

## Brain Change Cards (BCC) Instructions

Kate Cohen-Posey © 2016

### Setting up Your BCC

BCC are color-coded by the boarder on the back of the cards: *uplifting*—peach (#24), *inner critics*—black (#8), *sad/hurt*—blue (#8), *fearful*—yellow (#8), *angry*—red (#8), *busy pushers*—brown (#8), *pleasers*—green (#8), and *pursuer/distancers*—purple (#8). Each group has its own slot in the 13-pocket expanding file.

1. Use the tab inserts (included) to make a label for each slot that is personally meaningful or use the words above or face the cards backwards so you can easily recognize them by their boarder color.
2. The *uplifting* cards comfortably fit into the first slot.
3. *Critics*, *sad/hurt*, *fearful*, *angry*, *busy pushers*, *pleasers*, and *pursuers/distancers* fit in the next 7 slots.
4. The last slot can be used to store these instructions and the informed consent.

### Use BCC to become aware of personality PARTS and find qualities of the core SELF.

When people are overwhelmed with emotions or life stress it may first help discover the strengths of their core SELF. PARTs are easy to notice by (a) intense emotions and (b) extreme thoughts.

#### 1. Personify intense emotions & extreme thoughts

**a.** If people have emotional reactions (**guilt**, **hurt/sadness**, **fear**, **anger**, **pressure** (pushers), **longing** (pleasers), or **desire/repulsion**, they can look through those categories of cards and pick ones that best depict their emotion. Looking through too many distressing images at a time can be overwhelming. This is why they are put into groups of 8. If none of the pictures in one group fit, look through a 2<sup>nd</sup> group.

**Example:** A man said he felt his wall coming up. He looked through the pictures in the **sad** and **fearful** pictures before he found one in the **angry** group that depicted his wall: *the tower*. He said he put up a wall when it felt like things were falling apart.

Ask people how the picture shows their emotion. Often this clarifies feelings and adds information.

**b.** If people express negative thoughts, choose the category that best fits that thought. For example:

- **Inner critic** (black boarder): *I'm inadequate, a failure, weak, dirty, at fault, a fool, not enough; I don't deserve happiness, love, etc. I'll be punished.*
- **Hurt/sad** (blue boarder): *I'm alone, unlovable, helpless, incomplete, empty, abandoned; If only I'd....*

- **Fearful** (yellow boarder): *What if I fail, get hurt, hurt others, die; I'm trapped, not safe; I'm unsure.*
- **Angry** (red boarder): *Others have to, should, better...; others are weak, at fault, dishonest.*
- **Busy Pusher** (brown boarder): *I have to be in control, perfect, fix it; succeed. I'm responsible for....*
- **Pleasers & Clingers** (green boarder): *I need others; I have to make others happy, understand me, like me; others come 1st; I'm not important; I'll be left.*
- **Pursuers/Distancers** (purple boarder): *I have to have...; I have to succeed, be special/euphoric; OR: I cannot speak, look, be involved, get close.*

Explaining how a card fits a thought adds clarity.

**NEUROSCIENCE:** Using words to describe thoughts or feelings "turns on" verbal centers in the (positive) left pre-frontal cortex (PFC). This calms the anger/fear center in the right PFC.

**c.** Turn thoughts & feelings into parts by rewording them in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person: "A part of you is telling you you're a failure, alone, etc." Or, "A part of you feels angry, sad, or afraid." Reframing feelings & thoughts as parts externalizes them creates distance.

2. **Discover qualities of the core SELF** by looking through 24 uplifting cards. People pick pictures they like for any reason.

**a.** People name qualities they like in an image: calm, peace, kindness, joy, strength, or a special time in their lives. Ask questions to clarify vague qualities: "What do you like about starry nights?"

**Example:** A girl who had been depressed since her grandmother died 3 years before said she liked the stars because they are constant and always there.

**b.** Reframe qualities as resources: "You have within you the ability to know there is something constant in life (even though your grandmother died)." Note that pictures that initially seems positive can change.

**Example:** A man said a picture reminded him of his grandmother and how much he *missed* her. The card was no longer a resource.

**c.** People can identify with a resource by pretending they are (in) the picture using 1<sup>st</sup> person:

**Example:** I am the stars in the night sky. We are always there making the darkness brighter and helping people find their way.

Often taking the role of a resource will prompt a chain of positive associations.

**d.** Noticing sensations associated with positive images helps people connect with them more deeply. They can be described as:

calm, energized, warm, cool, relaxed, open, airy, light, spacious, releasing, expanded, flowing, fluid, floating, draining, and so on.

