COMMON AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS:

(Also Called Intrusive Thoughts, Cognitive Distortions or Negative Self-Talk)

MENTAL FILTERING: (Tunnel Vision) 	▪ Hyper focusing on a small negative aspect of a situation & failing to take into consideration the other positive aspects of a situation or the whole picture. In turn, a person might continually ruminate over the negative details for a long period of time & not be able to get past it. ▪ People with this form of negative thinking often see their glass as being half empty rather than half full in any situation.
JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS: 	**TWO TYPES OF JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS:** 1.) **Mind Reading:** Interpreting the thoughts & beliefs of others without adequate evidence. -Without individuals saying so, a person who jumps to conclusions feels like they know what another person is feeling or thinking & why the other person might be acting in a certain way. 2.) **Fortune Telling:** Predicting a negative outcome will occur without realistically considering the actual odds of that outcome.
CATASTROPHIZING: **("WHAT IF'S")** 	▪ Expecting disaster to strike no matter what & tend to only see the worst possible outcome of a situation. -*"What if I trip & fall in front of everyone?", "A storm is coming today, what if there is a tornado?", "What if I fail my test tomorrow?"*
POLARIZED THINKING **("Black and White",All or Nothing Thinking):** 	▪ Only looking at situations in terms of one extreme or the other. ▪ A situation or a person is either good or bad, success or failure – there is no middle ground. And if you fall short of your expectations, you view yourself as a total failure. But, in reality, most situations are somewhere in the middle. ▪ Inability to see the "gray" area
OVERGENERALIZING: **"Never" & "Always"** 	▪ Viewing negative experiences as a never-ending pattern of defeat. ▪ Assuming one failure will predict ongoing failure in the same activity/task. ▪ If something bad happens just once, you expect it to happen over and over again. A person may see a single, unpleasant event as part of a never-ending pattern of defeat. ▪ **Self- limiting Overgeneralization-** These thoughts can keep you from taking risks or next steps, harming your career and social life.
PERSONALIZATION &/OR BLAMING: 	▪ Blaming yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for or blaming others without looking at how your attitude or behaviors contributed to the problem. ▪ Seeing themselves as the cause of some unhealthy external event that they were not responsible for.
EMOTIONAL REASONING: 	▪ The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. ▪ When a person's emotions take over their thinking entirely, blotting out all rationality and logic. ▪ A person assumes their unhealthy emotions reflect the way things really are.
"SHOULD", "MUST" & "OUGHT" STATEMENTS: 	▪ Faulty thinking that contains phrases including "should", "ought", "must". ▪ These thoughts can contribute to feelings of fear and worry. They put unreasonable demands and pressure on ourselves, which can make us feel guilty or like we've failed.
LABELING: 	▪ Assigning labels to ourselves or other people ▪ "I am stupid", "I'm an idiot", "Failure"

CHALLENGING & REDIRECTING INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS:

MENTAL FILTERING:

1. Am I overly focused on what I perceive as a negative aspect of the situation & not considering other positive aspects?
2. Am I able to change the situation I am ruminating over? If not, is this thought helpful?
3. Will this thought lead to a positive outcome?
4. Will the situation I'm worrying about still seem as important to me in a week or a year from now, or will it become irrelevant?
5. If a friend approached me with the same situation, what advice would I give them?
6. Am I holding myself to unreasonable standards?

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS (Mind Reading or Fortune Telling):

1. What is the evidence supporting this thought?
2. Could I be misinterpreting the evidence?
3. What is the worst that can happen if my fear comes true?
4. If my worry does come true, will I be okay?
5. What advice would I give a friend who has the same concern or fear?
6. Am I assuming I know what someone else is thinking or how a situation will occur?
7. Could I be misinterpreting another person's intentions?
8. Is this thought due to a pattern I have experienced in the past, or is it an isolated incident?
9. Have I ever acted in a similar manner? What were my thoughts during that moment? (mind reading)
10. Am I viewing the situation as black and white, when it's really more complicated?
11. Do I have a trusted friend whom I can check these thoughts out with?

CATASTROPHIZING & FORTUNE TELLING:

1. What is the probability of my thought or fear actually occurring?
2. If your worry does come true, what is the worst that can happen?
3. On a scale of 1-10, How bad would it be if this concern really happened?

