

The 3 C's - Catch it, Check it, Change it - How to Correct Negative Thoughts & Thinking (or Distorted Thinking, Delusions, etc)

This is meant to help people with psychiatric conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, schizophrenia or other unlabeled illnesses that involve psychosis. Keep in mind, however, that people without a mental illness can still have negative thoughts or distorted thoughts.

(see my post about distorted thinking here; [What is Distorted Thinking?](#))

Now, a breakdown of the steps involved:

1. CATCH IT - Catch the negative thought. Learn to be aware of what you are thinking and when you have a negative thought. One of the defining factors of being human is the ability to analyze ourselves and our own thoughts.

2. CHECK IT - (there a few sub-steps to this one) It's difficult to be objective about one's thoughts so it can be helpful to talk things over sometimes with someone else or with a therapist or psychiatrist.

a.) Be rational. Is it real? Examine the evidence. You can ask someone else about it. (Did you hear that? Did such-and-such happen? What do you think of this idea or theory?) Use logic.

b.) Be specific.

c.) Thinking in shades of grey. Often, things are not absolute. What are your strengths and weaknesses? What can I work on?

d.) Apply the double-standard technique. With negative self-talk, a person wouldn't usually talk to their friends or family the way we sometimes talk to ourselves (or think about ourselves) Try not to be too hard on yourself when working on this. It's not necessary to hold yourself to unachievable or unreachable higher standards when comparing yourself to others. Is it a distorted thought thinking you are better than everyone else (or wanting to be better)

e.) Take a survey. Reach out to others. Ask others (make sure they are trustworthy and will offer you honest opinions. (people with stigma clouding their opinions may not be able to offer very helpful or useful advice). Get feedback.

3. CHANGE IT - Substitute the negative thought with something else that is positive. A simple, hypothetical example of this would be maybe you had a negative thought similar to the following "My friend cancelled our movie date. Maybe they don't like me. Are they in trouble? Are they going with someone else instead?" and replace it with "My friend cancelled our movie date. I'll have to find out what happened. Maybe we can rebook."

So, to recap - Catch it, Check it, Change it.

A useful PDF from the BBC about the 3 C's can be downloaded here:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/headroom/cbt/catch_it.pdf