

# CBT Workbook



## WHAT IS CBT?

# How it works

Our thoughts are the most important factor in human psychology because of the significant influence they have on our lives. The way we think drastically impacts the beliefs we have about ourselves, and in turn, effects our relationships, careers, health and overall wellbeing. While external factors will always influence the quality of your life to a certain degree, it is mostly your interpretation of external factors, i.e. the way you think, that has the greatest impact.

In CBT it is recognised that there are helpful and unhelpful ways of reacting to any situation. If your tendency is to think that you and everything you do has to be perfect, then small mistakes or setbacks will feel like major failures. If you dwell on anxious thoughts and worries, this will eventually lead to feeling hopeless or overwhelmed and prevent you from taking positive actions forward. If you regularly spend time thinking about your insecurities and weaknesses, this will eventually lead to low self-esteem. How you interpret events and your ability to reframe them is the difference between a joyful, confident and empowered mindset and one filled with anxiety and low confidence.

CBT helps to lessen the impact of negative thought patterns like these by breaking them down to feel more realistic and self-compassionate, and ultimately improve the way you feel and think about yourself. But just like building a strong, healthy body requires consistent attention and work, so does improving the quality of our thoughts. This journaling exercise walks you through the steps required to begin taking consistent action.

### LET'S TRY A QUICK EXERCISE:

- 1 Picture a green apple in your mind.
- 2 Now picture a blue apple.
- 3 Now picture a pink apple.

Did you successfully manage to picture these 3 different apples? Yes? Great!

What this tells us is that you have control over what you think about. When you were instructed to picture an apple in 3 different colours, you were able to do it. The same applies to your self-critical thoughts - you have the power to decide what thoughts you have, to interpret experiences differently and to create conclusions that will support your self-esteem and overall wellbeing.

### IF YOU TAKE IN JUST ONE THING FROM THIS WORKBOOK LET IT BE THIS:

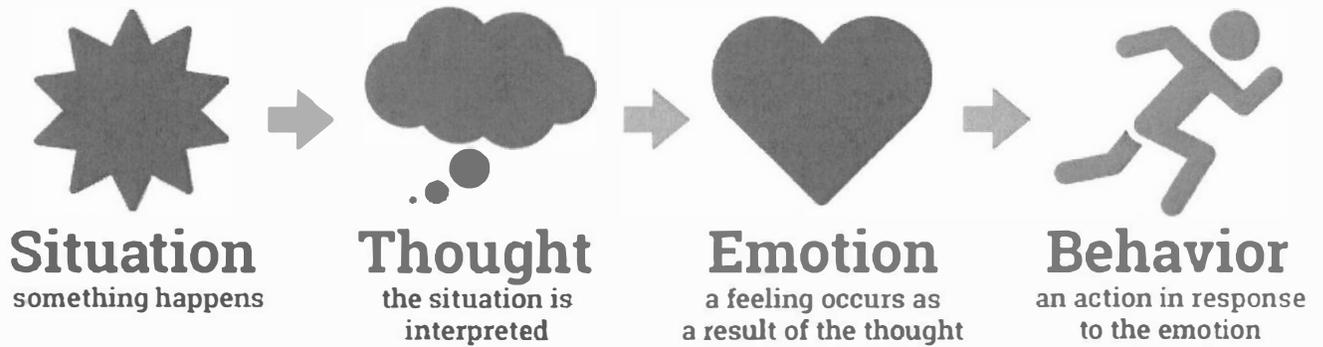
Rather than thinking of individual thoughts as true or correct, think of them in terms of how they affect you. Are your thoughts supporting you to achieve your goals, to build your self-esteem and to take positive actions forward, or are they knocking your confidence and holding you back? If it's the latter, are they worth having and paying attention to?

While you cannot eradicate negative thoughts, or feel exclusively and eternally positive about yourself, you absolutely can:

- Become more aware of when you're being self-critical
- Develop more control over your negative thoughts
- Counter your self-critical thoughts with self-compassionate ones
- Consciously increase the amount of positive thoughts you have to support you in feeling confident and in control.

# The Cognitive Model

CBT is based on the idea that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are constantly interacting and influencing one another. How we interpret or think about a situation determines how we feel about it, which then determines how we'll react.



The following example shows how this model might play out when two different people encounter the same situation:

| Situation: David and Jack receive poor grades on a math test.   |  |
|---|--|
| Jack  | David  |
| <b>Thought:</b> "If I was smarter I would've passed. I'm so stupid."  | <b>Thought:</b> "I must've underestimated this test. I didn't study hard enough."  |
| <b>Emotion:</b> Depressed and negative about future tests.  | <b>Emotion:</b> Disappointed, but confident about the next test.   |
| <b>Behavior:</b> Jake develops a negative opinion of himself and doesn't make adjustments to his test preparation, because he believes he is the problem. | <b>Behavior:</b> David isn't happy about his test score, but it doesn't affect his self-esteem. He makes a plan to study harder in the future. |

Now, let's take a closer look at each step of the CBT model, beginning with thought.

## Thoughts

Our brains are constantly using *thought* to make interpretations about the world around us. When we see, hear, touch, smell, or taste something, our thoughts tell us what it all means. Without thought, we would be hopelessly lost.

Part of thought involves making assumptions about our surroundings. For example, if you see a stranger walking toward you with a weapon, you don't *know* that they're dangerous, but it's usually a safe bet. These sort of educated guesses play a clear role in our survival.

However, in some situations, these same sort of assumptions can be harmful. For example, someone might assume that anyone who walks toward them is a threat, even in a totally benign situation. Interestingly, people with mental illness such as depression, tend to have a higher number of unfounded negative thoughts, which we call **irrational beliefs**.

Because we're constantly encountering so much information, we can only pay attention to a small percentage of our thoughts at any given time. Many of our thoughts become automatic and occur outside of our awareness, as if they are a reflex. These are called **automatic thoughts**.

When a thought occurs automatically, we aren't able to assess it for accuracy, because we don't even know that it has occurred. We simply accept the thought as truth and move on. Sometimes, thoughts that are both irrational and automatic can lead us to experience a negative emotion without us ever becoming aware of why.

## Emotions

As a result of our thoughts about a situation, we experience *emotions*. Look at this example to see how two people can feel very differently about the same situation, because of their thoughts:

| <b>Situation: Jenny and Annie notice a man looking at them and walking in their direction on a crowded sidewalk.</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Jenny</b>   | <b>Annie</b>   |
| <b>Thought:</b> "This guy seems fine—maybe he's just lost and needs directions."                                     | <b>Thought:</b> "Why is this guy coming toward me? What does he want? He must be up to something." |
| <b>Emotion:</b> Happy / Friendly   | <b>Emotion:</b> Scared / Nervous   |

Some researchers believe that there are six basic emotions which can occur at varying levels of intensity and combinations to create the wide range of feelings we recognize. The basic emotions are love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness, and fear.

When experiencing emotions, our bodies undergo a number of physiological changes. For example, fear can lead the body to enter the fight-or-flight response which includes increased heart rate, sweating, and the tensing of muscles.

Emotions, much like thoughts, often go unnoticed (especially when they are less intense). However, even when emotions occur outside of our awareness, they still impact our thoughts and behaviors.

**Try this exercise** to see how thoughts and emotions can exist outside of our awareness: Take a second and notice how your hands feel at this very moment. Maybe you can feel the surface that they're resting on, the temperature of the room, or your computer mouse under your palm. Your hands are always

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experiencing some sensation, but it usually goes unnoticed. If you constantly paid attention to every little thing, your mind wouldn't be able to spend much time thinking about the things that are more important.

