

# The Cognitive Approach

Key People in the study of  
Health & Social Care:

Jean Piaget  
George Kelly

# Cognitive Perspective- refers to our brains & the ability of our brains to process information.



- There is an expression which says  
“I can see the cogs turning”.
- It means that you can almost 'see' the brain processing information.
- It relates to the cognitive approach because it means that our brains are processing information.

The cognitive perspective believes our brains are like computers that are processing information



# Jean Piaget

- He said that cognition develops through a series of stages, each one building on the last.
- This means that as we are growing up, not only do our bodies grow, but the ability of our brains grow too.
- The ability to process information changes and develops as we get older.



He measured intelligence

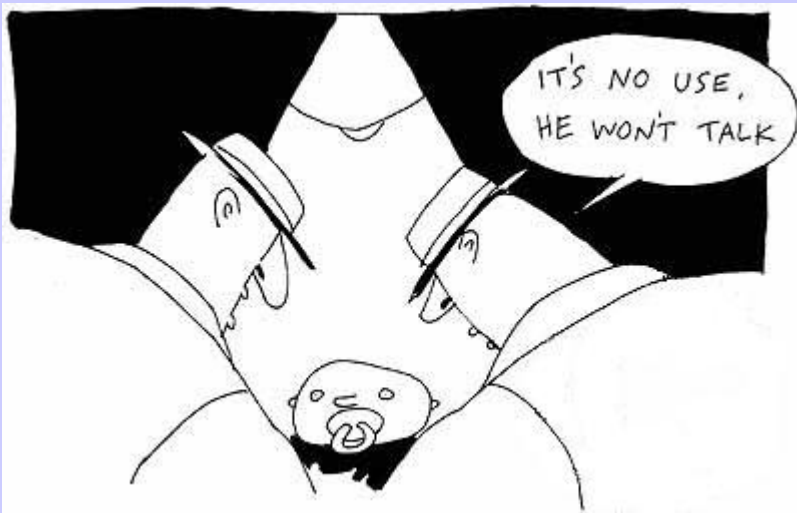
# Piaget's 4 Stages of Development

- **Sensori-Motor Stage, age 0-2**
  - **Pre-operational Stage, age 2-7**
  - **Concrete-operational Stage, age 7-11**
  - **Formal-operational Stage, age 11+**
- \* Create an mnemonic to remember the 4 stages.**

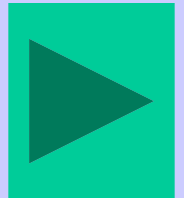
# Stage 1: Age 0-2

## The Sensori-Motor Stage.

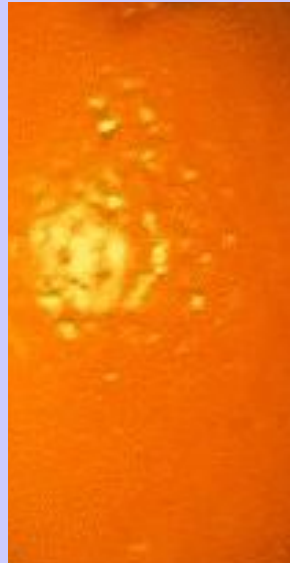
- Senses: touch, smell, sight, taste & hearing
- Motor - this refers to OUR motor abilities, eg how we move.
- Sensori-motor means a child's cognitions develop purely through these things.



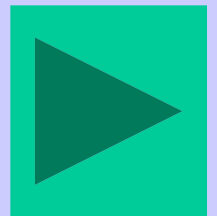
**Babies can not talk, so their cognitions develop through sensori-motor experiences.**



Babies learn through sight. What do you think these things are?



Click  
here for  
answers





# Stage 2: Age 2-7

## The pre-operational stage

- A child uses their language, thought and memory to represent objects mentally.
- They know what a glass of water is from memory and language as well as their senses.



500 ml



500 ml

But at the pre-operational stage a child won't understand the concept of volume and will think the taller glass holds more water



# Stage 3: Age 7-11

## The concrete-operational stage

- The child now understands concepts like water remains the same despite how it looks (tall, short etc)
- The child needs **CONCRETE** objects to process cognitions.
- The child cannot understand the 'abstract' form, eg it would struggle with a chess problem given to him verbally, but could cope if the chess pieces were in front of him



