

# Critical Thinking Skills

## How Critical Thinking Enables You

- ✓ Think independently.
- ✓ Make better decisions.
- ✓ Deal with change quickly and effectively.
- ✓ Solve problems systematically.
- ✓ Think more creatively.
- ✓ Increase self-reflection.

## Be Curious and Think Like a Kid

- Take a “naïve observer” perspective instead of being a know-it-all.
- Show some humility; don’t let pride or ego get in the way of clear thinking.
- Ask questions that reflect your willingness to grasp and accept new ideas and conclusions
- Project inquisitiveness and excitement rather than skepticism or negativity

## Awareness

It’s knowing what you know and don’t know.

### The Johari Window

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	Open	Blind
Not known to others	Hidden	Unknown

## Flexibility

### Someone who is flexible:

- ✓ Is open to new information and adapts easily
- ✓ Considers alternative points of view
- ✓ Deals with ambiguity without stressing out

### Common Sense

#### Common sense is about:

- ✓ Paying attention to the obvious
- ✓ Verification and accuracy
- ✓ Consider the source

## Critical Thinking Mistakes

- **Rationalization:** arises from a desire to avoid being wrong or not wanting to accept another conclusion
- **Emotional Thinking:** reacting to a feeling, emotional language or engaging in wishful thinking
- **Biases:** includes confirmation bias, hindsight bias, recency effect, and overconfidence
- **Tunnel Vision:** Conditioning that causes us to behave in certain patterns

## The Three E’s

### Examine

- Identify the issue or problem.
- Collect information.

### Explore

- Interpret information.
- Uncover assumptions and biases
- Brainstorm alternative explanations or solutions

### Evaluate

- Assess explanation or solutions
- Reach a conclusion

## Brainstorming Techniques

- **Mind mapping:** Start with your issue or problem in the center and create branches of sub-topics, and branch out from those until you capture all of the ideas related to the issue.
- **Drawing:** Think of an issue or problem. Draw any pictures that come into your mind without trying to make them look decipherable. Then look at them and see what ideas or solutions arise from them.
- **Brainwriting:** Get a group to write their ideas for how to solve the problem on their own sheets of paper and rotate the sheets to different people and build off what the last person wrote.
- **Reverse brainstorming:** Instead of asking, “How can I solve this problem?” ask, “How can I create this problem?”
- **Role model:** Brainstorm ideas as if you were your role model, or a public figure you admire.