



Total Behaviour Car

Dear parents,

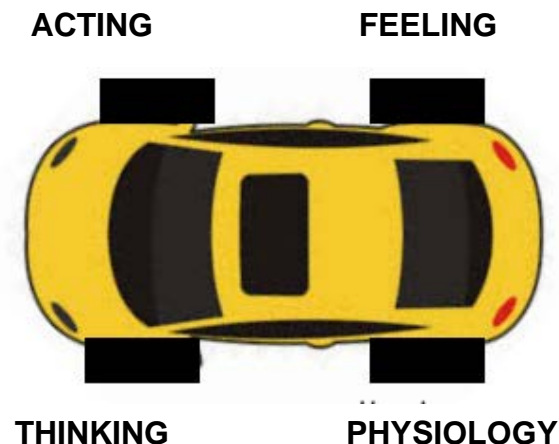
We use this 'Total Behaviour Car' as a simple model to assist students understand their behavioural choices and the choices of others. Total Behaviour is an approach that acknowledges at any moment in conscious time, an individual is: thinking, acting, feeling and experiencing physiological changes – these are the four wheels of the car. We recognise behaviour by the most dominant aspect (or wheel) of behaviour. For example, a student who is running a cross country race is obviously acting. S/he is running with one foot in front of the other, arms pumping. However, at the same time s/he is thinking ('I can do it, not long to go now'), feeling (tired, exhausted, exhilarated), and experiencing bodily responses (sweating, increased heart rate). A student who is playing a game of chess is quite obviously thinking. However, at the same time s/he is acting (moving a piece carefully), feeling (nervous, in control), and experiencing bodily responses (deep breaths, twitching nose).

Just like on a car when a driver turns a corner, the front wheels move. The driver has direct control over the front wheels. Therefore the front wheels in total behaviour are acting and thinking. Students (and adults) have direct control over their acting and thinking. They can choose different actions or different thoughts when things aren't going well. Teachers support students to replace unproductive actions or thoughts with productive or responsible ones. For example, instead of thinking 'I can't do this work because it's too hard and I'm dumb', a teacher will re-write the script with the student to say 'if I apply myself and keep trying I will do the best that I can do and I will be proud.'

The back wheels on a car follow the front wheels and so the back wheels in total behaviour (feeling and physiology) can only be controlled indirectly by the individual. One cannot click their fingers and choose to feel better. One cannot tell themselves to stop sweating. However, they can change actions and thoughts to influence feelings and physiology. So, going for a jog might help clear the head and improve feelings of sadness, while drinking some water, turning on the fan and having a shower can reduce sweating.

At North Kellyville Public School one of the pillars of our wellbeing programs is a joint understanding that you can only control your own behaviour. You are in total control of your own behavioural choices, but have zero control over others'. Peers, teachers and parents can influence choices (like a back-seat driver!), but they cannot control or make decisions on behalf of the driver. Please take the time to explore the other aspects of the behaviour car analogy below.

Tom Moth



- **THE HOOD...** Under the hood is the engine and battery. This is the student's nutrition, needed to keep their car running smoothly.
- **THE SUN ROOF...** The sun roof reminds us to be outdoors as much as possible and to be active. Staying indoors without any natural light is not conducive to leading an active lifestyle.
- **THE HAZARD LIGHTS...** Cars break down and so do people. Look for warning lights like exhaustion, illness and irritability. When cars break down they go to a garage. When people break down they need to see a doctor and/or rest!
- **THE BOOT...** The skills we have in our toolkit are put in the boot for when we might need them. Resilience, persistence, self-esteem, confidence, work ethic.
- **THE PETROL TANK...** Total behaviour cars are fuelled by thought and there are only two choices – positive fuel or negative fuel. Filling a behaviour car with negative fuel will lead to negative outcomes, but being positive in your approach will help maintain a smooth running car!
- **THE STEERING WHEEL...** The driver uses the wheel to choose which direction to go. If the same behaviour keeps leading to the same (negative) result, it may be time to turn the wheel. The wheel of changing behaviour moves slowly.
- **THE BACK SEAT...** People will try to control your behavioural choices but they are not able to. They can influence only. The driver is the only one in control and is responsible for all behavioural choices.
- **THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR...** Students look into the rear-view mirror to see events from the past. The more time goes by, the smaller those events appear. We cannot change the past, but the rear-view reminds us of the lessons we learn from events.
- **THE WHEELS...** Acting, thinking, feeling and physiology are the four wheels because they move in unison with one another. We control acting and thinking directly, but only have indirect control over feeling and physiology.