

# ABCD Thought Log How-To

The Thought Log is the basic building block of CBT. Thought Logs are like a cognitive workout - the more you do them, the more results you are likely to see. There are several different approaches to Thought Logs in CBT. The ABCD Log that follows is one of the clearest and most straightforward. Here's what it asks:

## Activating Event: What happened? What's stressing me out?

Ex: "Had a bad date."

## Belief: What is my negative self-talk? What negative belief am I clinging to? What interpretations am I making? Which Cognitive Distortions apply?

Ex: Thoughts/Beliefs: "I hate dating...I'm never going to meet anyone...There's no one out there for me...I'm such a loser!...No one could love me...I'll be alone forever."  
Cognitive Distortions: Overgeneralizing...Labeling...Catastrophizing...Fortune Telling...

## Consequence: What am I feeling? What physical sensations am I having? What is my behavior as a result of my beliefs? Note: It can be helpful to give a rating to each feeling (either as a percentage or from one to ten).

Ex: Feelings -- "Sad (8/10), Hopeless (8/10), Angry (6/10). Physical -- Headache, hunger, fatigue. Behaviors -- Eat entire box of cookies, zone out in front of TV, oversleep, ignore friends' calls."

## Dispute: Counter-thought. What realistic and grounding statement can I use instead? Is there an alternative way of thinking here?

Some additional questions to ask yourself when coming up with Disputes:

- What evidence do I have for thinking this way?
- Is this always true? Has this always been true in the past?
- Am I looking at the whole picture?
- What are the odds of this really happening or coming true?
- What would I tell a friend in this situation?
- What would someone I trust tell me about this?
- *Consider getting a reality check from someone you trust.*
- *Focus on the things you can control rather than those you cannot.*

Ex: "I've had fun on dates before (they're not *always* terrible)...There are *millions* of single people out there...I've had good relationships in the past...I have friends and family who love me (I'm not unlovable)...I wish I could tell the future, but I can't."

Thought Logs won't always flow naturally at first. Keep on trying! See if you can do one every day.