

Activity: Handling Adverse Events with the ABC Model

Summary: Life inevitably throws curve-balls, but how we *interpret* those events largely determines how we feel and act afterward. The ABC Model—**A**dversity/Activating event → **B**eliefs about the event → **C**onsequences (emotions + behaviors)—gives us a quick diagnostic map for stopping unhelpful spirals and replacing them with calmer, more constructive responses.

Let's get to work!

3 Quotes, Ideas, Facts (Learn)

The ABC Model was created within Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) to show that changing the B (beliefs) changes the C (consequences), even when the A (adversity) stays the same.

"It's not events themselves that upset us, but our beliefs about them." – Albert Ellis (founder of the ABC Model)

Practical application: Pause and Label

Before reacting emotionally to a triggering event, pause and label the "B"—your belief about what just happened. It's often invisible but drives your reaction.

- Example:
A (Adversity): A coworker ignores your greeting.
B (Belief): "They must be mad at me."
C (Consequence): You feel anxious and withdraw.

👉 Now challenge that belief:
"What else could be true?" Maybe they were distracted or having a tough day.

2 Questions for Reflection (Think)

Recall a recent stressful incident. After the event (A), what *automatic thought* or belief (B) flashed through your mind, and how did that belief drive your emotional or behavioral reaction (C)?

Which recurring belief patterns—"I must be perfect," "People can't be trusted," etc.—keep showing up in your journal? How might challenging just *one* of them change future consequences?

1 Activity or Challenge (Grow)

Build a one-page "ABC Log" for the coming week

1. **Divide the page into three columns** labeled A, B, and C.
2. **When adversity strikes** (a traffic jam, critical email, missed deadline), jot a few words in the A column.
3. **Immediately capture your first belief** ("They're out to get me," "I always mess up") in the B column.
4. **Note the consequence**—emotion, body sensation, or action—in the C column.
5. **End each entry by disputing an unhelpful belief** ("Is there evidence for that?" "What's a more balanced thought?") and writing the new, rational belief beneath it.

At week's end, review your log to spot patterns: Which beliefs spark the strongest reactions? Which new beliefs defused them fastest? Use those insights to refine your go-to self-talk for future challenges.