

GoodTherapy

Challenging Negative Thoughts

Anxiety, depression, and poor self-esteem often are the results of irrational negative thoughts. Irrational thoughts are not based in evidence, operate mostly on assumptions, and are rooted in beliefs on past experiences. This is your brain's way of trying to prepare for an outcome, making it less frightening. Everyone has irrational thoughts from time to time; but, if irrational thoughts begin to overtake rational thoughts, this can be the fuel for anxiety and depression. Challenging irrational thoughts can help us manage/change them.

Answer the following questions to challenge your thoughts.

1) What evidence do I have to support this thought?

2) Is there any evidence contrary to my thought?

3) How can I test my assumptions to see if they are accurate?

4) What would a friend think of this situation?

5) If I change my perspective to a positive one, how does my thought differ?

6) Will this matter a day from now, a month, a year?

7) Am I assuming the worst?