

Thinking Errors

When we tend to have the same or similar thoughts, feelings, and behaviors over and over again in response to our experiences – we call them patterns.

When our patterns of thought are self-defeating or fail to take into consideration the needs, feelings, and rights of others we call them “Thinking Errors”.

We believe that by identifying, and challenging your thinking errors, you can develop new patterns to replace your thinking error patterns.

These thinking errors are: Self-Centered, Blaming Others, Assuming the Worst, Minimizing, and Glorifying.

Self-Centered

Some people think that they should be able to do whatever they want no matter how it might affect others.

A way of thinking that assigns status to one's own views, expectations, needs, rights, immediate feelings and desires to such an extent that the legitimate views and feelings of others are scarcely considered or are disregarded altogether.

Example: Your friend wants to go to a movie that you don't want to see. You think to yourself "I don't want to go to that stupid movie". So, you lie to your friend and say that your car is not working.

Thinking Error: You are self-centered because you did what you wanted without taking into consideration what your friend wanted.

Blaming Others

Some people try to justify their behavior or make it look like they are victims by blaming others for what they do (They started it-it's not my fault).

A way of thinking that inaccurately or unreasonably assign blame for one's harmful actions to outside sources, especially to another person, group, or momentary aberration (drunk, high, bad mood) or misattributes blame for one's victimization or other misfortune to innocent others

Example: You get into a fight with your friend. You think to yourself "I didn't mean to hurt him. I was drunk and didn't know what I was doing". So, you get drunk again so you don't have to worry about how you're feeling.

Thinking Error: You do not accept responsibility for your behavior but instead blame it on being drunk.

Assuming the Worst

Some people think that nothing is going to work out – so why try.

A way of thinking that inaccurately or unreasonably assigns hostile intentions to others, considers a worst-case scenario for a social situation as if it were inevitable, or assumes that improvement is impossible in one's own or others' behavior.

Example: A teacher wants to meet with you to discuss why you missed class yesterday. You think to yourself, "She is going to suspend me and turn me in for truancy". So, you skip the class and run away.

Thinking Error: You assume the worst by thinking the teacher is going to turn you in for truancy.

Minimizing

Some people inaccurately think that hurting others is no big deal.

A way of thinking that inaccurately or unreasonably justifies harmful behavior as causing no real harm.

Example: You want some new tennis shoes that you saw at the mall. You think to yourself: "I've stolen things from there before. I can get away with it again. It's no big deal because the store's got insurance." So, you steal the shoes.

Thinking Error: You minimize your illegal behavior by thinking that it's no big deal since the store has insurance and no one is getting hurt.

Glorifying

Some people think that committing crimes is cool and exciting.

A way of thinking that inaccurately or unreasonably assigns status to harmful behavior by thinking of it as acceptable or even admirable to harm others.

Example: Someone is spreading hurtful rumors about you. You think to yourself, “Next time I see that person I’ll beat him up and show him who he’s messing with”. So, the next day when you see him, you beat him up and feel proud about it.

Thinking Error: You glorify (brag about) your harmful behavior by being proud of yourself for being tough enough to hurt people who mess with you.

Review

Match the thinking errors with their correct definition. Write the thinking error in the blank following the definition that best describes it.

- A. Some people think that nothing is going to work out anyway, so why try.
- B. Some people think that hurting others is no big deal.
- C. Some people try to justify their behavior or make it look like they are victim by blaming others for what they do.
- D. Some people think that they should be able to do whatever they want no matter how it might affect others.
- E. Some people think committing crimes is cool or exciting.

Thinking Errors

Self-Centered
Blaming Others
Assuming the Worst
Minimizing
Glorifying

Thinking About Your Thoughts

At times we all have errors in our thinking that could be self-defeating or harmful if we acted on them. By becoming aware of your thinking errors, challenging your beliefs, and learning to change the way you think, you can change those behaviors that have been harmful to yourself and others. This section of the book is designed to help you accomplish that goal.

It may now seem difficult to you to believe you can change the way you think. Many people who have experienced problems in life have been able to overcome those problems by changing the way they think about themselves and others. You have the same potential.

