

Welcome to

**Metacognitive Training  
for Depression (D-MCT)**

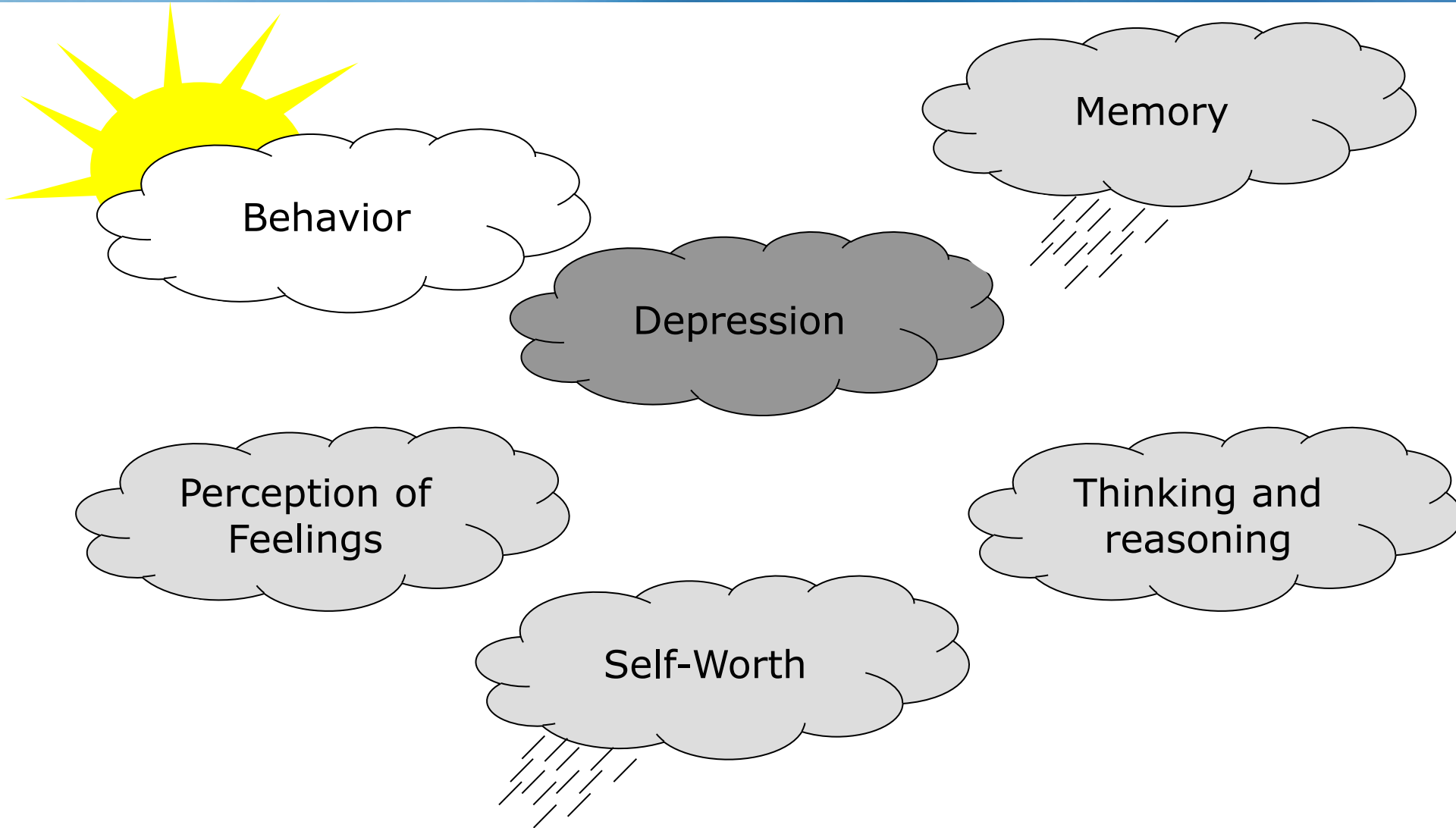
12/14

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Moritz & Schneider;  
ljelinek@uke.de