3. **Make a collage** of pictures with resources picture(s) in a dominate place so they can observe disruptive parts. Disturbing pictures can be partly covered, but cannot be eliminated or turned over. Arrangements can be photographed. People can expand the photo of the disturbing part to be aware of "who" is troubling them & then focus on a magnified calming image.

### Use BCC to PROCESS thoughts & feelings

Simply observing thoughts & sensations linked to feelings releases them.

1. **People look at the distressing picture** that depicts their upset part. They may need to think about the disturbing event or thought linked to it. They observe associated sensations & note where they feel them. **Example:** "As you look at the upsetting image notice what sensations you feel in your body and rate how strong they are on a 0 – 10 scale." Rating intensity of sensations helps people notice changes. Upsetting sensations can be described as:

tense, tight, clenched, knotted, hot, sweaty, burning, radiating, shaky, twitchy, throbbing, pounding, fluttery, queasy, nauseous, dizzy, spacey, breathless, heavy, stiff, cold, numb

**NEUROSCIENCE:** Brain imaging studies show that looking at upsetting images increases related body sensations. Observing sensations makes a brain-body link. The more an emotion is felt, the easier it is to change. A brain area maps sensations. Input from other brain areas calms the mapped sensations and returns them to normal.

2. **Dual Focus:** people look away from the card to focus on sensations. Focusing on a spot & sensations increases concentration. Slower is faster. If sensation seem stuck they will change more quickly by gazing at uplifting images.
3. While looking at resource image(s), people focus sensations & the picture.

**NEUROSCIENCE:** Brain imaging studies show that looking at images with uplifting qualities activates the left PFC. This reduces activity in the emotional right

PFC and triggers the brain's reward center to release the motivating neurochemical, dopamine, which "dilutes" distressing neurochemicals.

4. **"Squeeze the lemon:"** When sensations are 0 or neutral, people look back at the distressing image and notice sensations. Usually, they return to previous levels of disturbance and then fade more rapidly than before. This step is repeated until sensations remain at a 0 while looking at the unsettling picture and thinking of the negative thought or event.

**Eye Movements:** Peoples' eyes may naturally move back and forth between uplifting and hurtful images.

**NEUROSCIENCE:** Eye movements activate a rest-restore nerve that helps sensations return to 0. Eye movements happen naturally with BCC and may create a dream-like (REM) state that draws stored info from the brain cortex.

5. **Dialogue:** If sensations do not fade or seem stuck, engage the disturbing "picture" in dialogue. Use the "energy" from the resource card to *silently* ask the disturbing image (part) **questions** or make compassionate **comments** (see below). Continue until the distressing part is quiet and the body feels calm.

#### Possible Silent Questions

- **Intentions:** *How are you trying to help? What would happen if X stopped feeling...?*
- **Causes:** *When did you start giving X these ideas? How old does the part seem?*
- **Effects:** *What would X be like without that idea?*
- **Who's "talking":** *Is that idea coming from the pushy part or from your inner resource?*
- **Experience:** *What's it like for you when that part is quiet? How do you feel towards it now?*

#### Compassionate Observations & Comments

- *It's good you helped X... stay connected to her mother when she couldn't survive on her own; believe if she were good enough, bad things wouldn't happen; believe she can't... so she doesn't have to try.*
- **Change:** *It seems like the fearful part is unsure.*
- **Identify new parts:** *It sounds like a pushy voice just jumped in and said, '....'*

**Discover "new truths"** about the formerly upsetting event/thought. Surprising ideas often come once people look at the disturbing image without distress.

**Neuroscience:** In picture gazing, potent sensations (caused by adrenalin and cortisol) from distressing pictures and thoughts are linked with calming neurochemicals (endorphins, acetylcholine, and dopamine) aroused by positive images. Acetylcholine, especially, can trigger new ideas.

#### BCC—Attributions & References

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##### Positive Images (P)—back, peach boarder

