

SESSION 13: Take Charge of Your Thoughts



Session Focus

Taking charge of your thoughts can help you manage weight.

This session we will talk about:

- The difference between harmful and helpful thoughts
- How to replace harmful thoughts with helpful thoughts

You will also make a new action plan!

Anna's Story

Anna is working on managing her weight, so she's trying to eat well and be active.

Most days, Anna walks around the park. But on Tuesday, it's raining. Anna thinks: "The weather is lousy. I'd better skip my walk today."

Anna decides to replace her harmful thought with a helpful one: "It's raining, so I'll walk in the mall instead. It will also give me the chance to run some errands."

To prevent harmful thinking:

- Make sure your Action Plan is realistic, doable, specific, and flexible.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Take care of yourself: manage stress, get enough sleep, eat right, and stay active.
- Keep things in perspective.
- Be around people who practice helpful thinking.
- Celebrate and reward your progress.

Steps to Replace Harmful Thoughts with Helpful Thoughts

1. Identify your harmful thoughts. What thoughts get in the way of your eating and fitness goals?

2. Put on the brakes. Some people like to picture a big red stop sign. Others like to imagine the sound of a car slamming on its brakes, or the word "Stop!" How can you put the brakes on your harmful thoughts?

3. Think helpful thoughts instead. What helpful thoughts could you replace your harmful thoughts with?

TYPE OF HARMFUL THINKING	INSTEAD OF THINKING...	TELL YOURSELF...
<p>ALL OR NOTHING</p> <p>You see only the extremes. You don't see anything in between.</p>	<p>I can't eat ice cream ever again.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can have ice cream once in a while. • When I do have ice cream, I'll measure it. That way, I won't have too much.
	<p>Exercise is boring.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I haven't found an activity that I enjoy yet. • I'll keep trying new activities until I find one that I like.
<p>MAKING EXCUSES</p> <p>You blame situations or other people for your mistakes.</p>	<p>It's too cold/hot outside to go for a walk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will dress for the weather and walk anyway. • I will work out indoors.
	<p>I can't meet my eating goals because my spouse keeps making cookies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find the cookies tempting. • I will ask my spouse to make something healthy instead.
<p>FILTERING</p> <p>You ignore the good and focus on the bad.</p>	<p>No one else supports my healthy lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friend Shelly supports it. • I will ask for more support.
	<p>I haven't stuck to my goals at all this week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I stuck to my goals four out of seven days. • I have a plan for how to stay on track in the future.
<p>SELF-LABELING</p> <p>You call yourself something bad.</p>	<p>I'm such a weakling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can climb the stairs without getting out of breath now. • I'll be a little more active each week.
	<p>I'm the world's worst cook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My daughter liked the stir-fry I made last night. • I'll keep learning more about cooking.

TYPE OF HARMFUL THINKING	INSTEAD OF THINKING...	TELL YOURSELF...
<p>COMPARING</p> <p>You compare yourself with other people and find yourself lacking.</p>	<p>Teo has lost so much more weight than I have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My weight loss has slowed down. • I'll ask Teo for some tips.
	<p>Stella is so much stronger than I am.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'd like to be stronger. • I'll try using a resistance band.
<p>GLOOM AND DOOM THINKING</p> <p>You assume the worst.</p>	<p>I just know I'm going to get hurt. Then I won't be able to work out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'll take steps to work out safely. • If I do get hurt, I'll find a different way to be active.
	<p>I just know I'm going keep struggling with my weight, since both of my parents did.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know a lot more about how to manage my weight than my parents did. • I'll do what I can to manage my weight.