

Risky Thinking (Part 1): Recognizing and Assessing Unhelpful Patterns



Common Risky Thinking Patterns

Making excuses – Excuse or justify their irresponsible behavior and place the responsibility or blame for their actions on the situations in their lives or on other people.

Ignoring responsible action – Eliminate any sensitivity to the consequences of their behavior and find ways to get rid of their worries or fears.

Asserting power over others – Focus on gaining power and control over others. May resort to intimidation or threats to get what they want, label people as weak or strong.

Self-serving acts of kindness – Excuse the harm they have caused others by saying or doing things in an effort to feel better about themselves or making themselves look good.

Getting away with anything – Believe they are too skilled or smart to get caught for irresponsible behavior, are extremely optimistic and overconfident, fail to consider the potential negative consequences of their actions.

Lazy thinking – Take the path of least resistance and look for shortcuts instead of working toward specific and realistic goals.

A sense of being above the law – See the world around them as existing for their personal benefit, believe they have the right to disregard laws, mislabel their “wants” as “needs,” act like an exception to the rule.

Getting sidetracked – Are easily distracted and show a lack of persistence, may have a difficult time following through with their goals and commitments.



Best Practices

Assessing Risky Thinking Patterns

- Try to avoid the *Cosmo Quiz* effect – don't give away the “right answer” or use the word “test” instead of “assessment”
- Plan for needed accommodations – reading level, physical limitations, language barriers
- Find an instrument that fits your population
- Determine the proper frequency of assessing
- Ensure staff are properly trained in administration, scoring, and interpretation