Now, imagine you accidentally touch a hot stove with your hand. Suddenly, all of your attention goes to your hand as you jerk it back toward your body. This same process occurs with emotions. If you live your life with a constant low level of anger, you'll probably start to ignore the feeling, even though it's still there. When someone cuts you off on the highway, your anger boils to the top and you can feel it.

It's important to understand that thoughts and emotions can occur outside of our awareness, yet still impact our behavior. This knowledge justifies why we need to practice identifying our thoughts and feelings if we want to change our behavior.

## Behaviors

After we interpret a situation with our thoughts and experience an emotional reaction, we respond with a *behavior*. This whole process happens constantly, but it's usually mundane and not very noteworthy. For example, a low level of nervousness prevents us from crossing the road until it's clear of cars. The process works, and we make it across the street when it's safe.

Other times, the process doesn't work quite as well, and we begin to feel and behave in ways that hurt more than they help. Consider this situation, as experienced from two different people:

| <b>Situation: Conor and Elliott both call a friend who doesn't answer the phone.</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Conor</b>   | <b>Elliott</b>  |
| <b>Thought:</b> "They must be busy or they're just not in the mood to talk right now." | <b>Thought:</b> "They don't want to talk to me because I'm so boring and weird."              |
| <b>Emotion:</b> Neutral / No Change  | <b>Emotion:</b> Sad / Hurt  |
| <b>Behavior:</b> Conor tries to call his friend again a few hours later.               | <b>Behavior:</b> Elliott does not try to call his friend again and avoids them in the future. |

In the example above, we could guess that Elliott will have more difficulty maintaining healthy relationships if he continues to interpret neutral situations as if they are negative. The type of thoughts exhibited by Elliott are more common in people suffering from mental illness such as anxiety and depression.

# Core Beliefs

The thoughts we have in any given situation are influenced by our *core beliefs*. These are beliefs that we hold at the center of who we are that describe the basic nature of the world. Some examples of common core beliefs are:

- "People are generally good."
- "I am unlovable."
- "Everything turns out OK in the end."
- "The world is a dangerous place."

Core beliefs are developed from a person's unique personal experiences. However, these beliefs aren't always accurate. For example, someone who was mistreated by a parent as a child might develop the belief that they are unlovable, when the problem was actually their parent.

Imagine your core beliefs are like a filter that each thought must pass through. If someone has the core belief that they are unlovable, each of their thoughts will have to make sense in the context of that belief. The process might look something like this:

| <b>Situation: Michelle and Audrey both call a friend who does not answer the phone.</b>                 |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Michelle</b>   | <b>Audrey</b>  |
| <b>Core Belief:</b> I believe that I'm unlovable, so how does this situation make sense with my belief? | <b>Core Belief:</b> I believe that I'm valuable, so how does this situation make sense with my belief?   |
| <b>Thought:</b> "My friend didn't answer the phone because she doesn't like me."                        | <b>Thought:</b> "My friend didn't answer the phone because she's busy or just not in the mood to talk. She'll probably call back, and if not, I'll call her again tomorrow." |

Now, look at how the same negative core belief could impact even a positive situation:

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| <b>Situation:</b> Michelle calls a friend who answers the phone and has a nice conversation.   |
| <b>Core Belief:</b> I believe that I'm unlovable, so how does this situation make sense with my belief?  |
| <b>Thought:</b> "My friend is really nice to put up with me. She's probably so annoyed by my phone calls. I should try not to bother her so much!" |

# Cognitive Distortions

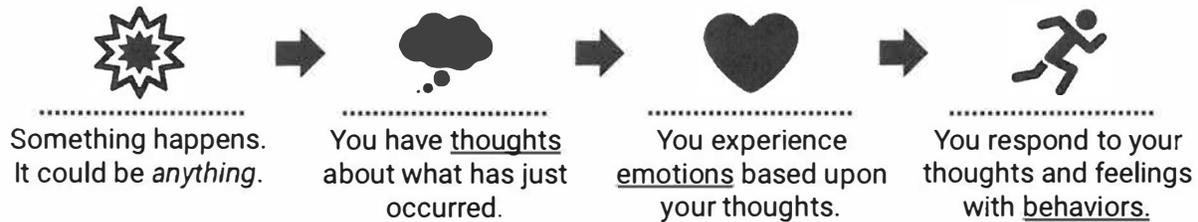
Unhealthy thinking patterns, called *cognitive distortions*, can lead to the reinforcement of negative thoughts and emotions. Cognitive distortions are common but irrational ways of thinking that can negatively impact emotions and behavior. Everyone experiences cognitive distortions to some degree, so don't be surprised if you can identify with a few of them.

- **Magnification and Minimization:** Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events. One might believe their own achievements are unimportant, or that their mistakes are excessively important.
- **Catastrophizing:** Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.
- **Overgeneralization:** Making broad interpretations from a single event. "I felt awkward during my first job interview. I am always so awkward."
- **Magical thinking:** The belief that actions will influence unrelated situations. "I am a good person—Bad things shouldn't happen to me."
- **Personalization:** The belief that one is responsible for events outside of their own control. "My mother is always upset. It must be because I have not done enough to help her."
- **Jumping to conclusions:** Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.
- **Mind reading:** Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence. "She wouldn't go on a date with me. She probably thinks I'm ugly."
- **Fortune telling:** The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.
- **Emotional reasoning:** The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. "I feel like a bad friend, therefore I must be a bad friend."
- **Disqualifying the positive:** Recognizing only negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive. One might receive many compliments on an evaluation but focus on the single piece of criticism.
- **"Should" statements:** The belief that things always need to be a certain way. "I should never feel sad."
- **All-or-nothing thinking:** Thinking in absolutes such as "always", "never", or "every". "I never do a good job on my work."

# The Cognitive Model

Thoughts → Emotions → Behaviors

Cognitive behavioral therapy (usually referred to as “CBT”) is based upon the idea that **how you think determines how you feel and how you behave**. The diagram and example below show us this process:



## Example: Pharrell

**Situation:** A stranger scowls at Pharrell while passing him on the street.

**Pharrell’s Thoughts:** “I must’ve done something wrong... I’m so awkward.”

**Pharrell’s Emotions:** Embarrassed and upset with himself.

**Pharrell’s Behaviors:** Pharrell apologizes to the stranger and replays the situation over and over in his head, trying to understand what he did wrong.

In this example, you might’ve noticed that Pharrell’s thought wasn’t very rational. The stranger could’ve been scowling for any number of reasons. Maybe the stranger just got dumped, or maybe he scowls at everyone. Who knows?

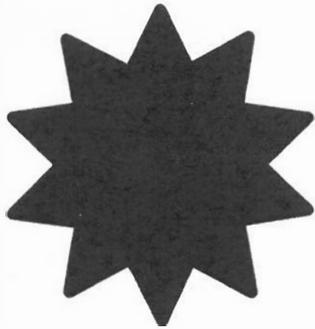
As humans, we all have **irrational thoughts** like these. Unfortunately, irrational or not, these thoughts still affect how we feel, and how we behave. Consider how Pharrell might’ve responded to the same situation if he had a different thought:

| Thought                          | ➡ | Emotion | ➡ | Behavior                                      |
|----------------------------------|---|---------|---|---|
| “What a jerk!”                   |   | Angry   |   | Pharrell shouts: “What’s your problem?!”      |
| “He must be having a bad day...” |   | Neutral |   | Pharrell walks away and forgets the incident. |

Using the cognitive model, you will learn to identify your own patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. You’ll come to understand how your thoughts shape how you feel, and how they impact your life in significant ways.

**Once you become aware of your own irrational thoughts, you will learn to change them.** The thoughts that once led to depression, anxiety, and anger will be replaced with new, healthy alternatives. Finally, *you* will be in control of how you feel.

