

S.T.A.H.L. NEWS

Students Talking About Healthy Lifestyles

Brought to you by the IUP Counseling Center in the Center for Health and Well-Being Nov 27, 2023

Cognitive Restructuring

Sometimes, distress arises from unhelpful thinking patterns.

By building the skill to challenge and replace unhelpful thinking patterns, you can cultivate a more positive and constructive outlook on life, ultimately contributing to improved mental well-being.

Identify if your thoughts contain any thinking errors

- **Catastrophizing:** Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation. “I’ll be so awkward. Everyone will notice and think I’m weird.”
 - Tip: Carefully examine the evidence for and against your thought
- **Mind-reading:** You believe you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely possibilities. “That person just looked at me funny. They probably think I’m ugly.”
 - Tip: Remember that it is impossible to know with 100% certainty what another person is thinking unless they tell you.
- **All or nothing thinking:** Thinking in absolutes such as “always”, “never”, or “every”. “I never do a good job on anything.”
 - Tip: Try assigning a true percentage value like 33% instead of 0% or 100%.
- **Emotional reasoning:** You think something must be true because you “feel” it so strongly, ignoring evidence to the contrary. “I know I do a lot of things okay at work, but I still feel like I’m a failure.”
 - Tip: Examine evidence for and against your feeling in a logical way. Be specific!

Use the following sets of questions to help evaluate your thinking

- What is the evidence that __? What’s the evidence on the other side?
- Could there be another explanation for why __?
- If the worst happened and your thought is true, how could you cope with that? How would this impact you one week/month/year from now? What do you think is the most realistic outcome?
- Let’s say your friend came to you with this same thought, what do you think you might tell them?

Break it down:

Situation: You knocked over a glass at work

Thought: I always cause a commotion. Everyone thinks I’m useless.

Challenge: One mistake does not make me useless. Everyone is clumsy sometimes.

Reframe: It is possible that people are looking at me because they are worried I got hurt. Even if they think that I am useless, it does not mean that is an accurate reflection of who I am.

The phone application: Clarity- CBT Thought Diary is an excellent resource for teaching and practicing the skill of cognitive restructuring. Use the QR code to download.



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Monday - Friday 8 AM - 4:30 PM

WALK-IN HOURS MONDAY - FRIDAY 1-3 PM