



# OVERTHINKING

Brought to you by: By:



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# WHAT IS OVERTHINKING?



Process of constantly analyzing and anguishing over one's thoughts. It may include rumination, in which an individual is stuck mentally rehashing their past or present decisions and/or actions.

## WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF OVERTHINKING?

### PHYSICAL IMPACT

Chronic worry and emotional stress can trigger our fight-or-flight response. This causes the sympathetic nervous system to release stress hormones such as cortisol. Elevated levels of cortisol can result in fatigue, irritability, headaches, intestinal problems (such as constipation, bloating or diarrhea), anxiety or depression, weight gain, increased blood pressure, problems with menstrual periods, poor sleep, and cardiovascular disease.



### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Constant worrying and negative thinking can lead to the habituation of these thoughts. In other words, your brain starts to believe that these thoughts are the new normal and turns them into a habit. This can lead to cognitive distortions and several psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, body image issues, and eating disorders.



### SOCIAL IMPACT

Research shows that people with high anxiety levels tend to be less satisfied with their lives and face negative outcomes in their social interactions. Overthinking social situations makes it harder to try new things, to take risks in your work or personal life, or sometimes to even leave your house.





## Thoughts

Mental process in which we form psychological associations and understand the world.

## T-E-A Cycle

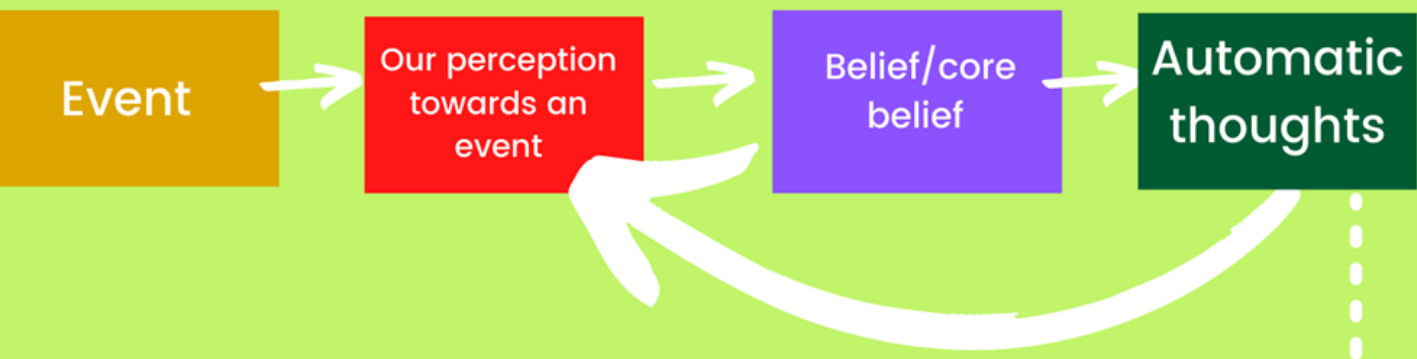
## Actions

Focuses on coping methods or ways practised to cope with situation including fight-flight response.

## Emotions

Feelings that results in physical and psychological changes that influence thought and behavior.

Our thoughts, emotions, and actions make up our perception, and according to our perception to an event, we formulate core beliefs. These core beliefs are the source of our automatic thoughts. T-E-A cycle happens every day in our lives and it impacts our daily functioning.



- Subconscious thoughts that occur in response to everyday events.
- Automatic thoughts are derived from our core beliefs.
- Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANT) are irrational and self-defeating.

# Cognitive Distortions

- Unhelpful ways of thinking that reinforce negative thinking or emotions.
  - Produced by our minds to convince us of something that isn't true.
- May sound rational and accurate but only create bad feeling towards self.

## EXAMPLES OF UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

**1. Jumping to Conclusions:** Thinking that you can predict the future.

**Example:**

*"I'm going to fail".*

*"She is not going to enjoy our date".*

**2. Overgeneralization:** Drawing conclusions from one experience to encompass all experiences.

**Example:**

*"The interview went great, but they didn't call me back. I'll never get a job".*

**3. Mental Filter:** Only paying attention to certain types of evidence. Picking out a single event and dwelling on it, often with inaccurate perceptions.

**Example:**

*"During my presentation, some students left early, my presentation must have been awful".*

**4. All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Things are seen in "black" and "white" or seen in absolutes. Such as "never" and "always".

**Example:**

*"If I'm not perfect, I have failed. Either I do it right or not at all".*

**5. Disqualifying the Positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting that they "don't count" for some reason or other.

**Example:**

*"It still wasn't good enough, I just got lucky, anyone could have done the same, it's nothing special" even though you've performed particularly well.*



# EXAMPLES OF UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

**6. Labeling and Mislabelling:** Putting a label on yourself as if it is a fact, negatively impacting your self-worth.

**Example:**

*"I'm fat and lazy".*

*"I'm stupid".*

**7. Emotional Reasoning:** Using your emotions to guide your interpretations.

**Example:**

*"I feel guilty, I must have done something bad".*

**8. Should Statements:** How you think you "should be" which creates anxiety due to judgemental expectations.

**Example:**

*"I should be married by now, all my peers are".*

*"I should lose 10 pounds".*

**9. Catastrophizing/Minimization:** Blowing things out of proportions or denying that there is an issue when there actually is.

**Example:**

*"I ruined my presentation because I mispronounced a word".*

*"I didn't complete a major project in time, but it's no big deal".*

**10. Personalization:** Thinking things are about you when they are just mere interpretations or observation.

**Example:**

*"He answered his phone during our date. I must have done something wrong because he left the date early".*

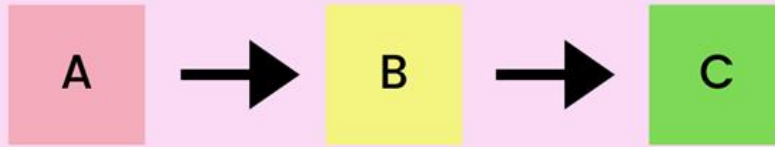




# Ways to handle overthinking?

## 1. ABC Model

ABC Model is used to tackle cognitive processes (the way you think and perceive things) to help you change or adjust your behavior. In the ABC Model



(A) Activating event that you are going through.

(B) Beliefs and thoughts that you hold toward the activating event.

(C) Consequential emotion that you feel due to your beliefs and perception of the activating event.

### Benefits:

- Replaces cognitive distortions to effective thinking/perception towards activating events.
- Explores behavioral and emotional response.
- Assists in re-evaluating beliefs.

## 2. Thought Tracking

Method that helps you track down thoughts to core beliefs.

Notice automatic thoughts toward an event



Assess your emotions



- Track down beliefs through questions
- "If thought is true, what does it mean to me?"



### 3. Journaling

#### Definition

Process that guides you through steps of identifying, challenging, and reinterpret negative thinking patters.

#### Method

Write down what's on your mind by starting with what is troubling you, how you feel or how your day went.

#### Benefits

- Able to identify negative emotions.
- Notice patterns of thoughts, behaviors, and feelings.
- Help to vent & process thoughts and emotions.



### 4. Speak to someone you trust or professional

- Speaking to a therapist, counselor, trusted friend, or family member can give you an objective view on your situation.
- Notice patterns of thoughts, behaviors and feelings.
- Helps you see the proximity of your situation from negative and positive perspective.

