

# Balanced Thinking

## Leaflet



This leaflet explains the concept of thought balancing and can be used in conjunction with the thought balancing diary. You can begin to identify your own unbalanced thinking and replace those thoughts with more realistic, helpful ones.

# Balanced Thinking

## Exploring the evidence...

A bit like going into a very dark room with a torch and having a look around; the torch only allows us to see small part of the picture at any one time — the part you are focussed on)

If you stop for a minute and turn on the main light, the whole room is revealed!

Once you can see everything, you are in a stronger position to make decisions about what's going on and how to respond. In the same way exploring the evidence for and against your own negative thoughts will often reveal a much bigger picture. Considering new evidence can help to balance your perspective and help you to feel better.



## Ask Yourself

- What evidence is there to support this thought?
- What evidence is there to question this thought?
- What would my best friend say if they heard me thinking in this way?
- What would I say to my best friend if he/she had this thought?
- Am I making any 'thinking errors?'

## Practice

- On the following page you will find a balanced thinking diary with one section completed.
- Complete one section of a Balanced Thinking Diary between now and tomorrow morning.
- Notice any emotional reaction or behavioural response and stop for a few minutes to evaluate it.

# Balanced Thinking

## Example:

Brian was sitting watching TV in the lounge. He suddenly became aware of feeling very angry and tense. Brian realised he hadn't been watching his program, he'd been thinking about other things. He stopped and wrote down his thoughts -

"That Arron always looks at me like dirt, he thinks I'm a joke." "I'm sick of people not taking me seriously."

"What's the point of trying to be mates with people they just take the mick!"

Once Brian had identified his thoughts, he explored the evidence by asking himself some questions, to see if this was balanced thinking.

### **"What evidence supports these thoughts?"**

Arron did give me a funny look this morning and last week he said something behind my back.

### **"What evidence questions these thoughts?"**

I do have some really good friends and get on with them well.

### **"What would my best friend say?"**

He'd probably tell me it's just Arron, he's a bit odd and doesn't get on with many people. He might say he wasn't even looking at me, he might have been in a bad mood or just staring into space.

## **Brian then identified his thinking errors -**

### **All or nothing thinking:**

leaping from Arron's dirty look to there being no point in having mates.

### **Snowballing:**

Arron not liking him to no-one taking him seriously.

### **Mind reading:**

Arron thinks...

### **Feeling thoughts:**

I feel angry, it must be true that Arron thinks I'm a joke!

Finally, Brian came up with a more reasonable thought about his situation -

"Arron may not have even been looking at me funny, but even if he was I have loads of mates and I can't expect to get on with everyone."