



Building Body Acceptance

Module 5

Overcoming Negative Predictions, Avoidance & Safety Behaviours

Introduction	2
Negative Predictions, Avoidance & Safety Behaviours	2
Challenging Negative Predictions	4
Thought Diary Example	6
Thought Diary Worksheet	7
Experimenting with Negative Predictions	8
Experiment Worksheet	10
Gradually Changing Your Behaviours	11
Stepladder Worksheet	12
The Final Word on Experiments...	13
Module Summary	14
About the Modules	15

This information provided in this document is for information purposes only. Please refer to the full disclaimer and copyright statements available at www.cci.health.gov.au regarding the information on this website before making use of such information.

Introduction

In Module 3, we discussed how to disrupt repetitive negative thoughts about your appearance and to bring your attention back to the here-and-now. This Module will discuss a particular type of negative thinking, called ‘negative predictions’, which can significantly impact your confidence to socialise, date, work or study. In this Module, you will learn to challenge and experiment with these negative predictions, and to reduce the anxiety, avoidance and safety behaviours often associated with these types of thoughts.

Negative Predictions, Avoidance and Safety Behaviours

Negative predictions are thoughts that arise when faced with a specific trigger, like a social, romantic, work or study situation. When this occurs, your mind will tend to make predictions about the situation you are facing, and these predictions will be influenced by the negative body image and unhelpful appearance assumptions you hold. Negative predictions often involve:

- Overestimating the likelihood that bad things will happen
- Exaggerating how bad things will be
- Underestimating your ability to deal with things if they don’t go well, and
- Dismissing factors that suggest things may not be as bad as you predict.

The negative predictions most common for people with BDD tend to centre on the fear that others will notice their perceived flaw, and judge them or react negatively towards them.

When you jump to such negative predictions about the situation you are facing, you tend to experience unpleasant feelings of anxiety. This is because your mind is evaluating the trigger situation as threatening in some way, and is switching on your anxiety or “fight/flight” response in order to cope with the threat. When you perceive that the trigger situation is threatening, you might also engage in particular unhelpful behaviours. You will tend to:

- **Avoid** the situation totally,
- Be overly cautious and engage in **safety behaviours**. These are behaviours that you use to help you get through the situation. For example, you might use make-up to cover your perceived flaw, only go out to dimly lit restaurants, pursue beauty treatments to try to change how you will look in the future, hold your body or face at a particular angle when conversing with others, only attend social events with trusted people, etc.
- You might also try the situation out, but **escape** when things seem too difficult or the anxiety seems overwhelming



While it makes a lot of sense to engage in these behaviours in an effort to try to control your anxiety, unfortunately by not confronting feared situations, you never have an opportunity to find out how things will really turn out. This means that your negative predictions are never really tested and therefore continue on, thus keeping the BDD cycle going.

