

# CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS WORKSHEET

Negative thoughts can contribute to feelings of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. By identifying and challenging these thoughts, you can change the way you feel and respond to situations. This worksheet will guide you through the process of challenging your negative thoughts using evidence-based CBT techniques.

### 1. IDENTIFY NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

**Instructions:** Write down a recent negative thought that has been troubling you.

**Example:**

- **Negative Thought:** "I always mess things up."
- **Negative Thought:** "No one cares about me."
- **Negative Thought:** "I'm not good enough at my job."

**Your Turn:**

- **Negative Thought:**

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2. EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions to assess the validity of your thought.

- **Is there substantial evidence for my thought?**  
Evidence:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Is there evidence contrary to my thought?**  
Contrary Evidence:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3. CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

**Instructions:** Think about different ways to view the situation. Answer the questions below.

- **Am I interpreting this situation without all the evidence?**  
Explanation:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **What would a friend think about this situation?**  
Friend's Perspective:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 4. REFRAME THE THOUGHT

**Instructions:** Look at the situation from a positive or neutral perspective. Use the questions below to help reframe your thought.

- **If I look at the situation positively, how is it different?**  
Positive Perspective:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- **Will this matter a year from now? How about five years from now?**  
Long-term Perspective:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 5. DEVELOP BALANCED THOUGHTS

**Instructions:** Combine the insights from the previous steps to create a more balanced and realistic thought.

**Original Negative Thought:** "I always mess things up."

**Balanced Thought:** "I sometimes make mistakes, but I learn from them and improve."

**Original Negative Thought:**

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Balanced Thought:**

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## 6. PRACTICE AND REFLECT

**Instructions:** Regularly practice challenging your negative thoughts. Reflect on a recent experience where you applied these techniques. How did it feel? What was the outcome?

**Situation:** "I made a mistake at work."

**Skill Used:** "Challenged my negative thought and reframed it."

**Outcome:** "I felt more confident and took steps to correct the mistake."

• **Situation:**

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• **Skill Used:**

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• **Outcome:**

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## TIPS FOR CHALLENGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

- **Pause and Breathe:** When a negative thought arises, take a deep breath and give yourself a moment to pause. This brief pause can help you gain control over your emotional response and prevent the thought from escalating.
- **Examine the Evidence:** Ask yourself if there is solid evidence to support the negative thought. Challenge it by seeking out facts that contradict the thought and focus on these instead.
- **Consider Alternative Perspectives:** Try to view the situation from a different angle. Ask yourself how a trusted friend or loved one might perceive the situation and consider adopting their more balanced perspective.
- **Use Positive Affirmations:** Replace the negative thought with a positive, empowering affirmation. For example, if you think, "I'm not good enough," counter it with, "I am capable and have strengths that I can rely on."
- **Focus on the Present Moment:** Negative thoughts often stem from worries about the past or future. Ground yourself by focusing on what is happening right now, using mindfulness techniques to stay present and engaged in the moment.