

RUMINATING THINKING PATTERNS

Repetitive, negative thought and feeling patterns that involve dwelling on problems instead of moving towards resolution.

Excessive Self-Criticism

Engaging in relentless self-blame, self-criticism or self-condemnation.

Feels: shameful, weak, like you never have been or done enough, fearful of failure, anxious

Regret

Dwelling on past mistakes or missed opportunities, often with feelings of guilt and remorse.

Feels: guilt, sadness, disappointment, remorse, grief, failure

Worrying About the Future

Constantly anticipating negative outcomes or envisioning what might go wrong.

Feels: uneasy, anxious, panic, dread, fearing the worst, restless and racing thoughts

Loss & Grief

Preoccupation with the circumstance of loss, unresolved issues, and what-if scenarios and idealization of the past.

Feels: guilt and self-blame, catastrophic thinking of the future, confusion, longing and yearning for how things used to be, isolation and loneliness.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING



A therapeutic process to identify, challenge and alter rumination patterns

1 Identify and record the negative, persistent thought.

Pay attention to what triggered or caused the thought, how it made you feel and what your reaction was.

For example: The thought, "I am always going to fail at this," was triggered when a friend asked me how I prepared for this presentation. It made me feel as if my friend does not think I am well prepared so I reacted with anger.

2 Examine the evidence. Challenge the validity of the thought and separate facts from feelings to obtain a more objective view.

- What evidence supports this thought?
- What evidence contradicts this thought?
- Is this a fact or what my mind assumes to be fact?
- Am I observing the situation objectively or am I projecting how I feel onto it?

3 Label distorted thinking patterns



Am I catastrophizing or using polarized thinking?



Is this the voice of one of my loudest saboteurs?



Is there a sense of resolution or am I predicting the future negatively without considering any other possible outcomes?

4 Trace the thought back to its origin. Recognize the brain and body may be re-experiencing the past.



What was the context in which you first formed this thought or belief?



In which areas of your life is it now a reoccurring theme?



What does it have to do with what you were taught about being yourself?

5 Generate and evaluate alternative thoughts to develop a more balanced, realistic view that takes into account the evidence you gathered.

For example: I have worked hard to prepare so that I can succeed. This could be my friend's way of offering support by asking how ready I feel.



Rate how much you believe this new thought a scale of 1-10. How many more can you come up with to get your rating closest to 10.



Consider how this alternative thought makes you feel. Does it seem more realistic? Does it activate higher-order brain regions?

