

Countering Irrational Beliefs

IRRATIONAL BELIEF:

THE IDEA THAT *IF SOMETHING IS OR MAY BE DANGEROUS OR FEARSOME WE SHOULD BE TERRIBLY UPSET AND ENDLESSLY OBSESS ABOUT IT*

CONSIDER INSTEAD:

There is a great difference between dreadful ruminations about what awful things might happen and thinking how to prevent, minimize, or cope with real potential problems.

The former is useless, depressing, exhausting, and may even be self-fulfilling. The latter is wise and reassuring.

Keep in mind that many of our fears never come true. Desirable outcomes are due to the laws of behavior, not due to our useless “worry.” Unwanted outcomes are also lawful, and not because we didn’t “worry.”

EXAMPLES Role-play both unhealthy & healthy self-talk for each of the following

1. Mike can’t sleep. His wife is traveling for work and hasn’t called him yet. He is terrified that something bad will happen to her; that her plane will crash or her hotel room will catch on fire.
2. Sarah has to give a speech in front of the class. She is sure that she is going to do something humiliating like cry or vomit.
3. Robert is sure that the good fortune he is enjoying won’t last long. He has watched other people lose everything recently and he worries that his family is next.

YOUR TURN: List some of your own irrational responses and the healthy alternative
