

Changing Unhelpful Thinking – Unpacking Unhelpful Thoughts

First, think about a time when you felt upset. Fill in a 'Five Areas Review' (see separate leaflet ask your guide to help you if you wish).

Pick out an unhelpful or upsetting thought and write it in the box...

Your unhelpful or upsetting thought:	
How much did you believe the thought at the time? Put a cross on the line:	
0	10
Not at all	Fully

Example: Paul's painting...

Paul is doing the decorating. He has very high standards and likes to get everything just right. When a drop of paint falls on the carpet, he gets very angry with himself. He tells himself that he can't do anything without messing it up. He rates his belief in this thought as 7 out of 10.

Now ask yourself:

- ➔ Why is Paul's thought unhelpful? (The 'Recognising Unhelpful Thinking' leaflet might help you with this question – ask your guide)
- ➔ Is there any real evidence for his thought? Paul could tell himself that he doesn't usually mess things up and that he usually does a good job. He could think about all the times when things have gone well. He could think what he would say to a friend who has just done the same thing.
- ➔ What alternative thought could he come up with? He could remind himself that things don't need to be perfect. Anyone could have spilt a drop of paint. He can use his alternative thought to challenge his first unhelpful thought.

The key steps of challenging and changing your unhelpful thoughts are:

1. Work out what the thought is that is causing the trouble – use a 'Five Areas' blank form to help you, and look at the leaflets on 'Recognising Unhelpful Thinking' with your guide.
2. Try not to treat the thought as a fact – it's just a thought and it can be changed
3. Try to find a more helpful thought that still fits the facts of the situation.
4. Practice using your new thought whenever you can.

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Continued...

Now go back to your own unhelpful thought....

Ask yourself:

- Q. Why is my thought unhelpful?
- Q. Is there any real evidence?
- Q. Can I come up with an alternative thought?

Write it here:

Now re-rate how much you still believe the first, upsetting thought:

0 10

Not at all Fully

Now rate how much you believe your new helpful thought:

0 10

Not at all Fully

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