



# The art of reframing

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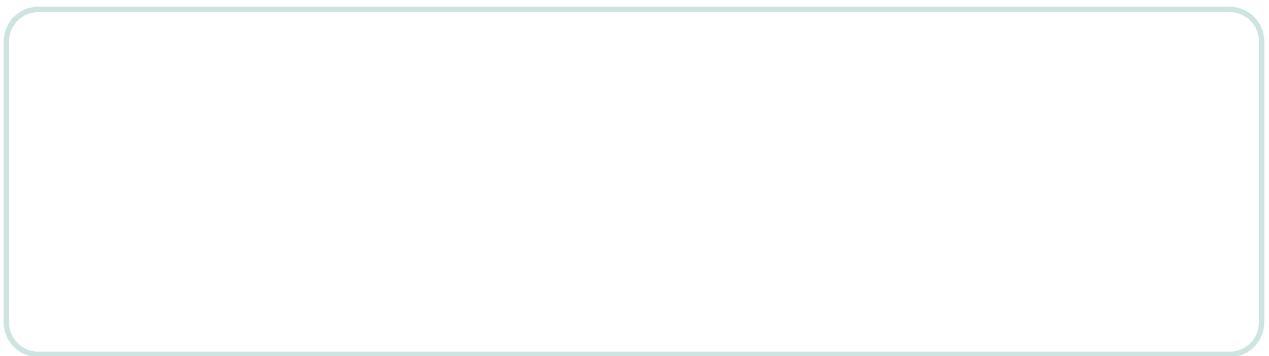
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In order to reframe, we first need to develop an awareness of our negative assumptions and thought patterns, and utilise strategies to shift these to more positive thoughts through 8 simple steps:

## 1. Observe your thoughts in action

The first step is to actually listen to and observe your thoughts. Many of us go about our days on autopilot and rarely stop to notice and consider what it is we're actually thinking. Try taking a few minutes, at intervals throughout the day, just to notice what you are thinking. Don't judge the thoughts as positive or negative, just simply observe them.

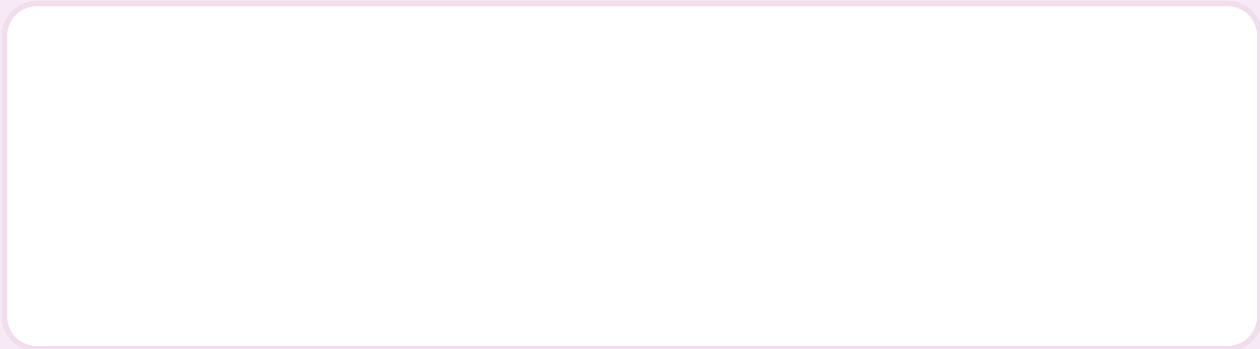
### Notes



## 2. Develop self-awareness

Once you are able to observe your thoughts, you can develop self-awareness around whether these thoughts are predominantly positive or negative. Try developing self-awareness by being mindful of your thoughts, or by using a thought journal to write down specific thoughts that have come up, as well as any particular triggers you may have noticed.

