

### DRIVER THINKING ERROR #3

You may think that there is a particular kind of driver who has crashes, or gets booked... and that you are not this kind of driver. For example, you might think that only young males have crashes (unless you are a young male!). You might think that only middle-aged women have crashes. You may simply think that people who have crashes are those who are unskilled or very risky drivers.

#### Attack this error:

- a) Do not stereotype "unsafe drivers". All kinds of people take risks and have crashes.
- b) People who are generally safe drivers sometimes drive unsafely... just like you. So, if you see a driver perform an unsafe act, don't immediately stereotype them as an unsafe driver.

### DRIVER THINKING ERROR #4

You may simply want (or need) to think that you are unlikely have a crash, be injured or killed, or even be booked.

#### Attack this error:

- a) Do not deny your risk; face it and do something about it.
- b) Remember that driving is a dangerous activity and crashes happen.
- c) You can influence your chances of having a crash, being injured or killed, or being booked.
- d) One of the most important things you can do to reduce your chances of experiencing these bad events is to judge risks accurately... by remembering what illusory invulnerability is and fighting the irrational thoughts which cause it

*Not having illusory invulnerability and being a low risk driver is critical to your health and safety*

Naturally, you would prefer not to have a crash, or be injured, killed, or even booked. You can influence your chances of experiencing these bad events, by avoiding risks. To do this you need to recognise risks accurately, and one way of doing this is to fight illusory invulnerability.

Now you know what illusory invulnerability is, and you know some ways to avoid it. Please use your skills.

WERE YOU *REALLY* A SAFER THAN AVERAGE DRIVER THIS MORNING?

WILL YOU BE FROM NOW ON?

recognising risks  
and driving safely

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT RECOGNISING RISKS CAREFULLY. IT MAY HELP YOU TO AVOID A CAR CRASH!

WHEN YOU ARE OUT DRIVING ON THE ROAD, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO RECOGNISE RISKY SITUATIONS, SO THAT YOU CAN AVOID THEM.

RECOGNISING RISKS IS NOT ALWAYS EASY AND ONE THING THAT MIGHT STOP YOU FROM RECOGNISING RISKS ACCURATELY IS “ILLUSORY INVULNERABILITY”.

### What is “illusory invulnerability”?

People often think that they are better off than their peers. For example, they think that they are less likely than their peers to experience negative events like being mugged or having a heart attack.

In other words, illusory invulnerability translates into the common belief: “It won't happen to me...”.

People have particularly strong illusory invulnerability when it comes to their driving. For example, most drivers think that they are less likely to crash than the average driver of their age and gender. They think that they are better and safer drivers.

### Is illusory invulnerability a problem?

Yes- illusory invulnerability can be a problem. When you think that bad things won't happen to you, you are likely to behave dangerously.

For example, if you can't imagine having a car crash, then you might not bother to stick to the speed limit, or you might not leave a large enough gap between you and the car in front of you.

### You probably experience illusory invulnerability

You might be thinking “I don't have illusory invulnerability.... Other people might, but I don't”.

But this thought would be an example of illusory invulnerability... other people probably think that they don't have illusory invulnerability either!

Think about the risks you take on the road. Don't you often take them because you don't really believe that you will have a crash, or even get booked?

### You should fight illusory invulnerability

It is very important that to recognise your vulnerability on the road. One of the most important things you can do to avoid crashing, or being booked, is to believe that it is *just as likely to happen to you as to your peers*.

### How to fight illusory invulnerability

You need to be aware of the faulty thinking that might cause illusory invulnerability, so that you can fight this faulty thinking.

Several kinds of faulty thinking might be involved. They are outlined below, with ways to fight them.

#### DRIVER THINKING ERROR #1

**You may think that other drivers make more mistakes, and take more risks, than you.**

##### Attack this error:

- Remember that you make mistakes too. Try to notice them when they happen. At the end of each drive you do, make a list of all of the mistakes you made. You can find a checklist to use for this at [www.irmrc.edu.au](http://www.irmrc.edu.au) Keeping track of your mistakes will help you not to make them in future.
- Ask the people who travel with you when you are driving (like your parents) to point out your mistakes, to help you to learn to be a safe driver.
- You probably notice other people's mistakes more often than you notice your own. For example, if the driver in front of you forgets to indicate before turning, you notice (perhaps in colourful language!), whereas if you forget to indicate you probably don't notice. When you notice another driver make a mistake, try to remember a time when you have made the same mistake.

- You might dismiss your mistakes because you know the reasons for them (e.g. your blinker is broken, you were tuning the radio, you were looking for a street sign), whereas you don't know the reasons for other drivers' mistakes. When you make a mistake, remember that a mistake is a mistake even if you know why you made it.
- Remember that, just like you, other drivers try to drive safely.

#### DRIVER THINKING ERROR #2

**You might think that crashes happen fairly often because you see them or hear about them (from people you know, or in the media). Also, you may see people getting booked quite frequently on the road. In contrast, you probably have very little experience of crashing, or being booked. So you may reason that you are a safer and better driver than average, and that you are less likely than your peers to have a crash or be booked in the future.**

##### Attack this error:

- Remember that there are a lot of other drivers and only one of you. Even though car crashes seem to happen a lot, the chance of any one driver having a crash is fairly low. In fact, many drivers never have a serious crash.
- Remember that even if you have not yet had a crash, you could have one in future.
- Remember that even if you have had better driving history than your peers, this does not mean you will have a better driving future than your peers.
- To illustrate this point: All of the drivers on the road today have never been killed in a car crash... just like you. Some of today's drivers will be killed in a car crash in future. You could be one of them.