

# MY THOUGHTS ARE CAUSING ME PAIN



T: +27 51 401 2853 / +27 58 718 5125 / +27 51 505 1989 / E: [scd@ufs.ac.za](mailto:scd@ufs.ac.za) / [scclqq@ufs.ac.za](mailto:scclqq@ufs.ac.za) / [scdsouth@ufs.a.za](mailto:scdsouth@ufs.a.za)  
[www.ufs.ac.za/kovsiecounselling](http://www.ufs.ac.za/kovsiecounselling)

*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives  
through quality, impact, and care.*



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

# MY THOUGHTS ARE CAUSING ME PAIN

Dr Melissa Barnaschone

Admit it, we all think a lot! Often, we overthink, overanalyse, and overcomplicate things. On top of that, our thoughts very often go unchecked and we believe them as if they are true, wreaking havoc in our lives without us knowing it.

We base our actions on our thoughts,  
but what if they're wrong?

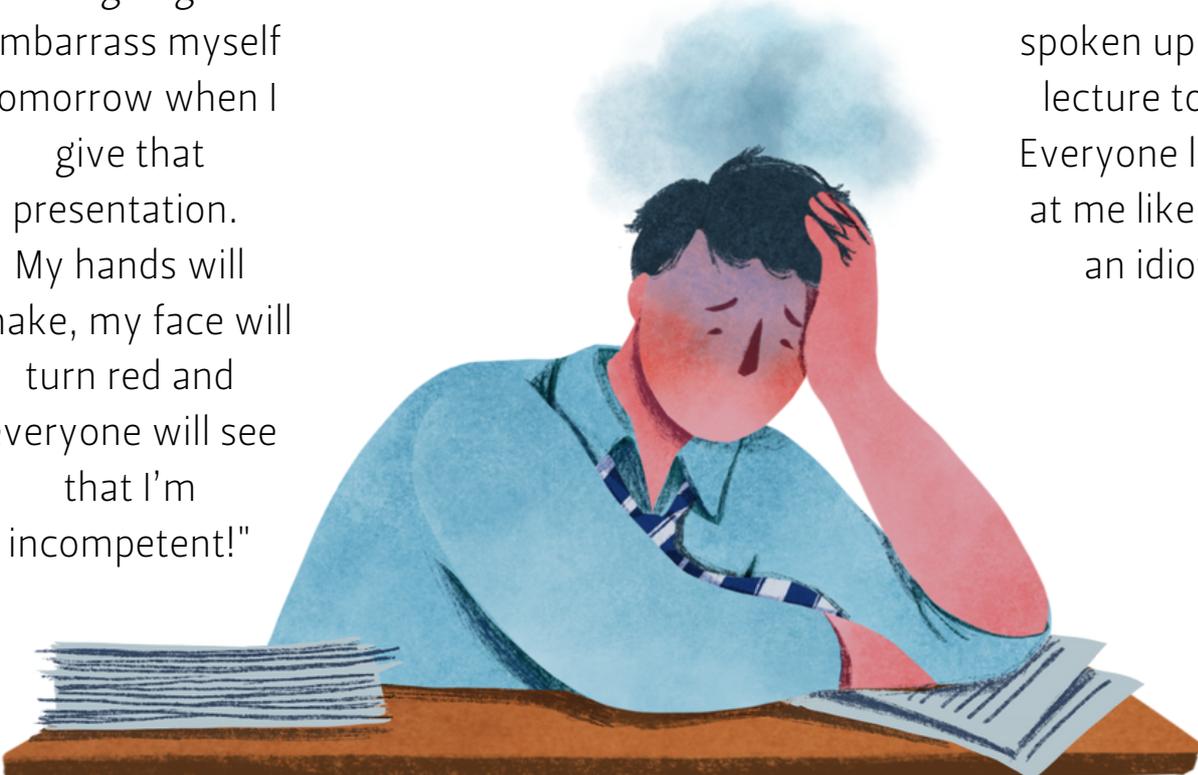
**Worrying** involves negative (often catastrophic) predictions about the future:

OUR INNER MONOLOGUE CAN INCLUDE TWO DESTRUCTIVE TYPES OF THOUGHT PATTERNS

**Ruminating** involves rehashing the past:

"I'm going to embarrass myself tomorrow when I give that presentation. My hands will shake, my face will turn red and everyone will see that I'm incompetent!"

"I shouldn't have spoken up in the lecture today. Everyone looked at me like I was an idiot."



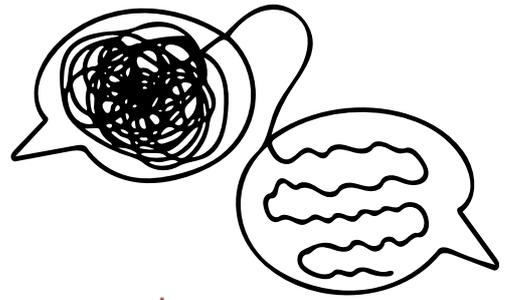
# HOW TO STOP OVERTHINKING

1

**Keep the focus on solution-building.** Dwelling on your problems is not helpful, but looking for solutions is. Instead of asking why something happened, ask yourself what you can do about it.

3

**Change the channel.** The more you try to avoid the thought from entering your mind, the more likely it is to keep popping up. Distracting yourself with an activity is the best way to change the channel. Exercise, engage in conversation on a completely different subject, think of something humorous or tranquil, or get working on a project.



2

**Challenge your thoughts.** Learn to recognise and replace your unhelpful thinking patterns with more helpful thoughts and ideas.

4

**Notice when you are thinking too much.** Awareness is the first step to putting an end to overthinking. Pay attention to the way you think. When replaying events in your mind over and over, or worrying about things you cannot control, acknowledge that your thoughts are not helpful.



Thinking too much about things isn't just a nuisance; it can take a serious toll on your mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.



***DON'T BELIEVE  
EVERYTHING  
YOU THINK***

## OTHER TECHNIQUES YOU CAN TRY

- **ANTI-PERFECTIONISM**  
Do poorly rather than do nothing at all.
- **EXPOSURE**  
The more you confront in life, the less fearful you become.
- **RELAX**  
Use exercise, meditation or mindfulness to your advantage.



# RESOURCES



## WEBSITES

[www.mentalhelp.net](http://www.mentalhelp.net)  
[www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)  
[www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk)

## APPS

ABC-Schema  
Moodkit  
Pacifica  
What's Up?

## CONTACT US AT:

+27 51 401 2853 (BFN)  
+27 58 718 5125 (QQ)  
+27 51 505 1989 (SOUTH)

[scd@ufs.ac.za](mailto:scd@ufs.ac.za)  
[scdqq@ufs.ac.za](mailto:scdqq@ufs.ac.za)  
[scdsouth@ufs.ac.za](mailto:scdsouth@ufs.ac.za)

## BOOKS

"Breaking Negative Thinking Patterns: A Schema Therapy  
Self-Help and Support Book"

by Gitta Jacob, Hannie van Genderen & Laura Seebaue

"Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice: A Revolutionary Program to  
Counter Negative Thoughts and Live Free"

by Robert W. Firestone