

Date/Time:

Situation (what event or experience led to the unpleasant emotion):



Automatic Thoughts (thoughts or images that went through your mind and how much you believed them on a scale of 0-100%; e.g. "What a jerk!"-90%):

Emotions and Intensity (scale of 0-100%; e.g. Anxious 90%)



Core Beliefs (rules and assumptions about yourself, life, others, or the world)

Behavior (what you did with the feeling; e.g. yelled, stayed in bed, punched a wall, called a friend)



Physical Signs (what was happening in your body during or after the situation; e.g. heart pounding, butterflies in the stomach)



When you recognize a thought you have about a troubling situation, you can choose what you would like to do with it. Here are some of your options...

**Option 1: Test, Challenge, or Dispute The Thought**



What is the evidence for this thought?

What is the evidence against it?

How does this thought make sense?

How does it not make sense?

*(Helpful if you think you may be catastrophizing:)*

What is the worst that can happen with this situation?  
Would I survive it okay?

What is the best that can happen with this situation?

What do I think is the most realistic outcome?

Do these thoughts look like cognitive distortions? (use handout)

**Option 2: Explore Other Ways to Think**



What are some other possibilities?

How else can I think about this?

What are some other ways of explaining this?

How might others think about this?

If a friend were thinking this way, what would I tell him/her?

**Option 3: Identify How Helpful (Adaptive) the Thought Is**



What is the effect of me thinking this way?

What would I notice if I stopped thinking this way?

What will the future look like if I keep thinking this way?

How might the future be different if I stop thinking this?

How is this thought helping me?

How is this thought hurting me?

**Option 4: Create and Focus on Balanced Thoughts**



Instead of telling yourself you should, need to, have to, or must, tell yourself that you want, wish, would like, or prefer.

Instead of insisting only two positions are possible (one good, one bad), see the many shades of gray in between.

Instead of focusing on only one part of a situation or issue, acknowledge all (or many) aspects of it.

Convert assumptions into mere possibilities

**Option 5: Be Mindful of the Thought**



Accept that you are thinking this way.

Make room for the thought non-judgmentally.

Recognize that a thought is not a fact.

Recognize that you are thinking many thoughts at once.

Recognize that thoughts are temporary: not permanent.

Know your thoughts don't have to control your behavior.

Explore how this thought became part of your life.

**Option 6: Shift from Thinking to Acting**



What would be good for me to do about this situation?  
What are my options?

What is my next step?



Option 1: Testing, Challenging, or Disputing Thoughts  
Write down the evidence for and against your automatic thoughts. Use the “cognitive distortions” handout to match automatic thoughts to distortions.

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Option 2: Explore Other Ways to Think  
Write about other ways to think about the situation other than your automatic thoughts.

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Option 3: Identify How Helpful (or Adaptive) the Thought Is  
Write about what you think will happen if you continue to think this way in the future.

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Option 4: Create/Focus on New, Balanced Thoughts

Use the information you wrote down under Option 1 to create new, balanced thoughts.

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Option 5: Be Mindful of Thoughts

Pause, take a few deep breaths, and focus on the following ideas (or similar ones).

- (1) Thoughts and feelings are experiences, not facts.
- (2) Thoughts and feelings are temporary. They come and go like wind or waves. They will not be here for long.
- (3) I can make room for thoughts and feelings, even if they are unpleasant. Unpleasant thoughts and feelings can come with me or stay behind as I live my life. I **don't** have to act on them.
- (4) **It's** okay for me to have unpleasant thoughts and feelings. They are part of being human. Sometimes, they serve me well, and other times they **don't**.
- (5) These thoughts and feelings came into my life for a reason. I wonder what brings them here.



Option 6: Shift from Thinking to Acting

Write down some ideas about what you can do about this situation.

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