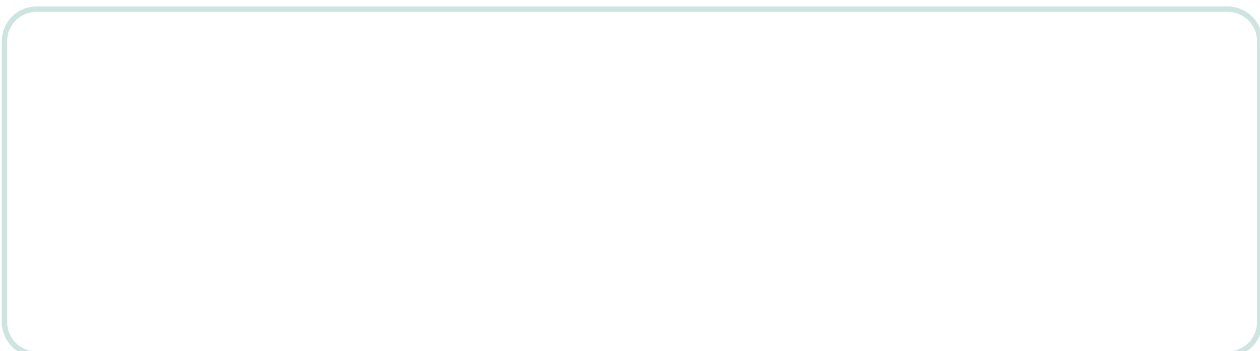
### Notes



## 3. Understand where negative thoughts and behaviours come from

Our negative thoughts and behaviours have developed over the course of our life as a mechanism for coping with stressful circumstances, or to protect ourselves. The trouble is, they rarely manage to do either of these things and need to be managed to assure our responses to situations are healthy. Acknowledge that your negativity is there for a reason and that you don't need to fight it; it simply needs to be shifted.

### Notes



## 4. Understand that most situations are changeable

Many of us, when going through a difficult time, tend to think it will last forever and that we can't do anything about it. Reminding ourselves that we have the ability to choose how we react and deal with a situation can be empowering - and can increase our resilience. Add your own personal examples, e.g. experience of home working, or the thought that COVID-19 will last forever, or that the lockdown will continue indefinitely.

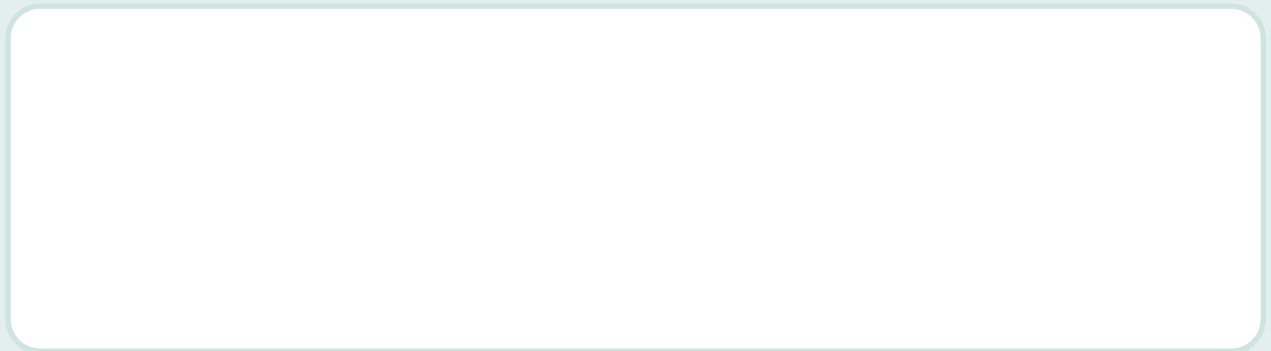
### Notes



## 5. Develop positivity

Develop some go-to positive thoughts or strategies for when those stressful thoughts pop up. Find some positive self-affirmation that really resonates with you or by taking some time out.

