

THINKING PATTERNS

Our mental interpretations of the world around us are the driving forces behind our actions, behaviours, and decision-making processes.

This is never truer than in our relationship with alcohol or substances.

Understanding our unique thinking styles can help us illuminate the path of recovery, allowing us to gain priceless insight into the dynamics of our behaviour.

Identifying the patterns of thoughts that act as the puppeteers of our actions can reveal the motivations, triggers, and beliefs that govern our relationship with substances. This understanding helps achieve a positive and substantial change.

Here's a thought! Try and tracek your thinking styles, do you often say, 'I need a drink to socialise,' and can you remodel that to say 'I used to rely on alcohol for social confidence'? Encourage change with your words!

If you're ready for the challenge, let's tackle those distorted thinking patterns. If you feel comfortable, take a moment to:

- **Record our thoughts:** Let's look for common thoughts related to the behaviour we want to alter. Can we see a pattern? Can we borrow a new perspective?
- **Conduct behavioural experiments:** Let's test the validity of beliefs about substance use. Can we collect evidence to support or dispute those beliefs?

We can change our narratives, and in turn, our lives. So let's work to challenge our beliefs, and pave the way for a Clean Slate.

COMMON THINKING PATTERNS

ALL OR NOTHING

Life isn't black and white, so why should we see it that way? A slip doesn't mean total defeat; it's an opportunity to understand triggers and break the cycle of extreme sobriety and intense binging.

THE SKY IS FALLING

Are we adding a terrifying soundtrack to the reality of not using/drinking? Are we pumping up the benefits of alcohol beyond their true value? Our view of its risks and rewards may need analysis.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

If we're using/drinking to escape unpleasant emotions, we're missing the chance to build other coping strategies. Focus on building resilience and helpful coping strategies.

LABELLING

If we're sticking negative labels on ourselves, or our behaviours? Remind yourself, you are not your thoughts and you are more than your behaviours.

COMMON THINKING PATTERNS (CONT'D)

MINIMISING OR DENIAL

Downplaying the problems and denying the impact of substance use could be our mind's sneaky way of avoiding change. You are capable of change.

TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR MOST COMMON THINKING STYLES

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