

Recognizing Rumination

Rumination, which is characterized by persistent negative thinking, has been identified as a key risk factor for depression (Joormann, Yoon, & Zetsche, 2007; Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Ruminating on negative thoughts means there is less space in our working memory to focus on other, more neutral or positive information. Indeed, research indicates that rumination has been associated with deficits in cognitive control (i.e. our ability to flexibly direct our attention towards goal-directed tasks, and away from distracting irrelevant information), (Beckwé, Deroost, Koster, De Lissnyder & De Raedt, 2014; Hallion, Ruscio & Jha, 2014).

Commonly, ruminative thinking may involve persistently thinking about events that have already happened or questions that cannot be answered such as:

“Why do I always feel this way....”

“If only I hadn’t said that to him....”

“If only I’d done.....X, Y or Z... differently”

This template can help clients to identify which negative thoughts they are having which are persistent in nature and interfering with their day-to-day lives.

| Persistent Negative Thought/s | What time of day do you tend to ruminate on this thought? | Where are you when this thought bothers you? | What kind of activity are you doing when you ruminate on this thought? |
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| <i>E.g. “If I hadn’t said that, he wouldn’t have broken up with me”</i> | <i>E.g. Late at night</i> | <i>E.g. Lying in bed</i> | <i>E.g. Trying to read my book or go to sleep</i> |
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References:

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