



Positive reframing is when we reconsider our thoughts in a positive light by looking at a situation differently and where possible, finding the benefits, upsides, or opportunities. It is a powerful way to transform how we think about our experiences.

We can all fall into patterns of negative thinking when feeling stressed or pushed to our limits by difficult circumstances. Positive reframing does not change what's happening, but it can put things into a healthier perspective and reduce the stress associated with it. Reframing can also help us identify habitual thinking that may not serve us best in the long-term. Use the activity below to practice positive reframing.

→ TheWellnessSandbox.ca

TIME TO COMPLETE: 10 to 15 minutes



Instructions:

- 1 Talk about the following negative thought responses that can result when faced with a challenge:
 - **Mindreading:** Where we believe we know the true intentions of others without talking to them.
 - **Catastrophizing:** When we assume that the worst will happen.
 - **Minimizing/Filtering:** When we filter out the positive and focus on the negative.
 - **Fortune Telling:** When we predict the future without having the facts.

Open the conversation up to participants and ask if they can identify any other negative thought responses.

- 2 Review the worksheet and invite participants to reflect on a recent situation while completing the questions.

Discussion:

- Did you identify a common perception or unhelpful thought response that you tend to fall back on?
- How did it feel to look at a situation using positive reframing?
- What could you do to use positive reframing more often in your life?

Encourage participants to bring positive reframing back to their work and home lives. By taking a few minutes to reflect on being aware of how perception can impact our reactions, they may feel more prepared to use positive reframing in the future.

Optional: After completing the worksheet, ask participants to break out into small discussion groups and share based on their comfort-level and how the activity was received. If the participants focused on a workplace event, you may want to facilitate a group conversation. If participants identified a personal situation, you may want to keep activity to individual reflection only.

Positive Reframing

Stressful situation or challenge

What happened? Try to explain the situation as it happened only using the facts.

Initial perceptions or unhelpful thoughts

Human negativity bias can influence our initial perception or thought response when faced with a stressful situation.

What are some of the thoughts that come to mind when reflecting on your scenario?

Positive reframing

How could your perception of the situation or event be more positive?

What are other ways you can look at this situation to find opportunities, solutions, or even benefits?

Sources

- Ackerman, Courtney E. (2020, October 31). *Cognitive Distortions: When Your Brain Lies to You (+PDF Worksheets)*. Positive Psychology. <https://positivepsychology.com/cognitive-distortions/>
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- *Positive Replacement Thoughts Worksheet*. (n.d.) Positive Psychology. Retrieved on April 19, 2021 from: <https://positivepsychology.com/wp-content/uploads/Positive-Replacement-Thoughts-Worksheet.pdf>