

Food Allergy "Thinking Traps" Activity

Our thoughts can trap us into believing things that aren't true!

Cognitive distortions, or thinking traps are faulty thought patterns that cause us to interpret reality negatively or incorrectly. These thinking errors can then trigger feelings of self-doubt and anxiety. However, if you know which distortions trap you, then you can choose to challenge and change your thoughts!

Below are common thinking traps and food allergy examples of each:

All-or-Nothing

Only thinking of extreme outcomes, and not seeing other possible outcomes.

"When my child starts school, he WILL be bullied."

Should Statements

Ironclad rules for how self/others should behave.

"I shouldn't feel scared after being diagnosed with food allergies - I'm so disappointed in myself."

Fortune-Telling

Predicting future things will be bad; nothing you do will change it.

"At my next appointment, I just know I will be diagnosed with 2 more allergies."

Emotional Reasoning

Our emotions are evidence for the truth. Whatever you feel is true will be true, despite evidence suggesting it's not true.

"If I feel incapable of managing food allergies or a reaction, then I am incapable.."

Labeling

Attaching a negative label to yourself/others even if it was a mistake or only happened once.

"I'm untrustworthy since I didn't read the label once and my child reacted."

Catastrophizing

Imagining worst-case scenario, no matter how unlikely in reality.

"If I have a reaction, it will be really bad and my epinephrine won't work!"

Over-Generalization

Every single event is part of a series of bad events that will keep happening again.

"Since one classmate made fun of my allergy, all of my classmates will do the same."

Internal Control Fallacy

You're completely responsible for everyone's happiness or pain.

"The only way my child will feel okay about his allergy is if I am always there to make things perfect."

External Control Fallacy

You're a victim of fate, with no control over what happens.

"No matter how much I prepare, if I eat at a restaurant, I'm going to have a reaction."

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Challenging Your Thinking Traps and Negative Self-Talk

You can challenge your thoughts and negative self-talk by questioning the thoughts and perceived outcomes. Below are examples of questions that you can ask yourself to help identify and challenge these thinking traps.

 Am I falling into a thinking trap?

Am I assuming I have no impact on the outcome?



 Am I jumping to conclusions?

Is the outcome a possibility or a certainty?



 What facts do I have to confirm that my thought is true?

What other outcomes are possible?



 What facts do I have to confirm that my thought untrue?

Is there something I can learn from this situation to help me next time?



 What skills or tools do I have that can help me through this?

Directions:

Using the food allergy thinking trap examples, record your own. Then use the thought-challenging questions to help you develop a new, more empowering thought that will replace the negative thought.

For more information: www.FoodAllergyCounselor.com/blog/category/cbt

Situation/Scenario <i>(What's going on?)</i>	Faulty Thought <i>(Which trap is it?)</i>	New Thought <i>(Replace old thought)</i>