

# MINDBRIDGE

## Cognitive Triangle and Balancing Negative Thoughts

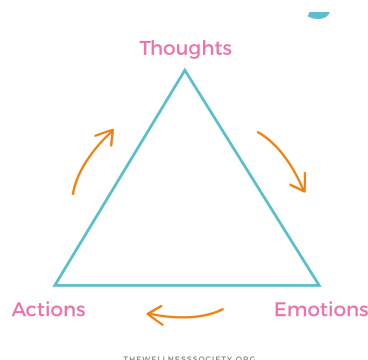
### Why do we Worry?

Worry is the brain's way of protecting us. It prepares us for challenges and helps us avoid danger. But sometimes, our brain overreacts and sees everyday situations as threats—even when they aren't.

- **Survival Instinct:** Our brain is wired to detect danger and prepare us to react
- When we don't know what will happen, our brain fills in the blanks with "what if" thoughts.
- If something went wrong before, our brain expects it to happen again

Think of a time you were really worried about something. What ended up happening?

### Exercise #1: Creating your own Cognitive Triangle



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Below write about One Scenario where you were in a State of Worry:

What happened?

My Thoughts



My Behaviors



My Feelings

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## Exercise #2: Listing our Negative Thoughts vs. Balanced Thoughts

What are Negative Thoughts and their Impact?

- Negative thoughts influence our emotions and actions, often making situations seem worse than they really are.
- Take a time you've have a negative thought. Do you recognize any of these patterns?
- Catastrophizing – Expecting the worst outcome.
- Mind-Reading – Assuming we know what others are thinking.
- All-or-Nothing Thinking – Seeing things in extremes

How can we Challenge Unhelpful Thoughts?

**We don't have to believe everything we think!** Sometimes, our brain tells us scary or negative things that aren't true or aren't as bad as they seem. We can investigate our thoughts to find out the real story.

- Is there real proof that this thought is 100% true?
- If a friend had this thought, what would I tell them?
  - We are often kinder to others than to ourselves—try speaking to yourself like you would to a friend
- What's the Worst, Best, and Most Likely Outcome?
  - Almost all of the time, the worst case doesn't happen, and even if things go wrong, we can handle it.

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Replace the Negative Thought with a Balanced Thought

- Old Thought: “I’ll fail my test and ruin my grade.”
- New Balanced Thought: “I might not get a perfect score, but I prepared, and I can try my best.”
- **The goal is to find a realistic and fair thought.**

**Examples:**

<b>Negative Thoughts:</b>	<b>Balanced Thoughts:</b>
I can't do anything right.	This is challenging, but I can improve with effort.

**In the Table Below, list three Negative Thoughts, and replace each with a Balanced Thought:**

<b>Negative Thoughts:</b>	<b>Balanced Thoughts:</b>

**Independent Reflection:**

Negative thoughts trick us, but we can challenge them. What's one worry you will challenge this week and how can your support system help you (Parents, Friends, Teachers)?

**➤ Example:**

One worry I will challenge this week is the fear of not doing well on my summer homework. My support system can help by reminding me that my worth isn't based on my school work and encouraging me to take breaks and stay positive while studying. My friends can quiz me, my parents can help me stay organized, and my teachers can clarify any last-minute questions I have.

**➤ Your Response:**