

# **Negativity**

## **Social Anxiety West Topic Session**

Negativity is common in many people experiencing anxiety and depression. By negativity we mean pessimistic thinking, worry, catastrophising, being critical or self-critical, expecting the worst or anything that is focused towards the negative.

In psychology this is sometimes called threat biased thinking as the primary purpose of it is to help us notice danger and prepare for it, but the bias does not only bring our attention towards threats, it also more generally brings to our attention anything that is bad or negative and this can be problematic for us and our happiness.

These questions are intended to prompt your thinking around the topic. You do not have to answer them, although it may be beneficial to you if you do.

### **Questions**

- **How much time do you spend thinking negatively? i.e. worrying, being self-critical, thinking about problems, or predicting and preparing for what might go wrong.**
- **In what ways can negative thinking be useful?**
- **In what ways does negative thinking cause us problems?**
- **If there are times when you start thinking more negatively, what are they?**
- **How often do you think negative thoughts about yourself, the world and other people?**
- **How much do you think negative thinking has become a habit for you?**
- **How much choice do you have over your thoughts? Could you choose to think differently?**
- **What is positive thinking and how might it be beneficial?**
- **How much do you consider positive thinking to be fake and negativity to be reality? Does it have to be one or the other?**
- **How do you find it when the people around you are thinking negatively compared to when they are thinking more positively?**