

## **DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK: How to Challenge and Escape the Domination of Unhelpful Thoughts**

### **You Are Not Your Mind**

You are bigger than your mind, but sometimes it seems as though your mind has you or thoughts are thinking you

*Disidentification*-Recognizing that your mind is just your mind and your thoughts are just your thoughts; they are not equal to your identity

*Externalizing*-Treating your thoughts as if they were an external person

*Mindfulness*-Just noticing thoughts or patterns of thinking rather than believing them

### **Challenge Thoughts**

*Use counterarguments*-Challenge unhelpful thoughts with facts that contradict them

*Make slight shifts in your self-talk or thoughts*-Instead of all or nothing self-talk, change it to mostly, usually, rarely, and so on; Instead of "why", change it to "how can I" and so on

### **Just the Facts**

*Use observational/sensory-based descriptions*-This helps to separate interpretations and imposed meanings from what happens; only describe what you could see or hear on a videotape about the situation or yourself

### **Go with the Thoughts Rather Than Fight or Oppose Them**

*Accept and soften towards one's thoughts*-Don't oppose or react; opposing gives the unhelpful thoughts energy; What you resist tends to persist.

*Exaggerate*-Amplify negative or fearful thoughts until they are absurd or lose their power

### **Get Into Dialogue and Out of Monologue**

*With another/others*-Talking to another person or several others can sometimes get you on a new track, provide a reality check and help you get perspective on your thoughts

*With self/thoughts*-Instead of accepting, fighting with or being dominated by unhelpful thoughts, engage in a dialogue with yourself or the thoughts and, as in conversations with others, new thoughts or perspectives might occur

### **Take Actions**

*Do something that is incompatible with the unhelpful thought*-Take an action that wouldn't be expected given the unhelpful thought

*Do something to refute the unhelpful thought*-Engage in some action that would disprove the unhelpful thought

*Action can help you get unstuck and move out of the thought*-Don't just sit there, do something; being in a different environment, moving your physical body and other actions can sometimes break you out of your mental rut