# D-MCT: Satellite Position



# Today's Topic



Behavior

Memory

Depression

Perception of  
Feelings

Thinking and  
reasoning

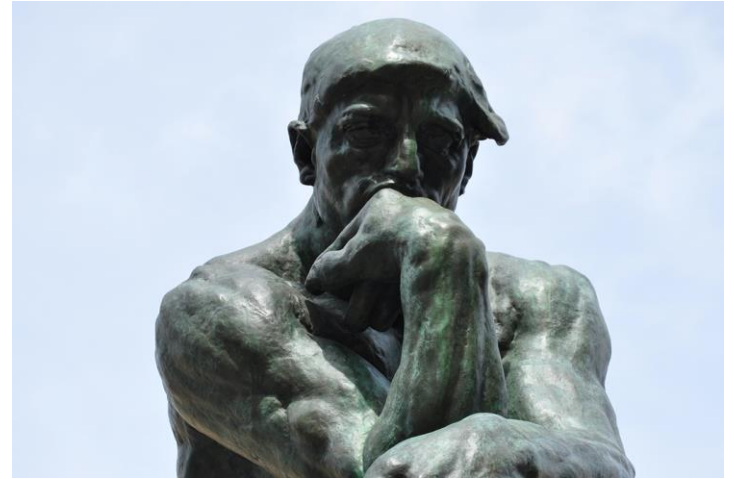
Self-Worth

# Today's D-MCT Topic:



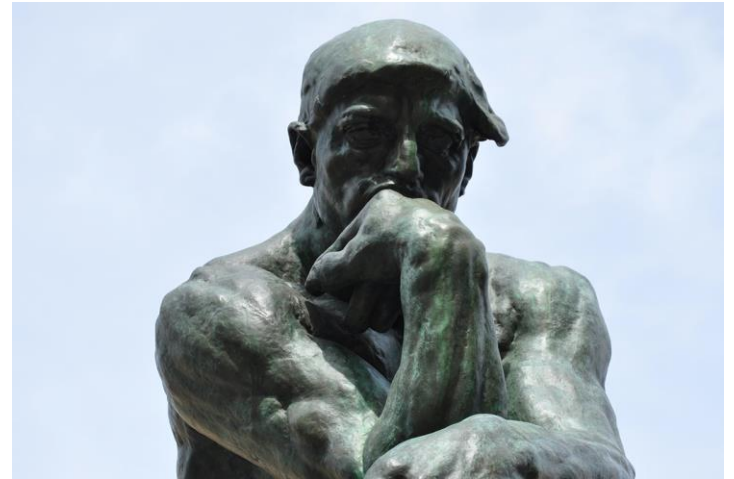
## **Behaviors and Strategies**

# 1. Ruminating



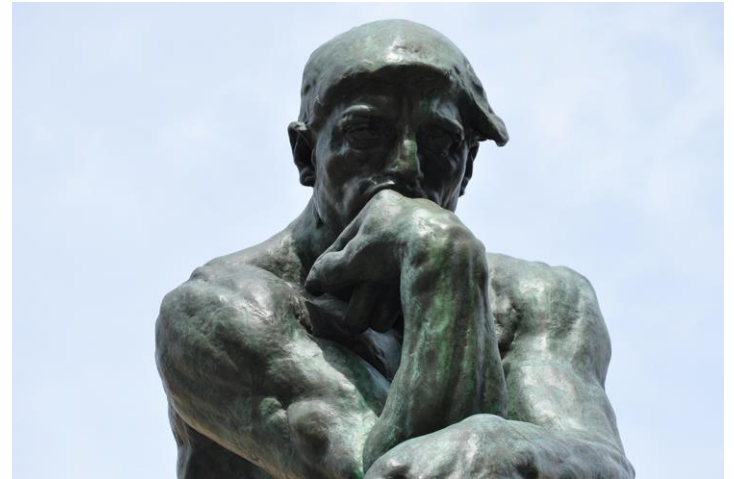
# 1. Ruminating

- Many people with depression complain of endless ruminating, brooding and worrying.



