STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING DIFFICULT THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOURS AT WORK

Working Through It

Here is a chart to help you see how you may be able to change difficult thoughts, emotions and behaviours at work by using different strategies.

- Constant negative thoughts
- Angry or emotional outbursts
- Crying
- Confusion
- Panic attacks
- Anxiety

Thoughts, emotions, and behaviours	Alternative strategies	Example
Having constant negative thoughts about yourself and others.	Be aware of the constant thoughts Challenge the information in the thoughts. Consider replacing them with more productive thoughts.	**From**: I'm such an idiot! Why am I so stupid? **To**: I feel frustrated. I want to do my part. I will ask for help when I do not know what to do. **From**: If I tell that I made a mistake I'll get fired. **To**: People rarely get fired for making a mistake. And, by taking responsibility for my mistake, my manager may see that I care about my work and want to improve.
For more information and tools to help with negative thoughts, go to www.mentalhealthworks.ca/wti/antidepressant_skills.		
Being unable to control crying at work.	Be aware of negative thoughts, or feelings that may trigger the crying. Consider alternative responses. Consider that crying can be a way of relieving stress, and you can plan for crying time during breaks in your workday.	**From**: When I hear co-workers laughing together in the kitchen I think that they all hate me and I start to cry. **To**: When I hear co-workers laughing together in the kitchen, I realize that I feel lonely at work. I'll consider ways to connect with co-workers so that I can feel included. **From**: I just have to keep my tears bottled up inside me all day. To: Knowing that I can get relief can help me to hold off from crying while I am working. I can find a discrete place for me to cry during my breaks and at lunch if I feel the need to cry.
Having panic attacks at work.	Be aware of how negative thoughts or feelings may lead to panic attacks. Consider other ways to respond or plan Plan ahead of time what you will do if you are experiencing a panic attack. Consider talking to someone you trust at work and seeing if they can support you during or after the attack.	**From**: When I look at all the emails I haven't answered, my heart pounds and I feel tense. **To**: Today I'll organize my day before I open my email. and **Plan**: I will tell a co-worker whom I trust that I am having panic attacks. I will ask if she could cover the phones for 10 minutes during or after an attack.
Having angry or emotional outbursts at work.	Be aware of early signs that anger is rising. Learn what physical signs your body gives you that your anger is rising.	**From**: When I'm angry I can't control what I say, and say things that I wish I could take back. **To**: I've learned that when my anger is rising I get a knot in my stomach. When I feel that knot, I force myself to slow down my thoughts and take several deep breaths so that I don't speak in anger.
Feeling confused and unable to remember details at work.	Consider other ways of having information given to you.	**From**: I am having a hard time remembering information when people tell me things verbally. **To**: I learned that I do better when people share information with me in a written format. So I carry a notebook with me to write things down, or I ask the person to please send me an email.
Feeling anxious	Consider alternatives to behaviours at work that could contribute to feeling anxious at work.	**From**: I'm used to drinking lots of coffee or pop all day, even though it makes me feel jittery. **To**: I remind myself that another cup of coffee could make me feel nervous for the rest of the day. or **From**: I feel overwhelmed with my work and think that I will get in trouble for not getting it done. **To**: I will express my concerns to my manager and ask for help to prioritize and manage my workload.

The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace
www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com