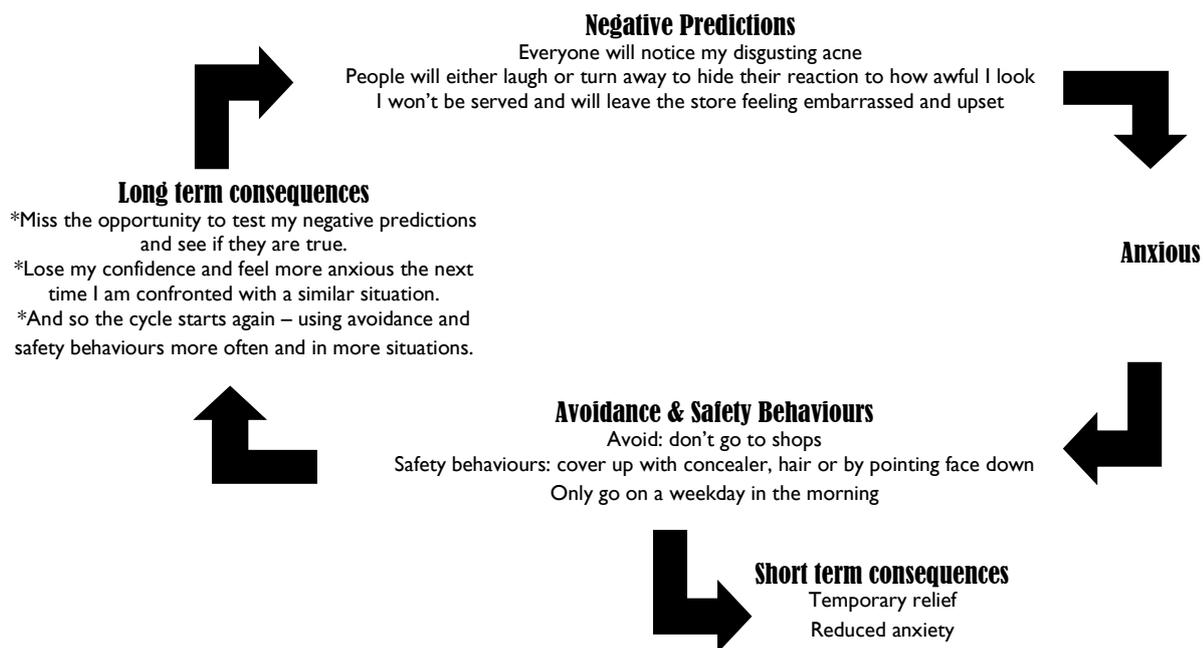
Here’s an example of negative predictions in action. Let’s say that you hold the unhelpful appearance assumption, “If I can see the problem, then everyone else must be noticing it too”. So long as you are able to keep your perceived flaw hidden, you will feel okay and have temporarily kept your fears at bay. However, the situation is about to change. You have to go to your local shops. You now have a situation that is triggering off your unhelpful appearance assumption, because you have to go out in public and are ‘at risk’ of having others notice your flaw as well.

Building Body Acceptance



At this point, your mind will start evaluating the situation as threatening in some way. You might have negative predictions such as, “Everyone will notice my disgusting acne,” “People will either laugh or turn away to hide their reaction to how awful I look,” or “I won’t be served and will leave the store feeling embarrassed and upset”. As a result of these negative predictions, you are probably starting to feel anxious. It’s also at this point that you might choose how to approach this situation.

You could avoid the situation totally by deciding not to go to the shops. If instead you decide that you will go, you might then think about how you could make sure that people do not notice your acne. As such, you might try to cover up by wearing concealer, carefully arranging your hair to cover your face, or by keeping your face pointed down so that others don’t make eye contact with you. You could also place some conditions on going, such as only going on a weekday morning when you are aware there are less people around.



As you can see from the diagram above, this sequence of events starts to look like a vicious cycle. When you experience negative predictions, they create anxiety. This in turn leads to efforts to control or reduce the anxiety by avoiding those things that concern you most or by using safety behaviours to help you confront them. *In the short term*, you may feel that you have controlled your anxiety and the situation (after all, no one can directly criticise your appearance if you don’t leave the house) and this may bring you some temporary relief. However, *in the long term*, you are unable to test out whether your predictions are actually true and so go on believing them, feeling anxious, and you are likely to continue to avoid similar situations in the future. In addition, because avoidance provided some temporary relief, you may start avoiding more and more situations over time. As a consequence, your anxiety and avoidance are likely to restrict your life and become more debilitating.

The remainder of this Module will introduce a way of breaking this vicious cycle. First, you will learn to challenge the negative predictions driving your anxiety and your avoidance behaviours. Second, you will learn to experiment with your negative predictions by gradually approaching feared situations and dropping safety behaviours. Doing these things will help you overcome negative thoughts about your appearance.

Building Body Acceptance

Challenging Negative Predictions

One way to address negative predictions is to challenge them ‘head on.’ In cognitive behavioural therapy, this is also called ‘disputation.’ Remember that our thoughts and predictions are often *opinions* we have picked up or learned, rather than facts. Therefore, rather than blindly accepting our thoughts, instead we can question them, particularly if they are causing us distress and leading to unhelpful avoidance or safety behaviours.

