

**Directions:** The following exercise can be performed with a group of 2-3 or more people. The roles outlined below can be rotated depending on how many are participating in the exercise. It can be performed within the teen or parent group, as well as during the joint session. During the joint session, have teens pair with a parent of another teen, rather than their own.

**Step One:** Person A is assigned the role of generating clues, for their partner/s to guess a “Toxic Assumption (TAs).” Person A should select one of the “TA” cut out cards (see attached) at random and offer very specific, realistic, and relevant sample scenarios and associated automatic thoughts, which serve as clues, for the other person/s to guess which TA is being illustrated.

**Step Two:** Person B, after correctly guessing the TA, suggests one or more Socratic questions for their partner to use in challenging the last clue or automatic thought example that led to the correct guess.

**Step Three:** Person A, who gave the clues, should use the Socratic questions and thought correction process to develop a “Realistic Reframe” regarding the last automatic thought clue provided earlier.

**Step Four:** After a few minutes, the larger group should reconvene and take turns presenting their experience with guessing a toxic assumption, challenging it with Socratic questions, and reframing it.

\*\*\*The exercise can be repeated, with teens and parents alternating roles.\*\*\*

## Toxic Assumptions:

- **Name Calling:** Using derogatory or pejorative labels to describe yourself or others.
- **Underestimating Yourself (or Others):** Assuming you cannot handle things when you really can.
- **Making About Me:** Interpreting random events as personal attacks.
- **Overestimating the Risks:** Mentally inflating the risk of a bad outcome.
- **Assuming without Knowing:** Assuming you know what someone is thinking without checking.
- **Global Judging:** A rigid style of perception, alternatively termed “black-white” or “all or nothing.”
- **Making About Me:** Interpreting random events as personal attacks.

## Socratic Questions:

- **“Have I checked this out?”**
- **“Did I succeed before?”**
- **“Is there another way to look at this?”**
- **“Do I have all the information?”**
- **“What would I say to a friend?”**
- **“What’s the worst that could happen?”**
- **“If the worst happened, could I cope?”**

## Realistic Reframe Formula:

- **Although** \_\_\_\_\_ fill in \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g., this may be difficult or I am feeling overwhelmed right now or progress has been slower than I hoped or things might seem hopeless to me right now, etc...), **I know that** \_\_\_\_\_ fill in \_\_\_\_\_ (I can ask for help or I have been successful at this before or I have many ways to cope or the worst case scenario is very unlikely, etc...).