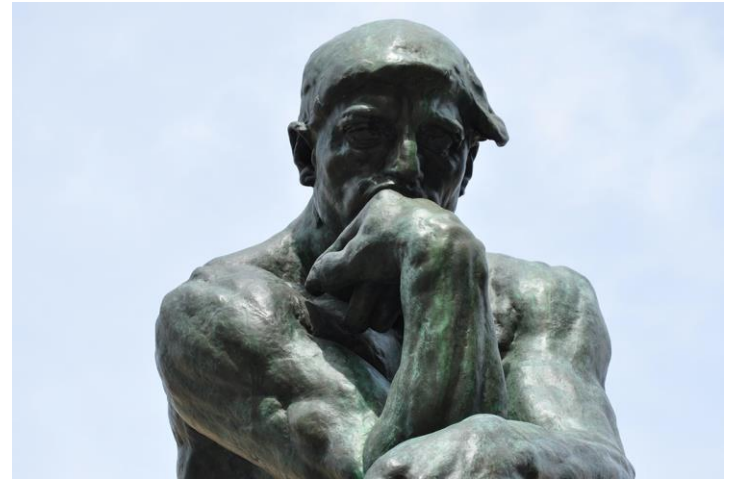
# 1. Ruminating

- Many people with depression complain of endless ruminating, brooding and worrying.
- Are you familiar with brooding and worrying?



# Can ruminating help ...

cf. Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1991; Wells, 2009

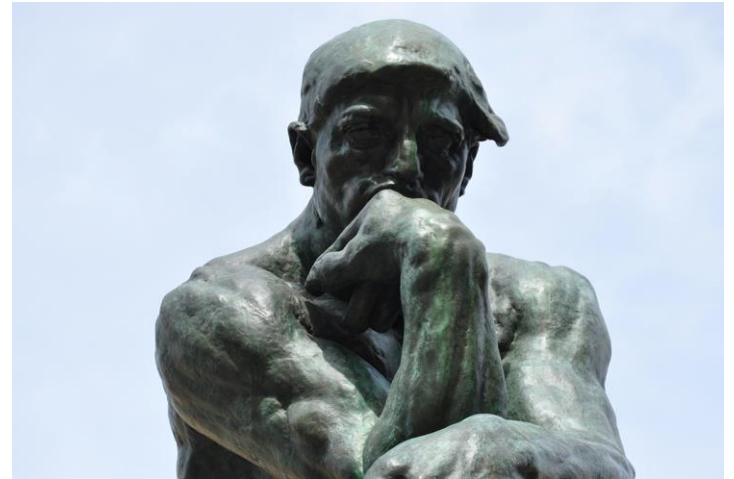




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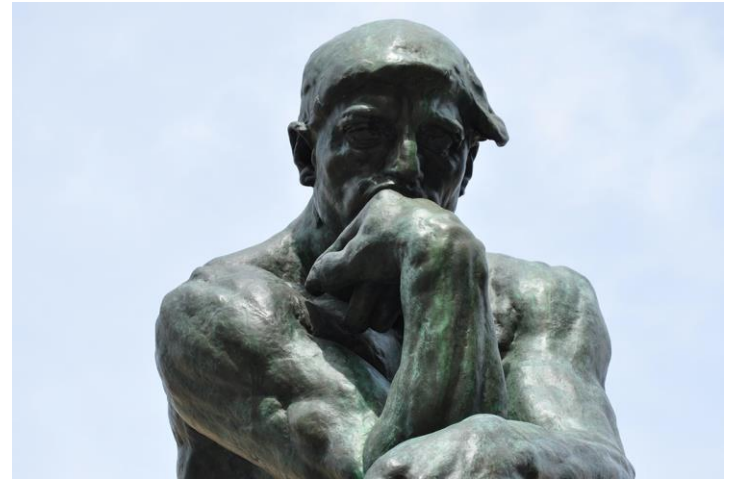
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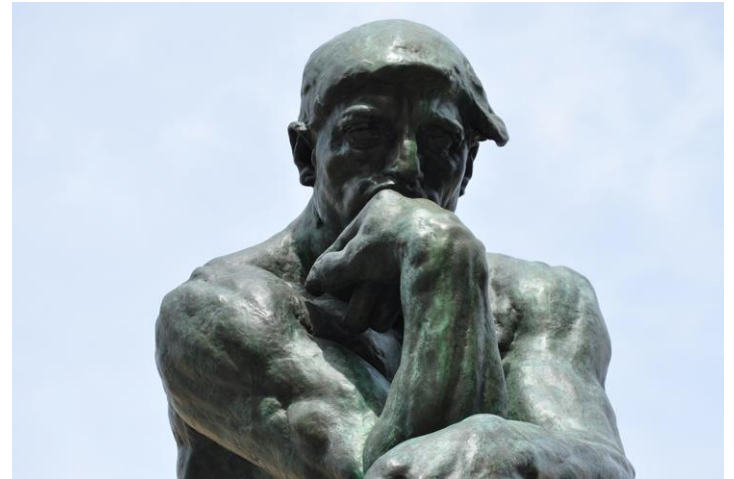
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- ... to avoid problems in the future?



