If I try to talk to my husband about the future, the conversation could be very helpful for us. It matters if I make an effort.



Picture 2b

This thought helps her take **ACTION**. She speaks to her friends about the best way to approach him. Then, she finds a time to talk to him about plans for the future.



Picture 2c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan and her husband know about each other's hopes for the future and support each other.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Now, let's talk a bit more about this example.

Discussion Questions

Birhan & her Husband

Ask the following discussion questions:

- ?** What is the difference between Picture 1a and Picture 2a (*show the pictures*)? How do these differences in thought impact Birhan's actions? How do the thoughts impact her relationship?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - In Picture 1a, Birhan takes the fact that talking to her husband may be difficult as a sign that she should not talk to her at all, leading to a disconnect between her and her husband.
 - In Picture 2a, Birhan understands that talking to her husband may be difficult but is important for the health of their relationship and family. This leads her to try talking to him, leading to a better understanding between her and her husband.

- ?** What are the thoughts that you have sometimes about your own relationship? How do these thoughts make you feel? How do they affect your actions?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - An answer like, "I'm not the kind of woman who can speak easily to her husband" might make a woman feel powerless and unable to speak to her husband.
 - An answer like, "We're never going to have a perfect marriage, so there's no point in trying to talk" might have a woman feel unmotivated to connect with her partner. She might miss opportunities to understand her husband and help him to understand her.


- ?** What are some thoughts about communicating in relationships which might be helpful and productive? How might these thoughts make you feel, and how could they impact your actions?

 - *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - An answer like, "Communicating with my husband might be difficult, but I can get better at it over time" might make a woman feel more comfortable with the idea of speaking to her husband. She might decide to try speaking, even if it is difficult.
 - An answer like, "Communicating with my husband might be difficult, but I can think of an approach that will make it easier for both of us" might motivate a woman to find a way to open a conversation.

Discussion Questions

Birhan & her Husband, Continued

Ask the following discussion questions:

-  What are some ways that women in your community might begin a conversation with their husbands about this topic?
- Would they ask the questions directly or start the conversation in another way?
- What words would they use, and which words would they avoid and why?
- How could they ask these questions in a way that their husband might be interested to have this conversation?

Below moving on, explain:

- Sometimes women are afraid to speak to their husbands because they fear that their husbands will become angry or hurt them.
- If this is your situation, it might feel difficult to overcome this challenge with by trying to have more healthy thoughts, and you might need more support.
- The resources in your community that can help you include the following [*insert resources available in your setting, which may include women associations or women affairs office representatives*].

Activity: People who Support Us

Introduce Activity

Now, we're going to talk more about Birhan and her thoughts about her community.

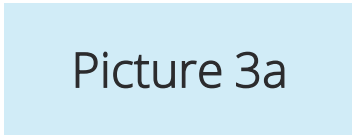
Use the pictures to conduct the activity below.



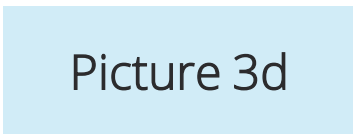
Birhan has been practicing having healthy thoughts recently and feels more connected to her husband. But still, sometimes she feels lonely, especially at night. Birhan is always helping others but has her own needs too.

Birhan has noticed that it's easier to have healthy thoughts when she's around other people. She decides she wants to try to reach out to others more often when she needs help. Birhan thinks about the people in her community.

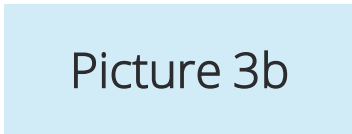
Introduce people in her community, using pictures.



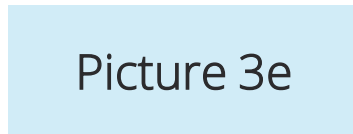
Birhan's friend



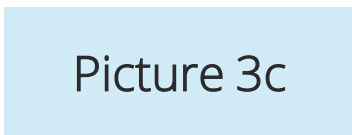
Birhan's sister



Birhan's health worker



Birhan's husband



Birhan's elderly neighbor

Activity: People who Support Us

 *With the pictures visible to everyone, ask the group:*

- Who do you think Birhan should reach out to for:
 - Practical support (for example, help going to a health facility)
 - Health advice (information about taking care of herself and her family)
 - Friendship (someone who would spend an afternoon with you or help her with chores)
 - Emotional Support
- Asking for help or support can be hard. How can Birhan do so?

