

# STOPP



## QUICK EXPLANATION

This activity can assist you in challenging any negative thoughts you have and help refocus your attention to the task at hand. Thoughts such as “I fail at everything I hand in” or “no one likes me”. Having thoughts of this nature can be common and it can affect different areas of your life such as sleep, confidence or academic performance. This activity asks you to challenge your thoughts, and STOPP them before they spiral.



## AIM

To help with negative thinking or worries.



## INSTRUCTIONS

Print out or write in a notebook so it can go in your wallet or purse as a reminder that you can cope when you are feeling worried, even if you don't think that you can.

Think through the STOPP technique as follows:

- The STOPP technique is something you can use to help stop your thoughts when they are becoming overwhelming or starting to spiral. The first step in STOPP is to do just that; stop. Take a breath and pause for a moment. Tell those thoughts to stop for a moment.
- Next take a breath. Notice what your breathing is doing and try to regulate it, for example breathing in for 4 seconds, hold for 1 second, and breathe out for 4 seconds.
- Then observe what you are reacting to. What is going through your mind? Has something triggered these thoughts? Are you having any physical symptoms?
- After asking yourself these questions, pull back and put some perspective on your thoughts. What is the bigger picture here? Is there another way to look at the situation? Is this thought a reaction of anxiety or fact?
- Finally practise what works and move forward. Ask yourself questions such as what is the most helpful thing to do for me right now? Where can I focus my attention? Do what will be effective and appropriate for the longer term.
- Remember that change can take time and needs practice and patience so please persevere. If you do feel that your negative thoughts are severely impacting your functioning, please do not hesitate to contact the Student Wellbeing Service.



## RESOURCES

STOPP CARD

**STOPP:**

**Stop:** pause.

**Take** a breath.

**Observe:** what am I reacting to? Triggers? Other symptoms?

**Perspective:** take a step back.

**Practise:** what should I do next?