

23 Managing negative beliefs



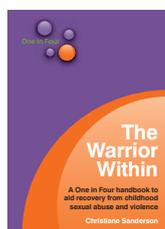
If you are working through *The Warrior Within*, this exercise and further useful information to help you in your recovery can be found on pages 89-93. This exercise assumes you have completed exercise sheet 1 **Starting an activity journal**.

Read through the range of negative thoughts and beliefs below and highlight which apply to you. List these in your journal along with an example of each negative thought or belief. Next try to identify any biases in your thinking and beliefs and how these shape your thinking and behaviour. Then you can begin to challenge this by asking yourself 'Is there any evidence to support this?' and 'What is the evidence that does not support this?' As you compile this evidence you can begin to consider alternative ways of thinking.

- **All or nothing thinking** – seeing extremes rather than the full range of possibilities.
- **Over-generalisation** – drawing conclusions based on isolated events and applying these to a wide range of situations.
- **Mislabelling** – creating a totally negative image on the basis of one single, minor deficiency.
- **Catastrophisation** – predicting and expecting the very worst in any one situation based on one minor difficulty.
- **Disqualifying the positive** – downgrading, rejecting or dismissing a positive aspect of something as unimportant.

- **Mental filtering** – filtering out positive aspects of a situation to dwell exclusively on negatives.
- **Magnification and minimisation** – exaggerating the importance of negative events and underestimating the importance of positive events.
- **Jumping to conclusions** – drawing negative conclusions not justified by facts.
- **Mind reading** – thinking you can tell what another person is thinking.
- **Fortune telling** – believe that you can predict all future outcomes.
- **Emotional reasoning** – assuming that feelings are facts and an accurate reflection of reality and truth
- **Personalisation** – assuming responsibility when there is none.
- **Perfectionism** – imposing unrealistic expectations on yourself and others.

Next, write down any alternative thoughts or beliefs which more accurately reflect reality. Before putting these into practice it helps to consider 'What is the worst that can happen?' and 'How would I cope if the worst happened?' By exploring your fears you will be able to anticipate obstacles and prepare for the management of alternative thoughts. Take time to do this for each negative thought and belief and remember to pace yourself when testing out alternative thoughts.



The content of this exercise sheet is based on *The Warrior Within: A One in Four handbook to aid recovery from childhood sexual abuse and violence* by Christiane Sanderson

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One in Four
219 Bromley Rd, Catford SE6 2PG
Telephone 020 8697 2112
Email admin@oneinfour.org.uk
www.oneinfour.org.uk

Registered charity number 1081726