This section will be the hardest work of the program. The things you learn and skills you develop based on the information here is giving the opportunity for change. Change is difficult. Many things must be identified, challenged, and learned to create change.

Thoughts are words that happen inside our head.

Thoughts influence our feelings.

What are feelings? Feelings are emotions and sensations that result from our thoughts before, during and after an event.

What are emotions? The moods that may result from our thoughts before, during and after an event.

Examples of emotions:

Thought: "Boy, it's dark in the basement."

Emotion: Fear

Thought: "The teacher told me I did a great job on my report"

Emotion: Happy

Thought: "I have four F's and a D. I'm never going to pass"

Emotion: Hopelessness

Sensations: The physical symptoms that may result from thoughts before during and after an event (what your body does).

Examples of Sensations:

Thought: "This wooden chair is uncomfortable"

Sensation: Aching back

In this section you will learn...

1. To become more aware of the thoughts, beliefs, and feelings that influence your behavior.
2. To record your thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
3. To identify patterns of thought that result in behaviors that re self-defeating or harmful to others.
4. To understand how “errors in thinking” lead to self-defeating or harmful behaviors.
5. To identify your “errors in thinking” and to anticipate experience when your “thinking errors” are most likely to occur.
6. To develop intervention skills to correct your “thinking errors”, challenge your beliefs, manage your feelings, and change your behavior.
7. To recognize and manage barriers to the change process.

Thought: "This chili has too many hot peppers"
Sensation: Burning mouth

Thought: "I hate arguing with my best friend"
Sensation: Tight stomach muscles

**Thoughts create feelings made of emotions and sensations.
Does the same event make the same thoughts and feelings in others? NO!**

Example:

Event: An adult watches the first snowfall of the season.

Thoughts: "This is great! Now I can go skiing this weekend, and if we have time we and snowmobile over at Joe's house".

Feelings: Excitement, happiness

Event: An adult watches the first snowball of the season

Thoughts: "Why do I live in Minnesota? I hate this miserable weather. I hate shoveling; I hate the thought of my car getting stuck. This is miserable".

Feelings: Depression, anger, frustration.

What are some thoughts and feelings that may result from the following events?

Event: A child watches his parents in a bitter, angry argument.

Thoughts: _____

Feelings: _____

Experience: A child sees a fire truck.

Thoughts: _____

Feelings: _____

Belief: Something accepted as true or right without proof.

Beliefs are notions that we develop based on verbal or nonverbal interactions with our family, society, and culture that create how we feel and think about things.

Beliefs are generally developed when we are children.

Example: A child watches his father get angry with his mother and they begin to argue. The father yells at his mother, threatens to hit her and the argument is over.

Thought: Dad stopped the argument by threatening to hit her. Behavior: When arguing with others, the child threatens to hit others. Belief: It is ok to threaten people who are arguing with you.

Example: A child drops a glass of milk on the living room carpet. His father tells him he is a stupid idiot and should not bring milk in the living room in the first place - -he should have known better.

Thought: Why is my dad calling me a stupid idiot? It must be true.

Behavior: When the child does something wrong, he gets very embarrassed, and therefore no longer tries new things.

Belief: I'm a stupid idiot. I can't do anything right.

Example: A child is boarding a plane with his family. A Muslim man approaches the line to board the plane as well. The mother pulls the son close to her and asks the father if they can take another flight.

Thought: When my parents are afraid, that scares me.

Behavior: Every time the child approaches a Muslim person, he goes out of his way to avoid contact.

Belief: All Muslims are bad and I need to be afraid of them.

Behavior: The manner that one conducts himself. You change behavior by changing your thoughts and managing your feelings.

In order to change behavior – you must

1. Be aware of your thoughts and feelings.
2. Be able to identify and challenge your beliefs.
3. Be able to identify thoughts and feelings that influence the behavior you want to change.
4. Replace old thought with new thoughts and learn to manage your feelings.
5. Develop new thoughts and beliefs so new behaviors will follow.

Thinking Reports: Thinking reports are a record of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are related to an event.

Event: A situation that you observe or participate in

Thoughts: Words that happen inside your head

Feelings: Emotions and sensations

Behaviors: How you conduct yourself.

Why are thinking reports important?

