

# challenging unhelpful thinking styles

**Evidence Testing** is all about trying to be objective about our thoughts. It is about asking yourself questions that will help you look for other information and make an informed decision about your thoughts, instead of just accepting them as fact.

## 1. CHECK THE EVIDENCE



If this thought was put on trial, what evidence would the defence present (what facts support the thought being true)?

What evidence would the prosecution present against (what information works against the thought or shows that it isn't true all the time)?

## 2. CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

| Unhelpful Thinking Style               |   | Disputation Questions  |
|--|---|--|
| Mental Filter                          | ➔ | Consider the whole picture<br>- Am I taking all the information into account?<br>- What else is going on that I'm ignoring?  |
| Jumping to Conclusions                 | ➔ | You know what they say about assuming...<br>- How do I know this?<br>- What are some alternative explanations for this?<br>- If I was feeling differently, would I still think this? |
| Personalisation                        | ➔ | Find all the causes<br>- Was this entirely my responsibility?<br>- What other factors might have affected the outcome?   |
| Catastrophising                        | ➔ | Put it in perspective<br>- What are the possible outcomes – best, worst, most likely?<br>- Am I jumping ahead of myself?<br>- How important is this in the scheme of things?         |
| Black and White Thinking               | ➔ | Find the shades of grey<br>- Am I being extreme or rigid?<br>- Is there an in-between where things are not perfect but not a disaster?   |
| Shoulding and Musting                  | ➔ | Be flexible<br>- Is this a strict rule, or is it a desire or possibility that didn't work in this instance?<br>- Can I replace this with a "could" or "would have liked to"?         |
| Labelling                              | ➔ | Judge the situation, not the person<br>- Does this behaviour or situation reflect how things always are?<br>- Are there examples where this label hasn't been true?                  |
| Overgeneralising                       | ➔ | Be specific<br>- Does this apply to all situations or am I overgeneralising?<br>- What are the facts and what are my interpretations?  |
| Disqualifying / Ignoring the Positives | ➔ | Acknowledge the good<br>- Am I downplaying or ignoring some of the evidence?<br>- What are the good things in this situation?  |

## 3. CHANGE MY PERSPECTIVE

What other ways are there of viewing the situation?

If I was giving advice to someone I care about in this situation, what would I say?

If I want to act in a certain way, how would I have to think differently?