1. WWI poster, 1918, *Joan of Arc*, US Treasury Dept.
2. De Souza, Ramirez, 2012. *Yggdrasil*.
3. *Sermon in Deer Park*. Wiki Commons.
4. Plockhorst, B. 1878. *The Good Shepherd*.
5. Rembrandt, 1669. *Return of the Prodigal Son*.
6. Siwallpaper.com. public domain.
7. Tenniel, J. 1865. *Cheshire Cat*.
8. Elsley, J. 1898. *Divided Attention*.
9. Vasnetsov, V. 1880. *Firebird Folk Tale*, Norse.
10. Pixabay pool dolphin
11. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Fool*. Rider Waite.
12. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Hermit*. Rider Waite.
13. Lela Posey. 1998. *Infinity Eye*. Gavin Posey
14. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Strength*. Rider Waite.
15. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Ace Cups*. Rider Waite.
16. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Ace Pentacles*. Rider Waite.
17. Michelangelo. 1512. *Creation of Adam*.
18. Morgan, E. 1886. *Lady Liberty*.
19. G'dizerega, Pixabay, solstice winter December
20. Lumpi, Pixabay, Girl dancing.
21. Koury, S. *Wisdom*. [www.skoury.com](http://www.skoury.com).
22. Zirngibl, M. 2006. *Cat Dance*. Wiki Commons.
23. Julia butterflies feeding on turtle tears. Wiki Commons.
24. Flash Alexander. Pixabay, Bald Eagle.

##### Inner Critics Back (IC)—back, black boarder

1. Blake, W. 1795. *God judging Adam*.
2. Tenniel, J. 1890. *Queen's Croquet Grounds*.
3. Pixabay, pointing star man index
4. Pixabay, hand
5. Smith, P.C. 1910. *King Swords*. Rider Waite.
6. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Death*. Rider Waite.
7. Daumier, H. 1849. *Hugo*.
8. Pixabay, spinster grandmother stern

##### Sad, Hurt (S)—back, blue boarder

1. Fussli, J, 1800. *Silence*.
2. Munch, E. 1896. *Separation*.
3. Mitelli, M. 1718. *Italian Book of Proverbs*.
4. Van Gogh, V. 1895, *At Eternity's Gate*.

5. Desktop wallpaper for free, *tear drop*.
6. Sargent, J.S. C. 1900. *Study Figure for Hell*.
7. Koury, S. 2018. *Blue Man*. [www.skoury.com](http://www.skoury.com).
8. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Nine Swords*. Rider Waite.

##### Fear (F)—back, yellow boarder

1. Munch. 1893. *The Scream*.
2. Blake, W. 1826. *Cain Fleeing after Killing Able*.
3. Newmeyer, F.C. 1923, *Safety Last*.
4. Pixabay. Chicken egg
5. Pixabay. cat annoyed teeth
6. Pixabay, child abuse fear
7. Pixabay, eyes fear female person
8. Blake, W. 1794. *Book of Urizen*.

##### Anger (A)—back, red boarder

1. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Knight of Swords*. Rider Waite.
2. Pixabay. man power electricity strong
3. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Tower*. Rider Waite.
4. Plueger, J. 2009. *Angry German Shepard*. US Air Force.
5. Brouwer, A. 1638. *The Bitter Pot*.
6. Under Water Volcano. US Research.
7. Publicdomainpictures.net. angry fist.
8. Angry bull. Free wallpaper tattoo design.

##### Busy Pushers (BP) —back, brown boarder

1. Von Stuck, 1920, *Sisyphus*.
2. Blake, W. 1826. *Book of Urizen*.
3. Batten, 1895. *English Fairy Tales*. Wikipedia.
4. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Eight Pentacles*. Rider Waite.
5. Winter, M. 1919. *North Wind & the Sun*, Aesop Fables.
6. Altman, G. Pixabay. *woman thinking*.
7. Altman, G. Pixabay. ring human silhouette
8. Busybee, Clipart.com. #33381027

##### Pleasers & Clingers (P&C)—back, green boarder

1. Guercino II. 1646. *Atlas Holding up the Celestial Globe*.
2. Blake, W. 1794. *The Song of Loss*.
3. Pixabay. dog animal eyes different colors
4. Granville, J.J. 1867. *Personification of Flowers*.
5. Rockwell, N. 2013. *Girl in a Mirror*.
6. Throw away person—no attribution, 20% of original.
7. Grace Selon of Art. *The Slave*, c.1920s. Atlas & Sansone.
8. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Four Pentacles*. Rider Waite.

##### Pursuers/Distancers (P/D)—back, purple boarder

1. Von Stuck, F. 1920. *Adam and Eve*.
2. Rider Waite, 1910. *Seven Cups*.
3. Pixabay. cigarette smoke embers ash burn
4. Clayton Cusak. *Tantalus*. Permission from [www.moz.com](http://www.moz.com).
5. Pixabay. woman mouth lips silence
6. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Two Swords*. Rider Waite
7. Smith, P.C. 1910. *Five Cups*. Rider Waite.
8. Brain gears, clip art.com. #109223278 (Use for OCD).

**Back of the Card:** creativecommons.org. *The Gyri of the Thinker's Brain in Biomedical Ethics*. Sanderson, B. 1997.