# The Cognitive Model



**Situation**

something happens



**Thought**

the situation is  
interpreted



**Emotion**

a feeling occurs as a  
result of the thought



**Behavior**

an action in response to  
the emotion

# The Cognitive Model

## Example Sheet

### Situation

Something happens. This step covers only the facts of what happened, without any interpretation.

A coworker, who I'm usually friendly with, walked past me in the hallway without saying "hello".



### Thought

Using thought, you interpret the situation. These interpretations are not always accurate. There are many ways to think about the same situation.

#### My Actual Thought

What did I do wrong? Why is she mad at me?

#### Alternate Thought

She didn't even notice me. She must have a lot on her mind.



### Feeling

You experience emotions based upon your thoughts about the situation.

- Hurt
- Offended

- Unfazed
- Neutral



### Behavior

You respond to the situation based upon your thoughts and feelings.

I couldn't stop thinking about what happened. Later, I acted coldly toward the coworker.

I wouldn't give the situation a second thought. I would act warmly to my coworker, as usual.

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Sheet

### Situation

Something happens. This step covers only the *facts* of what happened, without any interpretation.

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### Thought

Using thought, you interpret the situation. These interpretations are not always accurate. There are many ways to think about the same situation.

| My Actual Thought |
|-------------------|
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|                   |

| Alternate Thought |
|-------------------|
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### Feeling

You experience emotions based upon your thoughts about the situation.

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### Behavior

You respond to the situation based upon your thoughts and feelings.

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# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

### ✓ Examples

See how two people can experience the same situation in different ways based upon their thoughts. Each example depicts a negative and rational thought, and a typical outcome of each thinking style.

**Situation:** Jason and Kurt both receive a negative evaluation at work.

#### Jason

**Negative Thought:** “I can’t do anything right. I bet I get fired because of this!”

**Emotion:** Depressed and nervous.

**Behavior:** Jason avoids his boss because he believes he’s in trouble. He feels nervous the next time he’s confronted with challenging work, and performs poorly.

#### Kurt

**Rational Thought:** “I guess I didn’t work hard enough—I’ll have to come up with a better plan for next time.”

**Emotion:** Disappointed but motivated.

**Behavior:** Kurt seeks out his boss to talk about how he can improve. He approaches his next task as a challenge and gradually improves.

**Situation:** Gwen and Shirley both have an argument with a close friend.

#### Gwen

**Negative Thought:** “We *always* argue! Why can’t she ever see my side? This is so unfair.”

**Emotion:** Angry and blaming.

**Behavior:** Gwen stays angry at her friend and does not reach out to repair the relationship. Over time, Gwen’s friendship becomes more and more toxic.

#### Shirley

**Rational Thought:** “That was rough—I should apologize. We can both be stubborn sometimes.”

**Emotion:** Forgiving and regretful.

**Behavior:** Shirley accepts a portion of the responsibility and apologizes to her friend. They communicate and continue to strengthen their relationship.

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

### Practice

Write down an alternative *rational* thought for each situation. What do you think the resulting emotion and behavior might be?

**Situation:** Emily is cut off by another driver and has to quickly hit her brakes.

**Negative Thought:** “What a jerk! They don’t care about *anyone* but themselves. I could’ve crashed!”

**Emotion:** Angry

**Behavior:** Emily drives aggressively to provoke the driver who cut her off. Emily is still angry when she gets home, and yells at her family.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

**Situation:** Travis notices his wife hasn’t helped around the house for a week.

**Negative Thought:** “Does she even care? She knows I’ll clean up, so she abuses my kindness!”

**Emotion:** Angry and sad.

**Behavior:** Travis lets the dishes pile up and doesn’t say anything to his wife. He doesn’t ask why she hasn’t helped, and becomes angrier when he assumes she’s just selfish.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

**Situation:** Regina is invited to a birthday party by an acquaintance.

**Negative Thought:** “I won’t know anyone at this party and I’ll just seem out of place. She probably invited me because she felt obligated.”

**Emotion:** Sad and anxious.

**Behavior:** Regina lies and tells her friend she already has plans for the night of her party. Regina and her friend fail to develop their friendship.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

**Situation:** Thom notices a girl on the bus who keeps looking his direction.

**Negative Thought:** “Do I have something on my face? Is my fly down? Maybe I smell bad or something. I need to get home and take a shower.”

**Emotion:** Self-conscious and anxious.

**Behavior:** Thom avoids the girl and rushes off the bus without looking up from his shoes.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

YOUR CBT JOURNALING EXERCISE

# Example page

1. What is the one main critical thought you had today?

*I'm no good at my job because I always make mistakes.*

2. Describe the triggering situation (for example, an event, memory, dream, conversation etc) that led to your critical thought.

*My manager sent me an email expressing her disappointment about a task I'd forgotten.*

3. Tick the 1 or 2 thinking patterns below that best describe this type of critical thought.

- Mind reading - Assuming you know what others are feeling and thinking, without asking or hearing it from them.
- Catastrophising/Worst-case scenario thinking - Expecting the worst and blowing situations out of proportion.
- Personalising - Blaming yourself and taking responsibility for things beyond your control.
- Jumping to conclusions - Drawing conclusions with no evidence to back it up.
- Emotional reasoning - Believing something is the case because you feel it, not because there is evidence for it.
- Applying excessive pressure with 'should' and 'must' statements - Having rules for how you and others 'should' behave.
- Blaming - Blaming others for your problems, or blaming yourself for other people's problems.
- Filtering - Focusing only on a negative event and ignoring any positives.
- Overgeneralising - Basing your opinion on one or few events and expecting all others to have the same outcome.
- Black and white thinking - Viewing things as right or wrong, perfect or disaster, without seeing a middle ground.
- Minimising - Belittling the importance of your own value, abilities and achievements.
- Critically labelling - Calling yourself negative names such as 'idiot' or 'loser'.
- Other - Write your answer below.

4. Thinking objectively, do you actually embody a literal definition of your critical thought in question 1?

*No. Someone who is no good at their job would be uninvested in their work. They would have no success, they wouldn't understand how to do their job correctly and would get regular warnings from their manager. I dropped the ball this one time, but I'm usually good at my job. I've never had a complaint before now.*

# Continued - Example page

5. How much real world evidence is there to support and contradict your critical thought? Is it an accurate statement when considering the triggering situation?

Evidence to support the thought 'I'm no good at my job' includes: The mistake I made, the email I received pointing it out and being slow to reply to emails. Evidence to contradict the thought includes: I've been promoted, I am included in all important meetings, and I've had positive feedback off our clients and my colleagues. It's not accurate when considering everything I've achieved.

6. How does the critical thought affect you? What feelings does the thought evoke? Is the thought useful in helping you to move closer to your goals? Does the thought make you feel confident and thriving day-to-day?

The thoughts knock my confidence and make me question myself and my decisions at work. They do not help me to feel more confident and to grow in my job, like I would want. The thought is not useful.

7. What is a kinder and more realistic alternative statement that you can counter the thought with? Is the situation as bad as you first thought? What other ways could you interpret the trigger situation?

I screwed up this one task, but everything else this week has gone to plan. It's not the end of the world and I can correct it tomorrow.

8. What have you learnt from this process of breaking down your thought that will benefit you going forward?

That I am jumping to conclusions and don't need to listen to my own criticism. My own criticism is not helpful in moving me forward at work. I should and can be kinder to myself.

9. What are 3 'wins' you have had today, big or small, that you can celebrate?

- I got everything done on my to-do list for the day.
- I had a great meeting with someone from another department, in which I learnt a lot.
- I didn't snooze my alarm today.

## YOUR CBT JOURNALING EXERCISE

1. What is the one main critical thought you had today?

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2. Describe the triggering situation (for example, an event, memory, dream, conversation etc) that led to your critical thought.

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3. Tick the 1 or 2 thinking patterns below that best describe this type of critical thought.

