

Negative Thoughts

Negative thought patterns are common with depression and anxiety. You can **change your mood by noticing unhelpful thoughts and changing them.**

1. Notice when you have negative emotions or a change in your mood.
2. Focus on what you're thinking when you feel this way. Writing down your thoughts can be helpful. Try using the worksheet below.
3. Ask yourself if the thought is helpful or harmful. Is it an accurate view of the situation?
4. Challenge the thought. Is there any evidence to back it up? Is there less extreme language that you can use? What would you say to a loved one in this situation? What are positive parts of this situation?

Identifying Cognitive Distortions

Feelings Write down your emotional and physical feelings.	Thoughts Notice what thoughts are linked to your feelings.	Cognitive Distortion? Analyze your thoughts. Are they rational? Look at the list of cognitive distortions below.
Example: anxious, worried, shoulders tense.	"I know I'm going to fail the exam."	Fortune teller / jumping to conclusions.

Checklist of Cognitive Distortions

1.	All or nothing thinking: You look at things in black or white.
2.	Overgeneralization: You view a bad event as a pattern of defeat.
3.	Mental Filter: You focus on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4.	Discounting the positives: You don't count your positive qualities or achievements.
5.	Jumping to conclusions: Mind reading: you think that people are upset at you when there's no actual evidence. Or fortune telling: you predict things will turn out badly.
6.	Magnification or Minimization: You blow things out of proportion. Or you shrink their importance.
7.	Emotional Reasoning: You base your reasoning on how you feel. For example: "I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one."
8.	"Should Statements": You criticize yourself by using "should," "shouldn't," or "must."
9.	Labeling: You label yourself from your mistakes. For example, you say "I'm a fool" instead of "I made a mistake."
10.	Personalization and Blame: You place too much blame on yourself. Or you blame other people and overlook how you might add to a problem.

Adapted from 1980 David D. Burns, M.D., from *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1980; Signet, 1981)

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1.	Identify the Distortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write down your negative thoughts. - Identify which distortion is present. - This is so you can think about the problem in a more positive and realistic way.
2.	Examine the Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look at the actual evidence for your thought. - For example, if you think you never do anything right, list many things you have done right.
3.	The Double-Standard Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talk to yourself like you would talk to a friend. - Show yourself the same love.
4.	The Experimental Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test whether your thought is valid. - For example, if you feel like you're about to die of a heart attack during a panic attack, run up some stairs. This will show that your heart is working.
5.	Thinking in Shades of Grey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think of your problems on a range of 0 to 100 instead of all or nothing. - Think of bad things as partial successes instead of complete failures.
6.	The Survey Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find out if your thoughts are realistic by asking other people.
7.	Define Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you label yourself as "inferior" or "a loser," consider the actual meanings of the words.
8.	The Semantic Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use more rational language. - Replace "I shouldn't have..." statements with "It would be better if I..."
9.	Re-attribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Think of other factors that cause a problem rather than blaming yourself. - Focus on problem solving instead of feeling guilty.
10.	Cost-Benefit Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List the pros and cons of a feeling, negative thought, or behavior pattern.