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## Cognitive reframing worksheet pdf

### Cognitive reframing techniques. Cognitive reframing activities. Cognitive reframing examples. What is cognitive reframing.

Imagine it's your birthday. You're expecting a phone call from a close friend, but it never comes. You called them on their birthday, so why didn't they call you? Do they not care enough to remember your birthday? You feel hurt. Where did this feeling of hurt come from? It wasn't the lack of a phone call that caused the hurt. It was the thoughts about the lack of a phone call that hurt. What if, instead of taking the missing phone call personally, you had thought: "My friend is so forgetful! I bet they don't know anyone's birthday." "Maybe something came up unexpectedly, and they're busy." "We did talk earlier in the week, so I guess it isn't a big deal." Thoughts play a powerful role in determining how people feel and how they act. If someone thinks positively about something, they'll probably feel positively about it. Conversely, if they think negatively about something—whether or not that thought is supported by evidence—they will feel negatively. Cognitive restructuring is the therapeutic process of identifying and challenging negative and irrational thoughts, such as those described in the birthday example. These sort of thoughts are called cognitive distortions. Although everyone has some cognitive distortions, having too many is closely linked to mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and several other approaches to psychotherapy, make heavy use of cognitive restructuring. Each of these therapies leverages the powerful link between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to treat mental illness. The thought-feeling-behavior link is a big topic in itself, and beyond the scope of this guide. If you want to learn more, check out our CBT Psychoeducation guide and worksheet. Remember, cognitive restructuring refers to the process of challenging thoughts—it isn't a single technique. There are many techniques that fall under the umbrella of cognitive restructuring, which we will describe (alongside several therapy tools) throughout this guide. Identifying Negative Thoughts / Cognitive Distortions Cognitive restructuring starts with the identification of irrational negative thoughts (cognitive distortions). This is trickier than it sounds. Cognitive distortions can happen so quickly that they come and go before we've noticed them. They're more like a reflex than an intentional behavior.

# Your World Is Your Perspective

	Negative	Positive/Realistic
Rain:	Your hair got wet. It's depressing. It's not sunny. Hassle to drive in.	The way it transforms. Sleepy days. Waking up to the sound. Soft.
Failed a test	You suck. Will always fail. Is a loser. Is dumb. Lazy.	It sucks, but it just says to try harder next time, encouragement Does not indicate anything ultimate
Work	Hate job. Hate that have to do that. demeaned. people are mean	You made this choice. You are in control. This helps the future. Long term > short term
Eating	Can never control. Is controlled Just a fat filler. indicates incompetence	communal event, knows that moderation is key. Knows that treats and sweets are awesome. Let guilt go
Mean People	Everyone hates me. People are awful, untrustable. Radically defensive.	Own securities stronger than insecurities. People who matter don't mind and people that mind don't matter
Social	Everyone will know my flaws. Must fit in- self isn't good enough. Overthink	Lets things go. Recognizes others as humans. Recognizes lack of mind-reading. Expresses true self- who cares?
Alone	Other people are out. Never have friends. Wistful.	Focuses on positives. Knows change happens as long as not negative. Level head.
Self	Not good as someone else. Needs perfection. Criticizes.	Knows society does not get to define beauty. Recognizes perfection as impossible. Rejects negative thoughts.

# YOU ARE IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

Below, we'll discuss how to help your clients identify their cognitive distortions. Step 1: Psychoeducation Before jumping into the "doing" part of cognitive restructuring, it's important for clients to understand what cognitive distortions are, and how powerful they are in influencing one's mood. Start with psychoeducation about the cognitive model and cognitive distortions, using plenty of examples.

Tip: Share a list of common cognitive distortions with your clients to start a discussion about how our thoughts impact emotions, whether or not they're accurate. Most clients will identify with at least a few of the cognitive distortions, and easily connect them with their own experiences. In a group, ask participants to circle the cognitive distortions they've fallen victim to, and share stories. Step 2: Increase Awareness of Thoughts After building a general understanding of the cognitive model, your clients will learn to identify their own cognitive distortions. This takes practice. It's not natural, during a fit of rage, to stop and wonder: "What thoughts led me to this moment?" To hone in on the most important cognitive distortions, start by looking for negative emotions. When are symptoms of depression, anger, or anxiety at their worst? If your client has difficulty identifying their emotions, focus on behaviors.