- Mind reading - Assuming you know what others are feeling and thinking, without asking or hearing it from them.
- Catastrophising/Worst-case scenario thinking - Expecting the worst and blowing situations out of proportion.
- Personalising - Blaming yourself and taking responsibility for things beyond your control.
- Jumping to conclusions - Drawing conclusions with no evidence to back it up.
- Emotional reasoning - Believing something is the case because you feel it, not because there is evidence for it.
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- Blaming - Blaming others for your problems, or blaming yourself for other people's problems.
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- Critically labelling - Calling yourself negative names such as 'idiot' or 'loser'.
- Other - Write your answer below.

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4. Thinking objectively, do you actually embody a literal definition of your critical thought in question 1?

# Continued

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5. How much real world evidence is there to support and contradict your critical thought? Is it an accurate statement when considering the triggering situation?

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6. How does the critical thought affect you? What feelings does the thought evoke? Is the thought useful in helping you to move closer to your goals? Does the thought make you feel confident and thriving day-to-day?

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7. What is a kinder and more realistic alternative statement that you can counter the thought with? Is the situation as bad as you first thought? What other ways could you interpret the trigger situation?

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8. What have you learnt from this process of breaking down your thought that will benefit you going forward?

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9. What are 3 'wins' you have had today, big or small, that you can celebrate?

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YOUR CBT JOURNALING EXERCISE # 2

1. What is the one main critical thought you had today?

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2. Describe the triggering situation (for example, an event, memory, dream, conversation etc) that led to your critical thought.

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3. Tick the 1 or 2 thinking patterns below that best describe this type of critical thought.

- Mind reading - Assuming you know what others are feeling and thinking, without asking or hearing it from them.
- Catastrophising/Worst-case scenario thinking - Expecting the worst and blowing situations out of proportion.
- Personalising - Blaming yourself and taking responsibility for things beyond your control.
- Jumping to conclusions - Drawing conclusions with no evidence to back it up.
- Emotional reasoning - Believing something is the case because you feel it, not because there is evidence for it.
- Applying excessive pressure with 'should' and 'must' statements - Having rules for how you and others 'should' behave.
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- Minimising - Belittling the importance of your own value, abilities and achievements.
- Critically labelling - Calling yourself negative names such as 'idiot' or 'loser'.
- Other - Write your answer below.

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4. Thinking objectively, do you actually embody a literal definition of your critical thought in question 1?

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## YOUR CBT JOURNALING EXERCISE

5. How much real world evidence is there to support and contradict your critical thought? Is it an accurate statement when considering the triggering situation?

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6. How does the critical thought affect you? What feelings does the thought evoke? Is the thought useful in helping you to move closer to your goals? Does the thought make you feel confident and thriving day-to-day?

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7. What is a kinder and more realistic alternative statement that you can counter the thought with? Is the situation as bad as you first thought? What other ways could you interpret the trigger situation?

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8. What have you learnt from this process of breaking down your thought that will benefit you going forward?

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9. What are 3 'wins' you have had today, big or small, that you can celebrate?

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REFLECT BACK

# Well done!

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A massive congratulations on completing your daily journaling exercise. Really well done. This work is a vital step towards improving the quality of your thinking. Now that you have completed these questions your mind will be much more used to questioning your thoughts, dealing with criticism, from yourself and others, and coming up with more positive interpretations of your trigger situations that are actually *useful* to you and your confidence.

Now it's time to reflect back over the your answers and draw some conclusions.

1. Reading back over your workbook answers, were there any thinking patterns you noticed recurring?

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2. Did certain situations trigger you more than others?

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3. Come up with 2 ideas for limiting your recurring thinking patterns, and 2 ideas for managing the most triggering situations.

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4. What have you learnt about your thinking over the last fortnight?

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# Core Beliefs

Everyone looks at the world differently. Two people can have the same experience, yet have very different interpretations of what happened. **Core beliefs** are the deeply held beliefs that influence how we interpret our experiences.

Think of core beliefs like a pair of sunglasses. Everyone has a different “shade” that causes them to see things differently.



Many people have negative core beliefs that cause harmful consequences. To begin challenging your negative core beliefs, you first need to identify what they are. Here are some common examples:

|                     |              |                 |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| I'm unlovable       | I'm stupid   | I'm boring      |
| I'm not good enough | I'm ugly     | I'm worthless   |
| I'm a bad person    | I'm abnormal | I'm undeserving |

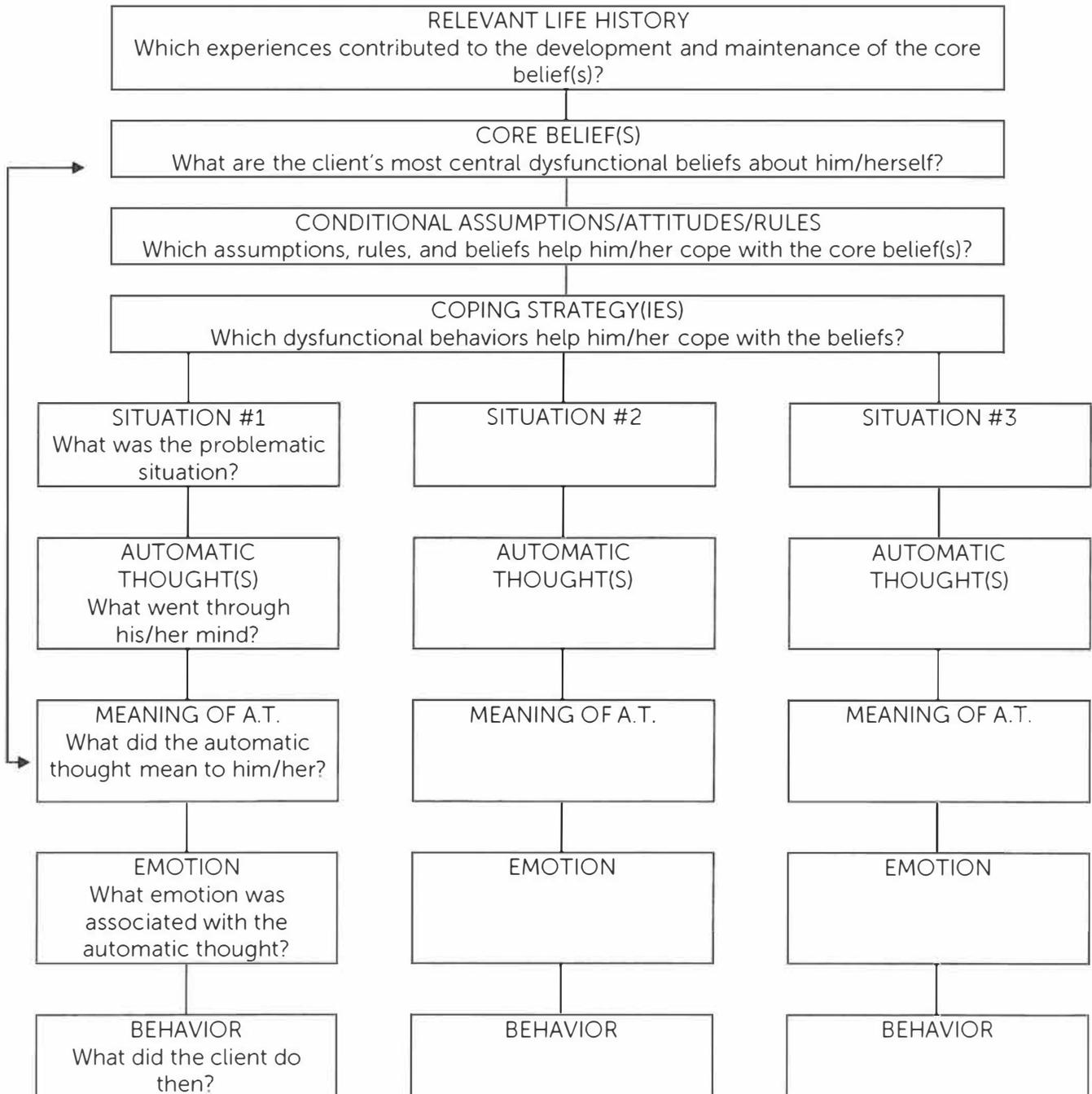
What is one of your negative core beliefs? \_\_\_\_\_

