

Becoming your own therapist

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“Of all the judgments we pass in life,
none is more important than the
judgment we pass on ourselves.”

Nathaniel Branden



Self-Therapy

- Generally, the term refers to psychotherapy we can conduct, on ourselves, without the intervention or assistance of a therapist.

*Be you own
therapist*

- Therapeutic treatment of oneself especially for the purpose of coping with one's personal or emotional problems”.





The concept of the inner critic

- Have you had that nagging thought that can be overwhelmingly critical sometimes?



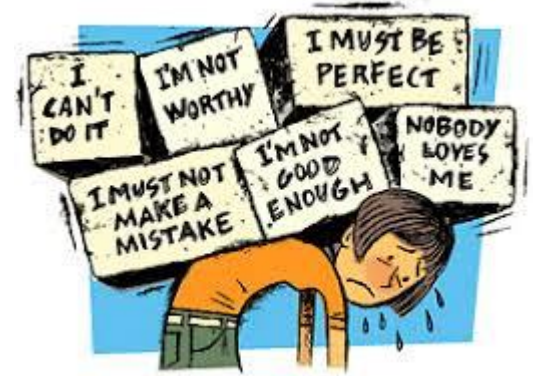
- The 'Inner Critic' describes an internal part of ourselves that “judges you, demeans you, and pushes you to do things”.
- The Inner Critic features heavily in self-esteem issues, which commonly underpin anxiety, stress, and depression.





seven types of 'Inner Critic':

- Perfectionist – do things perfectly
- Inner Controller – control your impulses
- Taskmaster – work hard and be successful
- Underminer- undermine your self confidence
- Destroyer – attacks your fundamental self worth
- Guilt-Tripper – stuck in the past
- Molder/conformist – fit into a certain mould



Be Your

Own

Therapist

THE PROCESS



Start with what you'd like to achieve.

- Are you hoping to learn techniques for managing anxiety?
- **Looking to nip negative thoughts in the bud?**
- Do you want to work on developing some positive behaviours?
- There's no 'right' answer.
- Clarifying your overarching goal will simply make your different objectives easier to understand.





Understand more about the problem.

- To work towards your goal, you need to develop your understanding of the problem.
- REBT involves separating your 'problem' into a practical part and an emotional or behavioural part.
- CBT exercises recommend identifying your triggers and cognitive distortions.
- IFST works by identifying your sub parts and bringing them into harmony.



so, what's the
problem?



Study your feelings and behaviours

Studying your behaviours or emotions at a more in-depth level can involve:

- Describing the feeling, its intensity and what you were thinking, etc.
- Recalling times that you felt or acted in a certain way.
- Keeping a record of when and where the feelings / behaviours pop up.
- Are there certain situations that lead to the problem?

feelings





Identify and explore self-talk, thoughts, beliefs.

- Very often, irrational or unhelpful cognitive mental processes are behind unwanted feelings and behaviours.
- Stress, anxiety, depression and even relationship difficulties can often be addressed by identifying the negative self-talk or distortions that go on in our head.
- What are your thoughts about any particular event? You will often find that those thoughts and not the events drive the way you feel.





Challenge your thoughts, self talk or beliefs.

- Once you become aware of your rigid thought patterns, you can begin to challenge them.

For example, compare

“If my friends can’t hang out with me tonight, it means they don’t like me” **and**

“I’ll be disappointed if my friends can’t hang out with me tonight, but I know they still like me because they called me yesterday and asked to hang out next week”.

- There are several faulty thinking patterns that we engage in everyday, lets look at some.





Faulty thinking patterns

- **Should statements** criticizing yourself or other people with 'should' or 'shouldn't'. 'Must', 'ought' and 'have to' are similar offenders. Guilt, anger, frustration and resentment.
- **All-or-nothing.** Looking at things in absolute, black and white categories.
- **Overgeneralization.** Seeing a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat. Key words are 'always' and 'never'.
- **Mental filter.** You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
- **Disqualifying the positive.** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities 'don't count'.





Faulty thinking patterns 2

- **Jumping to conclusions:**
 - **Mind reading:** presuming that someone is reacting negatively to you without evidence.
 - **Fortune telling:** arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
- **Magnification or minimization:** you blow things way out of proportion or you shrink their importance inappropriately.
- **Emotional reasoning:** you reason from how you feel. 'I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one'.
- **Labelling and mislabeling.** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying 'I made a mistake', you tell yourself, 'i'm a loser', or 'a fool'.
- **Personalization and blame:** you blame yourself for something you were not entirely responsible for.





