

2. Trying out a new behaviour to find out what happens. For example doing the opposite and seeing what happens

Gabriela constantly worried about her children. Whenever her oldest daughter, Angelina, went out with her teenage friends, Gabriela sat home worrying until her daughter returned. She imagined her daughter getting into a car accident, being abducted, making poor choices, talking to strangers, or being the victim of a violent crime. Her constant worry kept Gabriela awake at night and distressed throughout the day. When she put her worry into the "If ... then . . ." sentence, Gabriela identified several assumptions she held:

ASSUMPTION TESTED		<i>If I don't worry, something bad will happen to Angelina.</i> <i>If I don't worry, then I'm not being a good mother.</i>			
Experiment	Prediction	Possible problems	Strategies to overcome these problems	Outcome of experiment	What have I learned from this experiment about this assumption?
<i>Instead of worrying while Angelina is out with her friends, I'm going to enjoy myself at a game night party with my other children and neighbors.</i>	<i>If I don't worry, something bad will happen to Angelina.</i> <i>Whether something bad happens or not, I will feel like a terrible mother for not worrying.</i>	<i>Even though I am at the party, I'll still start to worry about Angelina.</i>	<i>When I start to worry, I can bring my attention back to the games.</i> <i>If I focus on the younger children and how much fun we are having, it may help me stay focused on the party.</i>	<i>I worried a lot less than usual.</i> <i>When horrible images came to mind, I was able to focus my attention back on the games.</i> <i>When Angelina came home, she said she had a good time. Nothing bad seemed to have happened.</i> <i>I did not feel like a terrible mother. In fact, I felt proud of myself.</i>	<i>When I don't worry, it doesn't make the children more vulnerable.</i> <i>I don't need to worry all the time to be a good mother. If something bad happens, my worry doesn't protect her. I was home if Angelina needed me, and I've taught Angelina how to make good choices and be safe. So it is OK for me to relax when she is gone.</i>
ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTION THAT FITS WITH THE OUTCOME(S) OF MY EXPERIMENT(S)		<i>I don't need to worry constantly to be a good mother. If I've taught my children to make good choices and be safe, then that is part of being a good mother.</i>			