List three pieces of evidence contrary to your negative core belief.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

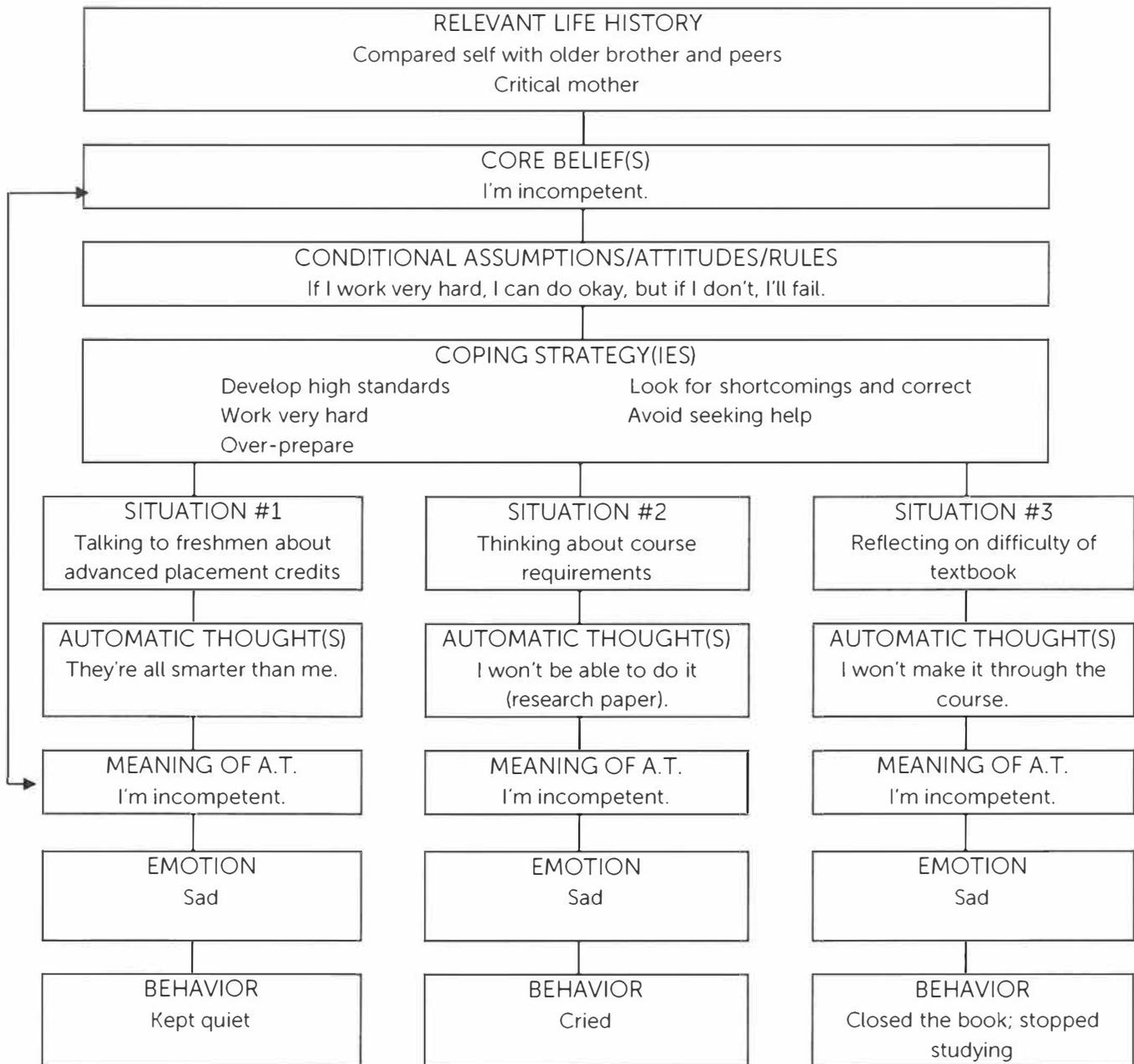
# Cognitive Conceptualization Diagram

## INSTRUCTIONS



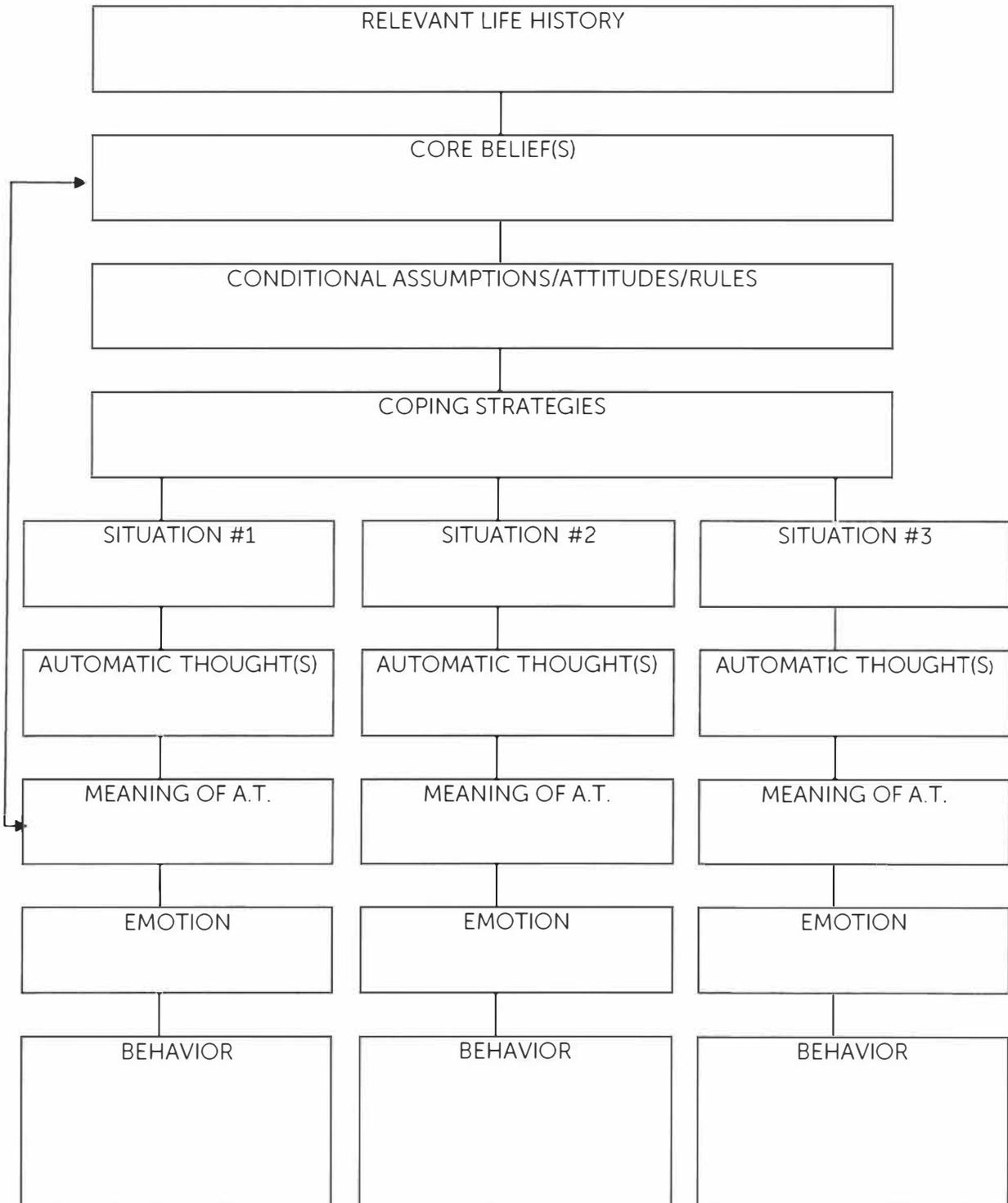
# Cognitive Conceptualization Diagram

## EXAMPLE



# Cognitive Conceptualization Diagram

## WORKSHEET



# Core Belief Worksheet

## EXAMPLE

Old Core Belief: \_\_\_\_\_ *I'm a failure.* \_\_\_\_\_

New Belief: \_\_\_\_\_ *I'm competent, though with both strengths and weaknesses.* \_\_\_\_\_