To challenge or dispute your negative predictions means that you dissect them, evaluate how accurate or likely they are, examine what evidence you base your predictions on, and look at any positive aspects you may be ignoring.

A helpful way to think about this is to imagine that you are a detective - collecting evidence for and against a case, considering other possibilities, and trying to work out the most accurate and balanced way of thinking about the case. Evaluating these thoughts isn’t something you should try to do in your head, as this can get messy and confusing. The best way is to write it down and we suggest using a Thought Diary to help you through this process. Thought Diaries are designed to guide you through the challenging process step by step, on paper, making things clearer for you.

On the next few pages are instructions and an example of how to complete a Thought Diary. There is also a blank Thought Diary for you to practise on.

The Thought Diary will first ask you to **Identify Negative Predictions**. To help you do that, first ask yourself:

- What is the situation bothering me?

Then:

- What am I predicting?
- What am I expecting?
- What do I see happening in this situation?
- What conclusions am I jumping to?

It is important to be **very specific** regarding what you predict will happen. For example, exactly what will other people do or not do? If someone were watching your negative prediction come to fruition, what exactly would they be seeing? A vague prediction might sound like “People will judge me”. A specific prediction might sound like “People will point at me, laugh at me and yell nasty comments like *freak*”

After you have written all your predictions down, underline the most distressing of these thoughts and rate the strength of your belief between 0 and 100%.

You’ll then need to ask yourself – when I am thinking like this, what do I feel?

- What emotion(s) am I feeling? (e.g., worry, fear, sadness, concern, anxiety)
- Rate the intensity of your emotion(s) between 0 and 100%

Building Body Acceptance

Once you have completed the first section, you are ready to begin to **Challenge Negative Predictions**. Here are the questions asked in your Thought Diary to challenge these types of thoughts:

- What is the factual evidence *for* this prediction?
- What is the factual evidence *against* this prediction?
- What is the worst that could happen?
- What is the best that could happen?
- What is the most likely thing that will happen?
- How does it affect me when I expect the worst?
- What could I do to cope if 'the worst' did happen?
- How else could I view the situation?
- Are there any positives in me or the situation that I am ignoring?



The ultimate aim of doing this Thought Diary is for you to **Develop Realistic Predictions**. Once you have explored the answers to the above 'challenging' questions in your Thought Diary, ask yourself:

- What would be a more realistic prediction or thought about this situation?

The final step is then to:

- Re-rate how much you now believe your original negative prediction,
- Re-rate the intensity of the emotions that you were originally feeling now.

Notice that the focus of the thought diary is about realistic thinking, not positive thinking. A realistic prediction might sound something like (e.g., "it is most likely others will be too wrapped up in themselves to notice my appearance"). Whereas an overly positive prediction might sound something like (e.g., "people will think I am beautiful and want to be around me"). Realistic predictions are far more useful than positive predictions because they are in tune with reality and hence more believable. By being more believable, they are therefore more likely to reduce the anxiety we might be feeling about the situation we are facing. If we were to just make positive predictions that were equally as unrealistic as our original negative predictions, we might be setting ourselves up for disappointment.

Try using a Thought Diary the next time you notice you are feeling anxious, nervous or uncertain about yourself and your appearance prior to entering a situation that involves being around other people. Pause when you notice these sorts of feelings, and see if you can find any negative predictions or conclusions you are jumping to, or bad outcomes you are envisaging.

If you work through the entire Thought Diary for challenging your negative predictions, it is likely that you will experience a decrease in the strength of your prediction and therefore a decrease in the intensity of your emotions. Using a Thought Diary to develop realistic predictions will therefore help you approach previously avoided situations, people, and activities with less fear and distress. While it will take some effort and practice, we recommend that you continue to use the thought diaries until it becomes second nature to stop and question your thoughts.

