

Justifications

Objectives

This module will help you explore and understand:

- your current sexual and non-sexual fantasies
- the link between your fantasies and your online behaviour

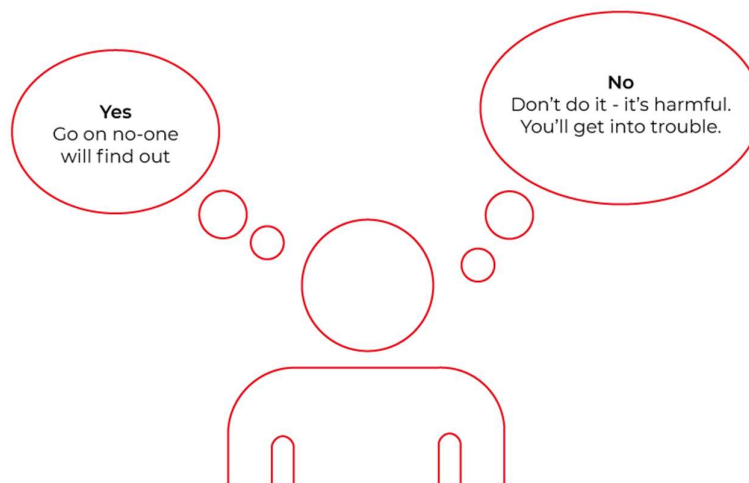
Justifications

When we encounter a situation in which our behaviour is inconsistent with our own or others' beliefs and values, our minds tend to come up with false reasons for why our behaviour is okay. These reasons are called 'justifications', and they serve to make us feel more comfortable and give us permission to keep engaging in the behaviour even when it is harmful. It is a way to deflect responsibility.

If we think back to the [thoughts, feelings and behaviour section](#), we know our behaviour is the consequence of what we think and feel. So, if we are telling ourselves that something is okay, we are more likely to engage in that behaviour, even when it is harmful. These 'making it okay' statements we tell ourselves are justifications.

It can sometimes be like having an internal monologue where you are battling between unhelpful and helpful thinking, like [self-talk](#). Justifications are unhelpful thinking as they give permission to do something we shouldn't be doing. We can use helpful thinking to challenge these justifications.

Here's an example



People will be persuaded by their unhelpful thinking if their 'yes' justifications in favour of doing the behaviour are stronger than their 'no' challenges against the behaviour.

Justifications include things like excuses, minimisations, exaggerations, denial and bits of information we choose to miss out or ignore.

We all use justifications every day. If it's raining outside, we might tell ourselves that we can't run today. Justifications can be a barrier to making positive changes. The more you are aware of

your unhelpful and helpful thinking, and the negative effects of offending for yourself and others, you will increase your ability and motivation to avoid further offending.

Here are some examples of statements that represent justification of behaviours. Have a think about what justifications you have used.

- “It was only once in a while.”
- “At least I’m not as bad as so-and-so.”
- “I’m dealing with a lot of stress and need to unwind.”

If you identify with the statements in the list then justification could be helping you to keep doing a behaviour that you know is harmful.

Exercise 1: Identifying and challenging your justifications

Use the table below to consider your justifications at the time you were engaging in harmful behaviour. Once you have identified what justifications you are using, it is important to think about how you can challenge these.

For example, if you are justifying the behaviour by saying "it was only once in a while", a potential challenge could be "even if it's once in a while, it is still illegal and harmful". Once you begin to challenge these justifications, they have less power.

You should repeat all the phrases you write in the “Challenges” column in your head, so that this sort of thinking becomes automatic if you start to experience the justifications again.

Justifications	Challenges
<i>I'm dealing with a lot of stress and need to unwind.</i>	<i>It is important for me to manage my stress in a healthy way that does not harm others. Every time I engage in this behaviour, it is very harmful to children and myself</i>

As you work through the modules, have this list with you. The more you understand about your offending behaviours, the more unhelpful thinking you should recognise. By recognising and challenging these unhelpful thoughts the more likely you will be to manage your behaviours.

*Please return to the website and complete the **Reflection** questions at the end of this module.*