

12. Re-thinking Thinking Traps



THINK & FEEL



DURATION

20 minutes

FREQUENCY

3x/week

DIFFICULTY

Moderate

EVIDENCE QUALITY

★★★☆



+ WELLBEING

+ MOOD

+ ANXIETY



Avoid jumping to conclusions

What it is?

- When confronted with negative events, e.g. failing an exam or not getting a promotion, it is easy to fall into a spiral of negative thoughts.
- Our brain often misinterprets negative events and makes them much worse than they really are.
- These thinking traps (or cognitive distortions) can lead us to miss or mislabel critical information or small details that shape your thoughts about an event. This is called “getting caught in a cognitive trap”.

What can I use it for?

- Re-thinking your thinking traps can be used to help you to understand and avoid cognitive traps
- Learning to recognise thinking traps can help with improving negative mood and anxiety, and lead to increased wellbeing.

How to do it?

1. Choose an event you feel you didn't handle effectively and/or left you feeling negative about yourself or others
2. Take a pause and notice the narrative in your mind; Ask yourself: Is what I am saying to myself true and accurate? Have I jumped to conclusions?
3. Separate facts from interpretation e.g. *Fact*: my partner didn't do the thing I requested of him/her; *Interpretation*: my partner doesn't care about me.
4. Try to use critical thinking to realise where you jumped to a conclusion, and adjust your thinking accordingly.

Anything to consider before I start?

- We tend to judge ourselves more harshly than we judge others.
- Our mind has a negative bias so it is easy to lose perspectives.



12. Re-thinking Thinking Traps

Avoid jumping to conclusions

List the event you feel you didn't handle effectively. Write down the thoughts and reactions you had about the event.

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Take a pause and notice the narrative in your mind; Ask yourself: Is what I am saying to myself true and accurate? What are facts of the situation and what are interpretation? Have I jumped to a conclusion here?

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Based on your answers to the previous question, how do you feel about the event, now that you've avoided any possible thinking traps? Do you need to change your interpretation of the event?

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What will you tell yourself when a similar event happens in the future. Write down what you will do instead and say it out loud after writing it down. First write it in a sentence, then create the tiny habit statement below.

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MY HABIT STATEMENT

Habit Statement:

When will I **practice** it?

How will I **remind** myself to practice?

How will I **celebrate**?

