

AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS WORKSHEET

Notice the thought • Check the evidence • Build a more balanced response

Automatic thoughts are quick thoughts or interpretations that can appear before we have time to examine them. The goal is not forced positive thinking. It is to notice the thought and see whether a more accurate, useful, or balanced view is available.

Common examples

"I always mess things up." "They did not text back, so they must be angry." "If I make one mistake, I will fail." "Everyone is judging me."
"I should be able to handle this by myself." "Nothing will ever change."

Situation / What happened	Automatic thought	Emotion + intensity 0-100

Check the thought

Evidence that supports the thought	Evidence that does not support it

Thinking pattern I notice	More balanced / helpful thought

THINKING PATTERNS TO WATCH FOR

These are common habits of thinking, not diagnoses. Most people use some of them sometimes.

All-or-nothing thinking: Seeing only two outcomes: success/failure, good/bad, right/wrong.

Catastrophizing: Jumping to the worst possible outcome and treating it as likely.

Mind reading: Assuming you know what another person thinks without enough evidence.

Fortune telling: Predicting a negative future as though it is already known.

Overgeneralizing: Turning one event into a broad rule: “always,” “never,” “everyone,” “nothing.”

Discounting positives: Explaining away evidence that does not fit the negative conclusion.

Should statements: Using rigid rules about how you or others must behave.

Personalization: Taking excessive responsibility for events with many causes.

Emotional reasoning: Treating a feeling as proof: “I feel unsafe, so I must be in danger.”

Labeling: Turning a behavior or mistake into a global identity: “I failed, so I am a failure.”

Try this sentence

“The first thought my mind gave me was _____. When I look at the whole picture, a more balanced thought might be _____.”