

THINKING PROBLEMS & MITIGATIONS

Problem	Description	Mitigations
Confirmation bias	The tendency to seek out examples and information that support what we believe – and ignore what challenges our beliefs	Ask, 'What would make me change my opinion?' and 'How can I get others to give me their honest opinions?'
Availability bias	Drawing on the most easily available memories to form judgments	Ask, 'Am I leaning too heavily on my – or other people's – limited experiences and memories?' and 'What does the data say?'
Anchoring bias	Relying too heavily on preexisting information or the first piece of information when making a decision	Ask, 'Why might this anchor be inappropriate?' Or form an initial assessment before receiving the anchor.
Hindsight bias	Our tendency to look back at unpredictable events and think that they were actually easily predictable	Ask, 'Can I trust my recollection of this event?' If not, then rely on evidence, memory is fallible.
Base rate neglect	Evaluating likelihood with no reference to the actual probability of an event occurring	Ask, 'What do the statistics have to teach me here?' Or 'What is the likelihood that X will/will not happen?'
Loss aversion	The common tendency to see a loss as more significant than a gain of the same value (e.g. losing \$20 is a bigger deal than finding \$20)	Ask, 'Am I not deciding because I am afraid to lose something?' Or 'What role are my emotions playing in this decision?'
Group think	Trusting that the group knows better than you do, or choosing not to speak up to maintain social cohesion.	Ask, 'Who has the most influence in this group?' Get them to speak last, or have people independently generate ideas first.
Optimism bias	Our tendency to overestimate the likelihood of positive events and underestimating the likelihood of negative ones.	Ask, 'What is the statistical likelihood of success?' and 'Imagine a year from now, why has the project failed?'