



Behavioral Experiments



Your thoughts and how you think can be pretty strong, maybe even stubborn. They won't go away or feel less intense easily. This will take some time and repetition. You can also run some experiments to gather more evidence!

Now that you have identified the types of unhelpful thinking styles you have and you begin to challenge them. The next thing to do is come up with an experiment. Here is an example:

Amanda plays on her high school softball team and is one of the best pitchers. Several of her close friends are also on her team. The team has lost the past few games and they are in jeopardy of not making the post season.

Each game, Amanda got quieter, more distant and began to isolate herself. During the next game, Amanda didn't do well again and the coach pulled her out of the game. She sat on the bench away from everyone looking away in the distance. As she sat there, she thought: "See, everyone hates me and it's all my fault that we can't win."

She knew this thought wasn't helpful, and began to challenge it.

"Is it all my fault we didn't win those games?"

"Was I doing my best pitching?"

"How talented were the teams we played?"

"Does everyone really hate me, or am I just upset right now?"

Amanda tested her thought that everyone hates her by going up to her friends and asking if they wanted to go out after the game. Her friends smiled and said they were waiting for her to talk to them and wanted to give her space because of how hard she was being on herself!

Amanda's experiment required a special ingredient: courage! When our unhelpful thoughts give us negative feelings, it is hard to do something that contradicts those feelings!