

# Cognitive Restructuring Worksheet (CBT)

Cognitive Restructuring is a tool designed to help you identify, challenge, and change unhelpful or distorted thoughts. By systematically examining these thoughts, one can develop healthier, more balanced ways of thinking and feeling.



[CBT Therapy Tools](#)

## Common Types of Negative Thoughts / Cognitive Distortions

- **All or nothing thinking:** Seeing situations solely in extremes—either total success or utter failure, with no room for any middle ground.
- **Overgeneralization:** Drawing sweeping conclusions from a single or few events, believing that a pattern is always or never present.
- **Mental filtering:** Focusing entirely on one adverse incident while overlooking evidence that would suggest a more balanced perspective.
- **Downplaying the positive:** Ignoring or minimizing positive experiences in order to uphold a predominantly negative view.
- **Jumping to conclusions:** Quickly assuming outcomes or interpreting others' thoughts based on limited or insufficient information.
- **Exaggeration of negatives:** Magnifying flaws, mistakes, or negative events beyond their actual significance.
- **Emotion-based judgments:** Making emotional assumptions that aren't grounded in facts.
- **Unrealistic expectations:** Imposing inflexible "shoulds" or unrealistic standards on yourself or others, which can set you up for disappointment.
- **Labeling:** Applying an all-encompassing label to yourself or someone else based on a single action or mistake.
- **Personalization:** Blaming yourself for events that are not entirely under your control, which often leads to unnecessary self-blame.

## 3 Cognitive Restructuring Exercises

1. Socratic Questioning
2. Thoughts on Trial
3. Decatastrophizing

[Give them a try on the following pages](#) ✓

### Tips When Doing Cognitive Restructuring

1. Fill in the responses soon after experiencing distress to capture thoughts accurately.
2. Be honest and non-judgmental about the thoughts and emotions that surface.
3. Review previous notes to track progress and recognize patterns over time.
4. Consider discussing entries with a therapist for deeper insights and guidance.

# 1. Socratic Questioning

Our thoughts stream through our mind like a constant internal dialogue, moving so quickly that we seldom pause to examine them. Since these thoughts shape our emotions and behaviors, it's crucial to challenge those that may be harming us.

Take a moment to consider each of the following questions and provide detailed answers, including explanations of why you agree or disagree with each point.

Thought to be questioned:

What evidence supports this thought? What evidence contradicts it?

Is this thought grounded in facts or driven by emotion?

Am I thinking in all-or-nothing terms, when the situation might be more complex?

Is it possible I'm misunderstanding the facts or filling in gaps with assumptions?

## 2. Cognitive Restructuring: Thoughts on Trial

In this exercise, you'll evaluate a specific thought by adopting the roles of defense attorney, prosecutor, and judge, to evaluate the accuracy of the thought.

**Defense and Prosecution:** Gather factual evidence that both supports and contradicts your thought. Use only verifiable facts—avoid any interpretations, assumptions, or opinions.

**Judge:** Come to a verdict on whether your thought is both accurate and reasonable. Consider if there might be alternative thoughts that provide a better explanation of the facts.

The Thought

The Defense (evidence for thought)

The Prosecution (evidence against the thought)

The Judge's Verdict

### 3. Cognitive Restructuring: Decatastrophizing

Catastrophizing is a common cognitive distortion, where you overstate the significance of a problem or assume the worst-case scenario is inevitable. By questioning your thoughts, you can often correct many of these distortions.

What specific situation or outcome are you worried about right now?

How likely is it that this will actually happen? What past experiences or facts suggest this might—or might not—come true?

What's the absolute worst-case scenario if this happens?

Assuming your worry does come true, what's the worst that could happen?

If your worry comes true, what are the chances you'll be okay?

In one week?.....%

In one month?.....%

In one year?.....%