

Changing the way we think

As thoughts play such an important role in our distressing emotions, it can be very effective to notice these thoughts, and learn to think differently, or to think about thoughts in a different way. When you start to feel upset

Questions to ask yourself when you feel distressed

STOPP! (page 38) Pause, take a breath, don't react automatically



Ask yourself:

- ❖ What am I reacting to?
- ❖ What is it that's really pushing my buttons here?
- ❖ What is it that I think is going to happen here?
- ❖ What's the worst (and best) that could happen? What's most likely to happen?
- ❖ Is this fact or opinion?
- ❖ Am I getting things out of proportion?
- ❖ How important is this really? How important will it be in 6 months time?
- ❖ What harm has actually been done?
- ❖ Am I expecting something from this person or situation that is unrealistic?
- ❖ Am I overestimating the danger?
- ❖ Am I underestimating my ability to cope?
- ❖ Am I using that negative filter? Those gloomy specs? Is there another way of looking at it?
- ❖ What advice would I give to someone else in this situation?
- ❖ Am I spending time ruminating about the past or worrying about the future? What could I do right now that would help me feel better?
- ❖ Am I putting more pressure on myself, setting up expectations of myself that are almost impossible? What would be more realistic?
- ❖ Am I mind-reading what others might be thinking?
- ❖ Am I believing I can predict the future?
- ❖ Is there another way of looking at this?
- ❖ What advice would I give someone else in this situation?
- ❖ Am I putting more pressure on myself?
- ❖ Just because I **feel** bad, doesn't mean things really **are** bad.
- ❖ Am I jumping to conclusions about what this person meant? Am I mis-reading between the lines? Is it possible that they didn't mean that?
- ❖ Am I exaggerating the good aspects of others, and putting myself down? Or am I exaggerating the negative and minimising the positives? How would someone else see it? What's the bigger picture?
- ❖ Things aren't either totally white or totally black – there are shades of grey. Where is this on the spectrum?
- ❖ This is just a reminder of the past. That was then, and this is now. Even though this memory makes me feel upset, it's not actually happening again right now.
- ❖ What do I want or need from this person or situation? What do they want or need from me? Is there a compromise?
- ❖ What would be the consequences of responding the way I usually do?
- ❖ Is there another way of dealing with this? What would be the most helpful and effective action to take? (for me, for the situation, for the other person)

