

A CBT and FeelingGood.com worksheet:



The simple CBT Thought Stop and Reframe handout

When stress becomes a disorder it distorts our thinking. Thought stop and un-distort your thinking with cognitive behavioural therapy journalling: *Write things down*, note the actual thoughts you are thinking when you're in a situation that upsets you and ends in self-sabotaging behaviour. Examples: 'Life is too hard', 'People are horrible', 'I could try that but it wouldn't work out so there's no point', 'I'm not ready –not yet...', 'She hates me...', 'It's not fair and I can't bear it!'

Thought Stopping: Practice awareness of your self-talk / how you explain the world to yourself - and if it is overdramatic negative thinking, interrupt it with a prepared 'reframe'. Replace your self talk deliberately and consciously. (You might also wear a rubber band or bracelet on your wrist, giving it a little twang each time you notice you are allowing negative thinking to take over your head in a never-ending loop. It will make you more aware of how often, and in what situation, you are having the negative thoughts, and will give you a routine and association for new cool and moderate self-management.)

Challenge and reframe the negative dramatic thought: Challenge the statements, examine them to see if they're valid. 'Where's the evidence for this? Is there another way to look at it? What would I advise my best friend?'. Example: "I'm not going – "I wouldn't enjoy myself" = "Actually, that's negative predicting, I don't actually know what's going to happen, and I won't know if I don't go... maybe I'll be a bit anxious, I can cope with that if it happens, and it might not happen... I was okay last time at that other event even though I upset myself before it with this kind of thinking, and I was glad I went..."

Here is a quick table of the top 'bad thinking habits'. Overdramatic thoughts cause overdramatic feelings and behaviours... Name them and tame them – all humans have the below occasional habits, but when stress becomes a disorder we are pretty much doing them all the time: Consider: *what is the evidence for these statements? Is there any evidence against them? How does believing them make you feel and behave? Is it rational? AND USE YOUR ANSWERS TO REFRAME!*

Negative Predicting:	Negative mind-reading:	Low Frustration Tolerance:	Emotional reasoning:
I could try, but it won't work out I could go, but I won't enjoy it I'll never be a success.	She thinks she's better than me. He doesn't like me. My partner doesn't fancy me.	I cannot, and indeed should not have to, tolerate anything that causes me frustration!	(I feel bad, so it IS bad.) [Anger, jealousy, fear, paranoia, upset etc. <i>I'm anxious so it is a threat..</i>

Summary: thought-stop and reframe: Build awareness of your thinking – stop it in its tracks – examine it for evidence – and if you decide it is distorted/irrational/ unhelpful, replace it with alternative healthy thinking. See the following examples + grid for you:

Negative Automatic Thoughts – stress distortions	Reframe Rational Thought Replacement – replace your self talk
Nobody really likes me...	That's not a true statement. My family like me, and I have my friend from work and my friend from college. And I got on well with many other people now that I think of it. Also, not everybody will adore and admire me in this life. I accept that. It's the same for everybody. Also, if somebody does think little of you, you don't have to agree with it. I'm okay, it's okay.
There's no point in trying that, it won't work out...	That's fortune telling, I actually don't know what's going to happen, all I can do is my best, it's certainly worth trying, avoidance behaviour is hurting my life ...
I can't cope!	That's a bit silly. If I literally 'couldn't cope' I'd drop down dead or burst into flames, yet here I am. It's more true to say that I have problems coping, and I wish I didn't have to cope, but that I'm doing my best. Accepting that <i>I can't cope</i> as absolutely true only maximises my discomfort, and if I believe it I'll avoid things...
