

TACKLING WHAT KEEPS SADNESS GOING

TACKLE SADNESS AND LOW MOOD ONE THOUGHT AT A TIME – SQUASH THOSE ANTs

Our thoughts are powerful because they are the lens through which we view our world. Do you view the glass as half full or half empty? Our thoughts have a strong influence on what we do (behaviours) and how we feel (emotions).

Sadness feelings are kept going by negative thoughts. It's like wearing a dark pair of glasses where no light of positivity can enter. These thoughts are referred to as Automatic Negative Thoughts or ANTs.

12 POWERFUL QUESTIONS TO SQUASH YOUR ANTs

Over the next two weeks capture the negative thoughts that keep your sadness going and squash them by asking yourself these questions whenever you feel sad.

1. Do I need to stop and take a deep breath?
2. If my best friend told me they had this thought what advice would I give them?
3. When I am not feeling this way would I think about this situation differently? Why?
4. Am I wearing those 'dark glasses'? What would be more realistic if I was not filtering out the positives?
5. What evidence is there that this thought is true? What other ways could I think about this situation?
6. What would someone else make of this situation?
7. Is my reaction disproportionate to the situation?
8. How important will this situation be in six months time? In one years time? In two years time?
9. When I felt this way before, what did I think about or do that helped me to feel better?
10. What is the most helpful thing I can do in this situation?
11. Are there any resources and strengths in me that I am ignoring or that I can use to help this situation?
12. What choices have I got here?

BRINGING YOUR ANTS TO COURT

It's time to bring your ANTS to court. To assist in the preparation of case you will need a thought record. The thought record will help you challenge your automatic negative thoughts to obtain a more realistic perspective and diffuse feelings of sadness.

Over the next 3 days when you have negative, sad or down feelings complete this thought record.

SITUATION OR TRIGGER – What triggered your sadness? When? Why?

FEELINGS – Name the feeling and rate the intensity from 0 to 100 (0 = extremely low intensity, 100 = extremely high intensity)

UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS OR IMAGES – What thoughts went through your mind?

WHAT FACTS PROVIDE EVIDENCE AGAINST THE UNHELPFUL THOUGHT? – Evidence against the thought.

WHAT FACTS SUPPORT THE UNHELPFUL THOUGHT? – Evidence for the thought.

WHAT ALTERNATIVE, MORE BALANCED PERSPECTIVE COULD I TAKE? – How would someone else view this situation?

OUTCOME: RE-RATING THE EMOTION – Having assessed the thought, has the intensity of the emotion changed?