

Bringing some balance back to your life

James talking about a time he challenged his thinking

I was feeling pretty down all day, and decided to give the thought challenging stuff a go. I picked out a thought that was really bothering me – I think it was something like 'FIND SITUATION FROM SIBLING PERSPECTIVE'. I tried to pick out which thinking distortions I was using. This helped bring everything into perspective a lot.

Helpful Questions

When you find yourself thinking negatively, try asking yourself these really helpful questions. They can really help to put things in perspective.

My favourite questions are the first four (but they're all really helpful). Some questions will only be helpful some of the time, depending on the situation. Play around with them and see which ones seem to help.

1. What evidence do I have that _____?
2. What would I think if a friend came to me with this problem?
3. Is it helpful for me to worry about this?
4. Will I care about this in a week/month?
5. What is the likelihood that _____?
6. How much would it really matter if _____ and could I cope?
7. What thinking distortions am I using?
8. What is the worst that can happen?
9. What is the most likely explanation/outcome?

Engaging in physical exercise

If you don't do it already, I'd really encourage you to start doing a bit of exercise. When I say exercise, I don't mean an hour at the gym every day or a half marathon. Just start with a walk or jog around the block, or something like a casual game of tennis.

Exercise seems to be as effective as antidepressants at treating depression, with fewer side effects. It can also reduce tension and anxiety.

I'd enter it into the activity planner below to make sure you keep it up.

George talks about exercise

I used to exercise pretty regularly, but my sister's alcoholism started to dominate the family's life and my life, so I didn't seem to have the time or energy to exercise anymore. A friend who lived nearby started jogging, so I decided to get back into jogging. I also played an occasional game of squash, and found it actually made a real difference. I'd been pretty depressed and had really low energy, but I found that the more I exercised, the more energy I got. I started with a 1 kilometre run and just built up from there. It also gave me a break from the house and all the crap that was going on there.

This ends module 2. Try out these techniques over the next couple of days and when you're ready, come back for module 3, where you'll learn a different approach to worried thoughts, and you'll start to see if you can get a bit of balance back in your life.

