



PRINTABLE THINKING TRAP CULPRIT CARDS

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THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



MR. VORTEX OF REPETITION

THINKING TRAP: LOOPBACK THINKING

He thinks that if something happens once, it is bound to happen again. He is stuck on the same story and makes things worse by creating negative expectations that are hard to let go.

EXAMPLE

You hurt yourself at soccer and say, "I'm not playing anymore."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind Mr. Vortex that if something happens once, it won't necessarily happen again. Think about a situation that ended in disappointment once, but went well the next time.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



GENERAL LABEL

THINKING TRAP: "ISM" THINKING

She loves to attach labels to herself and others. Unfortunately, she's in a hurry and doesn't want to waste effort collecting all of the data, so she takes shortcuts in her thinking and makes hasty judgments.

EXAMPLE

You complete the wrong page of homework and tell yourself, "I'm such a loser."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind General Label that no one is perfect, and that mistakes are part of learning. Talk about what your feeling instead of labeling and draw a picture to show a solution.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



MIND-READING MARY

THINKING TRAP: MIND READING

She is trying to help by making sense of our surroundings, but she's making it worse by assuming that everyone around is thinking negative things, which makes us feel like the whole world is against us.

EXAMPLE

You see a group of kids laughing in the playground and right away you assume they are laughing at you.

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind her that it is not possible to know what others are thinking and connect with your own thoughts instead. Write a card to yourself and include all the great things you know about yourself. Seal up the card and save it for a time when Mind-Reading Mary returns.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



ME, THE ALL-POWERFUL

THINKING TRAP: IT'S ALL ABOUT ME THINKING

He assumes, that he causes everything. He feels stressed when other people are upset and he tries to make everyone feel better but he is unfairly making us feel guilt for things we didn't do.

EXAMPLE

Your mom is in a bad mood and you think, "It's my fault because I didn't make my bed."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Create a list of things that you are responsible for and things that others are responsible for. Then, imagine a clear fluid boundary all around you creating an invisible force field between you and others.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



BLINDFOLD BOB

THINKING TRAP: SKEPTICAL THINKING

He minimizes all positive qualities or experiences and rejects positive feedback. He is trying to help us by keeping our expectations low to avoid disappointment.

EXAMPLE

Your mom compliments you when you do well at track and field, and you say, "You're just saying that because you're my mom."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind Blindfold Bob "I am a worthwhile person and can be kind to myself." Be aware of your strengths; for example, "I really did do well at track and field today!"

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



CATASTROPHIC CASEY

THINKING TRAP: DOOMSDAY THINKING

She imagines the absolute worst thing that could possibly happen in any situation. She is trying to help by letting us know when we might be in danger.

EXAMPLE

Your dad is driving you to school and you worry aloud, "Daddy, what if you're in a car accident?"

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind Catastrophic Casey just how unlikely it is that her worry will ever come true.

Let her know "It's not happening right now" and the only thing that's real and true is exactly what's happening in this moment.

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EDDIE EXAGGERATION

THINKING TRAP: EXAGGERATED THINKING

He tends to make small problems into huge ones. This is his way of trying to protect us from things that he believes will be difficult and stressful.

EXAMPLE

You receive a poor grade on a test and think, "I'm the worst at math."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Start working towards your goal in small, manageable steps. Rather than thinking about cleaning your whole room, break it down into what you can do first, like cleaning off your desk.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



SHAUN SHOULD PANTS

THINKING TRAP: SHOULD AND SHOULDN'T THINKING

He thinks every decision we make turns out to be a mistake, and tells us that we could have done better, and we need to be perfect.

EXAMPLE

You have an argument with a friend and think, "I should have invited my other friend instead. I would have had a better time."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind him that regretting a decision doesn't mean you don't measure up. Tell yourself: "This is good enough for today. I might as well enjoy myself" and remind yourself that you can always make a different choice next time.

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



ALL OR NOTHING ANDY

THINKING TRAP: PERFECTIONIST THINKING

He thinks things are either perfect or terrible. He is trying to help by pushing us to do our absolute best in every situation, which makes us feel like anything that isn't perfect is actually horrible.

EXAMPLE

You sleep in, are late for school and think, "The whole day is ruined."

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Question All or Nothing Andy's attitudes and see if you can make them more flexible. For example, try changing "The whole day is ruined because I slept in" to "I may have slept in, but I can make this moment great!"

THINKING TRAP CULPRIT



BLAME BLASTER

THINKING TRAP: BLAME THINKING

He is trying to help us feel less vulnerable by placing the blame on someone else, but he is forgetting to look at what has actually caused the problem.

EXAMPLE

Your family cat has gone missing and you cry out, "It's Dad's fault. He probably left the door open again!"

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Remind Blame Blaster that a problem does not need to have blame attached to it. After all, problems are a great chance for learning! Remind Blame Blaster that it's more helpful to look for real solutions when something goes wrong.

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ALWAYS-NEVER EVER AMY

THINKING TRAP: BLACK AND WHITE THINKING

She sees things in black or white; she likes to categorize situations into things that always happen and things that never happen, even if they actually happen only sometimes.

EXAMPLE

Your mom asks you to leave the room to calm down after a fight with your brother and you think, "She always take his side!"

TO DEFEAT THE CULPRIT

Write, draw or think of a list of exceptions to Amy's all-or-nothing thinking and remind Amy that there is such thing as "sometimes!"

INSTRUCTIONS

Print on thick card paper

Cut out each card

Fold in half

Glue together