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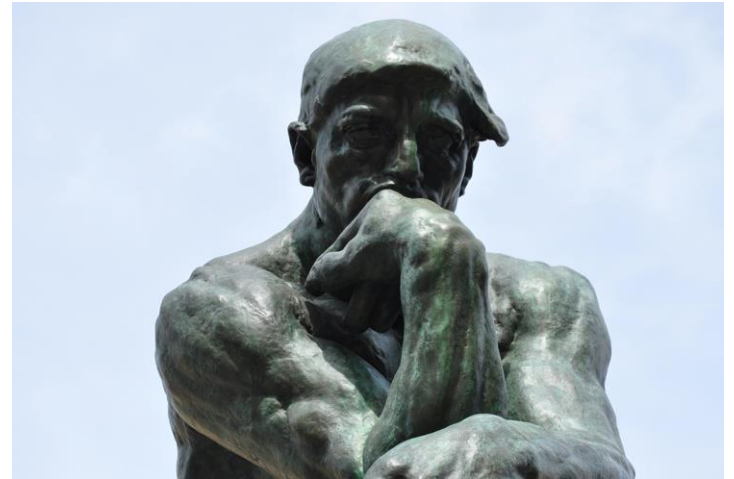
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- ... to solve problems?
- ... to avoid problems in the future?
- ... to organize things in your mind?