| Evidence against old belief  | Evidence for new belief   |
|--|---|
| <p>Did well on literature paper</p> <p>Asked a question in statistics</p> <p>Understood this worksheet</p> <p>Made decisions about next year</p> <p>Arranged to switch phones, bank accounts, insurance, etc.</p> <p>Got together all the references I need for econ paper</p> <p>Understood most of Chapter 6 in statistics book</p> <p>Explained statistics concept to a guy down the hall</p> | <p>I didn't understand econ concept in class but I hadn't read about it and I'll probably understand it later. At worst, it's an incompetency but maybe it's actually her fault for not explaining it well enough.</p> <p>I didn't go to the teaching assistant for help but that doesn't mean I'm incompetent. I was nervous about going because I think I should be able to figure these things out for myself and I thought he'd think I was unprepared.</p> <p>I got a B on my literature paper, but it's an okay grade. If I were really incompetent, I wouldn't even be here.</p> |

# Core Belief Worksheet

---

## WORKSHEET

Old Core Belief: \_\_\_\_\_

New Belief: \_\_\_\_\_

| Evidence against old belief | Evidence for new belief |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
|                             |                         |

# Historical Review and Modification of Core Belief

---

## EXAMPLE

Core Belief: I'm unacceptable.

Period: Elementary School (by school - [pre-school years, elementary school, etc.]  
and/or by age - [0-5 years old, 5-10, 10-15, etc.]

### 1. What made me think the core belief was true?

Dad criticized me; called me stupid.

Mom never defended me.

Dad didn't do that to my sister.

I did poorly in Math.

Dad always said I was bad.

Kids at school made fun of me.

### 2. What evidence is there that the core belief was not true, or not completely true?

Kids next door befriended me.

I tried to help mom.

My cousins cared about me.

I helped younger kids at school.

Teachers seemed to like me.

I always did my action plan.

I tried hard in school.

I didn't start fights with my sister.

### 3. For each item in number 1 above, what's another explanation? You may need another piece of paper.

Dad was abusive, but he was also alcoholic, unhappy, and he took it out on me.

### 4. Looking over all the evidence, how do I now view the accuracy of my core belief during this time period?

Maybe I was a normal kid.



# Activity Chart

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## INSTRUCTIONS

The activity chart can be used for either monitoring or scheduling. Therapists and clients can complete it together in session or clients can complete it at home.

As a monitor, the chart allows therapists and clients to collect important data. For example, the chart can help gauge how clients are spending their time and assess which activities they are spending too much and/or too little time. It is also useful for some clients to predict, then measure, their sense of pleasure and/or mastery they receive from various activities.

The chart can facilitate monitoring in other ways as well:

1. Clients can record their activities and measure the degree of a specific mood (for example, anxiety) during each activity.
2. Or they can record only those instances in which they experience more intense emotion, for example, writing down activities during which their anger was above a 5 on a 0-10 point scale.
3. Alternatively, clients can record only positive events or behaviors, such as identifying when their partner does or says something nice or when they begin a task without procrastinating.

As a monitor, the activity chart can reveal important information. With depressed clients, it may be important to identify activities in which they experienced little mastery or pleasure, as a prelude to eliciting their dysfunctional thinking in these situations. For many clients, it is helpful to identify the kinds of situations in which they experience a high level of negative emotion, again aiding them in identifying important cognitions and/or behaviors to work on in therapy. A review of the chart may also reveal that a client has been avoiding important activities or, conversely, that a client's schedule is too demanding.

As a schedule, the chart can be used to help clients commit to specific times and days to engage in important activities. For example, depressed clients often need to schedule several activities per day which have the potential for increasing their sense of mastery or pleasure. Procrastinating clients may need schedule "must-do" activities.

# Activity Chart

## WORKSHEET 1

|           | MON.    | TUE. | WED. | THU. | FRI. | SAT. | SUN. |
|-----------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Morning   | 6 - 7   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 7 - 8   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 8 - 9   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 9 - 10  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 10 - 11 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Afternoon | 11 - 12 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 12 - 1  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 1 - 2   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 2 - 3   |      |      |      |      |      |      |

cont.

# Activity Chart

## WORKSHEET 2

|           | MON.    | TUE. | WED. | THU. | FRI. | SAT. | SUN. |
|-----------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Afternoon | 3 - 4   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 4 - 5   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 5 - 6   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 7 - 8   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 8 - 9   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Evening   | 9 - 10  |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 10 - 11 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 11 - 12 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|           | 12 - 1  |      |      |      |      |      |      |

# Thought Record

## EXAMPLE

Directions: When you notice your mood getting worse, ask yourself "What's going through my mind right now?" and as soon as possible, jot down the thought or mental image in the Automatic Thought Column.

| <b>DATE &amp; TIME</b> | <b>SITUATION</b><br>1. What actual event or stream of thoughts, or daydreams, or recollection led to the unpleasant emotion?<br><br>2. What (if any) distressing physical sensations did you have? | <b>AUTOMATIC THOUGHT(S)</b><br>1. What thought(s) and/or image(s) went through your mind?<br><br>2. How much did you believe each one at the time? | <b>EMOTION(S)</b><br>1. What emotion(s) (sad, anxious, angry, etc.) did you feel at the time?<br><br>2. How intense (0-100%) was the emotion? | <b>ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE</b><br>1. (optional) What cognitive distortion did you make? (e.g., all-or-nothing thinking, mind-reading, catastrophizing, etc.)<br><br>2. Use questions at bottom to compose a response to the automatic thought(s).<br><br>3. How much do you believe each response?  | <b>OUTCOME</b><br>1. How much do you now believe each automatic thought?<br><br>2. What emotion(s) do you feel now? How intense (0-100%) is the emotion?<br><br>3. What will you do? (or did you do?) |
|------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
|                        | Thinking about arriving late for important presentation at work.   | How could I be late? I might get fired. (75%) I'm an idiot. (90%)  | Anxious (80%)<br>Sad (70%)  | I did arrive late for the presentation, but this is the first time this has happened. I was late because of unforeseen road work, and had even left early that morning. My boss seemed understanding. The worst that could happen is I'll receive a written warning at work and I would be pretty upset about that, but if I focus on my work, I'll feel better. Best is my boss will reward me for my presentation, even though I was late. Most realistically, my boss will be okay with my presentation and he'll get over my lateness. Believing that I might get fired and that I'm an idiot makes me feel sad and anxious. Realizing that my boss will probably be okay will make me feel better—more confident in my job security. I'd tell Jim that it's ridiculous to consider himself an idiot for something that wasn't within his control. I should stop blaming myself and accept that my lateness was out of my control. | A.T. = 40%<br>Anxious = 40%<br>Sad = 30%  |

Questions to help compose an alternative response:

1. What is the evidence that the automatic thought is true? Not true?
2. Is there an alternative explanation?
3. What's the worst that could happen and how could I cope? What's the best that could happen? What's the most realistic outcome?
4. What's the effect of my believing the automatic thought? What could be the effect of changing my thinking?
5. If \_\_\_\_\_ (friend's name) was in the situation and had this thought, what would I tell him/her?
6. What should I do about it?

