

CRIMINOGENIC THOUGHT PATTERNS WORKSHEET

Recognize high-risk thinking • Increase accountability • Choose a different response

This worksheet is for examining thoughts that can increase the risk of harmful, illegal, aggressive, or controlling behavior. The purpose is **accountability and behavior change**—not labeling a person as inherently criminal. Thoughts are not crimes, but repeatedly accepting high-risk thoughts without examining them can make harmful choices easier to justify.

Examples of high-risk automatic thoughts

Anger / entitlement: “They disrespected me, so I have a right to make them pay.”

Power and control: “If I do not control this, I look weak.” / “They need to do what I say.”

Black-and-white / my way or the highway: “Either they agree with me or they are against me.”

Justifying: “Anyone in my position would have done the same thing.”

Rationalizing: “I had a good reason, so what I did was acceptable.”

Minimizing: “It was not that serious.” / “Nobody really got hurt.”

Blaming: “They made me do it.” / “If they had listened, this would not have happened.”

Victim stance: “The rules are unfair to me, so I should not have to follow them.”

Superoptimism: “I can get away with it.” / “Nothing bad will happen this time.”

Cutoff: “Forget it—just do it.” / using anger, substances, or distraction to shut off consideration of consequences.

Situation / trigger	Automatic thought	Feeling / urge

Accountability check

What did I want?	Who could be affected?	Rule / boundary / right involved

FROM HIGH-RISK THINKING TO RESPONSIBLE ACTION

Slow the sequence down enough to identify the thought before acting on it.

High-risk thought	Pattern	What facts am I leaving out?

Short-term payoff I was seeking	Likely consequences to others / me

Responsible replacement thought	Specific action I can take instead

Replacement-thought examples

"Feeling disrespected does not give me permission to threaten or harm." "I can disagree without controlling the other person." "A reason explains my choice; it does not excuse it." "The impact matters even if I did not intend all of it." "I am responsible for what I choose next."

If anger or an urge to control, threaten, retaliate, stalk, or harm someone is rising: create distance, stop contact, avoid weapons and substances, and seek immediate professional or crisis support before acting.