1. They make you aware of the events, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors you have during the course of the day.
2. They are a valuable tool for helping you discover patterns of thinking that influence your behavior.
3. They help you identify patterns of behavior that result from your thoughts.
4. They help you become aware of the feelings that result from your thoughts.
5. If you can identify thoughts that result in behaviors that are harmful to yourself and others, you can learn to change them
6. If you replace negative or hurting thought with positive ones, you will directly impact how you behave.

A Thinking Report

What Happened? (Event)

What thoughts did you have with that event?

What feelings did you have with that event?

What was your behavior? (How did you respond?)

Thought Interventions

1. What is an intervention?

An intervention is anything you do to challenge a belief, change a thought or manage a feeling that would usually result in behavior that is self-defeating or that fails to take into consideration the needs, feelings and rights of others.

2. What is the purpose of an intervention?

An intervention has three functions: A. Challenge beliefs. B. To stop old thoughts and help you manage your feelings. C. To put a new thought in place of the old thought.

3. When do you use interventions?

An intervention must occur while the thought or feeling is occurring. It must occur before you act on your thoughts and feelings. Your feelings can help you identify when it is necessary to use an intervention.

Successful interventions result in changed behaviors.

Obstacles to Change

1. Obstacles are things that get in your way when you are trying to change – roadblocks.
2. Obstacles can make change difficult. You have to fight the urge to let them stop your progress. It won't always be easy.
3. Obstacles may include:
 - a. Holding on to beliefs, thoughts, feelings and behaviors which are very familiar or comfortable.
 - b. Getting so set in the way you think and feel that you learn to see different experiences as being the same even when they are different.
 - c. Assuming things will happen based on your past pattern of thinking and then behaving in a way that will make the outcome more likely to happen the way you predicted.
 - d. Being unwilling to discuss your problem and refusing assistance from your peers and staff.
 - e. Holding on to simple beliefs that you have about life. These beliefs are important to you because you have learned to rely on them and trust that they will help you deal with your experiences. Some of your beliefs are not always accurate or reasonable.

4. Thought patterns that can prevent change.

A. Everybody thinks this way.

1. This pattern helps you feel that your thoughts are right because everyone else believes the same things you believe.
2. Everyone cheats, but “other people” don’t get Caught.

B. I can’t help how I feel

1. Some thoughts and feelings are so automatic that we think we can’t do anything about them.
2. If you learn to be aware of them so you can change them, you will learn how to manage your feelings appropriately.

C. I’m only being honest.

1. This is often an excuse for...
 - a. Being rude: He was acting like a baby so I called him a baby. I was only being honest.
 - b. Keeping old thoughts, feelings and behavior:
It’s not honest to think of feel differently. It wouldn’t be me if I did that.
2. These thoughts and feelings can become a pattern for you.
 - a. “I think staff is all messed up and somebody needs to set them straight. If I don’t tell them what I think, I’m not being honest about my feelings.
 - b. If you “set them straight”, you will probably have more problems which will result in more thoughts and feelings that will cause more problems, etc.

D. I'm right (I'm entitled to think this way)

1. Some of our thoughts and feelings are so deeply planted in our minds that they become a part of everything that we do.
2. If you think you should be able to do whatever you want wherever you want and have whatever you want whenever you want it, you begin to apply this thinking to everything you do.

Helping you overcome obstacles to change

1. Learn to recognize your beliefs, thoughts and feelings that result in behavior that is self-defeating or that fails to take into consideration the needs, feelings and rights of others.
2. Recognize that change is difficult. It takes time. To be successful, you must practice, practice, and practice.
3. Remember that new beliefs, thoughts and feelings aren't phony, they are just new and different and it may take you time to become comfortable with them.
4. Recognize that challenging your beliefs, changing your thoughts and managing your feelings is not "selling out", but is doing what is best for you.
5. Remember to keep your mind open to new thoughts.
6. Consider the cost of hanging on to old beliefs. Is it more important to be right at the cost of your job, your family, etc.
7. Review your day. Use your journal to honestly record problems you have and progress toward change.
8. Ask yourself, "Am I really trying to change?" Remember, "If you keep on doing what you've always done, you will get what you've always got".
9. Focus on challenging your beliefs, and changing your thoughts – not just controlling your behavior.
10. Review your reasons for wanting to change your behavior.