# Ruminating is not helpful!

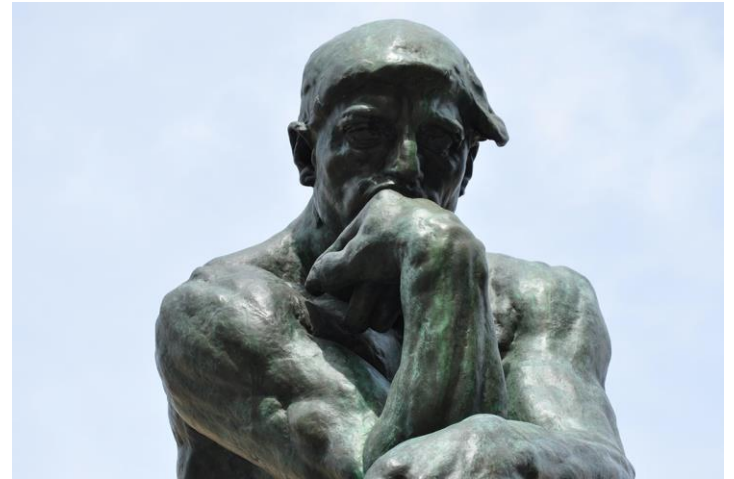
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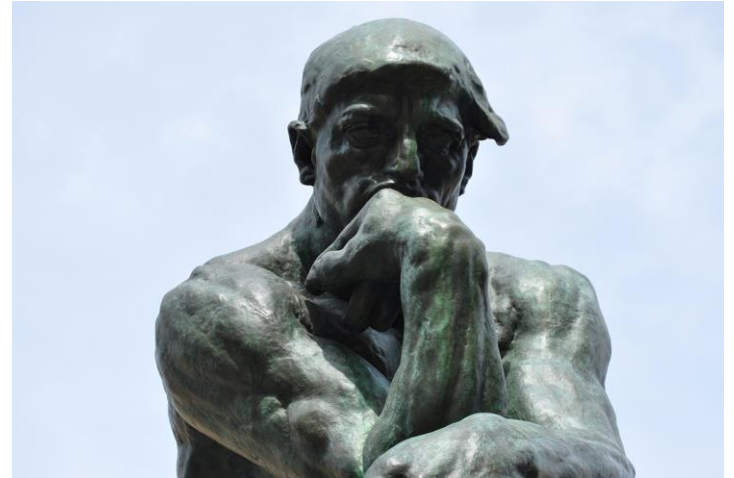
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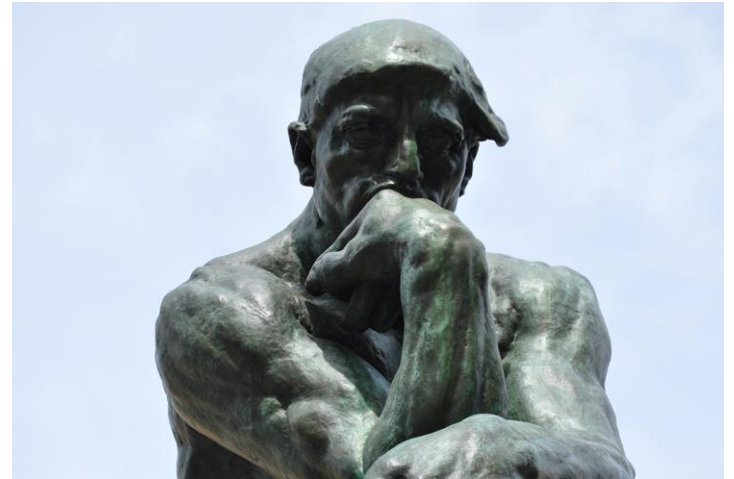
- But is rumination dangerous?
- Is it a sign that you will “lose” your mind?



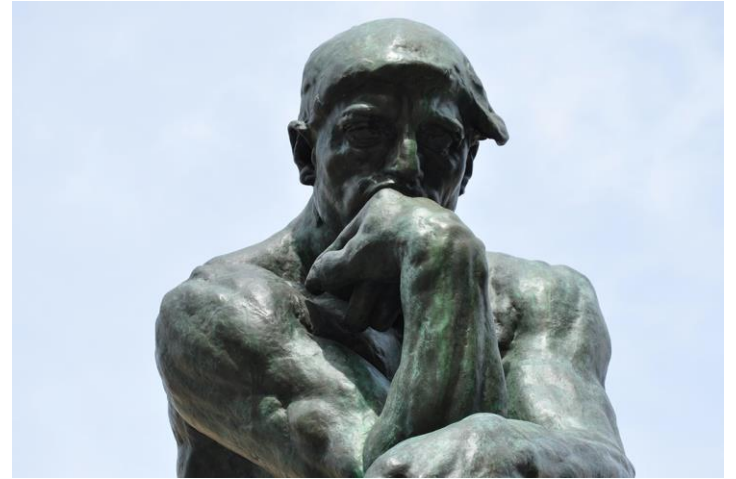
# Ruminating is not helpful!

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- But is rumination dangerous?
- Is it a sign that you will “lose” your mind?
- Is it unstoppable once you have started?



Not helpful, not dangerous!

