

Your Thoughts Can Change!

What to Know

You may feel alone when you think about suicide or have thoughts about hurting yourself. You may believe you'll always have these thoughts. But thoughts enter and leave your mind all the time, which means your thoughts can change. Some thoughts may tend to get stuck in your mind. Maybe you can't get them out of your head! But if you closely monitor your thoughts, you'll find the stuck thoughts aren't always present, and you can find ways to distract yourself from having these thoughts.

Thoughts and feelings come, they go, sometimes they come back, but occasionally they never return. The same is true with thoughts about suicide and hurting yourself.

What to Do

Try the following exercise.

What was your favorite song five years ago? _____

Is it the same now? Yes / No

What was something you believed in the past that you no longer believe?

Have you always had suicidal thoughts? Yes / No

Name a time in the past when you didn't have these thoughts.

Have your feelings about a person changed over time? Describe what happened.

What did you learn from the above questions? Have your thoughts and feelings all stayed the same or have they changed over time? _____

Now, in the first column, write down the thoughts you have when you think about suicide or hurting yourself. Be as specific as possible. For example: "I feel like I'm a burden," "I can't handle this anymore," or "Nobody would miss me." What triggers these thoughts? Is it stress, specific situations, or emotions? In the second column, write down your triggers next to each thought.

Thoughts	Triggers	True all the time?	Evidence

Now, let's challenge these thoughts. Ask yourself:

- In the 3rd column, ask yourself if these thoughts are true all the time.
- In the 4th column, write down evidence against these thoughts.

What would you say to a friend who had these thoughts?

When you have thoughts that feel stuck, do an activity that distracts you and brings you joy. It could be painting, listening to music, reading, or spending time with a pet. Write down some ideas of what you can do.

Whenever a thought about hurting yourself arises, consciously replace it with a positive or neutral thought. For example:

"I am not alone. There are people who care about me."

"This thought will pass, and I have tools to help me through it."

Write down what you will say to yourself.

Remember, it's okay to ask for help. Share your thoughts with a trusted adult, a counselor, or a helpline. You're never alone, and there are people who want to support you. Who can you reach out to when you're having thoughts about suicide?

Reflections on This Exercise

What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
