

# Cognitive Restructuring for Depression

cognitive

Cognitive restructuring is a CBT technique that involves recognizing negative and unhelpful thoughts, examining the evidence for and against these thoughts, and developing more helpful alternative thoughts. For someone with depression, cognitive restructuring can help interrupt and change the negative thought patterns that contribute to feeling sad, hopeless, or lonely.

## NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

What you think

Example: I'm terrible at my job. I'll probably get fired because I can't do anything right.



Here is an example of how a negative thought causes negative emotions and behaviors. Using cognitive restructuring to change the thoughts can change the emotions and behaviors.

# Triggering Event

Boss gives you critical feedback.

BEHAVIOR
What you do

**NEGATIVE** 

Example: Avoids asking for help and becomes less engaged in projects.

If you have a positive thought

following a triggering event,

positive emotions and

behaviors follow. Those

positive behaviors lead to

more positive thoughts, and

### NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

What you feel

Example: Shame and hopelessness.

# POSITIVE THOUGHTS

What you think



Example: Feedback is part of learning. I'll look at what needs improvement, and I can ask for help if I need it.



Boss gives you critical feedback. POSITIVE EMOTIONS What you feel

Example: Reviews the feedback, makes a plan to improve, and reaches out for support if needed.

**POSITIVE** 

**BEHAVIOR** 

What you do

Example: Acceptance, motivation, and a sense of calm.



the positive cycle continues.







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#### **THOUGHT**

What you think in a situation Ex: I can never do anything right.

#### **EMOTION**

How you feel
Ex: I feel sad and hopeless

#### **BEHAVIOR**

How you handle the situation Ex: Procrastinating on other tasks

It's important to understand that our automatic thoughts affect our feelings and influence our behavior.

You can recognize unhealthy thought patterns that are making your depression symptoms worse by practicing cognitive restructuring. Use the questions below each time you're experiencing unwanted thoughts that lead to unhealthy behaviors.

Thought:	
Is my thought factual?	
What evidence do I have to support my thought?	
What would someone else say about the situation?	
Is it possible to view this situation differently?	

\*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.



It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our <u>strict editorial standards</u> ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

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#### **Best Online Therapy for Depression**

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

### **Best Online Psychiatry**

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.





#### **Best Mental Health Apps**

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

#### **Therapist Directory**

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.



