

## If you're having trouble, ask yourself these questions:

Whenever we recognize an anxiety-related thought, feeling or behavior, it can be very helpful to ask ourselves the following questions:

### Alternative THOUGHTS:

1. What are other ways of looking at this situation?
2. Am I looking at the whole picture?
3. What might be a more helpful way of picturing this situation?
4. What unhelpful thinking styles might I be using here (see below)?
5. What is the evidence that my thoughts are true? Is there an alternative way of thinking about this situation that is more true?
6. What is the probability that my thoughts will happen? What are some other things that could happen that are equally, if not more, probable?
7. Have I had any experiences in the past that suggests that this thought might not be COMPLETELY true ALL of the time?
8. Can I really predict the future? Is it helpful to try? What is more helpful?
9. Am I exaggerating how bad the result might be? What is more realistic?
10. Can I read people's minds? What else might they be thinking (that's not so negative)?
11. If a friend or loved one were in this situation and had this thought, what would I tell them?

<b><i>Common Cognitive Distortions (Unhelpful Thinking Styles)</i></b>	
<b>All or Nothing Thinking:</b> thinking in absolute, black and white categories	<b>Over-generalizing:</b> seeing a pattern based upon a single event or being overly broad in conclusions we draw
<b>Mental Filter:</b> only paying attention to certain types of evidence (e.g., dwelling on the negatives)	<b>Disqualifying the positive:</b> discounting the good things that have happened
<b>Jumping to Conclusions:</b> <b>Mind reading:</b> imagining we know what others are thinking <b>Fortune telling:</b> predicting the future	<b>Magnification (catastrophizing) and minimization:</b> blowing things out of proportion or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important
<b>Emotional Reasoning:</b> assuming because we feel a certain way, what we think must be true	<b>Should/Must Thinking:</b> Using words like "should", "must", "ought to" or "have to"
<b>Labeling:</b> assigning labels to ourselves or others	<b>Personalization:</b> blaming yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for OR blaming others and overlooking ways you may have contributed to the outcome

Alternative BEHAVIORS:

1. What could I do in the moment that would be more helpful?
2. What's the best thing to do (for me, for others, or for the situation)?
3. If my feared situation happens, how will I cope? What coping skills can I use to handle my feared situation? What have I done in the past that was successful?
4. Am I needing to work on acceptance, letting go of control, being okay with less than perfect, or having faith in the future and myself?
5. Breathe: Focus your attention on your breathing. Imagine you have a balloon in your belly, inflating on the in-breath, deflating on the out-breath.

Alternative FEELINGS:

1. What might it feel like if I acted/thought differently?
2. When I'm not feeling this way, do I think about this situation differently?
3. Are there any strengths or positives in me or the situation that I might be ignoring?
4. What else might this anxiety be related to? Is it *really* about feeling \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Tell yourself: "This feeling will pass. It's a normal body reaction."