

Session 9—Avoiding Unhelpful Thought Patterns and Jumping to Conclusions



Most Important Task for this Session

- By the end of this session, participants can be flexible in coming up with helpful and accurate thoughts to replace unhelpful thoughts, with a special emphasis on not jumping to conclusions.

Agenda

1. Check-in and homework review
2. Identify unhelpful thinking patterns as a prelude to recognizing **Jumping to Conclusions**
3. Recognizing **Jumping to Conclusions**
4. Practice linking thoughts to feelings and behaviors
5. Assign At-Home Worksheet— **Weekly Goal Guide**

1. Check-In

- Write/share the agenda on the board or shared screen; write/share the check-in questions on the board or shared screen.
- Reinforce for arriving on time and bringing back the folder.

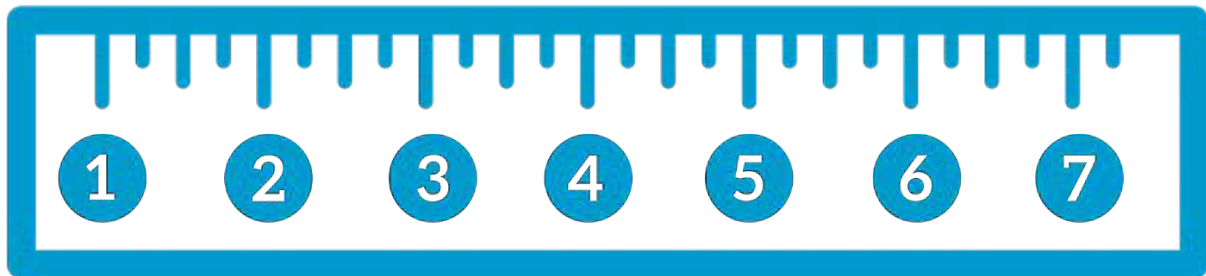
Check-in Questions

Ask participants to answer the four check-in questions.

1. What is your long-term goal (where would you like to be one year from now)?
2. What is your 3-month goal?

3. Can you please share your At-Home Worksheet—**Weekly Goal Guide** (what you assigned for yourself and what you completed)?
4. “What is your **Motivation Rating** and **Importance Rating** today on a scale of 1 to 7? (Scale 1; “Not at all motivated” – 7; “Extremely motivated”)

Motivational Rating on a Scale of 1-7



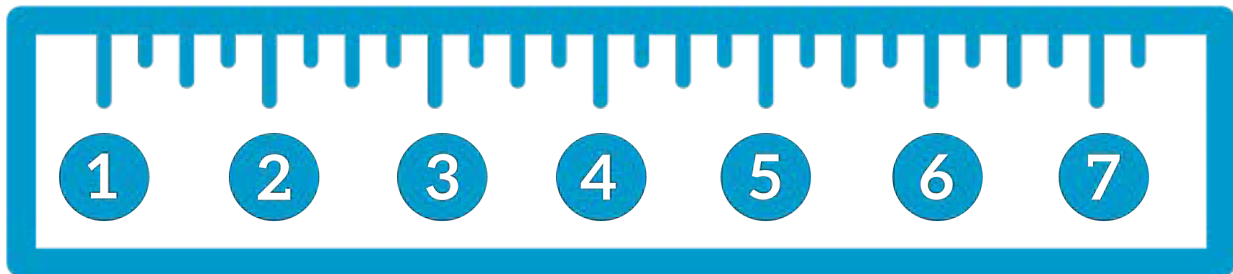
Not at all motivated

Somewhat motivated

Extremely motivated

Suggested facilitator dialogue: “You chose a _____. List three reasons why you chose this and not a lower number.” (Further the **Change Talk**.)

Importance Ruler



Not at all important

Somewhat important

Extremely important

Suggested facilitator dialogue: “You chose a _____. List three reasons why you chose this and not a lower number.”

