

Negative Automatic Thoughts

When we get stressed out and upset we often fall into the habit of thinking in negative ways. These thoughts then negatively effect how we feel and behave.

Once you can notice these thoughts, it can be easier to start to challenge them and find alternatives. Do any of the ones below see familiar to you? We nearly all do at least some of them!

Different Styles of Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATS)



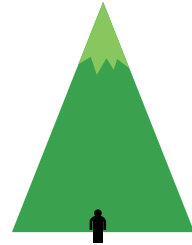
Mind-Reading

Assuming you know what others are thinking, usually something bad about you.



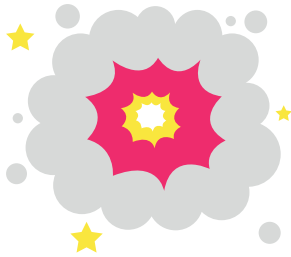
Emotional Reasoning

Making feelings into facts - 'I feel bad so it must be bad!' or 'I feel anxious, so I must be in danger.'



Overgeneralising

'I didn't finish the project on time, I'll NEVER get anything right.' If something bad happens once, you expect it to happen again and again.



Catastrophising

Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen 'I can't get on my bike because I'll definitely fall off and crash and end up in hospital' or 'If I tell Sarah I can't come out tomorrow she will hate me forever.'



Compare and Despair

Seeing only the good and positive stuff in others, and comparing yourself negatively against them 'Wow, they are so talented/handsome/great at making cakes - I'm so crap compared to them.'



Critical Self

Putting yourself down, self-criticism, blaming yourself for events or situations that are not (totally) your responsibility 'I am so rubbish at this' or 'It's always my fault that we get lost, I'm so crap at reading maps.'



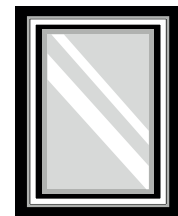
Shoulds and Musts

Thinking or saying 'I should' (or shouldn't) and 'I must' puts pressure on yourself, and sets up unrealistic expectations.



Prediction

Believing you know what's going to happen in the future. 'There's no point going to the interview, I already know I'll mess it up.'



Black and White Thinking

Believing that something or someone can be only good or bad, right or wrong, rather than anything inbetween or 'shades of grey'