

IDENTIFYING AND CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

SITUATION		
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS		
THINKING TRAPS		
<p>Probability Overestimation: Overestimating or exaggerating the likelihood of a negative outcome. In this trap, we confuse a possibility with a probability.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>My house will get broken into, the plane will crash</i></p>	<p>Catastrophizing: This trap occurs when we “blow things out of proportion”. Rather than considering more moderate outcomes, we quickly jump to the worst-case scenario.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>My anxiety symptoms are going to cause a heart attack</i></p>	<p>Fortune Telling: This kind of thinking leads us to predict how things will turn out, and we often assume they’ll turn out badly. We believe our prediction is fact, even if the situation hasn’t happened yet.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>The party won’t be fun</i></p>
<p>Mind Reading: Guessing what others are thinking. It is usually the assumption that others are thinking negatively about you, even when there is little or no evidence to support this assumption.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>She thinks I’m stupid</i></p>	<p>Black & White Thinking: Also called all-or-nothing thinking. In this trap, you see things in one extreme or the other, without considering all the possibilities in-between.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>I’m a bad mom/dad, it has to be perfect or it’s no good</i></p>	<p>“Should” Statements: You criticize yourself or other people with “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts.” “Musts,” and “have to’s” are similar offenders. These types of statements usually lead to feelings of guilt or anger.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>I should have said no</i></p>
<p>Mental Filter: You focus on some parts of the situation and ignore others. Instead of considering the big picture, you focus only on certain details and you filter out other pieces of information.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>Only remembering the negative feedback from a performance review</i></p>	<p>Discounting the Positive: You reject or dismiss positive experiences by insisting that they “don’t count” for some reason or another.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>She only said that to be nice [regarding compliment], I got lucky, it was a team effort</i></p>	<p>Discounting Coping Skills: Sometimes stressful things happen in our lives or to those around us. We may overlook our ability to cope with problems and underestimate our resilience.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>I’m helpless, I can’t deal with this, I’ll never get through this</i></p>
<p>Labelling: Using a single word to describe ourselves or other people. People are complicated and can’t be summed up in a single word!</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>I’m worthless, I’m stupid, he’s a jerk, he’s lazy</i></p>	<p>Personalizing: Blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong. It occurs when you take responsibility for a situation, and don’t recognize that other people or factors may have contributed.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>It’s my fault my son is failing math</i></p>	<p>Emotional Reasoning: Assuming that because we feel a certain way, that must reflect the truth about how things are. We judge a situation based on our feelings, which may not be objective.</p> <p>➤ Example: <i>I feel guilty, therefore I’ve done something wrong; I feel stupid therefore I am stupid.</i></p>

CHALLENGING THOUGHTS

Ask yourself these questions to challenge your anxious thoughts/assumptions and consider a different perspective.

➤ Am I exaggerating? Thinking of the worst possible outcome?

○ _____

➤ Have I faced a similar situation before? How did it go?

○ _____

➤ Is this a fact, or is it just a thought/opinion?

○ _____

➤ Am I ignoring any relevant pieces of information?

○ _____

➤ What would I say to a friend if they were in this situation?

○ _____

➤ Am I making this about me when it isn't?

○ _____

➤ Is this a helpful thought? What is a more helpful thought?

○ _____

➤ Let's take a step back and look at the big picture. How important is this really? Will it matter in a year?

○ _____

➤ Is my reaction in proportion to what's actually happening?

○ _____

➤ Even if the negative thought is true, what is the worst that is likely to happen? Is it a hassle or a horror?

○ _____

BALANCED THOUGHT:

What's a more balanced or objective way to see this situation?