

Thought Record Template <www.CognitiveTherapyGuide.org/thought-record-template.pdf>

1. The situation. Briefly describe the situation that led to unpleasant feelings. This will help you remember it later if you want to review your notes.

2. Initial thought. What thought first crossed your mind? This was probably a subconscious or automatic thought that you have had before.

3. Negative thinking. Identify the negative thinking behind your initial thought. Choose one or more from the list of common types of negative thinking: One-dimensional, all-or-nothing, catastrophizing, negative self-labelling.

4. Background. How far back does this go? When did you start to act or think like this? Can you trace your approach back to a situation or a person? If you have seen someone else behave like this, how successful was it for them? Search your heart.

5. Challenge your approach. What are the facts that support or challenge your approach? How successful has your approach been in the past? What advice would give someone in the same situation? What strengths do you bring to the situation that you may have overlooked?

6. Consider the consequences. What are the short-term and long-term consequences if you continue this approach? Look at the psychological, relationship, physical, and professional consequences.

7. Alternative approach. Now that you've analyzed what went wrong, that should help you discover a healthier approach.

8. Positive belief and affirmation. Write down a statement that reflects your healthier approach. Choose something that you can repeat to yourself.

9. Action plan. What can you do if the situation arises again? How would you prepare for the situation? What can you do during the situation? What can you do if you fall back to old habits?

10. 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.

This thought record template is a public service from www.CognitiveTherapyGuide.org. For a more complete guide to cognitive therapy refer to the book "I Want to Change My Life" by Dr. Steven M. Melemis. This handout may complement the work you do with your doctor or therapist, but *should be used in combination with professional guidance*.