



## HELPING YOUR CHILD BUILD A TOOLBOX OF SAFE, EFFECTIVE COPING SKILLS

### COPING SKILL 1: *COPING WITH BIG THOUGHTS*

When faced with stress or uncertainty, our brains are designed to focus on warning signs of danger. This “fight or flight” response increases our heart rate and makes us feel uneasy and tense. One way to feel better is to identify the source of our anxiety, and use careful thinking skills to calm back down. You can help your child or teen learn to recognize worried thoughts and focus on more helpful thoughts instead.

#### STEP 1: Help your child identify their thoughts

(Ask: If you were a cartoon, what would your thought bubble say right now?)

#### STEP 2: Help your child figure out if this thought is fully true, somewhat true, or not really reasonable

(Ask: How do you know this is true? Let’s find out more about this. )

#### STEP 3: After discussion, help your child come up with a believable, but less worried thought

(Ask: What could you tell yourself instead that would help you feel less worried? What would you tell a friend who was having the same thought, to help them realize it wasn’t fully true?)

## MORE RESOURCES FOR COPING WITH WORRIED THOUGHTS:

- Short [video](#) about coping with worried thoughts
- [TRAILS](#) Cognitive Coping Materials: worksheets, handouts, videos, and more!
- Observing our Train of Thoughts [video](#)
- [Reach Out](#): Challenging Negative Thoughts
- [Wellcast](#): Automatic Thoughts
- [HereToHelp](#): Healthy Thinking

## HTSD & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- [HTSD MENTAL HEALTH WEBSITE](#)
- HAMILTON CARES (609) 476-6138
- NJ MENTAL HEALTH CARES:  
1-866-202-HELP
- ATLANTICARE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
(609) 646-9159
- [ATLANTIC COUNTY MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION](#)