

# Risky Thinking (Part 2): Effective Strategies for Addressing Unhelpful Patterns



## Practical Strategies and Tools

### Cognitive Restructuring

Helps clients identify risky thoughts that lead to negative/unhelpful emotions and behaviors. Allows them to challenge and replace risky thinking with positive/helpful self-talk.

#### Practical Tools:

- **Basic Psychoeducation**
- **Thinking Checks/Thought Diaries**
- **Feelings Charts**



#### Helpful Tip

**Writing is key to the process!**

While verbal processing can be helpful, combining it with written reflection through thinking checks or a thought diary allows for a more comprehensive and structured approach to understanding and modifying your thought patterns.

### Mindfulness

Help clients tune in to their thoughts and feelings to develop a more objective, non-judgmental stance. Gives them the space to take a wider perspective on the matter.

#### Practical Tools:

- **Breathing exercises**
- **Guided imagery meditations**



#### Helpful Tip

**Use a trauma-informed approach.**

Guided meditations and grounding exercises may have adverse effects on individuals with severe trauma or PTSD. Mindfulness techniques may require guidance from a trained therapist to ensure proper technique for an individual's treatment plan.

### Expressive Writing

Helps clients identify patterns in thinking and emotions while also gaining insights into the types of thoughts and situations that trigger negative emotions.

#### Practical Tools:

- **Structured journaling**



#### Helpful Tip

**Assign lifework and follow up on it!**

The client can benefit from working on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs outside of session time. Giving them out-of-session activities or lifework gives them practice to work on current things in their life. If you assign, you'll want to follow up.