



# Cognitive Restructuring

START CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY

Sometimes when we have a negative thought, it sends us into a spiral of unhealthy thinking patterns and false statements. Some patterns include: all-or-nothing thinking, catastrophizing, mental filters (never focusing on the positives) and “should” statements. Whatever the negative thought pattern, these thoughts contribute to emotional distress and diminish our problem solving skills.

The table below is an example of how we can dissect our negative thought patterns and improve our perspective. Use the blank table on the following page to reframe your own negative thoughts into something healthier and helpful. Try to separate all of the thoughts so that they can be addressed with individualized attention. If the thoughts are coming to you in the form of a question, try reframing them into a different, more helpful question.

SUMMARIZE THE SITUATION IN ONE SENTENCE	
I am attending a large professional gathering of people that I do not know and it is filling me with anxiety.	
IDENTIFY THE NEGATIVE THOUGHT(S)	A MORE HELPFUL THOUGHT IS...
They are all going to be more experienced, educated, and smarter than me.	I am passionate about my career, which is why I am attending this event. Listening to people that are more experienced than me can help me fuel that passion. Everyone was a beginner at some point.
I am going to embarrass myself tonight somehow.	This event is one of many. This day is one of many. Even if things go wrong, the world will keep spinning. I have lived through embarrassing moments before. This is no different.
My anxiety is going to make me sick to my stomach.	I will treat my body and mind with nourishment and gentleness. My body will feel better if I address my anxiety.
Why do I have to be here?	I am so grateful to have the opportunity to earn a living from a job that I love and can grow from.
What if this event ends up being horrible / boring / etc.?	What if this event allows me to make a new friend, colleague, or connection for support in the future?

