

# SELF-INSTRUCTIONS

*Creativity applied to fear (Activity 4/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

This activity concentrates on the cognitive component of fear – negative thoughts. It's based on an assumption that in many cases in the situation of fear, people tend to overestimate the probability of dangerous/sad/ negative events and often see them as more catastrophic than they really are. These are the two most popular traps of automatic (negative) thoughts. The interpretation of the situation and automatic thoughts are the sources of real emotions such as fear, no matter how it really looks from the distance or another point of view. The idea of the activity is to learn to recognize negative thoughts and try to question or challenge them. It may be an individual exercise but to make it easier it's recommended to conduct it with a help of a carer.

## OBJECTIVES

- Recognize automatic negative thoughts and interpretation that cause fear
- Train the ability to question and challenge the automatic, negative thoughts
- Train the ability to manage the automatic negative thoughts
- Train the possibility to change the automatic negative thoughts to more realistic/ less fear causing

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

No resources or materials are needed. The activity is based on the self-training described in the book “The Anxiety Skills Workbook: Simple CBT and Mindfulness Strategies for Overcoming Anxiety, Fear, and Worry” by Stefan G. Hofmann.



<https://creatingwellbeing.eu/>



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## IMPLEMENTATION - INSTRUCTION

### QUESTIONING THE PROBABILITY

Often when something happens, we automatically interpret the situation in a negative, scary or most dangerous way (unexpected noise, someone doesn't pick up the phone, a little pain). The purpose of the activity is to face the real probability which is most often a lot less fearful than we presume.

The carer helps the senior to slow down the thoughts by asking questions, inspiring to think more rationally than emotionally, to evaluate the facts and feelings, consider other possible interpretations.

The activity required patience and may be difficult, because the senior feels real emotions and it's not easy for her/him to distance from them. We have to remember that finding other possibilities and alternatives may seem strange to them at the beginning, so sensitivity, patience and not being persuasive and irritating is very important.

Questions to be asked in a potentially fearful (imaginary or not clear) situation: How it may be explained in a different way? Try to think about 10 more reasons. What would you advise to your friend in a similar situation?

### POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

The creative approach in these activities relates to good questions and the ability to slow down automatic, negative thoughts of a senior by them. Thinking of other reasons also changes the focus from most negative interpretation of facts.

### EXPECTED RESULTS

As was mentioned above applying this activity consequently and making it a habit helps to reduce fear but requires time and patience. But even in some situations and with a sensitive help of a carer the activity should result in a more rational approach to fears, change the focus from and become a strategy to manage fear.