

## 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)?

### CHALLENGE UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

#### Mental Filter

Consider the whole picture

- Am I taking all the information into account?
- What else is going on that I'm ignoring?

#### Jumping to Conclusions

You know what they say about assuming...

- How do I know this?
- What are some alternative explanations for this?
- If I was feeling differently, would I still think this?

#### Personalisation

Find all the causes

- Was this entirely my responsibility?
- What other factors might have affected the outcome?

#### Catastrophising

Put it in perspective

- What are the possible outcomes
- best, worst, most likely?-Am I jumping ahead of myself?
- How important is this in the scheme of things?

#### Black and White Thinking

Find the shades of grey.

- Am I being extreme or rigid?
- Is there an in-between where things are not perfect but not a disaster?

#### Shoulding and Musting

Be flexible

- Is this a strict rule, or is it a desire or possibility that didn't work in this instance?

-Can I replace this with a  
“could” or “would have liked  
to”?

### **Labelling**

Judge the situation, not the  
person -Does this behaviour  
or situation reflect how things  
always are?  
-Are there examples where  
this label hasn't been true?

### **Overgeneralising**

Be specific

-Does this apply to all  
situations or am I  
overgeneralising?

-What are the facts and what  
are my interpretations?

### **Disqualifying / Ignoring the Positives**

Acknowledge the good

- Am I downplaying or ignoring  
some of the evidence?

-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?