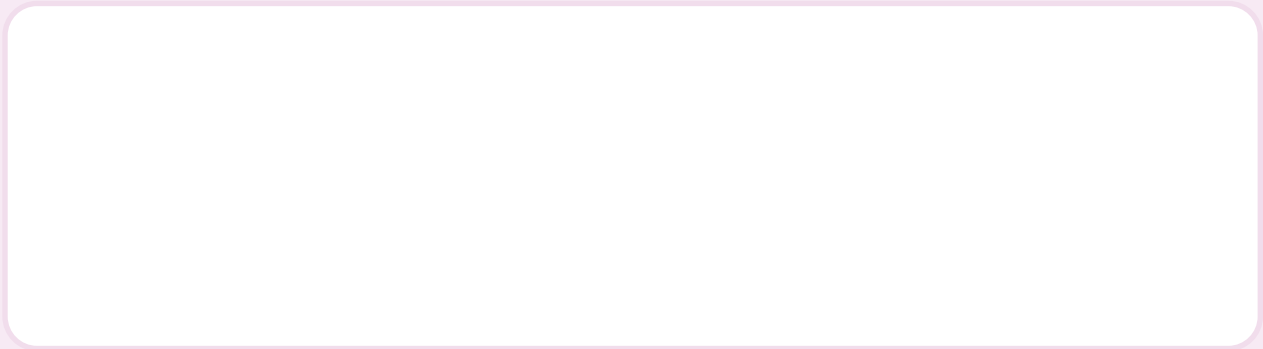
### Notes



## 6. Take a few deep breaths

If you find yourself under pressure, take a moment to close your eyes and breathe slowly. Notice the sensation of your breath going in and out. Repeat this for 4 or 5 breaths. This quick exercise helps us to stay calm and focussed, so we can choose wiser thoughts and reactions, and avoid negativity. See handout for the breathing exercise directions.

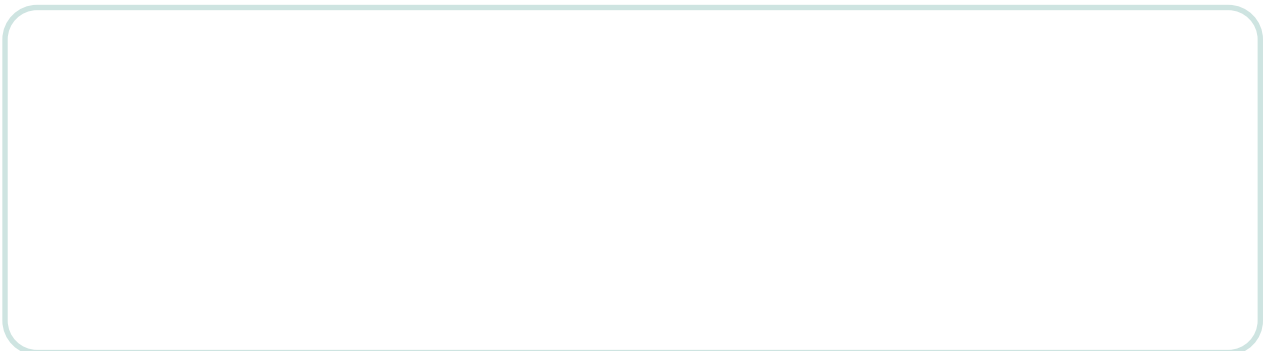
### Notes



## 7. Articulate your thoughts in milder, more accurate terms

Negative thoughts often involve the use of absolute terms, such as 'can't', 'never' or 'always'. Not only are these words negative and disempowering, they also tend to be exaggerations. You can very quickly shift a thought - and the way you feel about a situation - by using milder, less absolute terms. Shifting thoughts in this way not only makes you feel better, it also empowers you to act in ways that actually help you cope better.

### Notes



## 8. Ask 'what can I learn from this?' or 'what is the best way for me to accomplish this?'

All challenges provide us with an opportunity for learning, and it is true that growth and personal development usually happen outside our comfort zone. Looking for those opportunities, as well as the myriad of possible solutions and ways of dealing with or accomplishing things, helps us to focus on managing our behaviour in positive ways.

### Notes