Thought Diary – Example

Identify Negative Predictions

What is the situation bothering me?
<i>Having to walk through a shopping centre with lots of people around</i>
What am I predicting? What am I expecting? What do I see happening in this situation? What conclusions am I jumping to?
<i>Everyone will notice my disgusting acne. People will either laugh or turn away to hide their reaction to how awful I look. I won't be served and will leave the store feeling embarrassed and upset.</i>
Underline the most distressing thought and then rate how much I believe it (0-100%): 80%
When I am thinking like this, what emotion(s) am I feeling? (Rate the intensity 0-100%) <i>Anxious (95%)</i>

Challenge Negative Predictions

What is the factual evidence <u>for</u> this thought?	What is the evidence <u>against</u> this thought?
<i>- I do have acne - I was teased during high school for having bad acne</i>	<i>- I have been to the shops before and, as far as I could tell, was not laughed at - Most people at the shops are adults and probably behave differently to my high school classmates</i>
What is the worst that could happen?	What is the best that could happen?
<i>- Someone could laugh and point at me, encouraging other people to look and laugh too</i>	<i>- I could go to the shops, have no one take any notice of my acne, get what I need and leave</i>
What is the most likely thing that will happen?	How does it affect me when I think about the worst?
<i>- Some people might notice, but probably wouldn't react openly</i>	<i>- It makes me anxious and I find it hard to not think about my acne - I keep touching my acne to try to cover it up, which probably draws more attention to it</i>
What could I do to cope if 'the worst' did happen?	
<i>I could walk away and tell myself that there is something wrong with the other person if they think it is OK to laugh and point at someone else's insecurities. I could also remind myself of all the times I have been to the shops and this hasn't happened. It would be hard and upsetting, but I could get through it.</i>	
How else could I view the situation?	
<i>I guess most people at the shops are there to do something like pay their bills or get some groceries. They are probably concentrating on their own jobs rather than looking around and scrutinising other people's appearance.</i>	
Are there any positives in me or the situation that I am ignoring?	
<i>I have a few close friends, so not everyone judges me based on how I look. That being said, I have been told that I have a nice smile so maybe people notice that first. I guess my close friends opinions matter more to me than any strangers at the shops.</i>	

Develop Realistic Predictions

What's a more realistic prediction or thought about this situation?	
<i>Most people will probably be too busy with their own shopping to notice my acne. Even if someone does notice and reacts negatively, I guess this says more about their personality than it does about me. The people who really matter accept me as I am.</i>	
How much do I believe my original prediction now (0-100%)	40%
How intense are my emotions now (0-100%)	50%

Thought Diary

Identify Negative Predictions

What is the situation bothering me?
What am I predicting? What am I expecting? What do I see happening in this situation? What conclusions am I jumping to?
Underline the most distressing thought and then rate how much I believe it (0-100%):
When I am thinking like this, what emotion(s) am I feeling? (Rate the intensity 0-100%)

Challenge Negative Predictions

What is the factual evidence <u>for</u> this thought?	What is the evidence <u>against</u> this thought?
What is the worst that could happen?	What is the best that could happen?
What is the most likely thing that will happen?	How does it affect me when I think about the worst?
What could I do to cope if 'the worst' did happen?	
How else could I view the situation?	
Are there any positives in me or the situation that I am ignoring?	

Develop Realistic Predictions

What's a more realistic prediction or thought about this situation?
How much do I believe my original prediction now (0-100%)
How intense are my emotions now (0-100%)

Experimenting with Negative Predictions

By challenging your negative predictions as you did in the last section (using a Thought Diary), you can now be in a better position to approach situations with an open mind and with more realistic and balanced thoughts. The next step of challenging negative predictions is to test them out to see how accurate they really are. This is like a scientist doing an experiment with your negative predictions, to test how true they are.



As with a Thought Diary, there are some steps you have to work through to properly experiment with your negative predictions. On the next few pages are instructions and an example of how to do this. Following that is a blank worksheet for you to practise on.

