

Negative Automatic Thoughts

Negative Automatic Thought	Meaning	Example
Overgeneralising	We take once occurrence of an anxious event and generalise it to all others.	John attended his first day of university. When he went into the lecture theatre, he didn't know who to sit with so he sat on his own hoping someone would sit beside him. When the lecture started John noticed everyone else was sitting in a group or with friends. John is also part of the class WhatsApp group where the class are meeting in the student union and have arranged a night out together. John decides not to go because he will be left sitting on his own. When John goes home for the weekend, he also decides that he won't go out with his friends from home because they probably don't like him either and won't want to spend time with him.

<p>Mental filter</p>	<p>We only pay attention to certain types of evidence.</p>	<p>Ryan is driving home from work and is having what he would call a bad day. As he leaves work another driver cuts in front of him and Ryan gets annoyed saying to himself that everyone is rude and no one ever sees him. Later on his journey another driver waves for Ryan to go ahead of him. When Ryan gets home he complains to his wife about the driver that cut in front of him.</p>
<p>Mind reading</p>	<p>Assuming we know what other people are thinking (usually about us).</p>	<p>Lucy and her friend Mary are colleagues and are going on a Christmas Staff night out. As they are getting ready Lucy becomes anxious thinking that no one wants her to be there, everyone else thinks she is stupid and they only invited her because they had to. Meanwhile Mary is really looking forward to the night out together and the opportunity to get to know Lucy better.</p>

<p>Fortune telling</p>	<p>Believing that we know what will happen in the future.</p>	<p>Kate has been asked to do a presentation for the managers of her company. She has worked hard on it for weeks and shared it with some colleagues for feedback. The night before she becomes very anxious, she convinces herself that she will mess things up, her mouth will go dry, the bosses will hate her presentation and she will be fired.</p>
<p>Black & White thinking</p>	<p>Thinking of things as right or wrong, good, or bad.</p>	<p>Chloe is in secondary school and sits her exams. When the results come back she passes most exams but has failed her maths. Chloe begins to say things to herself like I am a failure because I didn't pass them all.</p>
<p>Disqualifying the positive</p>	<p>Ignoring good things that have happened or that you have done</p>	<p>Clare has some photographs taken at her 30th birthday and shares them with friends and family. Everyone comments how nice the photographs are and Clare responds by saying</p>

		<p>the photographer must have touched up the photographs because she never looks that good normally.</p>
Catastrophising	<p>Always believing that the worst will happen.</p>	<p>Laura has been invited to a party at her friend's house. As she begins to get ready, she feels like she can't go. She believes that no one will talk to her when she goes, she will be sitting alone, she wont have a good time and she wont be able to leave because she will be too embarrassed.</p>
Should and musts	<p>Thinking or saying "I should" or "you must" in anxious situations.</p>	<p>Jenny has been trying to improve her anxiety by going into town on her own. She decides to take the bus but begins to feel very anxious. She gets off the bus after a few stops and walks home. When she gets home she begins to say "I should be able to do that" and feels guilty, ashamed and a failure.</p>
Mountains and Molehills	<p>Minimising the odds of how things will turn out.</p>	<p>Sam has a university exam coming up in physics, his least favourite subject of his course. He spends all morning telling</p>

	<p>Exaggerating the risk of negatives and feeling unable to see another way of looking at the situation.</p>	<p>himself and his classmates “I’m going to drop out if I fail this test.”</p>
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