

# Exploring your thoughts



Various forms of distorted thinking, as identified by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) experts such as Dr. David Burns, exist. While occasional experiences of cognitive distortions are common for most individuals, frequent reinforcement of these distortions can amplify anxiety, intensify depression, lead to relationship challenges, and disrupt effective study habits. A good habit to get into is to question your thoughts regularly to assess how accurately you are perceiving reality. Once you can accurately identify and label your thoughts you can then decide as to whether it makes sense to continue thinking about yourself or your world in that way.



## Identifying your thinking

Take time to understand the different types of [distorted thinking](#) you might be engaging in that are negatively biased.

- Do you use “black and white” thinking?
- Do you tend to overgeneralise, catastrophize, personalise or mind-read?
- Are you using “should” statements or labelling?

Whatever you identify as your thinking style, make a note of it and look for alternative explanations, objective evidence, and positive interpretations to expand your thinking and change your perspective.



## Regularly question your thinking

Developing a beneficial routine involves regularly questioning your thoughts to evaluate the accuracy of your perception of reality. Once you can precisely identify and label your thoughts, you can then determine whether it is sensible to persist in thinking about yourself or your world in that particular way.



## Boost your mental health by self-exploration

Transforming your thought patterns can enhance your mental well-being. By cultivating the skill to navigate challenges through cognitive shifts, we inevitably experience greater happiness. Additionally, regularly assessing your thoughts and emotions allows you to uncover the root causes of stress, enabling effective problem-solving. When confronted with a new challenge, reflect on past successes in similar situations – consider whether those approaches could apply here, and explore alternative options.



## Talk to someone about how you are feeling

Seeking support is a display of strength. It's crucial to connect with someone and have a conversation about what's causing you stress. Sharing our concerns can make a significant positive difference in how we feel.

- Identify key, supportive, and trusted people you can speak with about how you are feeling.
- Consider scheduling regular consultations with a therapist if you feel like you're running into a brick wall. You can get treatment without having a serious mental illness or a life-threatening crisis.
- Make an appointment with the Medical School Student Support Team. They are here to support you at every turn.



Seek support:  
Medical School  
Student Support