# Stage 4: Age 11+

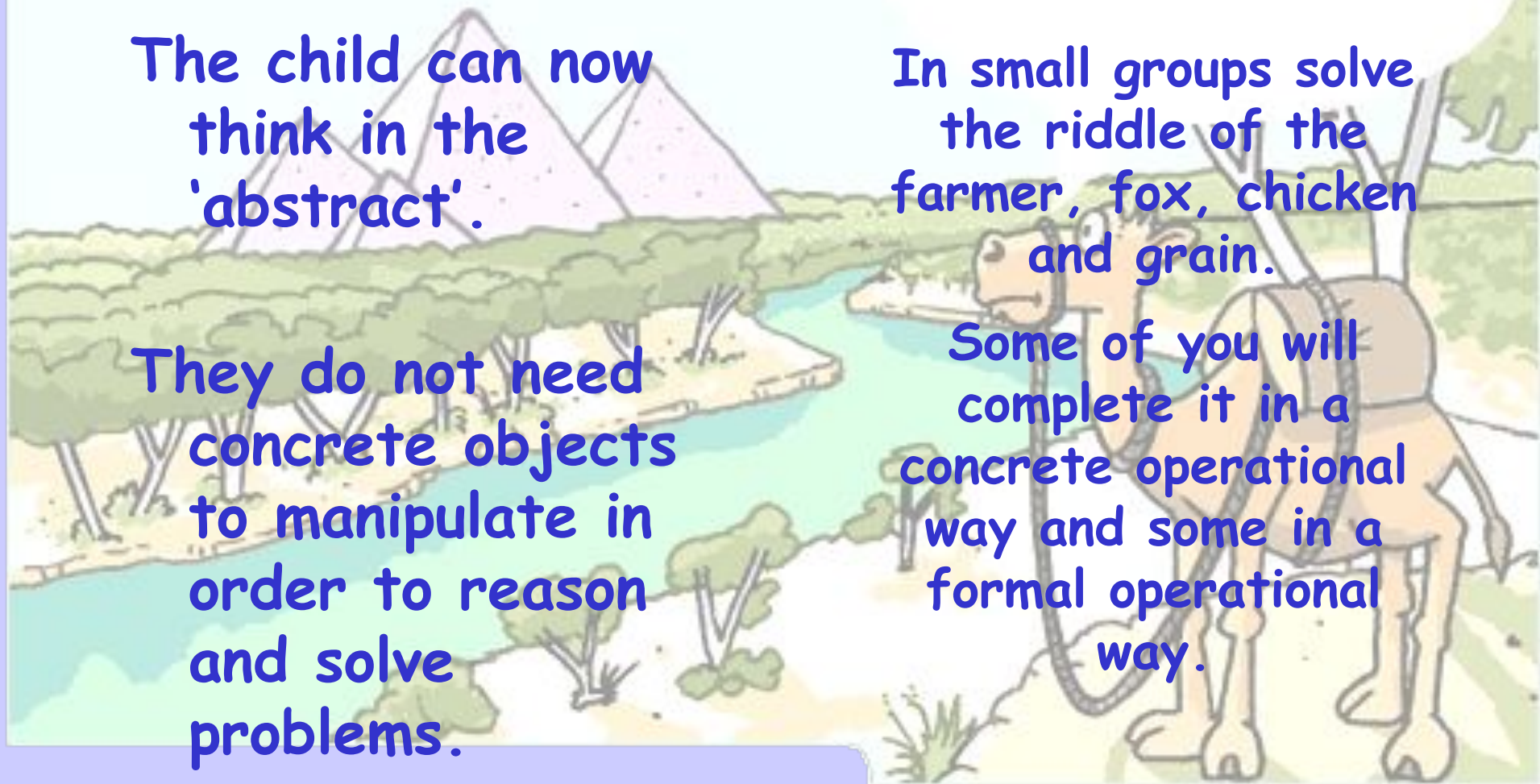
## The formal-operational stage

The child can now think in the 'abstract'.

They do not need concrete objects to manipulate in order to reason and solve problems.

In small groups solve the riddle of the farmer, fox, chicken and grain.

Some of you will complete it in a concrete operational way and some in a formal operational way.



# George Kelly - The Psychology of Personal Constructs

A construct is a way of construing (interpreting and making sense of) reality and the environment.

How do you construe the word  
**CHASING.**

What does it bring to your mind?

# George Kelly - The Psychology of Personal Constructs

Some people  
**construe**  
the word  
chasing  
with  
violence  
and danger



# George Kelly - The Psychology of Personal Constructs

Some people

**construe**

the word  
chasing as  
fun with  
family &  
friends





What do you think is happening in the photo?



- How did you **construe** the information?
- Why do you think you **construed** it in this way?

After this experience, how do you think the girl will construe being followed in the future?



