

DEVELOP RESILIENCE: CHANGE YOUR THINKING

Cognitive Restructuring Workbook

Cognitive restructuring is a useful technique for challenging automatic beliefs. You can use it to reframe the negative thinking you no doubt experience from time to time.

In their book, *Mind Over Mood*, by Drs Dennis Greenberger and Christine Padesky, the authors explore in great detail how you can use cognitive restructuring. We've lifted some of the steps from their framework to give you a flavour of how you might reframe your own negative thoughts.

As you work through this worksheet, try to think of a real life situation and write down any thoughts you have in the boxes provided.

STEP 1 – IDENTIFY THE SITUATION

Take a moment to calm yourself, and start to describe the situation that triggered your negative thought.

It helps to write this down.

An example might be, "My manager was angry with the quality of the report I submitted".

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STEP 2 – IDENTIFY AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

Now list your automatic reactions or thoughts. Using the report example, you might be thinking:

“My manager doesn’t like me”

Or

“Maybe I’m not cut out for this role”

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STEP 3 – FIND SUPPORTIVE EVIDENCE

Can you think of any objective evidence to support your automatic thoughts? For example, “My manager shouted and embarrassed me in front of my colleagues”

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STEP 4 – FIND CONTRADICTORY EVIDENCE

Now think of any evidence that contradicts your automatic thoughts. For example,

“I got a great performance review from my manager only last week”.

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STEP 5 – TAKE A BALANCED VIEW

You now have enough information to take a fair, balanced view of what happened.

If you still feel unsure, talk it over with a colleague or friend.

For example, the colleague might say:

“Your manager should have handled the situation differently”.

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STEP 6 – NEXT STEPS

Finally, reflect on what you could do about the situation and create some positive affirmations to help prevent this type of negative thought in future. For example, “My manager values the work I do”.

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TAKEAWAY

Use your new cognitive restructuring skills the next time you catch yourself thinking negatively.

Those negative thoughts can be really damaging at work, where they undermine performance, and in your home life, where they damage relationships.