

Thought Record (Cognitive Restructuring) Worksheet

When we adopt faulty thinking styles, it can be useful to complete a thought record and consider what type of thinking is triggered (Wilding, 2015).

A list of *faulty thinking styles* is provided below (modified from Wilding, 2015):

- **Self-blame** – rather than feeling like the victim, you believe you are responsible for the pain and happiness of everyone close to you.
- **Rigid Thinking** – we know we are right, but other people will not always agree.
- **Personalization** – believing that everything that people say and do, is in some way, related to us.
- **Blaming** – other people, organizations, and the wider universe are all to blame for our problems.
- **Generalizing the specific** – making a general conclusion based on a single occurrence.
- **Mind reading** – we believe we ‘know’ what others think and why they act as they do, even though they haven’t told us.
- **Magnification and filtering** – we magnify negative feelings and filter out all that is positive.
- **Polarized thinking** – we think of situations and people as all or nothing, e.g., good versus bad, pass versus fail.
- **Catastrophizing** – we expect the worst. Everything will go wrong and have the most significant impact.

Work with the client to complete the following *thought record* and identify which thinking style is being applied.

1. Pause

When your thinking or behavior is out of proportion to what is happening, the first and most important thing is to stop.

2. Identify and understand the trigger

It could be as simple as an abrupt comment or a look. Something caused a reaction that is disproportionate to the situation.

Who or what was it?

When did it happen?

Where did it happen?

Why did it happen?

3. Recognize your automatic thoughts

What were your first thoughts after the trigger?

4. Identify your emotional reaction

What emotions am I feeling, and how intense are they? Rate 1-10

5. Replace with alternate thoughts

How could I re-interpret what has happened more realistically?

6. Re-rate the intensity of your emotional response.

What is my emotional intensity now? Rate 1-10

Taking the time to stop and write down emotions and their causes can offer considerable insight into whether they are realistic, automatic, inappropriate, and need to be replaced.

References

- Wilding, C. (2015). *Cognitive behavioural therapy: Techniques to improve your life*. Place of publication not identified: Quercus.

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