



# 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 (how you can 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?

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

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

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## 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"/> Catastrophising            | <input type="checkbox"/> Labelling              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-white thinking   | <input type="checkbox"/> Jumping to conclusions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Underestimating Ability    | <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional reasoning    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mind reading               | <input type="checkbox"/> Unrealistic standards  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exaggerated responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Filtering              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fortune telling            |                                                 |

# Seeing Things Clearly Worksheet

## 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?

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## 5. Move forward

What can you do now to help yourself?

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# Thinking Traps

Thinking traps are common ways of thinking that everyone uses from time-to-time. However, thinking traps can make us feel more anxious, stressed or depressed than we need to. Therefore, it's helpful to notice when we use them!

## Thinking Trap

## Definition

## Example

Catastrophising

Worrying that the worse case scenario will happen.

I feel nauseous, what if I have cancer?

Black-and-White Thinking

Thinking in extreme categories (not seeing shades of grey in between).

I'm a total failure, and she's perfect.

Underestimating Ability

Underestimating your ability to cope.

If she leaves me, I'll fall apart.

Mind Reading

Assuming you know what other people are thinking.

He thinks I'm an idiot and she doesn't like me.

Exaggerated Responsibility

Taking total responsibility for anything bad that happens.

I made him worry, it's my fault we broke up.

Fortune Telling

Believing that your worries will definitely come true in the future.

I'll fail this assignment, this will be a disaster.



# Thinking Traps

## Thinking Trap

## Definition

## Example

Labelling

Assigning global negative traits to yourself and others.

I'm worthless.  
He's lazy.

Jumping to  
Conclusions

Drawing a conclusion without having enough evidence to support it.

She didn't reply to my text, she must hate me!

Emotional  
Reasoning

Assuming that your negative emotions reflect the way things really are.

I feel worried, something bad's going to happen!

Unrealistic  
Standards

Setting unattainable standards for yourself and/or others.

She should just *know* what I want!

Filtering

Noticing the bad and dismissing the good.

Forgetting a compliment and fixating on criticism.