



## STINKING THINKING

Stinking thinking is when people have messed up thoughts and beliefs that make it hard for them to stop doing addictive things and get better. This happens a lot with people who have problems with drugs or alcohol. It is really important to understand and deal with stinking thinking if we want to help people with addiction. In this lesson, we'll learn about stinking thinking, how it affects addiction, and ways to fight against it.

Stinking thinking usually starts with thoughts that do not make sense, like thinking it's okay to use drugs or alcohol a lot, or pretending the problem isn't serious, or blaming other people for their addiction. These thoughts are like shields that protect people from facing their addiction and trying to get better. But the problem is, stinking thinking just makes the addiction worse and stops people from getting the help they need.

For example, someone with stinking thinking might tell themselves that they deserve to drink a lot because they worked hard. They might think that drinking is not a big deal and ignore all the bad things that happen because of it. By believing these messed up thoughts, they keep themselves stuck in their addiction instead of realising they need to change.

Stinking thinking also messes with how people see themselves. They start thinking they're no good, not worth helping, or that they cannot beat their addiction. These thoughts make it really hard for them to ask for help because they feel hopeless or think they are too far gone to get better.

This kind of thinking makes a never-ending cycle of feeling bad and doing things that hurt themselves. People with addiction feel guilty, ashamed, and criticize themselves, so they use drugs or alcohol to escape those feelings for a little while. But those bad feelings always come back, and then they rely on substances even more to cope.

To fight against negative thinking, it is important to question our own beliefs and try to see things from a different perspective. One way to do this is through a type of therapy called cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT helps us recognise when our thoughts are not helpful or true, and teaches us how to replace them with better ones.

It is also helpful to get support from friends and professionals when dealing with negative thinking. Joining a support group allows us to talk about our experiences, learn from others, and get encouragement. Therapists who specialise in addiction can also give us guidance and help us find healthy ways to cope.

**Here are some examples of stinky thinking traits that you might come across:**

**1. All-or-Nothing Thinking:**

This is when you see things as either completely good or completely bad, with no in-between. It's like saying "I'm a total failure" when you make a small mistake. You don't leave any room for grey areas or different perspectives.

**2. Always Focusing on the Negative:**

Some people always focus on the bad things in life instead of the good. They might complain about what they don't have instead of being grateful for what they do have. Even if something is mostly good, they'll find something negative to focus on. It is like seeing the glass half empty than half full.

**3. Making Assumptions or Magical Thinking:**

This kind of thinking is making assumptions, when we think we can read others minds and tell how they feel or foretell the future, and then act as if what we assume is the reality. We often create self-fulfilling prophecies this way. You may have heard the that to assume is really "making an ass out of u and me".

**4. Self-Discount:**

It is the inability to receive or to admit to our own positive qualities or accomplishments. When someone gives you a compliment you tend to minimize it, make a joke out of it, or just ignore the compliment by changing the subject or turning the compliment back on the other person. This type of thinking may sound like "Oh that was nothing."

**5. Acting Like a Soap Opera Star:**

Imagine someone who always makes a big deal out of everything. They blow things out of proportion and love the drama. They might be called the "Drama King or Queen." On the other hand, there are people who hate conflict and avoid emotions at all costs.

**6. Emotional Reasoning:**

Sometimes, we think based on our feelings. For example, if I feel like a failure, I might believe that I am a failure. But it's important to remember that our feelings don't define who we are. We need to separate the feelings we had as a child from the feelings we have now as an adult.

**7. Should off:**

This kind of thinking involves words like "should of," "could of," "must," "ought to," and "have to." These words often come from parents or authority figures. When we say "should," it means we don't really want to do something, but we feel like we have to because someone else is telling us to. But as adults, we have choices and we don't have to do things just because someone else says so.

**8. Self-Labeling:**

Sometimes, we make the mistake of identifying ourselves with our flaws and mistakes. Instead of accepting that we are only human and can make mistakes, we call ourselves names like "stupid," "loser," "jerk," or "fool." But it's important to learn from our mistakes and not put ourselves down.

**9. Personalising and Blame:**

When we personalise, we blame ourselves for things that we weren't completely responsible for, or for how someone else feels. On the other hand, we might blame other people, events, or fate without considering how our own attitudes and behaviour played a part in the problem. When we were kids, we learned to blame others to avoid feeling ashamed of being blamed ourselves. But as adults, we swing between blaming others and blaming ourselves. The truth lies somewhere in between, in the grey area. It's not always one person's fault or the other's. The answer is usually found in considering different perspectives.

**10. Emotional Reasoning:**

This thinking is when we reason from feelings. "I feel like a failure, therefore I am a failure." We believe that what we feel is who we are without separating the inner child's feelings about what happened a long time ago from the adult's feelings in the now.