MindShift™ Cards — Balance Your Thoughts
— Thinking Traps —

Fortune-Telling
Believing you can predict the future and assuming it's going to be negative.

Are you 100% sure what the future holds? What else could happen? What's most likely to happen?

Unbalanced Thought
I'm going to make a mistake.

Balanced Thought
I can't know the future and it's not guaranteed I'll make a mistake.

Over-Estimating Danger
Believing that something is about to occur that is actually very unlikely.

Am I confusing a possibility with a certainty? Although it might be possible, how likely is it to actually occur?

Unbalanced Thought
The plane is going to crash.

Balanced Thought
The plane could crash, but it is much more likely that it won't.

Catastrophizing
Imagining the worst possible thing is going to happen and that we will be unable to cope.

What's the worst that could happen and how would I cope? Is this a hassle or a horror? Will this still matter in a year?

Unbalanced Thought
If I mess up, I'll be fired from my job.

Balanced Thought
I may get in trouble if I mess up, but I'll work through it and I may learn something from it.

Mind-Reading
Believing you know exactly what others are thinking and assuming it's negative.

Do you actuallly know what others are thining or are you guessing? What else could others be thinking?

Unbalanced Thought
She doesn't like me.

Balanced Thought
I can't know for sure what she thinks of me and assuming she doesn't like me won't make anything better.

Black and White Thinking
Thinking of situations in extremes (either really good or really bad).

What's a less extreme way of thinking about this? Does it really have to be one thing or another?

Unbalanced Thought
I'm either going to nail the presentation or bomb it completely.

Balanced Thought
I'll probably do better on some parts than on others, and even if I bomb it, I'll be able to manage.

Over-Generalizing
Making sweeping judgments about things based on one or two experiences, and using words like "always" or "never".

Is there any evidence or examples that show that this isn't completely true all of the time?

Unbalanced Thought
I always mess things up.

Balanced Thought
There are lots of things I do right and everybody makes mistakes sometimes.

Negative Brain Filter
Only paying attention to the bad things that happen and ignoring all the good things.

Am I ignoring some information and emphasizing others? Are there some positive or neutral things that happened?

Unbalanced Thought
I'm so awkward... I can't talk to anyone.

Balanced Thought
I had one awkward conversation, but I had some good conversations today too.

Should Statements
Telling yourself how you "should" feel or behave.

Am I holding myself to unrealistic expections or being too hard on myself? Do I often use the word "should" or "must"?

Unbalanced Thought
I shouldn't feel anxious.

Balanced Thought
Everyone feels anxious sometimes and wishing anxiety away won't help.

Emotional Reasoning
Believing something is true based on feelings rather than facts.

Is my thought based on the way I feel instead of facts? What is the evidence that this thought is or is not true?

Unbalanced Thought
I feel like I made a fool of myself.

Balanced Thought
Just because I feel that way doesn't mean it happened and focusing on it won't change anything.

MindShift® CBT

Anxiety CANADA