Steps to Problem Solving

- 1. Stop and think**
- 2. Identify the problem and goal**
- 3. Gather information and insight**
- 4. Explore alternatives and consequences**
- 5. Chose, plan, do**
- 6. Evaluate.**

During the course of the day, all of us encounter problems that we have to deal with. Some of these problems are easy to resolve and don't require much thought. Other problems are more difficult to resolve; they require more thinking and difficult decision making, They often involve strong emotions, and they may involve thinking errors. These problems, if not handled appropriately, can lead to behavior that hurt ourselves or others. Our goal is to teach you specific steps that you can follow each time one of these problem situations occur. If you learn and practice these steps, you will be able to resolve problem situations in a responsible manner.

Problem solving skills are designed to teach you the steps to follow in a problem situation so you can...

- A. Control the way you react to problems
- B. Manage your feelings when you are in a problem situation.
- C. Evaluate your thoughts before you act so you can make the best decision instead of selling for the first thought that comes to mind.

Problems are difficult situations we encounter that we don't know how to handle.

Step 1 Stop and Think

- A. Be Quiet
- B. Back Off
- C. Take Deep Breaths
- D. Ask yourself, "What should I do next?"

Step II Identify the Problem and Goal

- 1. What do I really want?
- 2. What do I really Want?

Step III Gather Information and Insight

- 1. What do I know for certain?
- 2. What do I only THINK I know?
- 3. What is the other person's point of view?

Step IV Explore Alternatives and Consequences

- 1. What choices do I have?
- 2. What are the consequences of each alternative for me and others?

Step V Choose, Plan, Do

- 1. What is my best choice?
- 2. What are my resources and obstacles?
- 3. What is my plan?

Step VI Evaluate

- 1. What was my original goal?
- 2. Are things better or worse?
- 3. What have I learned?

Principles for Daily Living

Our principles are the standards by which we live. They define who we are and how we treat others. While rules define what we have to do, principles, define what we should do to become contributing members to the community.

This section is designed to help you understand the process of replacing your old patterns of thinking with new patterns. The old patterns are defined as “Thinking Errors”. The new patterns are reflected in the “Principles for Daily Living” that could be used to replace the old thought with the new thought.

Principles for Daily Living

Pro-Social Thinking

- Care:** A way of thinking that takes into consideration the well-being of self, others, and the environment by listening to each other, negotiating and resolving conflicts and being kind to one another.
- Citizenship:** A way of thinking that believes in the importance of making, following, and protecting the laws, rights and freedoms of our society by working together for justice and equal rights for all and by being an informed and active member of the community.
- Courage:** A way of thinking that places a value on doing what you believe is right by seeking challenges, making difficult decisions and recognizing and acknowledging mistakes.
- Excellence:** A way of thinking that places value on working to the highest level of your ability by setting high expectation, doing your personal best and not giving up easily.
- Inquiry:** A way of thinking that values the importance of seeking knowledge and understanding by pursuing life-long learning, being curious, solving problems and being open-minded.
- Integrity:** A way of thinking that values trustworthiness and honesty by being honest with self and others, showing commitment and dependability by following through on what you say you are going to do. Doing the right thing, even when no one is wrong.
- Respect:** A way of thinking that recognizes and values the inherent worth of each person through fairness, understanding, cooperation, courtesy, and consideration for others.
- Responsibility:** A way of thinking that values assuming personal ownership to know and do your part for the common good by being accountable for your actions, know in the consequences of your behavior and exercising self-control.