Step 1: Identify Your Negative Predictions

From the first section of your Thought Diary, you will already know what the situation is, your negative prediction for this situation, and how much you believe it will happen. In addition to this, also write down **specifically** how you will know if your negative prediction has come true. Ask yourself: *What exactly would happen? What would an outsider see happening? What would you be doing? What would others be doing?*

The Situation: <i>Having to walk through a shopping centre with lots of people around</i>
My Negative Predictions: <i>Everyone will notice my disgusting acne. People will either laugh or turn away to hide their reaction to how awful I look. I won't be served and will leave the store feeling embarrassed and upset.</i>
How much do I believe it will happen (0-100%)? 80%
How will I know it has happened? <i>As I walk through the shops - people will look at my face and either laugh or be shocked. I will know they are shocked if they gasp and raise their eyebrows. I will see people start laughing while they are looking right at me. I won't be served in the shop even if I ask for help.</i>

Step 2: Identify Your Avoidance and Safety Behaviours

Next you need to identify what unhelpful behaviours you might be engaging in to cope with your negative predictions and anxiety (e.g., avoidance of people, places or activities, safety behaviours such as only entering a social event if your clothes or hair are adjusted a particular way, or if the light is dim).

<i>Trying to cover up (e.g., wearing concealer, arranging my hair over my face, keeping my face pointing down so others don't make eye contact with me), placing conditions on going (e.g., only going early on a week day when less people are around), avoidance (e.g., not going at all).</i>
--

Step 3: Remember Your Realistic Predictions

Next remind yourself of the new perspective that you developed from your Thought Diary, as you will also want to test your new realistic prediction against your old negative prediction.

<i>Most people will probably be too busy with their own shopping to notice my acne. Even if someone does notice and reacts negatively, I guess this says more about their personality than it does about me. The people who really matter accept me as I am.</i>
--

Step 4: Identify Your Helpful Behaviours & Set Up Your Experiment

This involves noting what it is you will do differently to test out your negative predictions, and see if they are accurate. This is really setting up the experiment and specifying what it is you will actually do. This will generally involve confronting rather than avoiding the situation, staying in the situation rather than escaping, and dropping safety behaviours to see how you go by yourself and without imposing conditions and restrictions on you entering the situation.

<i>Go to the shopping centre without covering my acne with concealer or my hair. Keep my face raised so I can see whether people are looking at me or going about their own business. I could sit on a seat for a</i>

while and keep a tally of how many people look at me and then laugh or are shocked, and how many don't even notice. If no shop assistants offer to help me, I can ask for help rather than leave immediately.

Step 5: Carry Out the Experiment

Follow through with what you set out to do in Step 4. Carry out the experiment, engaging in the more helpful behaviours you have identified, and see what happens.

Step 6: Evaluate the Results

The last step is to reflect on what actually happened and how this compares to what you were predicting in Step 1. What were the results of the experiment? What did you observe? How does this compare to your negative predictions? Which thoughts did the results support (negative predictions or realistic thoughts)? What was it like to carry the experiment out and act differently? What did you learn from the experience?

What actually happened? *I found that only five people looked at me out of the first thirty people who walked past. None of them laughed or appeared shocked. They probably only looked at me because I was staring at them. I wasn't served immediately in the shop, but that seemed to be because they were busy. Once I made eye contact with one of the assistants, they came over and helped me straight away.*

How much did my negative predictions come true (0-100%)? 5%

Were my negative predictions or realistic predictions supported by the experiment? *My realistic predictions.*

What was it like to act differently? *It was hard at first, but not spending so much time getting ready to go out was a nice change. Not covering up showed me that I can go out and interact with people I don't know that well.*

What did I learn? *This shows me that what I predict will happen in situations may not be entirely true. Others are less focussed on how I look than I am. So I may need to make my expectations more realistic, act accordingly, and see what happens again.*

If the results of your experiment do not support your negative predictions, which is often the case, that is great! It will be important to remember that the next time you find yourself making negative predictions. It will also be important to reflect and ask yourself "What does this mean for me as a person?"

However, should your negative predictions be supported, which may happen at times, it will be important to ask yourself some questions about this. Ask yourself: *Were there any other reasons for the result, aside from how I look? What else was happening at that time? Are there other ways of viewing what happened? What does this say about the other person if they are going to respond in that way? What could I learn from the experience to improve or change things in the future?*

It is important to note that not everything we think is inaccurate, or has no grain of truth to it. However, often when we have problems with our body image, we predict negative outcomes in all social situations, and act accordingly. We never step back to question these predictions or test them out. Maybe our predictions don't hold up at all, or are only relevant to very select circumstances, but we are living our life as if they apply to every situation we face. This becomes a habit that is important to break. The automatic process of predicting the worst, because of our negative view of ourselves, is what we want to change. It is important to tackle this because if you can make more realistic predictions in your day-to-day life, you will think and act differently, in a manner inconsistent with being someone who has a poor body image. When you do this, you will start to gather new information about yourself, which will allow you to see yourself in a less harsh, more positive, and kinder light.

Now, it's time for you to do an experiment. Use the worksheet on the next page to help you plan an experiment to test out your negative predictions.

Building Body Acceptance

Negative Predictions Experiment

Step 1: Identify Negative Predictions

The Situation:
My Negative Predictions:
How much do I believe it will happen (0-100%)?
How will I know it has happened?

Step 2: Identify My Avoidance and Safety Behaviours

--

Step 3: Remember My Realistic Predictions

--

Step 4: Identify My Helpful Behaviours & Set Up Experiment

--

Step 5: Carry Out the Experiment (from Step 4)

Step 6: Evaluate the Results

What actually happened?
How much did my negative predictions come true (0-100%)?
Which thoughts were supported by the experiment (negative predictions or realistic predictions)?
What was it like to behave differently?
What did I learn from this experiment?

Building Body Acceptance

Gradually Changing Your Behaviours



In some circumstances, you may be able to get straight in and do your experiment. In other situations, it might feel too overwhelming or anxiety-provoking to drop all of your safety behaviours and start approaching previously avoided situations. If this is the case, you may need to consider gradually dropping your safety and avoidance behaviours.

For instance, take the prior example where the person was concerned about others evaluating them negatively for having acne. Several possible safety or avoidance behaviours were identified, including: wearing concealer; arranging hair to cover their face; angling face downward to avoid eye contact; only going to the shops early on a weekday when less people are around; and not going at all.

To drop all of these safety behaviours at once might be too overwhelming so instead we recommend that you use a *Stepladder* to help you identify the gradual steps needed to test out your negative predictions. Just like in Module 4, each step on the stepladder can be given a “Distress” rating between 0 and 100, where 0 = this step is not distressing at all, and 100 = this step is highly distressing. Your stepladder might have fewer or more “in between” steps than the example given below, but the idea is to gradually build up your experiments until you have been able to truly test your negative predictions.

STEPLADDER EXAMPLE

Negative prediction to test: <i>Everyone will notice my disgusting acne. People will either laugh or turn away to hide their reaction to how awful I look. I won't be served and will leave the store feeling embarrassed and upset.</i>		DISTRESS (0-100) 95
STEP	DISTRESS	
1	<i>Go to shopping centre, on a weekday morning, wearing concealer but with hair brushed off face, keep head raised so I can see reactions, sit on seat and keep tally of negative, neutral and positive reactions from other people</i>	30
2	<i>Repeat step 1 but without concealer</i>	45
3	<i>Go to shopping centre, on a weekday morning, wearing concealer but with hair brushed off face, keep head raised so I can see reactions, approach shop assistants and ask for directions, keep tally of how many people help vs those who don't serve me</i>	55
4	<i>Repeat step 3 but without concealer</i>	60
5	<i>Go to shopping centre, on a busy weekend morning, wearing concealer but with hair brushed off face, keep head raised so I can see reactions, sit on seat and keep tally of negative, neutral and positive reactions from other people</i>	75
6	<i>Repeat step 5 but without concealer</i>	85
7	<i>Go to shopping centre, on a busy weekend morning, wearing concealer but with hair brushed off face, keep head raised so I can see reactions, approach shop assistants and ask for directions, keep tally of how many people help vs those who don't serve me</i>	90
8	<i>Repeat step 7 but without concealer</i>	95

You can use the Stepladder on the next page to break your experiments down in to more manageable steps. Remember, you only need to use the stepladder if the anxiety involved in stopping your current avoidance and safety behaviours is too overwhelming for you, and needs to be made more manageable.

