

The Jack Petchey **Spark** Programme

a self-discovery programme for young people



**Discover how to be at your best
more of the time!**

Session 7: Discovering my Mindtraps

The six In the Box Mindtraps

Earlier in the Spark Programme you learned about our self-talk (the voices in our heads) and how, when we are In the Box, our self-talk is likely to be coming from our Judge or Pessimist. In this session, we will explore your Judge and Pessimist voices a bit deeper, look for some common patterns which we call **Mindtraps**, and consider how they can get in the way when we're facing challenges such as tests or exams, just when we need to Be at Our Best.

Mindtraps are common negative thought patterns that can hold us back when we deal with a challenging situation.

The Judge

Makes judgements about ourselves and / or about others

The Pessimist

Imagines the worst, picturing the potential negatives



Pleaser

When faced with a problem, a person with a '**Pleaser mindtrap**' is more concerned about what other people think, which may lead to them to make a poor choice to satisfy someone else. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'People won't like me if I don't do this'*



Doubter

When faced with a problem, a person with a '**Doubter mindtrap**' can undermine themselves or others by questioning their own or other people's abilities. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'I'm no good at this.'*



Prover

When faced with a problem, a person with a '**Prover mindtrap**' gets very task focused and set on achieving the goal and loses sight of other people and their needs. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'I have to do this perfectly'*



Avoider

When faced with a problem, a person with an '**Avoider mindtrap**' may make excuses to avoid doing things or give up completely and blame someone else. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'It's not my problem.'*



Worrier

When faced with a problem, a person with a '**Worrier mindtrap**' worries too much. They may get too nervous or find it hard to make a decision. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'Things always go wrong.'*

Martyr

When faced with a problem, a person with a '**Martyr mindtrap**' takes on too much and ends up feeling burnt-out or unmotivated. *Their In the Box self-talk might be 'What I need is not important.'*



Exercise: Can you spot the Mindtraps?

Label each thought bubble with the relevant Mindtrap:

1. "I can never do this. I'm just not smart enough"

2. "I must get this done no matter what. Even if it means offending my friends"

3. "No one is helping me! I have no choice but to do it all by myself! As always"

4. "I don't have to do this now. I will wait until my mum mentions it"

5. "I'm not sure this is the right thing to do, but at least it will keep everyone happy"

6. "It's not my fault, I can't revise well at home"

7. "I'll have to choose these A Levels because Dad will be disappointed otherwise"

8. "What if we don't get the project finished? What if someone gets sick and can't complete their bit?"

Which two Mindtraps feel most familiar to you?

What sorts of situations trigger these Mindtraps for you?



Go Do!

Watch this video ([here](#)) of our Spark Ambassador Carl illustrating two of the Mindtraps.

Exercise: Mindtraps and tests or exams

For many of us there are multiple potential triggers associated with tests, exams and assessments, or even just the process of revising for these. Just thinking about an upcoming test, or being told by a teacher that we have a test next week can lead to an In the Box reaction and loss of our personal resourcefulness. If we're not aware and watching out for them, our Mindtraps are likely to catch us out and prevent us from being at our best. This exercise will help you understand your own experience and to be ready to respond differently next time this happens to you. Complete the boxes below:

What are the specific triggers that you experience relating to tests or exams?

My triggers:

What are the feelings (emotions and physical bodily sensations) you experience?

My feelings ...

Which Mindtraps do I fall into?

What is my self-talk when I'm in these Mindtraps?

My Mindtraps:

My self-talk:

How do these Mindtraps affect your behaviour?

What are the results?

The results:

The Realist Challenge

Take a deep breath and connect with your Realist – your wise, balanced and truthful self ...

For each line of self-talk noted above, what is the truth of the situation? Write these down:

What choices and options do you have when you experience these triggers again?

What do you choose to do (next time)? How will this help you?



Go Do!

Recruit an ally – a trusted adult who will be able to support you if your Mindtraps are triggered when you've got tests or exams coming up.

Explain to your ally what you've learned in this session including your triggers and Mindtraps, and agree how you will deal with those in future so you can stay resourceful. **Remember your self-care strategies as well as the CCC process.**

Key Insights

- There are six common patterns of In the Box thoughts. We call these Mindtraps.
- Our most familiar Mindtraps will often prevent us from being at our best, including when we are facing tests of exams.
- We can escape from our Mindtraps by becoming more aware of them and using Check-Challenge-Choice, or by changing our state using some of our other self-care strategies.