Distorted Thinking Patterns

1. 'What if' thinking
2. Catastrophizing
3. Expecting the worst
4. Leaping to conclusions
5. Black & white thinking
6. Unenforceable rules
7. Labeling
8. Negative Filter
9. Emotional reasoning
10. Blame game



Dealing with negative thoughts

- Catch it – recognize that you're engaging in unproductive, damaging self-talk.
- Control it – Stop! When you find yourself thinking negatively, break the vicious negative cycle.
- **Challenge it – Challenge what you're saying to yourself.**
- Change it – Turn your negative self-talk into positive ones that are grounded in reality.
- Cherish it – Enjoy the positive emotions and the feeling you have just created!





Questions for challenging negative thoughts

- Is there substantial evidence for my thought?
- Is there evidence contrary to my thought?
- Am I attempting to interpret this situation without all the evidence?
- What would a friend think about this situation?
- If I look at the situation positively, how is it different?
- Will this matter a year from now? How about five years from now?





Irrational Ideas that foster Neurosis

Irrational Beliefs

1. I must have love/approval from those significant to me and must avoid disapproval from any source.
2. To be worthwhile as a person I must succeed at everything and make no mistakes.
3. People should always do the right thing. When they behave obnoxiously, unfairly or selfishly, they must be blamed and punished.
4. Things must be the way I want them to be - otherwise life will be intolerable.
5. My unhappiness is caused by things outside my control - so there is little I can do to feel better.
6. I must worry about things that could be dangerous, unpleasant or scary - otherwise they might happen.

Alternative Beliefs

1. *Love/approval from any particular person is nice but not necessary*
2. *Unfailing success and competence is unrealistic and I accept myself as a person, separate from my performance*
3. *People unfortunately sometimes do bad things, but getting upset won't change that*
4. *Things won't always be the way I want. It's disappointing, but there is no need to catastrophize*
5. *Many external factors are outside my control, but it is my thoughts which cause my feelings*
6. *Worrying about things that might go wrong won't stop them happening. It will, though, ensure I get upset right now!*





Practice, practice and practice

- Every day, we face triggers and external events that we have no control over.
- As we practice, develop, and strengthen our rational and positive thought processes, we get better at managing our responses to them.
- Reward yourself with something you enjoy doing for keeping up the good work.





Using Self-Therapy for Anxiety

- **Psychoeducation** – resources to help you understand the nature of anxiety.
- **Relaxation** – Meditations, guided breathing, music, exercise, etc
- **Cognitive Restructuring** – Cognitive restructuring involves identifying and changing the maladaptive thought processes.
- **Anxiety Management Techniques** – typically used alongside cognitive restructuring and relaxation, these can include positive self-talk, grounding techniques and related exercises.





Using self-Therapy for Depression

- Most self-therapy approaches to handling depression use CBT techniques to identify, combat, and change negative thoughts.

Self-help for **Depression**: 9 Things to Consider



Take control over your depression with these self-help practices.



“If you don’t like something change it;
if you can’t change it, change the way
you think about it.”

Mary Engelbreit

Practical tips

- Learn to observe, be mindful.
- Become your own inner teacher by journaling
- become your own best friend
- Make healthy lifestyle choices
- avoid addictive behaviours
- Choose daily exercise, take a walk
- Clear the mind, slow down, de-stress, simplify.
- Share with friends in a reflective way.
- Question yourself
- Read ... everything.
- Live consciously, not reactively.
- Grow healthy, shed unhealthy relationships.
- Be compassionate toward yourself and others.
- **Practice self care.**
 - Laugh
 - Pick up a new hobby
 - Listen to music you enjoy

Self-care
isn't
selfish, it is
necessary.



What Self-care Can Look Like



Being kind to yourself

Going for a walk

Turn your phone off

Reading a book

Moving your body

Talk with a loved one

Saying 'no' more often

Watching a film

Prepare a healthy meal

Doing a face mask

Have a cup of tea

Play your favourite song

Practice gratitude

Listen to a podcast

Get a massage

Declutter your home

“Learning to love yourself is like learning to walk – essential, life-changing and the only way to stand tall.”

Vironika Tugaleva

In conclusion ...

BE KIND TO
yourself



At the end of the day, tell yourself gently:
"I love you, you did the best you could today,
and even if you didn't accomplish all you
had planned, I love you anyway."



Resources

- Catherine Moore
- www.solutionstoallmyproblems.com
- www.selftherapy.org
- Dr. Jay Earley





Thank you