

Seeing Things — Clearly —



Seeing Things Clearly

The way we look at situations is very important because it guides how we feel and what we do. Working to see our thoughts more clearly helps us put things in perspective and can reduce worry.

Our thoughts are shaped by our past experiences, our current knowledge about a situation, our values, culture and upbringing. Because of the way our thoughts show up in our minds, they appear very believable, and we often don't question them. This can cause us problems when our thoughts are based more on how we feel rather than facts.

This resource will guide you in challenging your thoughts. It will help you to make sure you are considering all the information and possible outcomes so your thoughts are as realistic as possible.

Check out how to do this using the steps below:

- Step 1** **Identify (the situation, thoughts and feelings)**

- Step 2** **Take a step back (look at what unhelpful thinking styles you are getting into)**

- Step 3** **Put your thinking to the test (challenge your thoughts by asking yourself some helpful questions)**

- Step 4** **Reconsider (can you develop new, more helpful ways of looking at the thought/situation)**

- Step 5** **Move forward (what do you need to do now?)**

Use the worksheet on the next page and follow the questions to help you start seeing things more clearly.



Seeing Things Clearly Worksheet

1. Identify

a) What is the **situation** that is upsetting you?

b) What are your **thoughts** about this situation? What is going through your mind?

c) How are you **feeling**? E.g. angry, sad, ashamed, scared, guilty, anxious, disgusted, annoyed.

2. Take a step back

Look at your thoughts. Can you recognise any 'thinking traps' that aren't helping you see things more clearly? (you can find a list of these thinking styles and what they mean at the bottom of this exercise)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harsh judgement | <input type="checkbox"/> Ignoring the positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thinking the worst | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional reasoning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filtering for the negative | <input type="checkbox"/> Fortune telling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mind reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting high standards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taking things personally | <input type="checkbox"/> Doubting your ability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black and white thinking | |

3. Put your thinking to the test

Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the facts?
- What experiences have you had that say this thought is not 100% true?
- Is there any information you don't know right now or aren't considering?
- Are there any positives or things that could help that you are ignoring?
- What would you say to a friend in this situation?
- What is the most realistic outcome?

4. Reconsider

Can you create a new, helpful and more accurate way of seeing things about the situation based on the answers to the questions above?

5. Move forward

What can you do now to help yourself?

Thinking Traps

Black and white thinking

Seeing things in one of two ways with no in-between. For example, something must be perfect, or it's a failure.

Thinking the worst

Thinking only of the worst possible outcomes and ignoring the other possibilities.

Ignoring the positive

Ignoring positive experiences like they "don't count" for some reason or other.

Looking through tinted glasses

Listening to our feelings more than the facts. Allowing our feelings to cloud our thinking.

Filtering for the negative

Focusing only on the negative parts of situations and ignoring anything positive.

Fortune telling

Getting stuck imagining that events will turn out badly, and thinking your prediction is a fact.

Harsh judgement

Being self-critical and much quicker to judge yourself than you would anyone else.

Mind reading

Believing that you know what a person thinks when you haven't actually asked them.

Setting high standards

Setting high standards for yourself and other people.

Taking things personally

Mostly thinking in negative ways towards yourself and others.

Doubting your ability

Doubting or questioning your ability to cope.