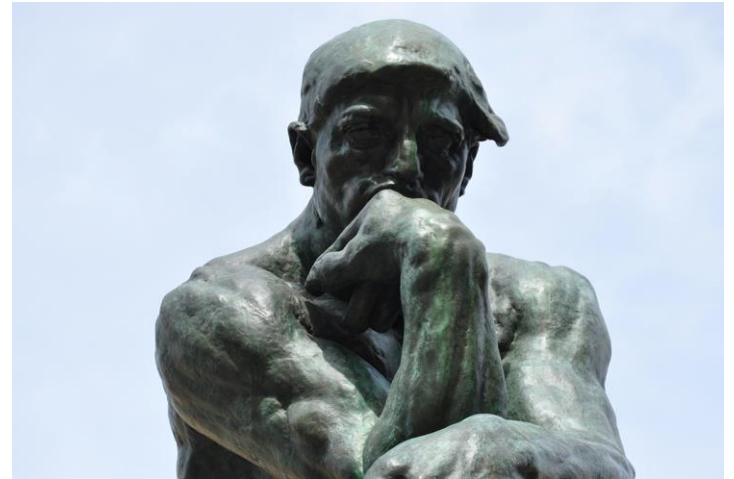




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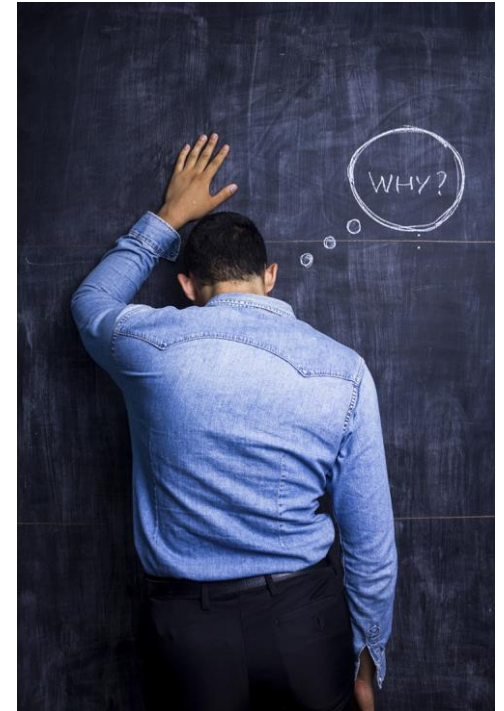
## Features of rumination?

- What separates ruminating from contemplating (ex: problems)?
- How is ruminating different from planning?



# Typical depressive ruminations

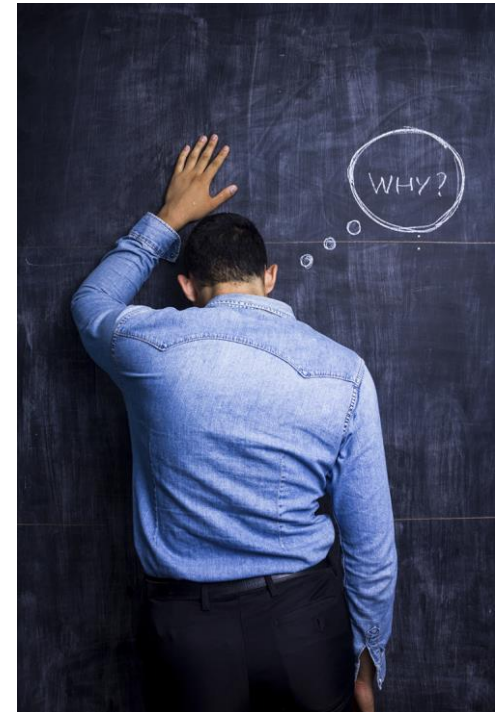
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# Typical depressive ruminations

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Ruminating over ...

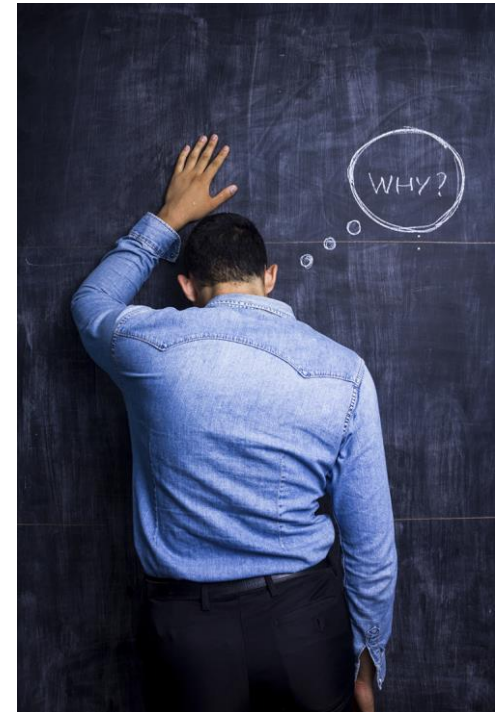


# Typical depressive ruminations

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- ... "Why?" (ex: The reason for a sickness).