Ask women to pause discussion to consider their own networks.

Now, let's talk about our own communities. As I say each category, I want each of you to think of the person in your life who might be able to offer you this type of help or support. If there is nobody that clearly fits the description, try to think of someone in your life that could fit the description.

- Practical support (for example, help going to a health facility)
- Health advice (information about taking care of herself and her family)
- Friendship (someone who would spend an afternoon with you or help her with chores)
- Emotional Support

 *Ask the group:*

- Is there anybody who is willing to share who they thought of for any of the categories?
- Women who just had babies can be very busy. How can they reach out to others when they need support?

Preparing for Homework

Now, prepare the mothers for their homework using the bullet points below:

- As we discussed last time, it can take time and practice to support healthy thinking, especially when you have a baby.
- One skill that can help us have helpful thoughts is learning to notice your thoughts.
- This week, we'll both notice our thoughts and track our experiences.

Show the homework to women and explain it:

- Remember two weeks ago we asked you to notice which activities help you feel good and have positive thoughts. Take time now to circle your favorite activities up top.
- Try to take time every day to do one of your favorite activities. If you can do more, that's great!
- At the end of each day, take time to notice how you are feeling – sad, just ok, or happy. Fill in the cloud if you are sad, the cloudy day if you are ok, and the sun if you are feeling good or positive.
 - Then, fill in a heart to represent the number of activities you did today for you. For example, if you spoke to a friend and practiced “worry time” you would fill in 2 hearts.
- Feel free to talk with people who care about you and might help encourage you with the homework. If you don't want others to see the homework form and your responses, make sure to keep it confidential and in a safe place away from others.

Distribute 1 homework sheet to each woman, and ask:



- Do you have any questions regarding the chart?
- Do you anticipate any challenges that might come up for you in completing this homework? What could we do to resolve them?

Closing the Session

Summarize the Session

Thank you so much for attending today's session. In summary, here's what we did today:

- We looked at our mood log and talked about our experience of recording our mood.
- We talked more about Birhan and looked at two examples of her thoughts about communicating with her husband
- We talked about social support networks, and finding different people to support our needs

Thank Participants and Close the session

Thank you so much for coming to the session and looking forward to seeing you again next time! If anyone has any concerns or questions, or would just like to talk a little more, I'll remain behind for a few minutes and would be happy to talk to you.

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 3

VISUAL AID

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



Story: Birhan & her Husband

PICTURE 1a.



PICTURE 1b.



PICTURE 1c.



If I try to talk to my husband about the future, the conversation will be very difficult. There's no point in trying.

Birhan thinks, "I'll keep my thoughts to myself to avoid any disagreements."

Birhan and her husband don't know each other's hopes for the future, and don't understand one another.

THOUGHT



ACTION



CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & her Husband

PICTURE 2a.



PICTURE 2b.



PICTURE 2c.



If I try to talk to my husband about the future, the conversation could be very helpful for us. It matters if I make an effort.

I'll speak to my friends about the best way to approach him. I'll find a time to talk to him about our plan for the future.

Birhan and her husband know about each other's hopes for the future and support each other.

THOUGHT



ACTION



CONSEQUENCE

Activity: People Who Support Us

PICTURE 3.



Birhan at Night

Activity: People Who Support Us

PICTURE 3a.



Birhan's friend

PICTURE 3b.



Birhan's Health Worker

PICTURE 3c.



Birhan's Elderly Neighbor

Activity: People Who Support Us

PICTURE 3d.



Birhan's sister

PICTURE 3e.



Birhan's Husband

Homework #3

Instructions

At the end of each day, take time to notice how you are feeling. Fill in the cloud if you are sad, the cloudy day if you are ok, and the sun if you are feeling good. Fill in a heart to represent the number of activities you did today for you.

