

Changing How You Think

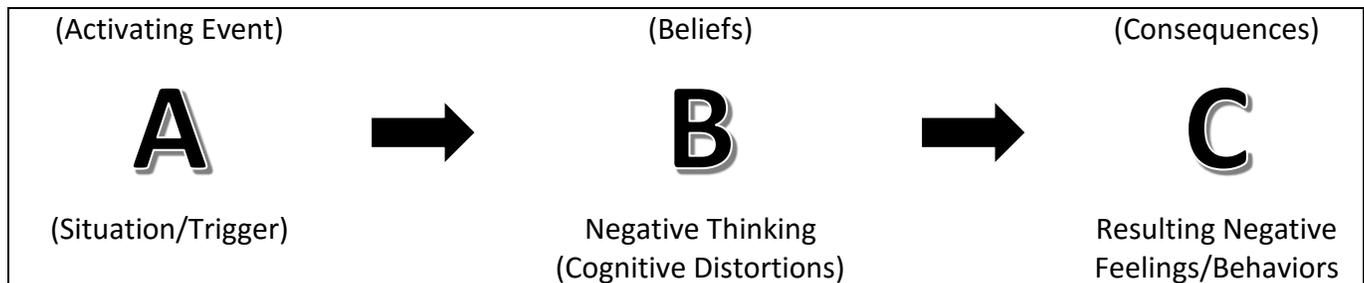
When you realize you are experiencing negative feelings or engaging in negative behaviors, STOP!

Step 1. **Catch** yourself thinking negatively.

Step 2. Identify and **Challenge** your cognitive distortions based on the evidence.

Step 3. **Change** your thinking to a more realistic perspective.

With practice, you can catch yourself thinking negatively BEFORE you start feeling/acting negatively.



Common Cognitive Distortions	Challenging the Distortions
Catastrophizing – assuming the worst-case-scenario is going to happen	How likely is it that this will actually happen? What are more likely outcomes? Make plans for a variety of situations. Could you cope with any outcome?
Black-and-White Thinking – thinking in absolutes or extremes; all or nothing view, not allowing for a middle ground	Try to find an in-between way to look at things and avoid the extremes.
Jumping to Conclusions – making guesses or assumptions before knowing all the facts	Examine the facts versus what you have assumed. Is there another possibility? Do I know this for certain?
Tunnel Vision - seeing only the things that support your point of view, and ignoring information that contradicts your point of view	Look at the big picture, from multiple points of view. Examine the evidence that your perspective is right and that it is wrong.
Unrealistic Goals – perfectionism, unbending rules about how you or others or the world should be	No one is perfect, so change your expectations to “good enough.” Instead of focusing on “shoulds,” restate it as a preference with a goal to work for.
Core Beliefs – I’m unlovable or I’m incapable	What is the evidence against that belief? Has anyone loved you in the past? Have you ever accomplished anything? Focus on the positives.

Situation: _____

Step 1. _____

Step 2. _____

Step 3. _____