

Becoming aware of your thoughts

Pause for a moment and tune into your thoughts. What are you thinking? Have you had thoughts racing through your mind and not even aware of what they are today?



Often times when you tune into your thoughts you may realize that they are negative or based in worry. They can sound like an inner critic calling the shots with thoughts like, “**Be careful you’re going to mess up!**” or “**Why bother?**” or “**I can’t do this.**” These thoughts are known as **Automatic Negative Thoughts** also referred to as **ANTs** and they can really be a nuisance and wreak havoc on your mental health by making you feel anxious or depressed.

Here are some tips to overcome automatic negative thinking:



Identify what caused you to feel the negative emotion



Note the automatic thought that followed



What emotion did you feel?



Did you experience tension or a sensation in your body?

Becoming aware of your thoughts and the reaction that occurs in your body can be an indicator that change is important.

Tips to change negative thoughts:

1. **Evaluate** if the thought is true (expert tip: they usually are not based in truth!)
2. **Adjust** the thought to make it more realistic and positive
3. **Practice** positive thinking



Quick exercise, say these two statements:

- **ANT:** “Things will never change.”
- **New thought:** “Things can get better.”



Did you notice a positive shift in your body when you said the new thought? Try this throughout your day and begin to transform automatic negative thinking into energizing positive thoughts to improve your mental health and well-being.