Activities



Day	Mood			Activities				
Day 1								
Day 2								
Day 3								
Day 4								
Day 5								
Day 6								
Day 7								

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 4

GUIDE

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Breakthrough
ACTION
FOR SOCIAL & BEHAVIOR CHANGE



Mother's Time: Session 4

Thinking Healthy About Family

Objectives

- Review Homework assignments from Session 3, and reflect on what she noticed by tracking her mood and activities
- Review three steps of healthy thinking
- Discuss different types of thoughts on family planning
- Reflect on people in the social network who offer support

Session Structure

- A** Introduction and Welcome Back
 1. Reminder of group guidelines
 2. Review of homework
 3. Review key concepts from Session 3
- B** Stories and Activities: Relationships and Support
 1. Story: Birhan and Another Pregnancy
 2. Story: Birhan and Side Effects
- Closing
- C**
 1. Continuing to care for ourselves
 2. Closing

Materials You'll Need

- Mother's Time Facilitator Guidebook: Session 4
- Session 4 Visual Aid

Notes for using this guide:

Regular text: Messages for mothers

Bold and italicized text: Instructions for HEW

Picture

Refer to a picture in visual aids.



Discussion Question

Introduction and Welcome Back

Reminder of Group Guidelines

Open the session: Thank you for coming in today, it's great that you were able to make time to meet again. Before we begin, let's take some time to go over our guidelines.

Ask if anyone can remember the three types of guidelines and remind women about them.

Contribute to the sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This program is designed to support mothers – and it's important that everyone here contributes for it to be a success. Try to attend every session, or let us know if you can't make it Be on time for every session: this means arriving 5 minutes before the scheduled start of the session to ensure we can start on time Speak up and participate, so you can get the most from the program Try your best to complete the homework assigned to you each session
Respect and care for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to others, you may learn from them Don't judge others, so we all can feel comfortable sharing Respect confidentiality, and don't share what you hear with others
Respect and care for yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let us know if you are uncomfortable or unhappy with any part of the sessions and we will make updates to address your concerns If any one of you need to consult me for any personal issue that requires my support, don't hesitate to talk to me at the end of each session

Review Homework

Ask if women would like to share from their homework sheet. Praise women who completed it.

Ask a few discussion questions:

- ?
 - Were you able to track your mood and activities? What was easy about this activity, and what was difficult?
 - What did you notice about your mood, on day when you were able to make time for activities?
 - Today is our last day together. Would you like to continue tracking your mood and activities in the future? How might you do so?

Listen to the women, congratulate them on their work and the progress made. Also allow women space to discuss how to continue homework activities in the future.

Reminder: Key Concepts

Recall Key Concepts

So far, we've talked about Birhan and her journey to learn to have productive thoughts. Today, we'll discuss thoughts that she has about family. Before we do that, let's review some of the key concepts we've learned so far.

Ask if anyone can recall any the key concepts in outlined boxes on the left. If people cannot remember how to define these concepts, you can use the definition on the right, next to the box.

Unproductive Thoughts

Unproductive thoughts are thoughts that make us feel overly stressed, powerless and not in control. Unproductive thinking can lead to inaction, which can result in avoidable consequences.

Healthy Thoughts

Healthy thoughts help us feel our best and take action for ourselves and our family.

Ask women to share examples of unproductive and healthy thoughts. Then, recall the three steps of learning to think healthy.

We've discussed that it takes practice to have healthy thoughts – it's not something which comes naturally. Can anyone remember the three steps of thinking healthy?

As necessary, remind people of the three steps using the boxes below.

Step 1 is..

Identifying unproductive thoughts

Step 2 is..

Replacing unproductive thoughts with healthy thoughts

Step 3 is..

Practicing healthy thoughts

Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy Part 1: Identifying Unhealthy Thoughts

Introduce Story of Birhan

Today, we will once again revisit Birhan, the mother we spoke about last time. Birhan has been learning to identify unproductive thoughts and replace them with more productive ones. Today we'll talk about some thoughts she has around family planning.

- It's important that every woman has time and space to think about what she wants for her future, and/or when she'd like to have another baby in the future. If we're able to think clearly about these topics, we can make the choices that are best for our families and our future.
- But when we are feeling stressed or sad it can be difficult to think about and plan for the future, particularly when it comes to family planning.
- Let's discuss how Birhan can use the three steps to have productive thoughts on this topic.

Show the visual aids as you tell the story.

Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy

Picture 1a

Birhan is having an unhelpful **THOUGHT**: I'm overwhelmed taking care of my baby. I don't have time to think about the future or my health. It doesn't matter what I do.



