

# THINKING PATTERN ROADMAP

## A GUIDE TO THE 7 THINKING PATTERNS

UNDERSTAND

GROW

THRIVE

### PURPOSE

This roadmap helps you to recognize, understand, and strengthen the seven major thinking patterns that are prevalent in autistic thinking. Each pattern is derived from the linear nature of the autistic brain, and how it processes information, solves problems, learns, and interacts with the world.

### USE THIS ROADMAP TO:

- ✓ Identify their strongest thinking styles
- ✓ Build flexibility in weaker areas
- ✓ Improve learning, communication, and problem-solving
- ✓ Develop self-awareness and confidence

THINKING PATTERN / WHAT THEY MIGHT SAY	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES	HELPFUL STRATEGIES
<b>1 LINEAR/LITERAL THINKING</b> "What do you mean when you say 'water under the bridge?'"	Focuses on facts, routines, and what is directly seen or experienced, non-social/non-abstract	Reliable, detail-oriented, can follow directions well (if motivated)	May struggle with abstract ideas or "reading between the lines"	Use visuals, examples, step-by-step, explicit instructions, don't use figures of speech
<b>2 BLACK AND WHITE THINKING</b> "Which is it? Yes? Or NO?"	Thinks in terms of all or none. Reduces detail in order to process more easily, dramatic overreaction	Sees things in their simplest form, reduces or eliminated details	Can become frustrated or misunderstand when things are abstract or vague	Use a visual number line to present two extremes and identify intermediate ideas
<b>3 RIGID THINKING</b> "You're not listening to me"	Resistance to new ideas, difficulty updating existing knowledge, no theory of mind	High precision, attention to detail, reliability, consistency, Often a strong sense of right and wrong	Committed to the "As Is" scenario or thoughts, can cause stagnation or leads to getting stuck	Use brainstorming, discussions, and concept maps to present alternative ideas
<b>4 STUCK THINKING</b> "I like stoplights."	Tends to create non-sequiturs. Reduced ability to move on without resolution, perseverance	When harnessed correctly, it can drive achievement, and promote a deep dive into detail	May not follow a conversation, may create social disconnection, or tunnel vision, Can become stuck analyzing	Set Time limits for topics. Provide resolution to question or problem. Write it down and save for later.
<b>5 SAMENESS THINKING</b> "I have made up my mind! dont confuse me with other information."	Lining up physical objects, ignoring or avoiding new information, lack of flexibility	Mastery through repetition, able to tolerate repetitive tasks, mental bandwidth preservation	Resistance to change, difficulty with transitions, difficulty with ambiguity	Use visual and logical frameworks, accept what routines are not disruptive, give lead times for changes
<b>6 "WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?" THINKING</b> "I don't care what others think of me."	Looks like selfishness, inability or unwillingness to see someone else's point of view, lack of motivation	Outcome orientation, focus on benefits, promotes self-advocacy and boundary setting	Short-term focus on reward, difficulty with collective goals, missing out on the big picture or long-term benefit	Define the value of a task upfront, attempt to tie it to something they want, and include an extrinsic motivation
<b>7 ANGRY THINKING</b> "I hate you"	May be characterized by loud, aggressive or angry words, "should" statements, or physical violence	Can provide energy and motivation to move forward, And support overcoming thinking may become black and white, obstacles	Logic may be lost, thinking may become black and white, may cause breakdown of social relationships	Stay Calm, de-escalate through validation, use physical activity to provide neurological regulation

★ THERE IS NO "BAD" THINKING—EVERY PATTERN HAS A PURPOSE! ★

AWARENESS → UNDERSTANDING → FLEXIBILITY → GROWTH → CONFIDENCE