Not bad: ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Bad

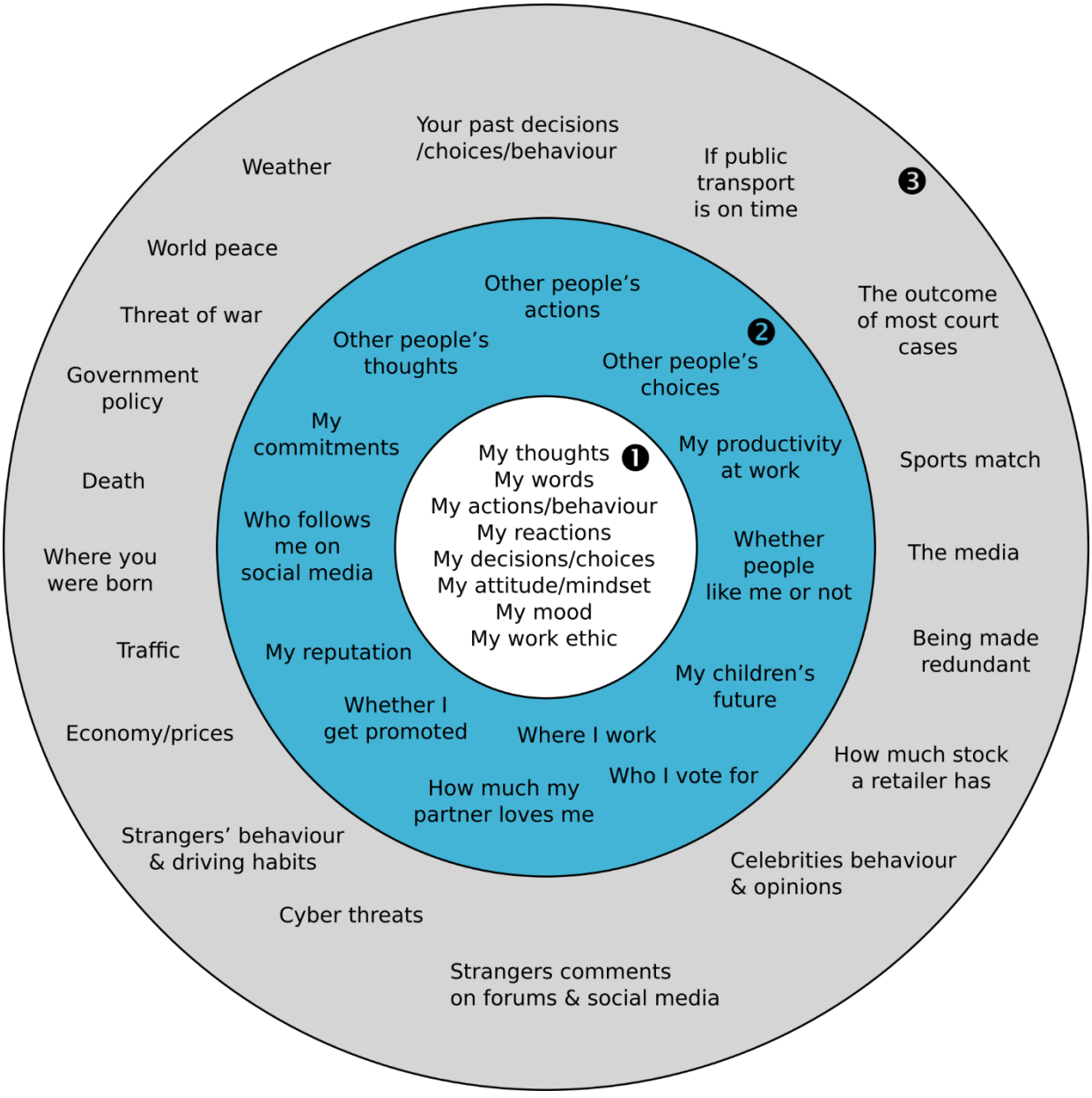
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. How much influence or control do I have over this situation?:
   a.) I have *total control* of the situation & the outcome:
   -Given I have total control of the situation, what can I do to alleviate my anxiety or concern?
   b.) I have *an influence* in whether the situation occurs:
   -Given that I have *some influence* over the outcome of my concern, what actions can I take to help alleviate it?"
   c.) I have *no influence or control* of whether this situation occurs:
   -If I have no control in the situation, how can I change my outlook to help reduce my anxiety?
5. Am I having this thought out of habit, or do facts support it? If I have facts to support it, what is "plan B" to help lessen my anxiety in the situation?
6. How can I test my assumptions or beliefs to see if they are accurate?

OVERGENERALIZING OR POLARIZED THINKING ("SHOULD", "MUST" & "OUGHT" STATEMENTS)**:**

1. Is this thought realistic?
2. Can I look for "shades of gray?"
3. Am I being too critical on myself or holding myself to unreasonable standards?
4. Why do I feel a situation "should" or "ought" to be a certain way?
5. What am I gaining or trying to alleviate by wanting situations to go a certain way?

Circles of Control, Influence & Concern



1 Circle of Control 2 Circle of Influence 3 Circle of Concern

See explanation and instructions on the next page…

© www.clairenewton.co.za

Circle of Control

This encompasses those circumstances/issues/problems that we have direct control over.

Circle of Influence

This encompasses those circumstances/issues/problems that we have indirect control over.

Invest your time, energy & emotions here

Circle of Concern

Also known as the circle of 'no control'. This encompasses the wide range of circumstances/issues/problems we have, but over which we have no control.

Instructions

This activity can be done individually or as a group. You can focus on all aspects of your life, or on one specific area (e.g. your business).

1. Print out the "*Circles of Control*" poster.
2. On small sticky notes, or pieces of paper, write down all the circumstances/issues/problems that are concerning you and put them in the Circle of Concern circle.

