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Overcoming Negative Thoughts and Feelings

Taking negative thoughts and bringing them to the surface is a great way to challenge the perspective. You don't have to accept negative thoughts so the best way to overcome negative thinking is to stop the thoughts dead in their tracks and think of ways to restructure them so that they are healthy. By doing this, you are considering all aspects of the negative thought before making an assumption.

Directions: Complete the questions below to challenge a recent negative thought

1. What happened? (include as much detail as possible; who you were with, when this happened, where you were, how you felt leading up to the negative thought, what your body was feeling (ie: anxious, tired, sad, etc.) and any other details.)

2. What did you immediately think before becoming aware that this was a negative thought? For example, "I'm so ashamed, I suck, I have no willpower."

3. What circumstances occurred before this issue that were not in your control? For example, "I was irritated because my dog pooped on the floor."

4. What is your responsibility in this issue? For example, "I didn't get enough sleep last night which caused me to feel agitated about my dog."

5. What evidence supports your negative thoughts? For example, "I could have not gone into the bedroom while agitated as I know the bedroom can be a trigger."

6. What evidence challenges your negative thought? For example, "Addiction is a disease and it takes time to work through this."

7. What is a more reasonable thought that you can have next time that offers a different perspective and isn't as negative? For example, "It's okay to feel down about this relapse but I am proud of my progress and will make changes going forward to make sure this doesn't happen again."