2. Identify Unhelpful Thinking Patterns as a Prelude to Recognizing Jumping to Conclusions

Facilitator-led activity: During the check-in review, the facilitator should be alert to examples of troublesome feelings and unhelpful thoughts articulated about the goal (or past attempts to meet the goal). These can be used as a segue into the expanded material on identifying unhelpful thoughts and the importance of not jumping to conclusions. The facilitator is also always listening for and amplifying any **Change Talk** that occurs.

3. Recognizing Jumping to Conclusions

Query participants about what was recalled about unhelpful thinking patterns from Session 7 and 8 and solicit examples from the participants' lives of one or two unhelpful thinking patterns. A Worksheet on unhelpful thinking patterns for review in-session is included at the end of this session. Limited facilitator self-disclosure could be useful here.

Introduce the idea of “fast guesses” and the concept of “jumping to conclusions.” Begin linking these unhelpful thinking habits to the example of “jumping to conclusions” as an alternative to making a careful, informed decision. Note the times that jumping to conclusions may be necessary (emergency situations; when safety is an issue) and when it is a problem—when more deliberation may be helpful.

Provide the participant with many opportunities to identify their common unhelpful thought patterns; prompt using earlier participant statements if needed. All ideas are welcome. Do not evaluate them yet.

4. Practicing Linking Thoughts to Feelings and Behaviors

Using these examples, link thoughts to feelings and behaviors, with the idea that changing thoughts can change feelings and behaviors. If participants highlight negative experiences, be sure to elicit critical details (Were they in treatment?

Symptomatic? Traumatic experience?) to contextualize and reframe perceived failures. Help participants identify alternative, more balanced thoughts and the feelings and potential behaviors that ensue.

5. At-Home Practice

Ask participants to do the following:

1. During the week, identify at least three times their first inclination was to jump to a conclusion about a painful or difficult situation, and then generate a couple of alternative thoughts.
2. Complete the Session 9 At-Home Worksheet—**Jumping to Conclusions** with at least three examples.
3. Complete the **Weekly Goal Guide** with two small steps toward their goal.

In-Session 9 Worksheet—Thinking Patterns

Everyone has **thinking patterns, which are kind of like thinking habits**. These patterns can influence our emotions and behavior. Sometimes our patterns can be unhelpful because they can prevent us from seeing things clearly and making empowered choices.

Here are some examples:

All-or-Nothing Thinking: Using words like “always” and “never” to describe situations when it might be more accurate to use less extreme words. For example, if a first date goes badly, saying to yourself, “I’m never going to be able to find anyone. No one will ever love me.”



Catastrophizing: Expecting only the worst possible outcomes without giving room for possible good outcomes. For example, thinking that if you did poorly on the first exam in college class, it means you will fail the course and you should drop the class rather than try studying more.



Mind Reading: Assuming you know what others are thinking or feeling without checking it out. For example, thinking a friend is angry with you if they do not answer your text quickly.



Fortune-Telling: Thinking you know what the future will bring based on very limited information. For example, thinking the day will be horrible because you got a late start.



Feelings as Facts: Believing that if you feel something it must be true. For example, feeling suspicious and becoming convinced that someone is going to harm you instead of checking in on whether you are just feeling anxious.



Jumping to Conclusions: Assuming the meaning of a situation even though you don't have all the facts. For example, thinking you know what someone else is thinking (**Mind Reading**) or that you know what will happen in the future (**Fortune-Telling**).



“Should” Statements: Believing things should be a certain way, for example, holding yourself or others to an unrealistic standard. For example, being very harsh with yourself because you committed to a strict exercise program and then had to miss a day at the gym because you were ill.





Session 9 At-Home Worksheet—
Avoid Jumping to Conclusions

Name: _____

Date: _____

Disappointing or Distressing Situation	Your Usual Explanation When you Jump to a Conclusion	One Alternative Explanation	Another Alternative Explanation
Example: <i>My partner is short with me.</i>	Example: <i>I'm irritating him.</i>	Example: <i>He had a hard day at work.</i>	Example: <i>He got stuck in traffic.</i>