

Tackling Anxious Thoughts

Anxiety can sometimes serve a purpose in helping us deal with life's difficulties.

As an evolutionary function, it can sometimes help us respond to threat, and anxiety can also drive us to focus on our challenges and solve problems.

When it spirals out of control, however, anxiety can impair our ability to think logically and deal with adversity using logic and rational thinking.

Tackling Anxious Thoughts can help you notice your anxious and irrational thoughts and help you think of more helpful, rational alternatives to them. Regular practice will help you implement this approach naturally so that you can stop your anxiety from spiraling out of control.

Write your answers in the boxes provided.

Outline a common situation or scenario that you feel triggers your anxious feelings.

E.g. Talking to your boss, meeting a large group of people.

Anxiety can bias our thinking by making us buy in too much to the chance of something bad happening. We can then tend to envision the potential negative outcomes as much more severe than are in reality.

Sometimes, just pausing a moment to consider these two things is enough to dispute our anxious thoughts.

Try to envision yourself in the anxiety-triggering scenario you just outlined.

What is the worst potential consequence of this scenario?

What is the best potential consequence of this scenario?

Now, what do you feel is the most likely consequence of this scenario?

Now consider what would happen if your worst potential consequence became a reality.

Envision yourself facing the worst potential consequence you outlined.

Would it still concern you...

In a week's time?

In a month?

In a year?

Anxious thoughts often center around what could potentially go wrong, and all the negative possibilities related to this irrational thought.

Often, however, the worst potential outcome is not the most likely - and even if it becomes a reality, it may be less catastrophic as we imagine it to be.

Reflect on the “worst” and “best” potential consequences that you outlined above.

Now outline your...?

Anxious/Irrational Thought:

Objective/Rational Thought: