

Situation: Describe the situation or recurring thought that elicited emotion

Feelings: Identify a few emotions that came up for you. Rate them in intensity.

Describe physical sensations in the body (tight chest, shaking hands, sweating, nausea, pain). Labeling a confusing or overwhelming sensation in the body will communicate to your brain that you know what is going on and will help you feel more in control.

Things about feelings:

- Feelings do not last forever
- Feelings cannot hurt us
- Feelings have less power over us when they are known and familiar
- Suppressing/denying/avoiding them makes them louder and scarier

Thoughts: If you were being truly honest with yourself, what was going through your mind? What were you saying to yourself? Did you have an image of something? What did it mean? What did it say about you? What implications did that situation have for me or my future?

Distortions: This section aims to describe the very common errors our human brains often create for us. The foundation of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is that *Thoughts, *Feelings, and *Behaviors are all interconnected and interrelated. So sometimes in order to feel better we have to evaluate the thoughts or behaviors that are keeping us stuck.

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Examples of Common Cognitive Distortions:

All or nothing/ black and white:	This type of polarized thinking leaves no room for middle ground. People or situations get placed in categories of “either/or” “always/never” “success/failure” “good/bad” with no room for shades of grey or allowance for the complexity of life.
Jumping to Conclusions:	We interpret a situation with little or no evidence... convincing ourselves that our predictions are an established fact. Mind Reading: Assuming we know what someone is thinking based off of their behaviors or interpreting others thoughts without adequate evidence Fortune Telling: Predicting the worst or expecting things to turn out badly.
Emotional Reasoning:	Listening to our emotions as fact. Assuming our emotions reflect the way things really are. Emotions are information, but they do not always expose the true nature of things.
Should Statements:	This is the list of rules in our heads that dictate the way things “should” or “shouldn’t” be. We expect the world to be different than it is. We might try to use this distortion to motivate (or guilt) ourselves, as if we have to be punished in order to do something. We may also get mad at others if they break those rules in our heads.
Personalization:	The belief that what others do or say is a direct response or personal reaction to us. Or the belief that we are responsible for events or situations that are out of our control.
Blaming:	This one is the opposite of personalization. We may hold others responsible for our pain, despite only being able to control our own emotions and reactions. This could also look like tendency to blame others or avoid taking responsibility. Fallacy of Change: Expecting other people to change to better suit us or make us happy. This distortion also refers to believing that it is fair to pressure someone into changing for their benefit or having a vision of how someone ‘should’ be as if love, happiness, and trust are dependent on the changes are made (sometimes seen in abusive relationships).
Magnification and Minimization:	Exaggerating or shrinking the magnitude of events, for example downplaying our achievements or exaggerating the importance of a mistake. Expecting the worst and disaster to strike (also known as catastrophizing).
Labeling:	This is when we attribute one or two qualities/ behaviors to someone’s character (usually a negative global judgment) rather than allowing for grace in the interpretation. We attach an unhealthy label to things instead of describing the attribute in the context of a specific situation.
Overgeneralization:	We come to a conclusion on something based on one single incident or piece of evidence. We might make broad interpretations of situations, if because something happened once, it will happen again and again.
Disqualifying the Positive:	We object positive experiences, insisting that they do not count. Or we use a “mental filter” to recognize only the negative aspects of a situation. For example, placing more weight on one piece of negative feedback than seven pieces of positive feedback.

Reframes: This is the section where we start to shift the narrative that has been keeping us stuck in a cycle of anxiety or depression. We are not necessarily trying to make negative thoughts positive, just less hurtful/harmful. We can confront or address our thoughts using Socratic questioning (using questioning to clarify meaning, challenge the thought, and increase insight). This is also called Cognitive Restructuring.

Below are some examples of questions to ask yourself about the thought:

- 1- Do we need to use a Bridge Statement to help move the thoughts into a less negative place? (“I’m open to the possibility that this thought is not as factual as I believe it is,” “I agree that those thoughts are not helpful for me”)
- 2- What is the evidence for this thought? Evidence against it?
- 3- What would you say to a friend going through this? Would you tell your friend that thought?
- 4- Are there shades of grey we are missing? Could it be more complicated than I’m thinking it is?
- 5- Is this thought based on facts or feelings?
- 6- Could I be misinterpreting the evidence?
- 7- Is there a more helpful way of thinking about myself or this situation?
- 8- Have I been judging myself harshly? Is there a more fair way to sum this up?
- 9- Will this be important to me in ten years?
- 10- What are other points of view? (Friends, family, your fur baby)
- 11- What are the long-term implications of -or- what am I gaining from these thoughts?
- 12- If my thoughts are true, what is the worst-case scenario?
- 13- Are there any opportunities for growth?

Things about Thoughts:

- * Intrusive thoughts are completely normal. They are not secret desires; they are your brain’s junk mail.
- * You are not your thoughts. Thinking about something is not the same as doing that thing because thoughts are not actions.
- * Your thoughts are not facts. Thoughts that we come to believe as true are called Core Beliefs. These thoughts often resemble “I am _____” “The world is _____” “People are _____” (examples of the blanks may include bad, helpless, a loser, not good enough, incompetent, ugly, stupid, unworthy, undeserving, unlovable). Core Beliefs tend to act as filters that guide our perceptions... and therefore become a factory for automatic negative thoughts.
- * Having weird thoughts does not reflect your value or worth as a person. Thoughts hold no moral value.
- * Even if you do not believe the reframed thoughts, you have planted a seed demonstrating to yourself that there may be another way of thinking about things. This is a normal place to start with this exercise.

Feelings: Re-rate feelings that were identified in the second column based off the reframed thoughts to evaluate the impact of thoroughly processing your thoughts. Reflect on this exercise.