

REFRAMING

What is it?

Reframing, also known as **cognitive reframing**, is an exercise used to shift your mindset so you're able to look at a situation from a different perspective. When you have negative or anxious thoughts, you can transform them into something that feels less intense and stop yourself from spiraling.

How does it help?

Negative thoughts can lead us to act against our own self-interests. Reframing has been shown to reduce stress and mental distress. It allows you to challenge your negative thoughts, creating a more positive and supportive mindset for our mental health.

Example:

Event	You make a mistake
Negative thought	"I can't do anything right."
Negative belief	You are not capable
Negative emotion(s)	Shame, fear, distress
Dysfunctional behavior	Refusing to try again

Speak to yourself with the same kindness you show to a friend.

You can change the negative thought to *"I realize where I went wrong, and I can do better next time."*

Now you view the mistake as a learning experience, and you have set yourself up to succeed in the future.

REFRAMING EXERCISE

Describe a situation or event that is making you feel bad. What is a common negative thought you struggle with?

Even though the situation is hard, is there something you have learned from it? Is there another way of looking at it? Consider a healthier thought you can have.

Additional questions to ask yourself when reframing:

- How would someone else think about the situation?
- Are there other explanations I haven't considered?
- Am I leaving out the positives or exaggerating the negatives?
- Are my thoughts based more on how I feel than the actual facts?
- Am I holding myself to unrealistic standards that I would never expect other people to achieve?
- Am I overestimating how much control or responsibility I have in this situation?
- Am I considering everything I can do to deal with the situation?

The more you practice healthier thoughts, the more naturally it will come to you!

Reinforce your reframed thoughts with physical reminders like written messages on sticky notes.