

The Thought Record is a fundamental tool in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). The underlying principle can be summarised as "*what do you believe, and why do you believe it?*"

Instructions to complete a Thought Record

In the "Situation" column, write a description of a triggering event, or difficult situation that you want to work on. You may also be aware of negative feelings or thoughts with no trigger. In either case, for this column, just write down the "who, what, when and where" - in other words, write the date and time, where you were, who you were with, and what you were doing.

In the "Feelings" column, write down which negative emotions or feelings you were experiencing. There may be one, or more than one, and typical items for this column would be things like anger, sadness, anxiety, guilt, etc.

In the "Behaviours" column, write down what happened in that situation. How did you react and behave? Also note down how you were feeling (physiologically) in your body.

In the "Automatic Thoughts" column, write down what was going through your mind during the situation. You are particularly looking for any negative thoughts that occurred. These are the assumptions, interpretations, judgements, and beliefs which were likely influencing your reaction.

Following on from a Thought Record

For each automatic thought, we would then work towards a more rational response. These counter-statements are meant to be more functional and factual. If you are having trouble thinking of a response, it may help to ask yourself "if I had a friend in this situation who was having this thought, what would I say to them?". There are various questions that one can ask themselves to challenge these negative thoughts and evaluate them more realistically.

If you want additional guidance with thought records, 2 excellent workbooks are "Mind Over Mood", by Greenberger and Padesky, and "Feeling Good", by David Burns.

THOUGHT RECORD

Reflect on this past week, and identify 3 situations where you felt unpleasant emotions (e.g., anger, anxiety, sadness, stress). Write down these situations as well as how you were feeling, what you did and what was going through your mind

SITUATION What were you doing at the time when you started to feel bad? What were the triggers?	FEELINGS What did you begin to feel? (Rate 0-100%)	BEHAVIOURS How did you react in this situation? How were you feeling in your body?	AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS What was going through your mind, before, during, and after the event? How intense were these thoughts?