Building Body Acceptance

Another important thing to do is that each time you attempt a step from your step ladder, try to keep track of how it goes by recording it on the *Negative Predictions Experiment Worksheet* on page 10. Just as all good scientists would record the results of each experiment they did, so to it would be good for you to record the results of each experiment you do. Therefore, you may need to make lots of copies of this worksheet, so you can do lots of experimenting!!!

MY STEPLADDER

Negative prediction to test:	DISTRESS (0-100)
------------------------------	---------------------

	STEP	DISTRESS
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Note: remember you don't need to have 10 steps, it could be less or could be more, whatever makes the most sense to you. The main thing is to make sure the jump between each step represents a 'manageable challenge', rather than a huge overwhelming leap!!!

Building Body Acceptance

The Final Word on Experiments...

Some people ask “how many times do I need to do an experiment?” The answer to this varies for each individual. The bottom line is that you need to keep doing experiments (which may involve either repeating the same experiment or finding new experiments) until you have fully tested your negative predictions, are thinking more realistically, feeling better, and living the life you want to be leading.

Using the acne example we have followed in this module. They would need to keep doing their shopping centre experiment until they had fully tested their negative predictions (i.e., *everyone will notice my disgusting acne, people will either laugh or turn away, I won't be served*), and now truly believed their realistic predictions (i.e., *most people will probably be too busy with their own shopping to notice my acne*), and no longer found shopping centres distressing. Once this was achieved they might set new experiments in other situations that still trouble them (e.g., socialising), now that going to the shops is no longer an issue for them.

Some people also ask “how frequently do I need to do experiments?” The answer is the more frequent the better. If you just do these types of experiments every now and then, it will take much longer to overcome your distress about your appearance. You need to experiment as often as is possible and appropriate given the situations you are tackling.

You know, sometimes a powerful way of experimenting with our negative predictions and seeing just how much people notice and care about our appearance, can be to do an experiment where you purposely exaggerate your perceived flaw (e.g., draw red spots on your face to exaggerate acne). Now I know this sounds very scary, but hear us out. People with BDD often think that the “bandwidth” of what people notice and find acceptable when it comes to physical appearance is very narrow. By pushing the limits and exaggerating physical flaws, we have the opportunity to discover that there is actually a lot of leeway in what people notice and accept when it comes to physical appearance, and so the bandwidth may be much broader than we thought. The idea is probably still sounding pretty scary to you. Think of it this way, if people don't notice or react to these exaggerations in our appearance, what does that say about how much they will notice your typical appearance concerns, and what does this also say about the importance of our appearance to others in day to day life? If you can, rope in a trusted friend to do the experiment with you to make it less scary and give you moral support. Believe it or not, by the end of it all some people even find it a fun experience to try something so radical!

Finally, as already mentioned if an experiment doesn't go well (e.g., someone does make a very negative comment about the specific body area that concerns you – which is unusual in our experience), it is important to look for reasons for this other than it being about you. It is also not the time to back off from experimenting, no matter how much you want to. Keep going! Repeat the experiment. No good scientist would make wide sweeping conclusions based on one experiment – so you shouldn't either. If you are repeating the experiment and it still doesn't go well, try the experiment in slightly different situations or with different people. This may allow you to learn that with select situations or select people things may not go well (and you can cope with that!), but there may be many other situations and other people where things do go well, and hence life doesn't need to be so restricted.