# Thought Record

## WORKSHEET

Directions: When you notice your mood getting worse, ask yourself **"What's going through my mind right now?"** and as soon as possible, jot down the thought or mental image in the Automatic Thought Column.

| DATE & TIME | SITUATION<br>1. What actual event or stream of thoughts, or daydreams, or recollection led to the unpleasant emotion?<br><br>2. What (if any) distressing physical sensations did you have? | AUTOMATIC THOUGHT(S)<br>1. What thought(s) and/or image(s) went through your mind?<br><br>2. How much did you believe each one at the time? | EMOTION(S)<br>1. What emotion(s) (sad, anxious, angry, etc.) did you feel at the time?<br><br>2. How intense (0-100%) was the emotion? | ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE<br>1. (optional) What cognitive distortion did you make? (e.g., all-or-nothing thinking, mind-reading, catastrophizing, etc.)<br><br>2. Use questions at bottom to compose a response to the automatic thought(s).<br><br>3. How much do you believe each response? | OUTCOME<br>1. How much do you now believe each automatic thought?<br><br>2. What emotion(s) do you feel now? How intense (0-100%) is the emotion?<br><br>3. What will you do? (or did you do?) |
|-------------|---|---|--|--|--|
|             |   |   |  |  |  |

Questions to help compose an alternative response:

1. What is the evidence that the automatic thought is true? Not true?
2. Is there an alternative explanation?
3. What's the worst that could happen and how could I cope? What's the best that could happen? What's the most realistic outcome?
4. What's the effect of my believing the automatic thought? What could be the effect of changing my thinking?
5. If \_\_\_\_\_ (friend's name) was in the situation and had this thought, what would I tell him/her?
6. What should I do about it?

# Testing Your Thoughts

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## EXAMPLE

What is the situation?

I was very late in mailing an important document for my boss.

What am I thinking or imagining?

He is going to think I am a complete idiot! I'll lose my job.

What makes me think the thought is true?

This was a very important document that I forgot.

What makes me think the thought is not true or not completely true?

I rarely forget to do things; Since I started this job two years ago, my boss has praised my work.

What's another way to look at this?

I made a mistake. My boss knows that I'm not perfect, and he's generally fine when I've made a mistake.

What's the worst that could happen? What could I do then?

I'd lose my job. I would find a new job.

What's the best that could happen?

The document will arrive on time even though I mailed it so late, and my boss will be really happy.

What will probably happen?

The document will arrive late, but my boss will recognize that my work is usually good and that my forgetting was an honest mistake.

What will happen if I keep telling myself the same thought?

I'll continue to feel anxious and upset.

What could happen if I changed my thinking?

I'll feel better.

What would I tell my friend   Laura   if this happened to him or her?

Don't worry; you've been a good worker for two straight years. Your boss will know it was just a mistake.

What should I do now?

Tell my boss what happened.

# Testing Your Thoughts

---

## WORKSHEET

What is the situation?

What am I thinking or imagining?

What makes me think the thought is true?

What makes me think the thought is not true or not completely true?

What's another way to look at this?

What's the worst that could happen? What could I do then?

What's the best that could happen?

What will probably happen?

What will happen if I keep telling myself the same thought?

What could happen if I changed my thinking?

What would I tell my friend \_\_\_\_\_ (think of a specific person) if this happened to him or her?

What should I do now?

# Advantage/Disadvantage Analysis

---

## INSTRUCTIONS

Clients may find it helpful to learn the skill of analyzing the advantages and disadvantages in a variety of contexts:

### 1. In decision making

- a. Weighing attributes (Should I take job A or job B?)
- b. Deciding whether to take a certain step. (Should I leave my partner? Go back to school? Take medication?)
- c. Determining whether this is a reasonable time to take a certain step. (Given that I'll eventually have to change jobs, should I do so now or later?)

### 2. In changing certain beliefs

- a. What are the advantages and disadvantages of continuing to hold this belief?
- b. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of changing the belief?

### 3. In motivating the client

- a. What are the advantages and disadvantages [of engaging in this behavior]?
- b. What are the advantages disadvantages [of not engaging in this behavior]?

# Advantage/Disadvantage Analysis

---

## EXAMPLE

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Advantages of keeping my core belief that I'm weak</p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Don't have to face anxiety</li><li>2. Don't have to try new things</li></ol>  | <p>Advantages of changing my core belief that I'm weak</p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Could feel better about myself</li><li>2. Could try new things more easily</li><li>3. Could be less hard on myself when I'm not perfect</li><li>4. Could keep a better mood more often</li></ol> |
| <p>Disadvantages of keeping my core belief that I'm weak</p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Won't reach my goals</li><li>2. Will continue to feel stuck</li><li>3. Will never really know what I'm capable of</li><li>4. Won't feel significantly better than I do now</li></ol> | <p>Disadvantages of changing my core belief that I'm weak</p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Might feel anxious</li><li>2. Might not feel like the real me</li><li>3. Might try a few things that I'm not good at</li></ol>  |

# Advantage/Disadvantage Analysis

---

## WORKSHEET

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Advantages of<br><hr/>    | Advantages of<br><hr/>    |
| Disadvantages of<br><hr/> | Disadvantages of<br><hr/> |

# Problem Solving Worksheet

---

## EXAMPLE

1. Problem

Boyfriend says he's going away to California to visit his aunt for a week.

2. Special meaning: Automatic thoughts and beliefs

He doesn't care about my feelings.

3. Response to special meaning

Not necessarily true. He often shows that he cares. His aunt is getting up in age and she's always been like a second mother to him— he ought to spend some time with her.

4. Possible solutions

1. Arrange to call and text him or have him call and text me several times when he's away.
2. Spend the weekend together when he gets back, even if it's just catching up on errands and chores together.
3. Explain to him that I acted angry toward him because I felt hurt but now I realize he does care about my feelings.



# Challenging Anxious Thoughts

Anxiety can be a healthy emotion—it forces us to focus on our problems, and work hard to solve them. But sometimes, anxiety grows out of control, and does just the opposite. It *cripples* our ability to solve problems. When this happens, **irrational thoughts** often play a role.

In this exercise, we will practice catching our irrational thoughts, and replacing them with rational alternatives. With enough practice, this will become a natural process that can help you manage anxiety.

## Describe a common situation that triggers your anxiety:

example: "giving a speech in front of a crowd" or "driving in rush hour traffic"

|              |
|--------------|
| <br><br><br> |
|--------------|

Anxiety distorts our thinking by causing us to **overestimate the likelihood of something going wrong**, and **imagine the potential consequences as worse than they really are**. Sometimes, just taking a moment to think about these facts can help us recognize our irrational thoughts.

## Imagine you are faced with the anxiety-producing situation from above. Describe the...

|                 |
|-----------------|
| Worst outcome:  |
| Best outcome:   |
| Likely outcome: |

## Imagine the worst outcome comes true. Would it still matter...

|                   |
|-------------------|
| 1 week from now:  |
| 1 month from now: |
| 1 year from now:  |

Usually, anxious thoughts focus on the worst possible outcomes, even when they aren't likely. For example, a person who is nervous about giving a speech might think: "*I am going to forget everything and embarrass myself, and I'll never live it down*".

As an outside observer, we know that an alternate, more rational thought might be: "*My speech might only be OK, but if I do mess up, everyone will forget about it soon enough*".

