



An exercise for managing
anxiety

CHALLENGING YOUR THOUGHTS



When anxiety gets the better of us, it's typically because we buy into a particular thought or narrative and find ourselves in a mental tug-of-war that intensifies the more we fight.

When this happens, the anxiety can surface in real-life reactions - the fight/flight response - like breathlessness or panic attacks. It's pretty exhausting and can take its toll on our mental and physical health.

But consider this:

Not all of your thoughts are real. **A thought is not a fact!**

If we consider that, we provide the grounds for us to challenge our thoughts. And in turn, break the circuit by nipping the cause for those physical manifestations in the bud, helping us feel more in control and less overwhelmed.

The framework below can help us build our resilience to anxious thoughts when they show up, strengthening the objective and logical brain.

**Resilience: the ability to bounce back
Bounce-back-ability!**

It's the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, the ability to adapt to adversities and cope with the stress of everyday living.

Resilience is a skill and can be learnt or developed through overcoming adversity.

THE ABCDS OF RESILIENCE

Ask yourself the following questions the next time you're feeling anxious.

ADVERSITY

What is the challenge or setback that I am facing? What is the situation?

e.g. dinner with family, presentation

BELIEFS

What are the beliefs, thoughts, and worries around this challenge?

CONSEQUENCES

How does this thought or belief impact how I feel and how I am acting?

DISPUTE

Argue with yourself using the E.A.I.U method below.

EVIDENCE

What factual evidence is there for the thoughts and beliefs?

(Remember that thoughts aren't always true) - examine your past experience

ALTERNATIVES

What are alternative ways of looking at this?

IMPLICATIONS

What is the worst case scenario if this thought is true?

USEFULNESS

What is the usefulness of these beliefs?

(Are they motivating? Do they help you?)

Go through the vowels one at a time. They may not all be relevant to your situation. Sometimes there is concrete factual evidence that explains why you should be reacting strongly - don't beat yourself if you're not feeling great. All emotions play a vital role in our lives - even the ones we tend to label "negative" like anger or hurt.

Typically, if you work through each of these steps, you will find some extra ammunition for that internal debate, refuting those unhelpful thoughts and finding more ease in the present.

Whilst this may feel like a timely exercise to begin with, it becomes easier with practice. By practising this method, we strengthen the logical, objective part of the brain.

We become more flexible with anxious thoughts and they can de-escalate sooner rather than feeding into the physical realm, causing us to feel worked up, or leading us to worst case scenarios.





SOLAS
MIND

Keep these simple tips in your back pocket and give them a shot the next time you feel your anxiety creeping in. They should help you to feel calmer, less reactive, and help you to see your thoughts objectively.

www.solasmind.com