

# STRONG TEENS

**Grades  
9–12**



## **A Social & Emotional Learning Curriculum**

by

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15  
minutes

## Review

To activate prior knowledge, review and discuss previous topics and main ideas. Obtain 3–5 adequate ideas.

### Sample Script

*During our last meeting, we talked about how to recognize and understand six common thinking errors. Raise your hand if you can tell me an important idea we learned in our last class.*

### Ideas Discussed from Lesson 6

- Identifying negative thought patterns can create a healthy lifestyle.
- What are some common thinking errors?
- How do you apply negative thought patterns and thinking errors to your own life?

### Review of Thinking Errors

The previous lesson’s homework assignment will be used in Looking for Evidence and Learning to Reframe Negative Thoughts, Activity C, for discussion and group activity.

Use Supplement 7.1 as an overhead transparency. (This transparency was also part of last week’s lesson.) Tell the students that they are going to review the thinking errors and then move on to the “next level” where they will start to change negative thought patterns.

### Sample Script

*I am going to show you those thinking errors again because, in today’s lesson, we are moving into the “next level,” where we will start thinking of ways to change those negative thoughts if ever we should have them.*

Review the six negative thinking errors. Use questions such as “What was another one?” or “What can you tell me about this one?” Expose one image at a time, providing hints and feedback.

The thinking errors are as follows:

- *Binocular vision*—looking at things in a way that makes them seem bigger or smaller than they really are. (Example: You’re invited to a beach party. It will be lots of fun, but you don’t know how to swim or don’t want to have to wear a bathing suit, and that is all you can think of.)
- *Black-and-white thinking*—looking at things in only extreme or opposite ways (e.g., thinking of things as being good or bad, never or always, all or none, friend or enemy) (Example: If my girlfriend wants to break up, then she must hate me. There is no other explanation.)
- *Dark glasses*—thinking about only the negative parts of things (Example: I messed up on a major school project, so now my whole day is ruined.)
- *Fortune-telling*—making predictions about what will happen in the future without enough evidence (Example: Natalie is not going to like the present I got for her.)



- *Making it personal*—blaming yourself for things that are not your fault (Example: If I had stopped the dog and played with him, he wouldn't have been hit by the bicycle.)
- *Blame game*—blaming others for things that you should take responsibility for (Example: You blame the teacher for a bad grade when you didn't study for the test.)

2–5  
minutes

## Introduction

Communicate the lesson's purpose and objectives clearly. Introduce the concept of changing thinking errors to positive or more realistic thoughts.

### **Sample Script**

*We spent some time reviewing six kinds of thinking errors. We will now learn to change those thinking errors to positive or more realistic thoughts.*

20  
minutes

## Looking for Evidence and Learning How to Reframe Negative Thoughts

Use the following sample script or your own words to describe to the students that identifying negative thought patterns and thinking errors is only part of the process. Use an example to describe a process that involves the following:

1. Identifying (recognizing) a negative thought pattern
2. Making a decision regarding the validity of the thought (i.e., Is this based on a thinking error or on real evidence?)
3. Replacing or reframing the negative thought if it is based on a thinking error

### **Sample Script**

*We all have negative thoughts at some point. Sometimes the negative thoughts we have are normal reactions to bad situations. These negative thoughts help us make decisions about our safety and our choices. For example, you may have negative thoughts about failing a test. When you look for evidence about this type of "negative thought," you might find that some thoughts could be true or reasonable. For example, if you don't study for the test, you probably will do poorly on it. On the other hand, if you study really hard for the test, there is no evidence that you will do poorly.*



### **Activity A: Using Evidence**

Use Supplement 7.2 as an overhead transparency to discuss using evidence to examine our thoughts. Help students understand the process of identifying a negative thought using evidence to determine if the thought is reasonable. Review each situation, asking the following questions:

- What is the evidence?
- Is it realistic/reasonable?



### **Sample Script**

*We all remember what thinking errors look like and how they can lead to negative thoughts. So, what can we do with our negative thoughts? Knowing that we are having a negative thought is just the beginning of the process. Next, we have to decide whether or not the negative thoughts are based on reasonable evidence. We can find evidence by asking ourselves questions about the negative thoughts. Here is how it would look if we wrote it down when we had a negative thought.*

Refer to Supplement 7.2 for examples.



### **Activity B: Reframing**

Use Supplement 7.3 as an overhead transparency to discuss how to identify thinking errors and how to use methods of reframing. Work through the examples, explaining the rationale behind the reframing process (i.e., reframing is simply an exercise that involves taking the same negative information and placing it into a more likely or realistic frame). Encourage discussion and input from the students regarding their experiences with negative thoughts.

#### **Sample Script**

*In order to change the negative thoughts that come to mind in these types of situations, there are a couple of different activities you can do. One of the things to do is called reframing. Reframing means to change the negative thoughts around. When you reframe something, you take the negative information and put it into a more realistic situation. Here are some examples of reframing.*

Refer to Supplement 7.3.

Discuss with students how in some situations you may not have control or the ability to change the circumstances, while in other situations you may need to take responsibility for making changes.



### **Activity C: Homework from Lesson 6**

Use Supplement 7.4 as an overhead transparency, and ask students to take out their homework assignment from Lesson 6. Use students' examples to practice reframing. The students will see how reframing and identifying thinking errors can be useful in everyday situations. Use Supplement 7.4 to guide this process as a group activity.

#### **Sample Script**

*We are going to use the homework you did last week when we talked about how to identify negative thoughts and thinking errors. We are going to use examples from that homework to practice reframing.*

Ask students to volunteer a negative thought based on their homework responses. Guide students through the Changing Thinking Errors process using the following steps:

1. What was the negative thought?
2. What is the evidence for or against the negative thought?

3. Was there a thinking error? Yes or No?
4. What was the thinking error?
5. What is a more realistic way of thinking about it? (Reframing the thinking error)

If there is time, ask for volunteers from the class to role-play some of the homework examples. Have the students model situations in which negative thoughts could potentially have been reframed.

2–5  
minutes

## Closure

Gather your students together, and review the lesson's main points. Close the lesson with a few thoughts to tie Lessons 6 and 7 together. These may be responses to questions the students have had or comments they made during the lesson. Be sure to encourage students to use these skills daily.

### Main Ideas

What are the steps of Changing Thinking Errors?

- Identify negative thoughts.
- Look for evidence for or against.
- Decide if there was a thinking error. If so, which thinking error?
- Use reframing to think about it realistically or more positively.



Use Supplement 7.5, Feelings Thermometer, as an overhead transparency for students to view.

#### Sample Script

*Everyone has negative thoughts from time to time. Sometimes, we have to think about our negative thoughts to decide if we should try to change them. We can use the thermometer to gauge our negative thoughts. If our negative thoughts are getting high, this could be a good time to use reframing. Sometimes negative thoughts cannot be reframed, and, in these cases, it is important to find something positive to focus on in order to take responsibility for our feelings and behaviors.*

2–5  
minutes

## Homework Handout



Pass out the homework handout, Supplement 7.6, Changing Thinking Errors. Explain how to fill in the columns. Encourage the students to identify at least two events for the chart. Remind the students not to identify whom they are referring to in the homework.

#### Sample Script

*Just like the assignment we did in class today (Supplement 7.4), for homework I would like you to think about more situations where negative thinking can be changed. You will be using the same form that we just used for our discussion.*



# Common Thinking Errors



**Binocular vision**

Looking at things in a way that makes them seem bigger or smaller than they really are



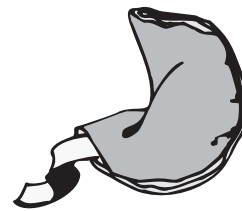
**Black-and-white thinking**

Looking at things in only extreme or opposite ways (for example, thinking of things as being good or bad, never or always, all or none)



**Dark glasses**

Thinking about only the negative parts of things



**Fortune-telling**

Making predictions about what will happen in the future without enough evidence



**Making it personal**

Blaming yourself for things that are not your fault



**Blame game**

Blaming others for things you should take responsibility for



# Evidence For or Against

Negative thought	What is the evidence?		Is it realistic/ reasonable?
<p><b>A</b></p> <p>My friend never chooses me when it's time to choose sides for dodge ball. He hates me.</p>	<p><b>For?</b></p> <p>Over the past week, whenever we've played dodge ball, Marcus has not chosen me for his team.</p>	<p><b>Against?</b></p> <p>He plays with me at my house. We eat lunch together. He laughs at my jokes. He is really serious about dodge ball. I'm not.</p>	<p>If he hated me, he probably would not want to spend any time with me or even talk to me.</p>
<p><b>B</b></p> <p>I am such an awful dancer. I will never make the dance team. I'm never good at anything.</p>	<p><b>For?</b></p> <p>All of the other students are catching on to the dance steps. I keep falling. I have failed both tryouts.</p>	<p><b>Against?</b></p> <p>I cannot predict the future. I can't be good at everything, and there are other things that I am better at.</p>	<p>The team leader has some very specific requirements for someone who makes the team, and, so far, I have not been able to do them. It is reasonable to expect that I might not make the dance team this time around. There are other activities I can join instead.</p>



# Reframing Negative Thoughts

What was my negative thought?	What thinking error did I make?	What is a more realistic way of thinking about it? (Reframe)
My friend never chooses me when it's time to choose sides for dodge ball. He hates me.	Black-and-white thinking	Marcus probably knows that I don't really like to play dodge ball, so he picks other people who like to play.
I am such an awful dancer. I will never make the dance team.	Fortune-telling	If I don't make the dance team, I still have other things I can do.
Everything at home is bad.	Dark glasses	Some things at home seem bad right now, but there are some good things, too.
It's awful that I fight so much with my dad.	Binocular vision	Most of the time I don't fight with my dad, just sometimes.

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