## Using your own "worst outcome" and "likely outcome" from above, describe your...

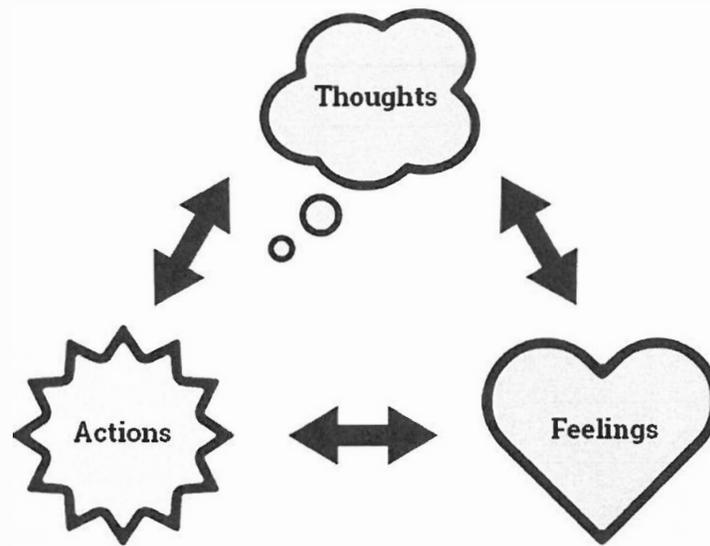
|                     |
|---------------------|
| Irrational thought: |
| Rational thought:   |

# Thoughts Feelings Actions

Everyone has problems, both big and small. To better solve your big problems, it helps to learn how your thoughts, feelings, and actions are connected.

Imagine you have an upcoming test, and you think "I'm going to fail". Because of this thought, you start to worry. You are so worried that you feel sick just thinking about the test. Because it's so uncomfortable, you decide not to study.

The thought ("I'm going to fail") led to a feeling (worry), which led to an action (not studying). What might have changed if you had a different thought?



**Thoughts** are the words that run through your mind. They're the things you tell yourself about what's going on around you. There are many different thoughts you could have about a single situation.



**Feelings** come and go as different things happen to you. You might feel happy, angry, and sad, all in one day. Some feelings are uncomfortable, but they are not bad. Everyone has these feelings from time-to-time.



**Actions** are the things you do, or the way you behave. Your thoughts and feelings have a big impact on how you act. If you feel happy, you are likely to do nice things. But if you feel angry, you might want to act mean.

# Thoughts Feelings Actions

## What happened?

My friend Emma hasn't spoken to me as much as usual over the past week.

## My Thoughts

I thought: "Emma hasn't talked to me much this week. She must be mad at me."

Because I was upset I ignored Emma and avoided her at school.

## My Actions

I felt sad and hurt.

## My Feelings

Just because you have a thought doesn't mean it's true. Your thoughts are *guesses* about why something happened, or about something that might happen. Coming up with new thoughts will help you see a situation differently.



### New Thoughts



### New Feelings



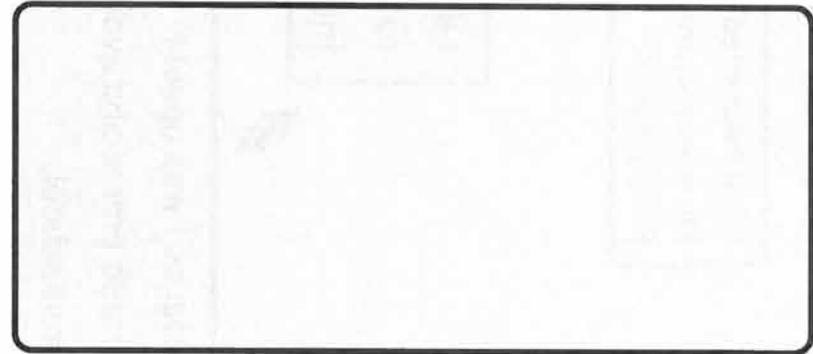
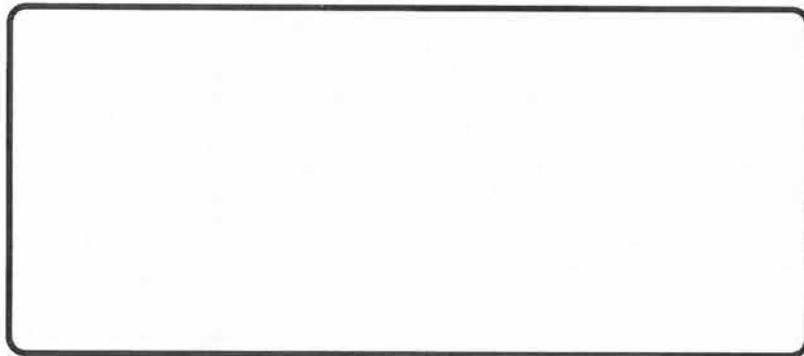
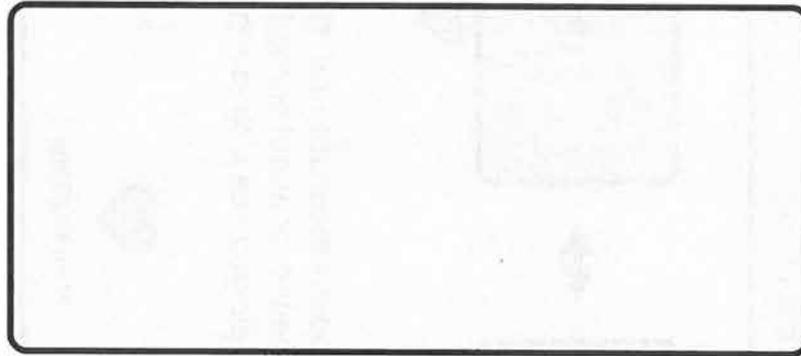
### New Actions

|          |  New Thoughts |  New Feelings |  New Actions |
|----------|--|--|---|
| <b>1</b> | "Emma might be upset with me, but maybe not. I don't know."                                      | Concerned that Emma <i>might</i> be upset, but I'm not as sad as I was.                          | Ask Emma if she is mad at me, or if she has another problem.                                      |
| <b>2</b> | "Emma has probably been busy with school or something else."                                     | Disappointed I haven't talked to Emma, but understanding.  | I'll stay friendly with Emma, as usual. I'll be sure to say "hi" anyway.                          |
| <b>3</b> | "Maybe Emma is upset about something unrelated to me."   | Worried about how Emma is feeling.   | Ask Emma what's going on, and if she needs help.  |

# Thoughts Feelings Actions

What happened?

 My Thoughts



 My Actions

 My Feelings

# Thoughts Feelings Actions



**New Thoughts**



**New Feelings**



**New Actions**

|          |  |  |  |
|----------|--|--|--|
| <b>1</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>2</b> |  |  |  |
| <b>3</b> |  |  |  |

# Self-Therapy Session

---

## WORKSHEET

### 1. Review of past week(s)

- What positive things have happened? What do I deserve credit for?
- What problems came up? What did I do? If the problem recurs, what, if anything, should I do differently?

### 2. Review of Action Plan

- Did I do what I had planned? If not, what got in the way (practical problems; automatic thoughts), and what can I do about that next time?
- What should I continue to do this week?

### 3. Current problematic issues/situations

- Am I viewing this problem realistically, or have I been overreacting? Is there another way of viewing this?
- What should I do?

### 5. Prediction of future problems

- What problems may come up in the next few days or weeks, and what should I do about them?

### 6. Set new Action Plan

- What action plan would be helpful? Should I consider:
  - Doing Thought Records?
  - Scheduling pleasure or mastery activities?
  - Reading therapy notes?
  - Practicing skills such as relaxation?
  - Doing a credit list?