Module Summary

- Negative predictions occur when faced with a specific trigger (e.g., a social, romantic, work or study situation), that activates your unhelpful appearance assumptions, bringing your negative body image to the forefront.
- Negative predictions involve:
 - Overestimating the likelihood that bad things will happen
 - Exaggerating how bad things will be
 - Underestimating your ability to deal with things if they don't go well, and
 - Dismissing factors that suggest things may not be as bad as you predict.
- Negative predictions can bring about feelings of anxiety, and lead to unhelpful avoidance and safety behaviours.
- Avoiding people, situations or activities, or using safety behaviours to cope with them, may reduce the anxiety you feel in the short term, but in the long term can keep your BDD going.
- One way to change our negative predictions is to challenge or dispute them using a Thought Diary. This involves identifying what you are predicting, challenging your predictions, and developing more realistic predictions about the situation.
- Another way to overcome negative predictions is to experiment with them. This involves planning experiments to test the accuracy of your predictions. Such experiments will often involve dropping your safety and avoidance behaviours, which can be done in a gradual 'stepladder' fashion to make in more manageable.



Coming up next ...

In the next module, you will learn how to adjust your old unhelpful appearance assumptions and develop more helpful ones.

About The Modules

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Rebecca Anderson (MPsych¹; PhD²)

Clinical Psychologist

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Dr Lisa Saulsman (MPsych¹; PhD²)

Senior Clinical Psychologist

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Dr Peter McEvoy (MPsych¹; PhD²)

Senior Clinical Psychologist

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Dr. Anthea Fursland (Ph.D.²)

Senior Clinical Psychologist

Centre for Clinical Interventions

Paula Nathan (MPsych¹)

Director, Centre for Clinical Interventions

Adjunct Senior Lecturer, School of Psychiatry and Clinical

Neuroscience, The University of Western Australia

Sharon Ridley (MPsych¹)

Clinical Psychologist

Centre for Clinical Interventions

¹Masters of Psychology (Clinical Psychology)

²Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical Psychology)

BACKGROUND

The concepts and strategies in these modules have been developed from evidence based psychological practice, primarily Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy (CBT). CBT for Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) is based on the approach that BDD is a result of problematic cognitions (thoughts) and behaviours.

REFERENCES

These are some of the professional references used to create the modules in this information package.

Cash, T. (1997). *The body image workbook*. Oakland: New Harbinger Publications.

Feusner, J., Neziroglu, F., Wilhelm, S., Mancusi, L., & Bohon, C. (2010). What causes BDD: Research Findings and a Proposed Model. *Psychiatric Annals*, 40, 349-355.

Knoesen, N. & Castle, D. (2009). Treatment intervention for Body Dysmorphic Disorder. In S.J. Paxton & P. Hay (Eds.). *Interventions for body image and eating disorders*. (pp. 284-309). Melbourne: IP Communications.

Phillips, K. (1996). *The broken mirror. Understanding and treating Body Dysmorphic Disorder*. New York: Oxford.

Ross, J. & Gowers, S. (2011). Body Dysmorphic Disorder. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment*, 17, 142-149.

Thomson, J.K. (1990). *Body image disturbance: assessment and treatment*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Veale, D. (2010). Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Body Dysmorphic Disorder. *Psychiatric Annals*, 40, 333-340.

Veale, D., Willson, R., & Clarke, A. (2009). *Overcoming body image problems including Body Dysmorphic Disorder*. London: Robinson.

Veale, D. & Neziroglu, F. (2010). *Body Dysmorphic Disorder: A treatment manual*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Wilhelm, S., Phillips, K., Fama, J., Greenberg, J., & Steketee, G. (2011). Modular Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Body Dysmorphic Disorder. *Behavior Therapy*, 42, 624-633.

“BUILDING BODY ACCEPTANCE”

This module forms part of:

Anderson, R., Saulsman, L., McEvoy, P., Fursland, A., Nathan, P., & Ridley, S. (2012). *Building Body Acceptance: Overcoming Body Dysmorphic Disorder*. Perth, Western Australia: Centre for Clinical Interventions.

ISBN: 0 9757995 9 2

Created: November 2012