1. The mugger follows his victim across the car park



2. She is on the phone to her boyfriend

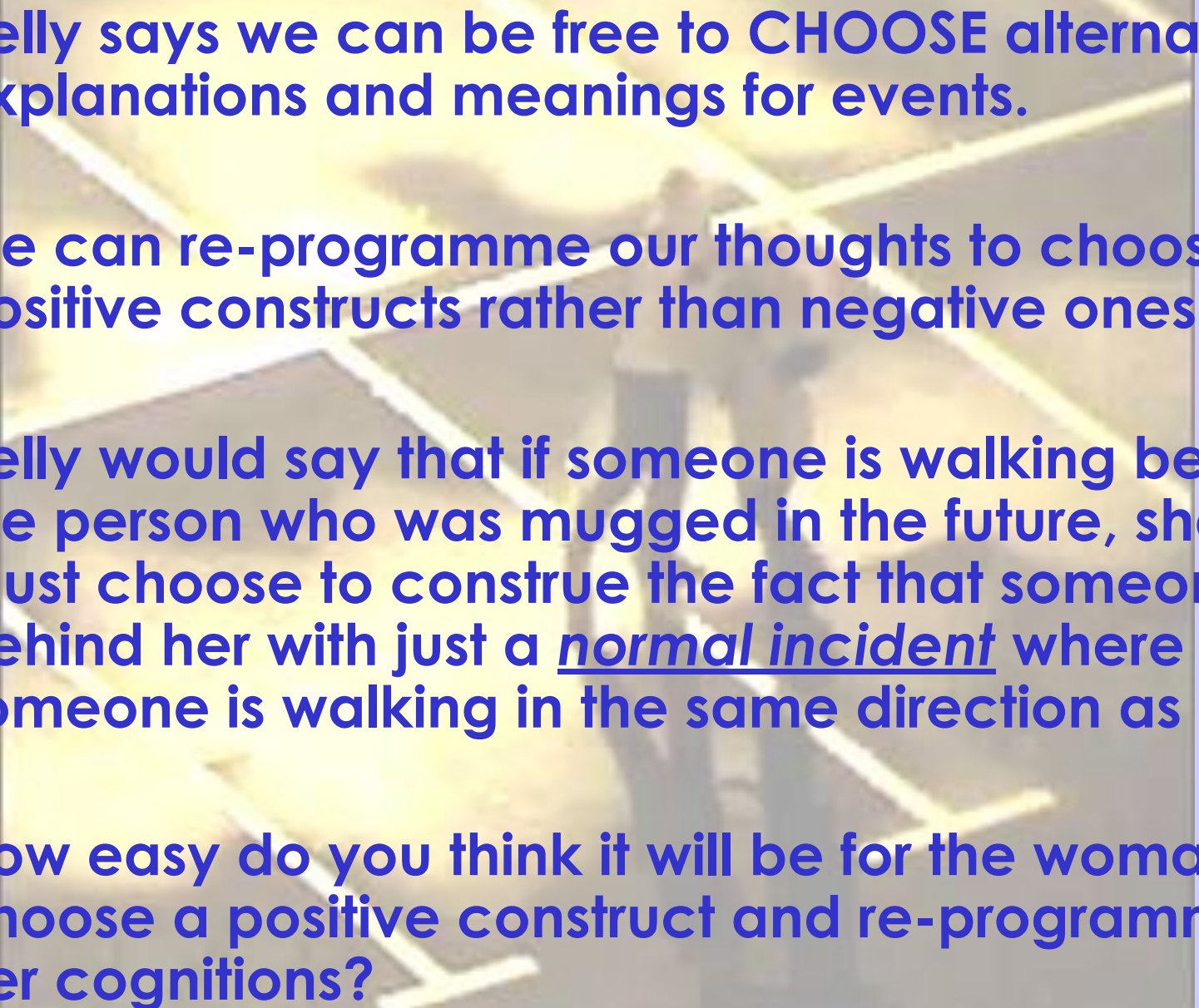


3. The attacker grabs her arm pulling her to the ground



4. The mugger steals her phone and stamps on her head



- 
- Kelly says we can be free to CHOOSE alternative explanations and meanings for events.
  - We can re-programme our thoughts to choose positive constructs rather than negative ones,
  - Kelly would say that if someone is walking behind the person who was mugged in the future, she must choose to construe the fact that someone is behind her with just a normal incident where someone is walking in the same direction as her.
  - How easy do you think it will be for the woman to choose a positive construct and re-programme her cognitions?