Picture 1b

Because she has this thought, Birhan can't take **ACTION** and has a **FEELING** of being alone. Instead, Birhan thinks, "I won't speak to a health worker, or anyone else, about my health or family planning.."



Picture 1c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that there's potential for another pregnancy before Birhan is ready



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy Part 2: Replacing Unhealthy Thoughts with Healthy Thoughts

Continue the story:

As you know, Birhan is learning to identify thoughts which are not productive and replace them with thoughts which are more productive, and she decides to do this with her thoughts about a potential next pregnancy. Let's look together at what she is doing.

Show the visual aids as you tell the story.

Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy

Picture 2a

Birhan tries replacing her unhelpful **THOUGHT** with a helpful one: It is a lot of work to care for my baby right now. But it's important that I make time to think about my health and my baby's health. The choices I make matter



Picture 2b

This thought helps her take **ACTION**. She decides it's a good idea to seek help if she needs it. She makes time to discuss planning for my future and family planning options with a health worker



Picture 2c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan is more informed about her options, and different methods for avoiding another pregnancy until she is ready.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.

Now, let's talk a bit more about this example.

Discussion Questions

Birhan & Another Pregnancy

Ask the following discussion questions:

- ?** What is the difference between Picture 1a and Picture 2a (*show the pictures*)? How do these differences in thought impact Birhan's actions?
- Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
- In Picture 1a, Birhan is overwhelmed and thinks that nothing she does matters, and so there is no point in taking action. If she continues this way, there's risk of another pregnancy before she is ready.
 - In Picture 2a, Birhan acknowledges that she has a lot of work, but thinks that the choices she makes matters. As a result, she seeks help and advice from a health worker, who informs her about her different options.
- ?** What are the thoughts that you have sometimes about planning your future family? How do these thoughts make you feel? How do they affect your actions?
- *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - *Example:* A thought like, "If my family hears that I'm thinking about family planning, everyone will think poorly of me" may make a woman feel too anxious to think about her options and prevent her from thinking about future and family planning.
 - *Example* A thought like "I have no control over when I get pregnant so there's no point in planning" could make a woman feel hopeless, and unable to take actions that could benefit her and her family in the future.
- ?** If you have unhelpful thoughts sometimes about planning for your future family, what are some alternative, healthy thoughts you might have? How do these thoughts make you feel? How would they affect your actions?
- *Potential answers mothers might provide are below; you can use them if the conversation is not starting.*
 - *Example* A thought like, "Although some people in the family are pressuring me to have children, maybe not everyone feels that way. Some people in my life support me and want the best for me and my family" might help a woman feel more supported about the idea of planning and spacing her children and prioritize considering what might work for her family.
 - *Example* A thought like "even if I feel like I have little control, maybe there are some small things I can do to help me make the future I want" could make a woman feel motivated and inspire her to think of ways that she can begin to control my future (like talking to a friend, family member, or HEW about family planning or your future).

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

Part 1: Identifying Unhealthy Thoughts

Birhan chooses and starts using a family planning method in consultation with her health worker. She's happy with her choice but struggles with some unhelpful thoughts when she hears about a friend's experience with the same method.

Show the visual aids as you tell the story.

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

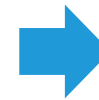
Picture 3a

Birhan is having an unhelpful **THOUGHT**: A friend told me about side effects from the family planning method. If they affected her they will be even worse for me.



Picture 3b

Because she has this thought, Birhan considers taking this **ACTION**: Maybe I should just stop taking the method now, without consulting the health worker, to prevent any side effects.



Picture 3c

The **CONSEQUENCE** if Birhan takes this action, her health, and the health of her baby, could be put at risk if she has an unplanned pregnancy.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of story?

Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

Part 2: Replacing Unhealthy Thoughts with Healthy Thoughts

Continue the story:

As you know, Birhan is learning to identify thoughts which are not productive and replace them with thoughts which are more productive. She notices that her thoughts and feelings about side effects are not helpful, so she tries a different approach. Let's look together at what she is doing.

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

Picture 4a

Birhan tries replacing her unhelpful **THOUGHT** with a helpful one: A friend told me about side effects she had from a family planning method. They didn't sound pleasant, but maybe things will be different for me.



Picture 4b

This thought helps her take **ACTION**. She decides to consult with her health worker about what side effects she might get, and how she could manage them if they come up.



