**Recognizing and Replacing Negative Thought Patterns**

**Purpose:**  
This worksheet helps you identify negative thought patterns that may stem from trauma, understand their impact on your emotions and behavior, and develop strategies to reframe and replace these thoughts with healthier, more constructive perspectives.

**1. What Are Negative Thought Patterns?**  
Negative thought patterns are automatic, repetitive ways of thinking that distort reality and fuel feelings of fear, shame, or inadequacy. These patterns often develop as survival mechanisms during traumatic experiences but may become unhelpful over time. Recognizing and replacing these thoughts can reduce their power and help you foster a healthier relationship with yourself and the world around you.

* What negative thoughts do you notice repeating in your mind?
* How do these thoughts make you feel about yourself and your circumstances?

**2. Identifying Common Negative Thought Patterns**  
Below are examples of common negative thought patterns. Reflect on which ones resonate with your experiences:

* **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Viewing situations in extremes with no middle ground.  
  Example: “If I don’t succeed completely, I’m a failure.”
* **Catastrophizing:** Assuming the worst possible outcome will happen.  
  Example: “If I make a mistake, everything will fall apart.”
* **Emotional Reasoning:** Believing your emotions reflect reality.  
  Example: “I feel scared, so this must be dangerous.”
* **Personalization:** Taking responsibility for things outside your control.  
  Example: “It’s my fault they’re upset.”
* Which of these patterns do you recognize in your thoughts?
* Are there other patterns you notice that aren’t listed here?

**3. Understanding the Impact of Negative Thoughts**  
Negative thought patterns influence how you feel and act. They can increase anxiety, decrease self-esteem, and create barriers to healing.

* Reflect on a recent time when a negative thought affected your emotions or behavior. What was the thought, and how did it influence your actions?
* How might changing this thought have changed the outcome of the situation?

**4. Reframing Negative Thoughts**  
Reframing involves challenging the validity of negative thoughts and replacing them with more balanced and constructive alternatives.

**Reframing Framework:**

1. Identify the negative thought: Write it down.
2. Challenge its accuracy: Ask yourself, “Is this thought true? What evidence supports or contradicts it?”
3. Replace it with a healthier perspective: Write a new thought that is more realistic and affirming.

* Practice using the framework with a negative thought:
  + Negative Thought: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Evidence Against It: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Reframed Thought: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Creating a List of Affirmations**  
Affirmations are positive, intentional statements that help counter negative thoughts and foster self-compassion.

* Write down three affirmations that resonate with you (e.g., “I am worthy of love and respect,” “I am doing my best and that is enough,” “I am safe in this moment”):
* How can you incorporate affirmations into your daily routine (e.g., repeating them in the morning, writing them in a journal)?

**6. Building Awareness and Resilience**  
Recognizing and replacing negative thoughts is a skill that strengthens over time. Building awareness of your patterns and practicing reframing regularly helps you regain control of your inner narrative.

* How can you remind yourself to notice negative thoughts without judgment when they arise?
* What is one small step you can take today to begin shifting your mindset?

**Conclusion:**  
Your thoughts shape your reality, but they do not have to define it. By recognizing negative patterns, challenging their accuracy, and replacing them with healthier perspectives, you are taking control of your emotional and mental well-being. Each small effort to reframe a thought is a step toward greater self-awareness, resilience, and healing. Trust in your ability to create a kinder and more supportive inner dialogue.