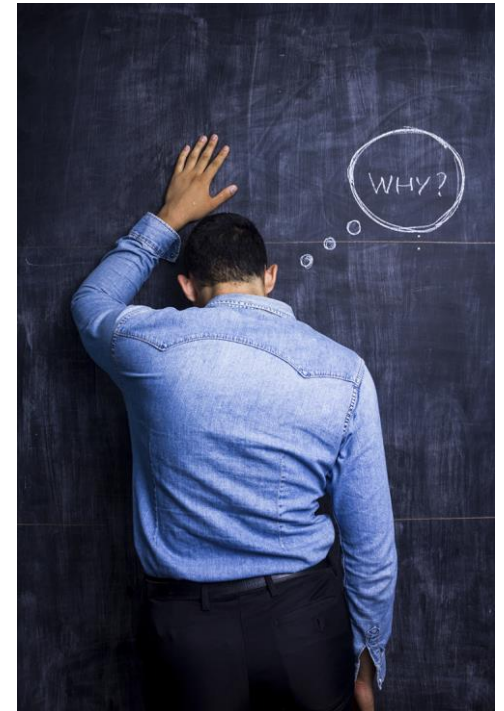


# Typical depressive ruminations

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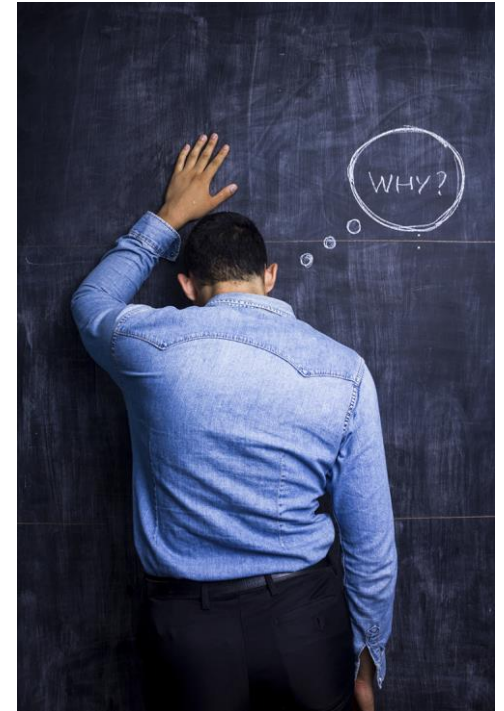


# Typical depressive ruminations

## 1. Content

Ruminating over ...

- ... "Why?" (ex: The reason for a sickness).
- ... past events that have already occurred.
- ... the ruminations.



# Typical depressive ruminations

## *2. Type and Manner*



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While ruminating ...





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## 2. *Type and Manner*

While ruminating ...

- ... it's hard to find an end and we often go around in circles (propogating "endless loops").



# Typical depressive ruminations

## 2. *Type and Manner*

While ruminating ...

- ... it's hard to find an end and we often go around in circles (propogating "endless loops").
- ... there exists a risk of losing insight.



# Typical depressive ruminations

## 2. *Type and Manner*



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While ruminating ...



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## 2. *Type and Manner*

While ruminating ...

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# Typical depressive ruminations

## 2. Type and Manner

While ruminating ...

- ... there is usually no "solution" (the difference from problem solving).
- ... actions rarely follow (the difference from planning).





What helps against ruminations?



# What helps against ruminations?

Does this also help to suppress negative thoughts?



# Thought Suppression

Try it out!

During the next minute do  
not think of an elephant!



Does thought suppression work? No!



# Does thought suppression work? No!

Most of you probably immediately thought about an elephant and/or about something related to an elephant (i.e. zoo, safari, Africa, etc.).



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The effect is even stronger when you try to actively suppress **unpleasant thoughts**, such as self-blame ("I'm a failure", etc.).



# Conclusion

Problematic strategy: "I am not allowed to think negative thoughts."