Picture 3c

The **CONSEQUENCE** is that Birhan is that Birhan learns how to manage when she gets side effects, which aren't so bad for her personally. Using family planning helps preserve the health of her and her baby.



Ask the group: What did you understand from this part of the story?

- *Explain the story again if necessary, showing the links between the thought, action and consequence.*

Now, let's talk a bit more about this example.

Discussion Questions

Birhan & Another Pregnancy

Ask the following discussion questions:

- ?** What is the difference between Picture 3a and Picture 4a (*show the pictures*)? How do these differences in thought impact Birhan's actions?
- Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
- In Picture 3a, Birhan becomes very anxious, and almost stops using her method of family planning. This would put her at risk for an unintended pregnancy.
 - In Picture 4a, Birhan acknowledges that side effects might be a problem, but avoids jumping to the conclusion that they'll be bad for her too. She decides to consult with her health worker on how she might manage side effects if they come up and is able to continue using her method.
- ?** What are the thoughts that you have sometimes about contraceptive methods? How do these thoughts make you feel? How do they affect your actions?
- *Potential answers mothers might provide; you can use them if the conversation is not starting:*
 - *Example:* A thought like, "thought like, "if I use a contraceptive method and it has side effects, it will definitely impact my ability to do my daily activities" might make a woman feel afraid to think about contraception and prevent her from trying them.
 - *Example* A thought like "If I use contraception, it will impact my menstrual cycle, outweighing any potential benefits it might bring me, so there's no point in trying" might make a woman feel unable to explore her options and consider what is right for her.
- ?** If you have unhelpful thoughts sometimes about contraceptive methods, what are some alternative, healthy thoughts you might have? How could these thoughts make you feel? How would they affect your actions?
- *Potential answers mothers might provide are below; you can use them if the conversation is not starting.*
 - *Example* A thought like, "if I use a contraceptive method, it's possible that I'll have side effects, but they might not be so serious as to impact my work. Perhaps the health worker can help me manage them" could help a woman consider the different potential outcomes and make a decision about whether family planning is right for her.
 - *Example* A thought like "it's possible contraception could impact my menstrual cycle, but maybe I'd get used to it if contraception was bringing me other health benefits" might help a woman feel motivated and pursue more information about family planning.

Family Planning Information

Before closing, share some information about family planning:

Since we've talked a lot about family planning today, I'd like to share some information before I close about different methods. If you'd like, we can meet to discuss further after this session.

Importance of Postpartum Family Planning

- The year after giving birth can be busy for a mother, but it's important to make time to speak with a health worker that you trust about your health and family planning.
- It is important to make sure that your next pregnancy happens on your terms and that you are prepared for it. Having a pregnancy that you are not prepared for can put you and your baby at risk.

Side Effects

- Health workers can give you information about the side effects of different methods. They can also listen to your concerns and suggest alternative options that may be more suitable for you.
- While some methods do have side effects, they effect women in different ways. The right method for you may not necessarily be the method that your friends are using.

Breastfeeding

- While breastfeeding can be used as a method of spacing within the first 6 months following a birth, in order for it to be effective there are very specific rules and steps that must be followed. We can talk more about these steps or rules if you would like after the session.

Choice and Follow Up

- No one should ever pressure you into choosing a family planning method – it's your choice.
- After the session, I can also provide you with information about other family planning methods, if you would like.

Closing the Session

Begin closing:

- Before closing, I'd like to share some reflections.
- Although so much of your energy is being spent as you adjust to life with your newborn child, it is just as important to take time to care for yourself. In these sessions, we've learned to notice thoughts which aren't helpful, and replace them with other thoughts. We've also learned that it takes practice to have healthy thoughts.
- Reaching out to others for help is important. Reaching out to friends or your partner to discuss the supports you may need, fears you may have, and even when the right time may be to have another child. Health workers have more information on family planning methods that might interest you.

? *Open discussion*

- It is important that we keep thinking about and practicing healthy thinking after the session. I think it would be helpful if we all shared some ways that we can continue practicing this work and these concepts in our lives.
- Is there an activity that you are looking forward to doing more consistently? If so, why?
- What does thinking healthy mean to *you*? And how do you plan to incorporate healthy thinking into your life?
- What are some ways that you can make sure you are practicing healthy thinking consistently?
 - *Potential Answer:*
 - Talk with a friend, your husband/partner or a family member and ask them to help you practice healthy thinking
 - Make time to continue doing the homework exercises and keep practicing
 - Reach out to a HEW or to the facilitator
- What are some ways that we can continue to support each other as a group?
- Would anyone like to stay in touch and continue meeting?

