

CBSST: Challenging Difficult Thoughts

Questionable beliefs

Example:

- **Catch it!**
Unhelpful thought: “That man with the bulge in his pocket has a gun because he is in the FBI and following me.”
- **Check it!** Is this thought true? Is it helpful?
 - What else might be causing the bulge in the man’s pocket?
 - Is everyone with a bulge in their pocket in the FBI?
- **Change it!**
 - “That man probably has a cell-phone in his pocket or maybe just his keys.”
 - “If it’s not a gun maybe he is not an FBI agent following me.”

Depression

Example:

- **Catch it!**
Unhelpful thought: “I am worthless; nobody likes me.”
- **Check it!** Is this thought true? Is it helpful? Challenge it!
 - My friend _____ likes me.
 - The people in this class like me.
 - I am not feeling well, so I am criticizing myself.
 - There are many things that I am good at; I just need to focus on them.
 - I am feeling lonely and that makes me feel bad.
- **Change it!** “I have many good qualities (list them). I think I will go talk with one of my friends. That will help me feel better about myself.”



Adapted from the Minneapolis VA CBSST Manual