It is not possible to suppress unpleasant thoughts and attempting to do so can be frustrating.

To consciously not want to think about something can strengthen these thoughts.



# Instead: Search for an inner space ...

cf. Wells, 2009



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View a thought for what it is

- a **thought!** Not reality!
- an "experience" in your mind. Attempt to register the thought, but to not judge it.



# Instead: Search for an inner space ...

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for example, a place in which you can observe thoughts but not judge them:

View a thought for what it is

- a **thought!** Not reality!
- an "experience" in your mind. Attempt to register the thought, but to not judge it.

Imagine that you are at a train station. Like thoughts, the trains will come and go – but, you do not board every train!



# Exercise:

## Search for an inner space ...

Observe your thoughts without intervening or judging them ("I'm an idiot, I'm ruminating again"). Let your thoughts pass, like the train at a train station, clouds moving across the sky, or a leaf floating down a stream.



Breathing exercise ...

# What did you do during the breathing exercise?

- Directed your concentration on your breath
- You observed your breath without changing it
- You perceived your thoughts and feelings without judging them or intervening



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In depressive phases ...



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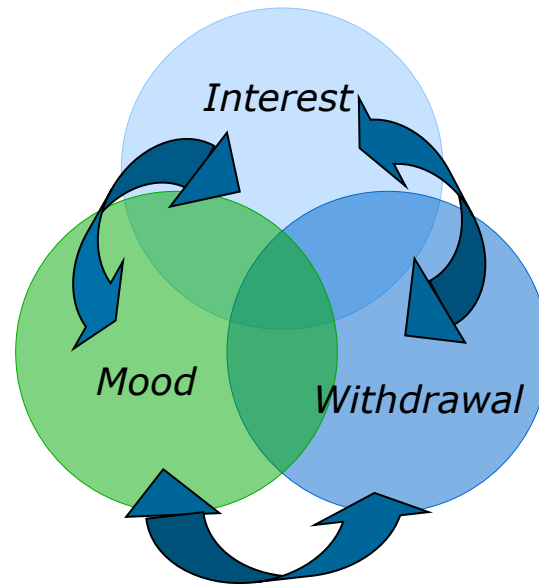
- ... interacting with others can be difficult.
- ... those affected often feel misunderstood by other people ("They have it good, I would rather have their problems.")
- ... the drive to do things is reduced.
- ... interest in others (and their problems) is often reduced.



Withdrawal is understandable.  
But is it helpful?

# No – withdrawal leads to a vicious cycle!

"Things aren't going well for me.  
I can no longer pull myself together."



"My mood becomes worse."

"I pull back more and more and take on less."



Try to break through this  
vicious cycle



# Try to break through this vicious cycle

- Every start is difficult! **But:** Overcome yourself and make a small step forward.



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- Every start is difficult! **But:** Overcome yourself and make a small step forward.
- **Step by step:** Let small steps (i.e. getting up) lead to bigger steps (i.e. going out). Don't over commit yourself!





# Try to break through this vicious cycle

- Take care of necessities (i.e. personal hygiene, grocery shopping), but also do things that make you happy (i.e. listening to music, going for a walk).



# Try to break through this vicious cycle

- Take care of necessities (i.e. personal hygiene, grocery shopping), but also do things that make you happy (i.e. listening to music, going for a walk).
- Also when you do not immediately enjoy all activities, remember: **Activities lead to better mood!**



# Behaviors and Strategies

## Learning Points



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## Learning Points

- Certain behaviors (i.e. withdrawal) strengthen rather than reduce depression!
- Ruminating does not help with problem solving, rather it strengthens negative thoughts and feelings.
- Attempting to suppress ruminative thoughts leads to further intrusive thoughts and is therefore not helpful.



# Behaviors and Strategies

## Learning Points

Instead:



# Behaviors and Strategies

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- Practice perceiving without judging (Breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, Yoga etc.).





# Behaviors and Strategies

## Learning Points

Instead:

- Practice perceiving without judging (Breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, Yoga etc.).
- Especially during depressive phases, it is important to maintain contact with important others and to continue to participate in activities (small steps).

**Thank you!**

