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Changing Your Thoughts For the Holidays

4 CBT techniques to try if the holiday season is a difficult time for you

1. **Straight Forward Approach** - Replace negative thoughts with positive and realistic ones

Example: "I hate my family." or "My family is the worst."

Find one or two things that you appreciate about your family and focus on that with a thought like:

"My family can be difficult at times but I appreciate....or at least they...."

2. **Examine Evidence** - Ensure thoughts are based on actual evidence rather than assumption

Example: "Nobody likes me." or "I'll be alone and rejected."

If you are thinking this, *stop* and *examine the evidence*, ask yourself:

- i. What evidence do I have to support this thought?
- ii. What evidence do I have that goes against this thought?

3. **Survey Method** - Ask others about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the holidays

Example: "Everyone else loves the holidays."

Ask a trusted friend or a random stranger (multiple people if needed) if the holidays are the best time of year for them? Or if they get stressed about the holidays?

I can almost guarantee that you'll find others that are stressed out too and you can change your thought to something like:

"The holidays are a stressful time, it's okay that I feel stressed."

4. **Semantic Method** - Use less emotionally charged language

Example: "I hate the holidays"

A possibly less emotionally charged thought:

"This is a difficult time of year for me"