

Exercise: ABCD Cognitive Restructuring

Instructions

Take a few minutes to reflect on a stressful situation or unpleasant event that occurred recently. See if you can identify the automatic thoughts and beliefs that may have occurred in response to this event. Notice what the consequences were of this automatic thought or way of thinking, including the impact that it had on you emotionally, physiologically and behaviorally. Then, practice reframing this thought to something more balanced and useful. One way to do this is to ask yourself the following questions:

- What kind of thought would feel more helpful?
- What thought would promote better peace of mind and better ability to cope with this situation?
- What thought would be more balanced and more realistically reflect the situation at hand?

Activating Event: Identify the stressful or unpleasant situation.

Belief system or thoughts about the event (you can include cognitive distortions or negative thoughts about the stressor).

Consequences of the thoughts (you can include how it made you feel and how your behavior was affected).



Disputing. Identify more realistic, balanced or positive thoughts to replace your negative or dysfunctional ones.

When you stay tuned in to your thoughts throughout the day, you can catch yourself when you start to think negatively. When you identify thoughts that are negative or one of the cognitive distortions, ask yourself the following four questions:

1. Is this thought helpful and true?
2. What impact does this thought have?
3. Where did I learn this thought?
4. Does this thought promote peace of mind and well-being?