

TYPES OF NEGATIVE THOUGHT

- Resilience Worksheet -

Predicting the future: It is quite common to spend a lot of time thinking about the future, thinking about what could go wrong. However, nobody can truly predict the future, so this just wastes time and energy being upset over things which may not even happen. Example: *“I will completely stuff up that job interview”* or *“I will fail my exam next week.”*

Mind reading: Just as nobody can predict the future, it is also not possible to know what another person is thinking. Therefore, making assumptions about other people’s beliefs without having any evidence to support them is very unhelpful. Example: *“Everyone thinks I’m an idiot / I’m weird.”*

Catastrophising: This can be known as making mountains out of molehills or blowing things out of proportion. It could also be thinking something terrible is going to happen with no evidence to support it. Example: *“I cancelled going out with my friend... she is never going to speak to me again, she hates me now”* or *“I forgot to turn the photocopier off before I left last night, I’m definitely going to get fired.”*

Focusing on the negative: Instead of taking situations into context, some people focus on the negatives or what they think should have happened instead. This can stop you from seeing the full picture and appreciating the positive things that may also be going on. Example: *“I should be able to cope with that”* or *“I should have done better.”*

Over generalising: Assuming that every situation will go badly in the future because it hasn’t gone well in the past. Example: You feel intimidated first person you are introduced to in a new workplace makes you feel very intimidated, therefore you assume that everybody else will do the same. In reality it is likely that the first person you met was just having a bad day and everybody else is fine and you feel very comfortable with them.

‘What if’ statements: It can be very easy to get bogged down into a circle of worry about ‘what if’. These thoughts tend to make us stop going to places or doing things that we would like or enjoy. Example: *“What if I have a panic attack at the party?”* or *“What if I don’t make friends when I start my new job?”*

Labelling: It can be very easy to attach negative labels to yourself such as *“I’m weak”* or *“I’m a waste of space”*. This could also be describing yourself with *“I’m always...”* or *“I never...”* These labels really influence how we see ourselves and are rarely true.

Challenging unhelpful thoughts

Is there any evidence to contradict the thought? – Having done something successfully previously

Do you have a pattern of unhelpful thinking, can you identify particular traits?

If your best friend was talking to you about this situation, or saying these things to you what would you say to them? - Often, we “speak” to ourselves in a much more critical way than we will ever speak to anybody else!

What are the benefits of thinking in this way? – It can help to find a “pro” and a “con” for having the thought, often when you think about it, there is no benefit to thinking in that way.

How will you feel about this in 6 months’ time? – Will you look back and think you were silly for worrying.

Is there another way of looking at this situation? – have you previously performed well in similar situations? Have you prepared for the situation? Do you know you will do your best?

Self-talk Cycle:

