

## THOUGHTS 2 -- IDENTIFYING HELPFUL/POSITIVE AND HARMFUL/NEGATIVE PATTERNS OF THINKING

### SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Agenda and Announcements
- II. Review
- III. Personal Project Review
- IV. New Material: Identifying Categories of Harmful Thoughts
- V. Mindfulness Exercise
- VI. Take Home Message
- VII. Personal Project

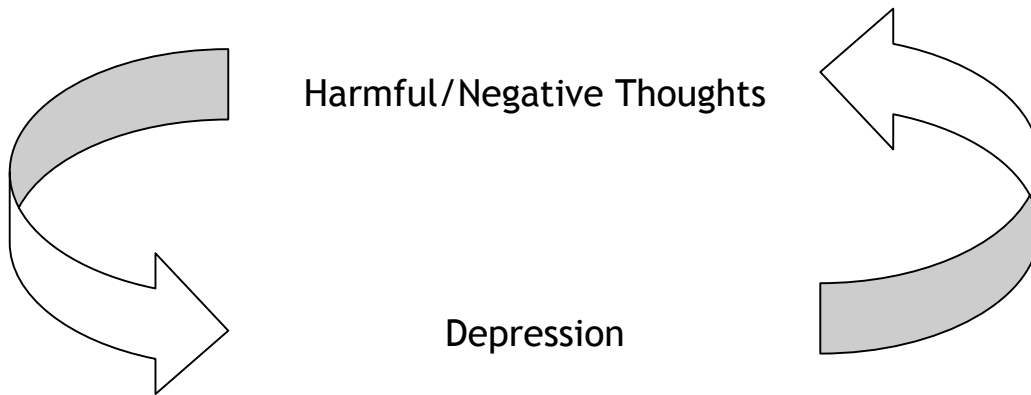
The purpose of today's meeting:

- To talk more about the relationship between thoughts and mood.
- To begin talking about common patterns of harmful and helpful thinking.
- To learn about types of harmful thoughts.
- To discuss the possibility of changing how we think.

## REVIEW: THOUGHTS AND YOUR MOOD

- What do you remember most from the last session?

Depression affects the way we think; we have more harmful thoughts. Having harmful thoughts can also lead you to feel more depressed.



## PERSONAL PROJECT REVIEW

1. Review your quick mood scale.
2. What was a harmful thought (one that depressed you) that you had over the past week?
3. What was a helpful thought (one that helped you) that you had over the past week?
4. If you looked over the lists of Helpful Thoughts and Harmful Thoughts (on page 15 & 16 of your books), which thoughts applied most to you?

## COMMON PATTERNS OF HELPFUL AND HARMFUL THINKING

### HELPFUL THINKING

#### CONSTRUCTIVE

“Puts you together.”

**Example:** I can learn.

#### NECESSARY

Helps you do what you have to do.

**Example:** To find out if I am HIV positive, I need to have a blood test.

#### POSITIVE

Makes you feel better.

**Example:** I can focus on what is good in my life or what I can do.

### HARMFUL THINKING

vs. DESTRUCTIVE

“Tears you apart”, “destroys you.”

**Example:** I don’t know anything.

vs. UNNECESSARY

Does not change anything (no matter how much you think).

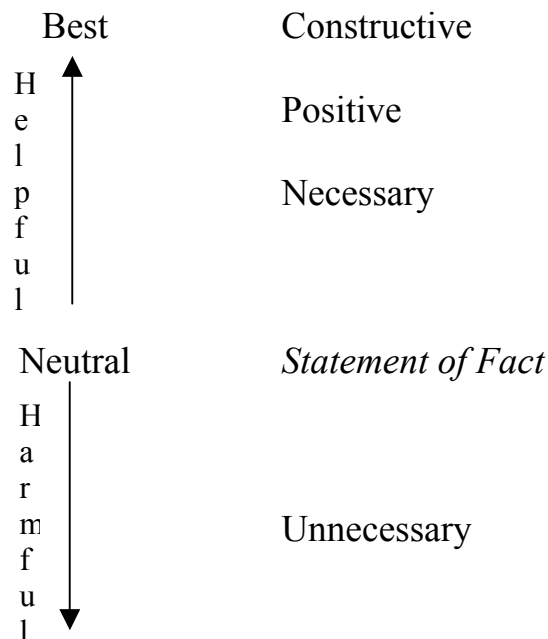
**Example:** “What if I am HIV positive?”

vs. NEGATIVE

Makes you feel worse.

**Example:** There are many things that are wrong with my life, and there’s nothing I or anybody can do about it.

### Types of Thoughts



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Negative

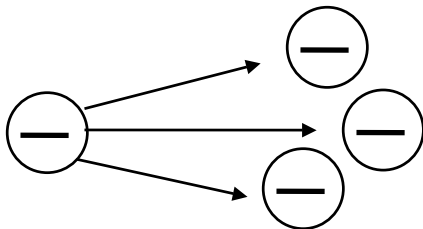
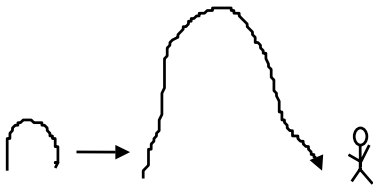
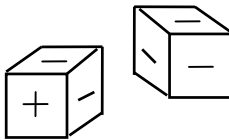
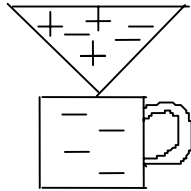
Worst

Destructive

## CATEGORIES OF UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

(From David Burn's Book Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy. Morrow, 1980)

### Symbol



### Unhelpful Thought Pattern

#### All or Nothing Thinking

Thinking in extremes (can only be at one end of the scale, top or bottom). Not balanced.

All good or all bad. The best or worst. Perfect or a failure.

#### Negative Filter (Ignoring the Positive)

Only remember negative events. Filter out positive events. Your cup of life ends up very bitter and negative.

#### Pessimism

Believing negative things are more likely to happen and positive things are never or hardly ever going to happen

#### Exaggerating

Exaggerating problems and the possible harm they could cause, and underestimating your ability to deal with them.

“Mountain out of a mole hill”

#### Overgeneralization

Taking one negative characteristic or event and seeing it as a never ending pattern.

He/She doesn't like me --> no one likes me.

I couldn't do this one thing. --> I can't do anything.

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Labeling (either yourself or others)

Attaching a negative label, instead of seeing a error or problem. Labels can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

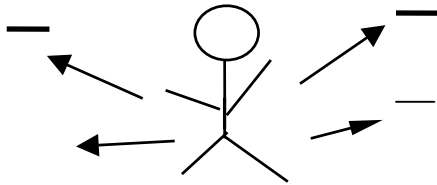
“Stupid” vs. not good at math.

“Clumsy” vs. drop things occasionally.

## CATEGORIES OF UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS (continued)

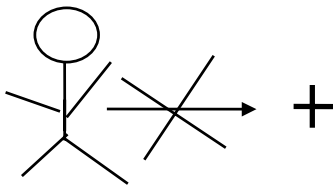
### Symbol

### Unhelpful Thought Pattern



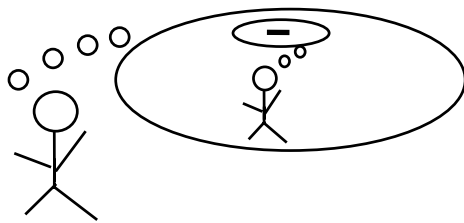
#### Blaming Oneself

Thinking negative things happen, and they are always entirely your fault.



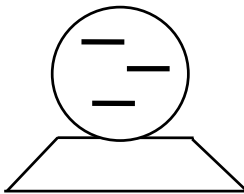
#### Not Giving Oneself Credit

Thinking positive things that happen are either just luck or somebody else's doing and never the results of one's effort.



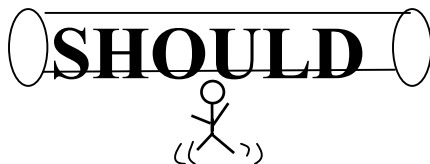
#### Mind Reading

Thinking that you know what others are thinking, and they are thinking negatively about you.



#### Negative Fortune Telling

Thinking that you can see how things will be in the future and it is bad.



#### "Should"ing yourself

Telling yourself you should, ought, and must do something. Makes you feel forced to do things, controlled, and resentful. Weighing yourself down with "shoulds."

## MINDFULNESS EXERCISE (orange exercise)

Take an orange (or anything else really).

For the next five minutes, try to use the orange to anchor you to the present.

Focus only on what you are doing in the present. What you are seeing, tasting, touching, hearing, and smelling.

It is natural for thoughts to wander. When they wander, bring them back to the present and focus only on what you are doing, on the here and now.

Use the orange to keep your thoughts in the present. Keep your mind on what you are doing now, not on what you have to do or what you may have done in the past.

It takes practice being in the present. At first it can be difficult.

How is it for you?

Notes:


### Take Home Message

My thoughts can be helpful or harmful.

I can think in ways that will make me feel better.

I can mold my internal reality so that  
it helps me achieve a healthy mood.

## PERSONAL PROJECT

### QUICK MOOD SCALE

DAY							
BEST MOOD		9	9	9	9	9	9
		8	8	8	8	8	8
		7	7	7	7	7	7
		6	6	6	6	6	6
OK/AVERAGE		5	5	5	5	5	5
		4	4	4	4	4	4
		3	3	3	3	3	3
		2	2	2	2	2	2
WORST MOOD		1	1	1	1	1	1
# harmful thoughts							
# helpful thoughts							

### WEEKLY PROJECT

- 1) Continue tracking mood using the mood scale (more details on page 17).
- 2) Track significant positive and negative thoughts you have each day.

### OPTIONAL PROJECT (select one of the following activities if you want)

- 1) Practice the orange exercise (see page 23) or any relaxation exercise that you have found helpful to you.
- 2) Continue using 3x5 index cards to track thoughts you have.
- 3) Try and figure out whether there are specific harmful thought patterns that apply to you.
- 4) Find the most helpful thought patterns that give you noticeable better feelings.

**COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION**  
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