

# Reframing Unhelpful Thoughts

## Age Range:

11+, Year 7+,  
KS3, KS4

## Topics Covered:

Mental Wellbeing

## Time:

30-40 minutes

## Equipment needed:

A clear space. Paper,  
pens.

## Learning Outcomes:

- Young people have an increased understanding of the importance of good emotional health and mental wellbeing.
- Young people have an increased ability to identify a range of effective strategies for looking after their own mental wellbeing.

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles

**This exercise can be used to reinforce key messages about positive, healthy thinking.**

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and reflective learning to understand how to identify unhelpful thoughts and reframe them into healthier thoughts and positive thinking.

## Exercise

In a large circle have a brief discussion on how negative/unhelpful feelings and opinions might impact someone's life.

Read out the following statement: **'Nat is 15 years old and regularly struggles to think positively about her day to day life, including her upcoming GCSE's, the time she spends on social media and her relationships.'**

Discuss Nat and her feelings with the group:

- **What kind of things might be going on in Nat's day to day life?** *E.g. GCSE exams, social media, relationships (e.g. boyfriend/girlfriend, family, friends). etc.*
- **How might these negative / unhelpful thoughts affect Nat?** *Explore the impact on her education, relationships etc.*

Explain to the group that when people have unhelpful thoughts, there is opportunity to reframe them into healthier thoughts and feelings. It may not necessarily change the situation, but it can put things into a healthier perspective which may change someone's experience of the situation.

Hand out the worksheet or complete this exercise on an interactive whiteboard as a class. On the left-hand side there is a list of events that have happened in Nat's life. In the next column are some short and simple statements which use unhelpful language. In the third column, ask the group to reframe these unhelpful statements into healthy ones or to find more positive possibilities. In the final column, discuss the possible impacts these changes could have on Nat's mental wellbeing. There is a blank sheet for the group to think of their own events and reframe any unhelpful thoughts into healthy, positive ones. These could be things that the group have experienced themselves; or statements you wish to explore.

## Summary

Sum up by asking the group how reframing unhelpful thoughts could improve someone's mental wellbeing, and people/places that someone could go to for help and support around their mental wellbeing.

# Healthy, Happy, Helpful Thoughts

Event	Unhelpful	Healthy	Impact
Something has happened in Nat's life	Nat's first thoughts (can be more than one)	Possible healthy thoughts (can get as many as possible)	How might reframing her thoughts help Nat's wellbeing?
Nat gets a bad grade in her first mock exam	<p>"There isn't enough time in the day to revise everything"</p> <p>"There is no point trying"</p>	<p>"It was a mock so I've got time to improve"</p> <p>OR</p> <p>"I could ask a friend to revise together"</p>	By spending time with friends, Nat might find that others are facing the same stress and be able to help each other.
Nat's new Instagram post hasn't got many likes	"I look terrible"		
Nat's boyfriend/girlfriend isn't texting back	"They're obviously not happy, I must have done something wrong"		
Nat's parents have told her she needs to get a part time job	"They don't understand how much I've got on at the moment"		
Nat has accidentally lost her sisters bracelet	"She is going to hate me. I'll lie and say it was stolen"		
Nat often has music rehearsals at lunchtime	"I can't be bothered to rush to the canteen, so I'll just skip lunch"		

<b>Event</b>	<b>Unhelpful</b>	<b>Healthy</b>	<b>Impact</b>
Something has happened in Nat's life	Nat's first thoughts (can be more than one)	Possible healthy thoughts (can get as many as possible)	How might reframing her thoughts help Nat's wellbeing?