Principles for Daily Living Self-Evaluation

Place an X by the "Principles for Daily Living" that you feel you'll need to work on

- Care: Consider and attend to the well-being of self, others and the environment
- Listening to others
 - Resolving conflicts
 - Being Kind to others
- Citizenship: Make, follow, and protect the laws, rights, and freedoms of our society.
- Working Well with others
 - Being willing to help others
 - Being an active member with your peers
- Courage: Commit to what you believe is right.
- Seeking challenges to improve yourself
 - Making difficult decisions
 - Recognizing and admitting your mistakes
- Excellence: Work to the highest level of your ability
- Setting high expectations from yourself
 - Doing your personal best
 - Not giving up easily
- Inquiry: Act consistently with honesty and trustworthiness
- Being honest with yourself and others
 - Being dependable
 - Following through on your commitments
- Respect: Recognize and value the inherent worth of each person
- Being understanding and cooperative
 - Being fair
 - Showing courtesy and consideration towards others
- Responsibility: Assume personal ownership to know and do your part for the common good.
- Being accountable for your actions
 - Thinking about the consequences of your behavior
 - Exercising self-control

Care

Care: Consider and attend to the well-being of self, others and the environment.

- 1. Listen to each other**
- 2. Negotiate and resolve conflicts**
- 3. Be kind**

1. Name a person you think is kind to others

2. Give an example of how this person has been kind to others.

3. Do you admire this person? YES_____ NO_____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you were kind to others.

Citizenship

Citizenship: Make, follow, and protect the laws, rights, and freedoms of our society.

- 1. Recognize and value working together**
- 2. Work for justice and equal rights for all**
- 3. Be an informed and active member of the community.**

1. Name a person you think has been a good citizen.

2. Give an example of how this person has shown they are a good citizen.

3. Do you admire this person? YES _____ NO _____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you showed good citizenship.

Courage

Courage: Commit to what you believe is right

1. Seek challenges

2. Make difficult decisions

3. Recognize and acknowledge mistakes

1. Name a person you think seeks challenges, makes difficult decisions, or admits mistakes.

2. Give an example of how this person seeks challenges, makes difficult decisions, or admits mistakes.

3. Do you admire this person? YES _____ NO _____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you sought challenges, made a difficult decision, or admitted to a mistake;

Excellence

Excellence: Work to the highest level of your ability

- 1. Set high expectations**
- 2. Do your personal best**
- 3. Don't give up easy**

1. Name a person you think doesn't give up easy

2. Give an example of when this person was faced with a difficult decision and didn't give up

3. Do you admire this person? YES _____ NO _____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you felt like giving up and didn't

Inquiry

Inquiry: Seek knowledge and understanding

1. Pursue life-long learning

2. Develop curiosity and problem-solving skills

3. Be open-minded

1. Name a person you think is open minded and tries to understand other people's point of view

2. Give an example of how this person has shown that they are willing to listen and understand other people's point of view.

3. Do you admire this person? YES ____ NO ____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you were willing to listen and understand another person's point of view even though you didn't agree.

Integrity

Integrity: Act consistently with honesty and trustworthiness

- 1. Be honest with self and others**
- 2. Show commitment and dependability**
- 3. Do what you say**
- 4. Do the right thing- even when no one is looking**

1. Name a person you think is honest and trustworthy.

2. Give an example of how this person shows honesty and trustworthiness.

3. Do you admire this person? YES _____ NO _____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you were honest even though you knew you would be punished.

Respect

Respect: Recognize and value the inherent worth of each person

1. Seek understanding and cooperation

2. Be fair and just

3. Show courtesy and consideration

1. Name a person you think is respectful toward others.

2. Give an example of how this person shows respect to others.

3. Do you admire this person? YES ____ NO ____

Why or why not?

4. Give an example how you have shown respect towards others.

Responsibility

Responsibility: Assume personal ownership to know and do your part for the common good.

- 1. Be accountable for your actions**
- 2. Know the consequences of your behavior**
- 3. Exercise self-control**

1. Name a person you think shows they are responsible.

2. Give an example of how this person has shown this.

3. Do you admire this person? YES ____ NO ____
Why or why not?

4. Give an example of a time when you didn't want to accept responsibility for your actions, but you did.

Vocabulary

1. Thoughts: _____

2. Feelings are made up of what 2 things (define them)

a.

b.

3. Please define and give an example of one of your beliefs:

4. Thinking reports include an event, thought, feeling, and behavior:

Define and event and behavior.

5. Intervention:

6. Obstacle:

7. Pattern:

8. Problem:

9. Name the 6 steps to problem solving

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

10. Name the 8 Principles for Daily Living and give a brief definition of each:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.

11. Name and give a brief definition of the 5 Thinking Errors

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.