

# Helpful Thinking Strategies

## CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF THINKING NEGATIVELY ABOUT AN EVENT OR SITUATION, ASK YOURSELF: WHAT EVIDENCE DO I HAVE THAT THIS IS ACTUALLY TRUE OR GOING TO HAPPEN? CHANCES ARE, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY, AND YOU'RE WORRYING WITHOUT GOOD REASON.

## IS THERE AN ALTERNATE EXPLANATION?

IF YOU HAVE IT IN YOUR HEAD THAT AN EVENT HAPPENED BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU DID OR DIDN'T DO, ASK YOURSELF: IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THAT EXPLANATION?

## WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO A FRIEND WHO IS THINKING LIKE THAT?

IT IS THE EASIEST THING IN THE WORLD TO CALL YOURSELF UNPLEASANT NAMES WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE. BUT THIS IS UNHELPFUL AND NEGATIVE SELF-TALK THAT CAN BE REALLY HARMFUL AND DISCOURAGING. INSTEAD, SAY SOMETHING HELPFUL TO YOURSELF LIKE, 'CALM DOWN! IT WAS A MISTAKE, YOU DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE.'

## WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD?

IT IS EASY TO IMAGINE THE WORST WHEN SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO YOU REMAINS UNRESOLVED. IN THESE SITUATIONS WHERE YOUR IMAGINATION IS TEMPTED TO RUN WILD WITH NEGATIVE POSSIBILITIES, ASK YOURSELF 'WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD?'

WHEN YOU THINK RATIONALLY AND OBJECTIVELY, YOU CAN REDUCE YOUR STRESS AND HELP YOURSELF FEEL A BIT BETTER.

## IS THERE A MORE HELPFUL WAY TO THINK ABOUT THIS?

THIS IS A REALLY VALUABLE THINKING SKILL TO LEARN. IT ISN'T ABOUT GLASS-HALF-FULL OR LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE - IT IS ABOUT LOOKING AT AN EVENT (EVEN ONE WITH A LESS THAN IDEAL OUTCOME) AND USING YOUR BRAIN TO WORK OUT IF THERE IS A WAY TO THINK ABOUT IT THAT ISN'T JUST GOING TO MAKE YOU FEEL MISERABLE.

LIFE IS ABOUT MAKING MISTAKES - THEY ARE HOW WE LEARN! AND A BIG PART OF LEARNING IS LOOKING AT EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS, GOOD AND BAD, IN HELPFUL WAYS.

## WHAT NEXT?

IF YOU FIND THAT YOU ARE TALKING UNHELPFULLY TO YOURSELF A LOT, AND THAT THESE STRATEGIES AREN'T BEING AS HELPFUL AS YOU'D LIKE, DON'T WAIT FOR THINGS TO GET BETTER BY THEMSELVES. REACH OUT TO A FRIEND, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, CLUB LEADER, DOCTOR, OR OTHER TRUSTED ADULT FOR HELP.

Information adapted from:  
[www.beyondblue.org.au/SenseAbility](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/SenseAbility)

