



## **Sitting with Feelings and Challenging Negative Thought Patterns**

Negative thought patterns and emotional dysregulation are common issues faced by individuals with ADHD. Learning to sit with feelings and challenge these thoughts can help manage emotional responses, improve mental health, and foster resilience. This guide will outline strategies for sitting with feelings and challenging negative thoughts effectively.

### **1. Understanding the Benefits of Sitting with Feelings and Challenging Negative Thoughts**

This practice can help:

- Increase emotional awareness and regulation
- Reduce the impact of negative thought patterns
- Improve overall mental well-being
- Foster greater self-compassion and understanding

### **2. General Tips for Sitting with Feelings**

- **Create a Safe Space:** Find a quiet, comfortable place where you feel safe to explore your feelings.
- **Be Patient:** Allow yourself the time to experience and understand your emotions without rushing the process.
- **Stay Present:** Focus on the present moment and your current feelings without getting lost in past or future worries.
- **Practice Self-Compassion:** Treat yourself with kindness and understanding as you explore your emotions.

### **3. Steps for Sitting with Feelings**

#### **i. Acknowledge Your Emotions:**

- Recognise and name the emotions you are experiencing.
- Accept that it is okay to feel these emotions.

#### **ii. Observe Without Judgment:**

- Notice your thoughts and feelings without labelling them as good or bad.
- Understand that emotions are a natural part of the human experience.

iii. Explore the Sensations:

- Pay attention to how your body feels.
- Identify any physical sensations associated with your emotions (e.g., tightness, warmth, tingling).

iv. Breathe Through the Emotions:

- Use deep breathing to stay grounded.
- Inhale slowly through your nose and exhale through your mouth.

v. Stay With the Feelings:

- Allow yourself to fully experience your emotions without trying to escape or suppress them.
- Recognize that emotions are temporary and will pass.

#### **4. Challenging Negative Thought Patterns**

a) Identify Negative Thoughts

**Purpose:** To become aware of the specific negative thoughts affecting your emotions and behaviour.

**Instructions:**

- **Keep a Thought Journal:** Write down negative thoughts as they occur.
- **Recognise Triggers:** Identify situations or events that trigger these thoughts.
- **Understand Patterns:** Look for recurring themes or patterns in your negative thinking.

**Tips:**

- Use a dedicated notebook or app for tracking thoughts.
- Review your entries regularly to gain insight into your thought patterns.

b) Examine the Evidence

**Purpose:** To evaluate the validity of negative thoughts by examining supporting and contradictory evidence.

Instructions:

- Ask Questions: Challenge the negative thought by asking:
  - What evidence supports this thought?
  - What evidence contradicts it?
- Consider Alternatives: Think of alternative explanations or perspectives.
- Balance the View: Write down a balanced, more realistic thought that considers all the evidence.

Tips:

- Be objective and fair in your evaluation.
- Seek feedback from trusted friends or a therapist if needed.

c) Reframe Negative Thoughts

Purpose: To replace negative thoughts with more positive and constructive ones.

Instructions:

- Identify Distortions: Recognize cognitive distortions such as overgeneralisation, catastrophising, or black-and-white thinking.
- Create Positive Statements: Formulate positive, realistic statements that counteract the negative thoughts.
- Practice Affirmations: Regularly repeat these positive statements to reinforce new thought patterns.

Tips:

- Use positive affirmations that are believable and relevant to your experiences.
- Practice reframing regularly to build new mental habits.



## 5. Examples of Challenging Negative Thoughts

### Example 1: Self-Doubt in Work Performance

Negative Thought: "I always mess up at work."

Examine the Evidence:

- Supporting Evidence: I made a mistake in my last project.
- Contradictory Evidence: I have received positive feedback on other projects and completed tasks successfully in the past.

Reframed Thought: *"I made a mistake in my last project, but I have also done many things well. I can learn from my mistakes and improve."*

### Example 2: Social Anxiety

Negative Thought: "People don't like me."

Examine the Evidence:

- Supporting Evidence: I didn't get invited to a recent social event.
- Contradictory Evidence: I have close friends who enjoy spending time with me and have received invitations to other events.

Reframed Thought: *"Not being invited to one event doesn't mean people don't like me. I have friends who value me, and I can continue to build positive relationships."*

### Example 3: Fear of Failure

Negative Thought: "I'll never succeed in my career."

Examine the Evidence:

- Supporting Evidence: I didn't get the promotion I wanted.
- Contradictory Evidence: I have achieved several milestones in my career and received recognition for my work.

Reframed Thought: *"Missing out on one promotion doesn't mean I won't succeed. I have accomplished a lot and can continue to grow and develop my career."*



## **6. Incorporating These Practices into Daily Routine**

- **Daily Reflection:** Set aside time each day to reflect on your emotions and thought patterns.
- **Mindfulness Practice:** Incorporate mindfulness meditation to enhance your ability to stay present with your feelings.
- **Therapeutic Support:** Consider working with a therapist or coach to develop personalised strategies.
- **Regular Review:** Periodically review your thought journal and progress to reinforce positive changes.

## **Conclusion**

Sitting with feelings and challenging negative thought patterns are powerful techniques for managing emotional dysregulation and improving mental health, especially for individuals with ADHD. By acknowledging and exploring your emotions and systematically challenging and reframing negative thoughts, you can develop greater emotional resilience and foster a more positive mindset. Remember to practice regularly, seek support when needed, and celebrate your progress along the way.