

## **The ABCDE'S of Critical Thinking**

**A = Recognize Assumptions:** Assumptions are ideas, beliefs, or values that are taken for granted. Are they true, that's what needs to be determined. Example: "Anyone who wants a job can get one"

**B = Examine Biases:** Biases are prejudices. They can sway an individual toward a particular conclusion or action on the basis of a personal theory or stereotype. Example: "Fat people are lazy" or "men are insensitive."

**C = Analyze the need for Closure:** Many people look for immediate answers or quick fixes and experience a great deal of anxiety until a solution is found for any problem. They are very ambiguous; cannot tolerate doubt and uncertainty. In order to overcome the desire to reach a conclusion, they must make a conscious effort to NOT jump to judgment. Look for a second right answer. If you recognize this characteristic about yourself, you can start to control it and deal more maturely and effectively with your patients and in all relationships.

**D = Manage Data:** In order to find answers you must be willing to ask questions. Effective communication is necessary for this step. Then after asking the questions you must take the data; validate it, organize it, and analyze it.

**E = Evaluate other Factors:** Anxiety and other emotions can reduce our ability to think critically. Environmental factors are also an influence. We must step back and evaluate where we are in any given situation. If the emotion is too intense we will actually only collect "data" that supports the emotion.