Questions to test a thought

Keep this beside you when you fill in a thought record.

Pick two or three questions that fit the thought in front of you. The aim is to see the situation accurately. It is not to talk yourself into feeling fine.

Check the evidence

- What are the facts here, and what am I adding?
- What is the evidence for this thought? What is the evidence against it?
- Has this worry come up before? What actually happened?

Look from another angle

- If my closest friend had this thought, what would I say to them?
- How might I see this in a week, a month, a year?
- Is there another explanation I have not considered?

Check the thinking style

- Am I thinking in all-or-nothing terms?
- Am I predicting the future or reading minds?
- Am I holding myself to a standard I would never apply to anyone else?

Check the cost

- What does believing this thought do to me? How do I feel and act when I buy into it?
- Does thinking this way help me deal with the situation?

Move to action

- If the thought is partly true, what can I do about that part?
- What is the worst that could realistically happen? Could I cope? Who or what would help?
- What is one small step I can take now?

A last question

What would be a fairer way of putting this?

My notes and questions

© 2026 Patrick O'Hare Therapy · patrickoharetherapy.com
This handout supports your therapy. It does not replace professional advice.