

Subject 4: Anxiety and unhelpful thinking

Anxiety is often triggered by unhelpful thoughts. Many people think the way we feel is due to external events and the actions of others. However, our feelings are linked with how we think. This is the ABC model.

- **Activating event** – something that happens
- **Beliefs and thoughts** – your thoughts and beliefs that are triggered by the event
- **Consequences** – the outcome / the way you react

Previous life events and the way you have learnt to think about things impact on how you interpret everything around you.

Examples of unhelpful thinking include:

- **Catastrophising** – when something happens and we think the worst possible outcome is going to come true.
- **Black and white thinking** – thinking that everything falls into one of two categories is very restrictive and gives you no room for middle ground. This can lead to highs and lows in emotions, rather than a more balanced perspective.
- **Making assumptions** - our brain makes associations based on our previous experiences and knowledge. Sometimes these associations can be incorrect and increase anxiety.

Eliminating Unhelpful Thoughts

Learn to balance your thoughts with the DE model.

- **Dispute unhelpful thoughts** - investigate the thoughts behind your feelings and challenge these in a constructive way. Find evidence to show that the unhelpful thought is incorrect.
- **Emotional review** – after thinking about the more balanced thought, reassess the intensity of your emotions that are attached.

Although it might take a bit of practice to shift to more balanced thinking patterns, it will help to give you a more accurate perspective and help to balance your emotional reactions.

If you are concerned about anxiety

Effective treatments for anxiety are available to help. Speak to your doctor or company provided counselling service for advice on the best option for you.

Do you want to find out more?

Generali Employee Benefit Network has partnered with FlourishDx to provide video and other resources on mental health and sleep health. Access these resources [here](#).