Close the session

Thank you so much for coming to these sessions. Let's take a moment to go around within our group and thank one another.

Once everyone has had time to give their thanks, say:

Thank you so much for coming to the session, and for participating in this group! If anyone has any concerns or questions, or would just like to talk a little more, I'll remain behind for a few minutes and would be happy to talk to you.

Ideas for Next Steps

Congratulations on running three sessions for mothers. If mothers or health workers would like to continue, you can use content in the *Thinking Healthy* manual from WHO. If you would like to keep running groups, you may want to consider the following:

Reminders of the group's guidelines

It is important start each session by going over the ground rules, listed at the beginning of each session. While some mothers may already be familiar the rules from having attended prior sessions, some mothers will be new; others may need a reminder to adhere to them. These rules help to ensure a smooth-running session that every mother will feel comfortable participating in.

Additional examples of healthy and unhealthy thinking

If you are looking to find more examples or diagrams that show healthy vs. unhealthy thinking, then we encourage you to look through the WHO's [Thinking Healthy Manual](https://www.who.int/mental_health/maternal-child/thinking_healthy/en/), available at: https://www.who.int/mental_health/maternal-child/thinking_healthy/en/.

This may help you provide additional examples of healthy thinking and may also help the group discuss additional situations where they can practice shifting their perspective towards a more productive outlook.

Activities that reinforce mother-baby bonding

It may be helpful for mothers to think about activities that they like to or could do with their baby to reinforce positive bonding. Doing pleasant activities with the baby helps to instill a positive connection between mother and child that is beneficial to both parties. Mothers may benefit from expanding upon *Homework 1.1* to think of activities that their baby may enjoy or activities that both they and their baby will enjoy together. Mothers can use subsequent group sessions to discuss together what their babies like to do and develop various new ways to bond with their child.

Discussions of support and resource referrals

In further group sessions, it may be beneficial to incorporate information about different resources that may be available to mothers in the Ethiopian health system. The resources may vary based on your area, but could include para-social workers, health extension workers, and health facilities. Mothers may also benefit from sharing ideas for resources with each other in a group discussion.

Thank you for your interest in Mothers' Time and the work that you do to support mothers in the community.

MOTHERS TIME SESSION 4

VISUAL AID

This tool is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of Breakthrough ACTION and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government



Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy

PICTURE 1a.



PICTURE 1b.



PICTURE 1c.



I'm overwhelmed taking care of my baby. I don't have time to think about the future or my health. It doesn't matter what I do.

Birhan thinks, "I won't speak to a health worker, or anyone else, about my health or family planning.."

There's potential for another pregnancy before Birhan is ready.

THOUGHT



ACTION



CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & Another Pregnancy

PICTURE 2a.



It is a lot of work to care for my baby right now. But it's important that I make time to think about my health and my baby's health. The choices I make matter.

THOUGHT



PICTURE 2b.



I'll speak to my friends about the best way to approach him. I'll find a time to talk to him about our plan for the future.

ACTION



PICTURE 2c.



Birhan is more informed about her options, and different methods for avoiding another pregnancy until she is ready.

CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

PICTURE 3a.



A friend told me about side effects from the family planning method. If they affected her they will be even worse for me.

THOUGHT



PICTURE 3b.



Maybe I should just stop taking the method now, without consulting the health worker, to prevent any side effects.

ACTION



PICTURE 3c.



If Birhan takes this action her health, and the health of her baby, could be put at risk if she has an unplanned pregnancy.

CONSEQUENCE

Story: Birhan & Side Effects

PICTURE 4a.



A friend told me about side effects she had from a family planning method. They didn't sound pleasant, but maybe things will be different for me.

THOUGHT

PICTURE 4b.



She decides to consult with her health worker about what side effects she might get, and how she could manage them if they come up.

ACTION

PICTURE 4c.



Birhan learns how to manage when she gets side effects, which aren't so bad for her personally. Using family planning helps preserve the health of her and her baby.

CONSEQUENCE