### Unhelpful Thinking Styles

**All or nothing thinking**

Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

*If I'm not perfect I have failed*

*Either I do it right or not at all*

**Over-generalizing**

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

*"everything is always rubbish"*

*"nothing good ever happens"*

**Mental filter**

Only paying attention to certain types of evidence

*Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes*

**Disqualifying the positive**

Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

*That doesn't count*

**Jumping to conclusions**

There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

*2 + 2 = 5*

**Magnification (catastrophizing) & minimization**

Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

**Emotional reasoning**

Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

*I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot*

**should**

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

**must**

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

**Labelling**

Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

*I'm a loser*

*I'm completely useless*

*They're such an idiot*

**Personalization**

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault

**"this is my fault"**

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault

What behaviors do they want to change? What triggers those behaviors? Think of these situations like alarms, alerting you that cognitive distortions are nearby. You notice a feeling of anxiety before going out with friends. Your heart races, and you sweat.

Situation <small>(When does this anger arise? When do I get angry?)</small>	Angry "hot" thought <small>(What do I think? What do I believe?)</small>	Symptoms & body sensations <small>(What do I feel? What do I notice?)</small>	Balance <small>(What do I think?)</small>

PHYSIOLOGYWELLS

You start arguments with your partner after you've had a meeting with your boss. The arguments always start over something minor, like chores. When a big assignment is due at school, you put it off until the last minute. Small assignments are no problem. You feel depressed when you have to spend an evening alone. You feel so lonely that you can't take it. This discussion is intended to improve your client's awareness of situations where cognitive distortions are impacting their mood and behavior. The more specific triggers or situations they can identify, the easier it will be to recognize them in the moment. Tip: When emotions seem to sneak up on your client, or if they have a hard time identifying their emotions, have a discussion about warning signs. How do they feel or behave differently immediately before the situation occurs? For example, someone struggling with anger might notice that their face feels hot, or their voice trembles, before they "snap". Anger Warning Signs worksheet With the completion of step 2, your client has laid the foundation for a core tool of cognitive restructuring: thought records. Step 3: Thought Records A thought record (also called a thought log) is a tool for recording experiences, along with the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that accompany them. This exercise will help your clients become aware of cognitive distortions that previously went unnoticed, and unquestioned. With practice, they will learn to identify cognitive distortions in the moment, and immediately challenge them. Each row of a thought record represents a unique situation. The headings for each column will differ slightly between thought records, but generally they include "situation", "thoughts", "feelings", "consequences", and sometimes, "alternate thought". Ideally, each row is filled in shortly after a situation ends. Tip: When a client has a hard time remembering to complete their thought record, ask them to set a regular time to fill it out each day.

Negative Thought: Reframing

Negative Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reframed Positive Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reframed Positive Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Negative Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
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 How Action: \_\_\_\_\_

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 Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Action: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Reframed Positive Thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Feeling: \_\_\_\_\_  
 How Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Encourage them to set a reminder on their phone, or to complete it at a time that's easy to remember (e.g. right before bed). Thought Record worksheet Thought Record (with example) worksheet Tip: When generating alternate thoughts, the goal isn't to be ultra-positive, but rather, to be fair. It's fine to acknowledge when a bad situation exists. The exaggeration of a bad situation is what we want to avoid. Sometimes, the mere awareness of a cognitive distortion will be enough to eliminate it. Other cognitive distortions are more deeply ingrained, and require extra work. This is where cognitive restructuring techniques, which make up the rest of this guide, will come in handy. Cognitive Restructuring Techniques When looking at other people's cognitive distortions, they seem easy to dispute. No matter how much your friend believes that they're the "worst person ever", you know that to be untrue. But when it comes to a person's own cognitive distortions, they can be much more difficult to overcome. That's why they persist. We believe in our own cognitive distortions, no matter how inaccurate they may be. For these difficult cognitive distortions, we have several techniques to help tear them down. These techniques should be used again and again, whenever cognitive distortions are identified.

