

Strategies for Challenging Negative Thoughts and Thinking Traps



Think Like a Detective – What evidence is there supporting that the negative thought is true? What would convince you that the thought is correct or incorrect?



Alternative Perspectives – What would someone who disagrees with your thought say or think? What would you tell a friend who was in this situation to make them feel less upset?



Consequences – What is the worst thing that could happen if your thought is true? What are other possible outcomes of this thought being true? What is the likelihood that the worst-case scenario will happen? What about that the other outcomes will happen? How might thinking this way impact your relationship with the other person? How has thinking this way worked in the past for you? Are there other ways of thinking about this scenario that may work better?



Idea Generation – Brainstorm other thoughts about the situation. Think of (or write down) as many alternative thoughts as you can. Next, evaluate the pros and cons of each thought. How might each thought impact your emotions and behaviors? How might each thought help you achieve a larger goal (e.g., maintaining a friendship, completing a task you care about)?