

Cognitive Therapy thought record

Introduction

This record will help you document your feelings and consider how to harness positive thoughts and let go of negative thoughts.

Things to consider when recording your thoughts

- **The situation.** Briefly describe the situation that led to your unpleasant feelings. This will help you to remember the situation later when you review your notes.
- **Initial thought.** What thought first crossed your mind? This was probably a subconscious or automatic thought that you have had before.
- **Consider the consequences.** Why do you want to change this thinking? What will the consequences be if you don't change? Look at the psychological, physical, professional and relationship consequences.
- **Challenge your initial thought.** How successful has this thinking been for you in the past? What facts do you have that support or challenge your initial thought? What strengths do you have that you may have overlooked? What advice would you give someone else in the same situation?
- **Negative thinking (Optional).** Summarise the kind of negative thinking behind your initial thought. Identify one or more of the basic types of negative thinking: all-or-nothing, focusing on the negatives, catastrophising, negative self labelling, mind reading, should statements.
- **Background (Optional):** When did you first have initial thoughts like this? How deep do the roots go? Do you know anyone else who thinks like this? How successful has this thinking been for them?
- **Alternative thinking.** Now that you understand your negative thinking, how could you have handled the situation differently? Drop any negative assumptions and think of possibilities or facts that you may have overlooked.
- **Positive belief and affirmation.** Write down an affirmation, in a positive form, that reflects your healthier approach. Choose something that you can use as a reminder.
- **Action plan.** What can you do if this situation arises again? Knowing your tendencies, how can you prepare for this situation? Write a list of strengths you bring to the situation. What can you do if you fall back on old habits?
- **Improvement.** Do you feel slightly better or more optimistic? This step reinforces the idea that if you change your thinking, you will change your life.

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My thought record

Situation/Trigger	Feelings Emotions – rate 0-100% Body sensations	Unhelpful thoughts/Images	Facts that <u>support</u> the unhelpful	Facts that provide evidence <u>against</u> the unhelpful thought	Alternative, more realistic & balanced perspective	Outcome Re-rate emotion
<p>What happened? Where? When? With who? How?</p>	<p>What emotion did I feel at that time? What else? How intense was it? What did I notice in my body? Where did I feel it?</p>	<p>What went through my mind? What disturbed me? What did those thoughts / images / memories mean to me or say about the situation? What am I responding to? What 'button' is this pressing for me? What would be the worst thing about that, or that could happen?</p>	<p>What are the facts? What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts are totally true?</p>	<p>What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts are NOT totally true? Is it possible that this is opinion rather than fact? What have others said about this?</p>	<p>STOP! Take a breath... What would someone else say about this situation? What is the bigger picture? Is there another way of seeing it? What advice would I give someone else? Is my reaction in proportion to the actual event? Is this really as important as it seems?</p>	<p>What am I feeling now (0-100%) What could I do differently? What would be more effective? Do what works! Act wisely. What will be most helpful for me or the situation? What will the consequences be?</p>

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