# Cognitive Reframing

Worksheet pdf

Cognitive Reframing Worksheet pdf

Cognitive reframing starts with the identification of irrational negative thoughts, then understands how the CBT model works and effects your actions. Then after identification and clear understanding move towards the next step, which is the identification of your cognitive distortions or negative thoughts, record them, and try to work on your cognitive distortions. Use below mentioned steps to restructure your negative thought pattern.

Identification of Distorted Thought

How it affects you

Symptoms  
(Emotional & Physical in your body)

Function - (How it impacts your body)  
(What did I notice in my body?)  
(When did I feel it?)

How it affects your Actions

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With enough repetition, the cognitive distortions will be extinguished and replaced with new, balanced thoughts. Here are the techniques. Socratic Questioning Socrates was a Greek philosopher who emphasized the importance of questioning as a way to explore complex ideas and uncover assumptions. This philosophy has been adopted as a way to challenge cognitive distortions. Once a cognitive distortion has been identified, this technique is simple. The cognitive distortion will be assessed by asking a series of questions. Therapists can set an example by asking these questions of their clients, but ultimately, the client should learn to question their own thoughts. Socratic Questioning worksheet Is this thought realistic? Am I basing my thoughts on facts or on feelings? What is the evidence for this thought? Could I be misinterpreting the evidence? Am I viewing this situation as black and white, when it's really more complicated? Am I having this thought out of habit, or do facts support it? Tip: Anyone can quickly spit out answers, just to have the exercise done. However, the value of Socratic questioning comes from the thought behind each answer. Spend at least 1-3 minutes on each question to get the most out of this exercise. Oftentimes, cognitive distortions are just an exaggerated view of reality. Before a first date, a person might find themselves overwhelmed with anxiety, thinking of all the things that might go wrong. Maybe their date won't like how they look, or maybe they'll make a fool of themselves. With the decatastrophizing technique, we ask very simple questions: "What if?" or "What's the worst that could happen?" Client: I always worry that my date won't like how I look, or I'll make a fool of myself. This leads to me getting so nervous that I do make a fool of myself. Therapist: So, what if those things come true? What if your date doesn't like how you look, or you make a fool of yourself? Client: Well, we probably won't have a second date... Therapist: What if you don't have a second date? What happens then? Client: I guess nothing. I just won't see them again. This sequence of questioning helps to reduce the irrational level of anxiety associated with cognitive distortions. It highlights the fact that even the worst-case scenario is manageable. Note: Decatastrophizing is sometimes called the "what if" technique because of the style of questioning. Putting Thoughts on Trial In this exercise, your client will act as a defense attorney, a prosecutor, and a judge. First, your client will act as a defense attorney by defending their negative thought. Ask them to make an argument for why the thought is true. Remember to stick to verifiable facts. Interpretation, guesses, and opinions aren't allowed! Next, ask your client to act as the prosecutor. Now they will present evidence against the negative thought. Just like in the previous step, require that they stick to facts, while excluding opinions. Finally, ask your client to act as the judge. They will review the evidence, and deliver a verdict. The verdict should come in the form of a rational thought. Putting Thoughts on Trial worksheet If you would like to continue learning about cognitive behavioral therapy, cognitive distortions, and cognitive restructuring, check out these additional resources: References 1. Butler, A. C., Chapman, J. E., Forman, E. M., & Beck, A. T. (2006). The empirical status of cognitive-behavioral therapy: a review of meta-analyses. *Clinical psychology review*, 26(1), 17-31. 2. Carey, I. A., & Mullan, R. J. (2004). What is socratic questioning? *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 41(3), 217. 3. McManus, F., Van Doorn, K., & Yiend, J. (2012). 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