   At this stage you may have a lot of stress and anxiety over the things you've written down and may feel you don't have any control over them. Having no control can be alarming.
3. Look at all the things you've written down and decide which things you can actively control. Move all the sticky notes with the things that you can actively control from the outer, big Circle of Concern into the small Circle of Control.

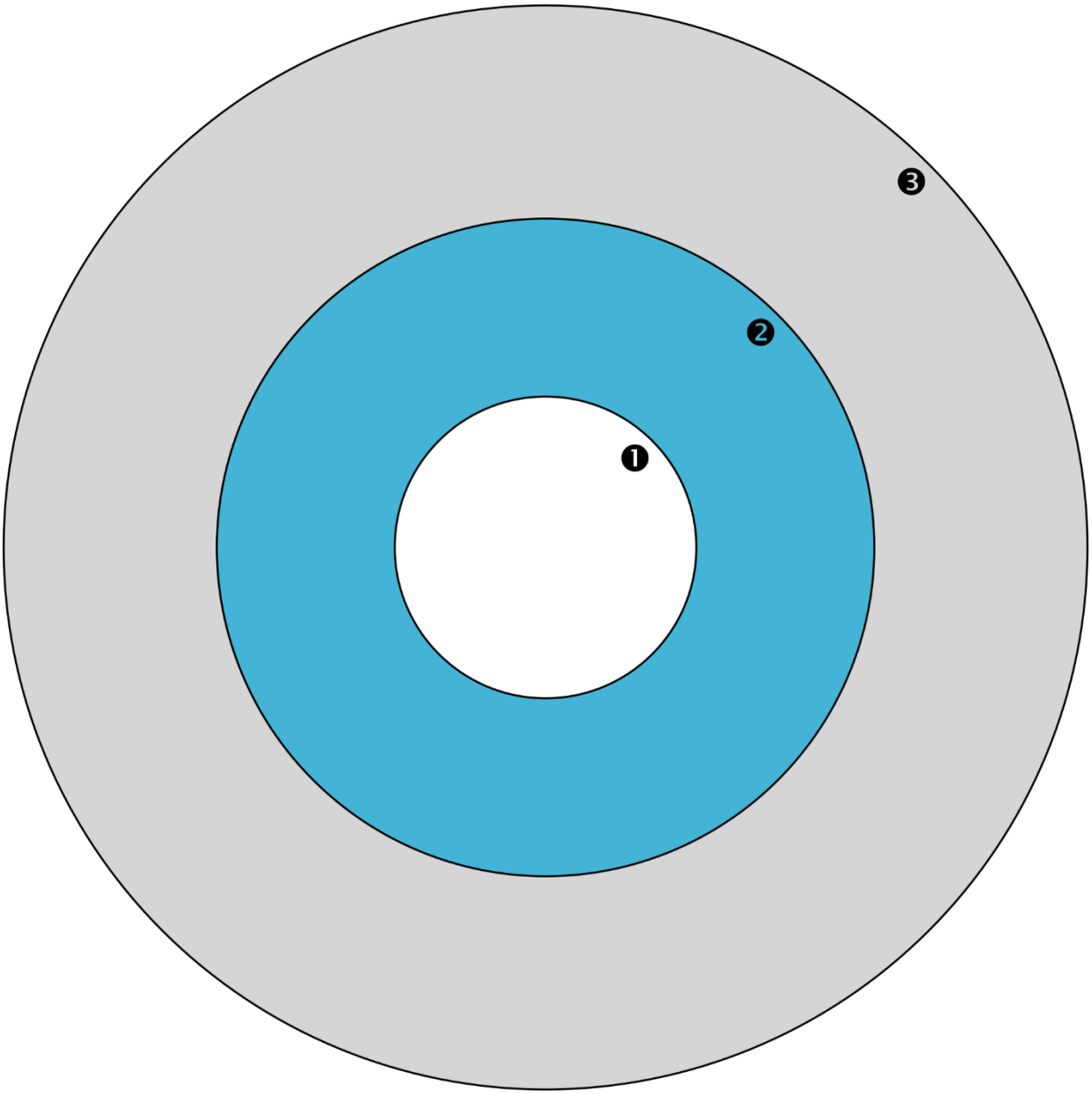
   At this point, you may think that there aren't many items that you can actively control. Maybe that's true - you can't control them, so ask yourself, "Can I influence them?"
4. Think about ways you might be able to influence the things that are still in your Circle of Concern.

   E.g. could you develop a better relationship with the person outside of the team who's making impossible demands and get to the root cause of their behaviour?

   Go through all the notes that are still in your Circle of Concern and try to move them into the Circle of Influence.

   As you explore these further, and think about them differently, you might find that some of the concerns can go straight into the Circle of Control.
5. When you have worked with the sticky notes until you can't move anything anymore, write the circumstances/issues/problems onto the actual poster and put the poster up in a place where you can easily see it every day. (The inside of a cupboard door that you open every day is a useful place to put your poster if you don't want anyone else to see it).
6. Your poster will then be a daily reminder of just how much you can control and where you need to focus your time and energy

Circles of Control, Influence & Concern.



❶ Circle of Control ❷ Circle of Influence ❸ Circle of Concern

© www.clairenewton.co.za