

# Worksheet

Professional Version | US English

# REBT Consequences Analysis Form



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## Description

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*"According to REBT theory, humans are happiest when they establish important life goals and purposes and actively strive to attain these."*

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(Ellis & Dryden, 1997)

Unfortunately, we do not always act in ways which maximize the achievement of our life goals. Techniques such as 'cost/benefit analysis' can be helpful to understand the function of behaviors.

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*"Using cost-benefit analysis often gets at your clients' unconscious resistance to change, makes it fully conscious, and thereby interferes with it. Clients sometimes may tell you that they are consciously aware that they are resisting therapy, and aware that this resistance does them little good and much harm. But for the most part, they manage to keep this so-called awareness well covered-up, and are, at most, very slightly aware of the expenses of resisting. By encouraging them to do clear-cut cost-benefit analyses in writing, and by their making themselves much more conscious of the harm they are wreaking, their changing becomes more likely. Of course, even when clients are fully conscious of the hazards of their dysfunction, they still may perversely resist giving it up. But awareness often increases the chances of their fighting against their resistance."*

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(Ellis, 2007)

REBT takes a modern behavioral approach to analysis of behavior (private events, like thoughts and emotions, are considered to be forms of behavior). The functions of given behavior are understood through its consequences. Behavioral science understands that consequences of behavior can be categorized in two general types: reinforcers (benefits) and punishers (costs). Any outcome which results in strengthening and increasing the rate and duration of given behavior is considered as reinforcement; and any outcome which results in weakening and eventually extinction of given behavior is considered as punishment. Additionally, the consequences are separated by time of occurrence: short-term outcomes are known to be more influential (i.e. more reinforcing and more punishing) if they occur immediately or shortly after the response; long-term outcomes typically have less influence on a particular behavior, but usually exhibit much more cumulative impact on general well-being and environment of a person.

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# Instructions

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The *REBT Consequences Analysis Form* (a form of “functional/pragmatic disputing”) can be used to challenge and restructure irrational attitudes. It can also be used for motivation enhancement and strengthening commitment to change. The client is encouraged to identify a target issue or problem, and to identify associated life goals / values. The form then guides the client to identify the consequences of a behavior and then encourages them to formulate the best long-term solution to their difficulty.

# REBT Consequences Analysis Form

## Target

What is the issue or problem you want to think about?  
What are your goals / values?

## Short-term consequences

### Benefits ✓

Gains, pleasures, comforts

Importance

/100

### Costs ✗

Damages, harms, losses

Importance

/100

## Long-term consequences

### Benefits ✓

Gains, pleasures, comforts

Importance

/100

### Costs ✗

Damages, harms, losses

Importance

/100

## Best long-term solution

What is the best outcome for you in the long-term?

# REBT Consequences Analysis Form

## Target

What is the issue or problem you want to think about?  
What are your goals / values?

Smoking - I smoke 40 cigarettes a day and want to stop.  
I do value my health - and I want to be an active parent for my children.

## Short-term consequences

### Benefits ✓

Gains, pleasures, comforts

It relaxes me.  
Smoking gives me time to think.  
It give me time to be sociable with friends and colleagues.  
I used to think it made me look cool.

Importance  
75 /100

### Costs ✗

Damages, harms, losses

I spend about \$14 a day or \$5000 a year.  
It annoys my boss when I take cigarette breaks.  
I smell of tobacco.  
It upsets my children - they ask me to stop.  
I get really agitated when I can't smoke.  
I get out of breath easily.

Importance  
30 /100

## Long-term consequences

### Benefits ✓

Gains, pleasures, comforts

Helps me keep my weight under control.

Importance  
10 /100

### Costs ✗

Damages, harms, losses

Increases my risk of cancer, as well as lung and teeth problems.  
It's costing money that I could do with to spend on other things.  
I want to be around for my children and smoking jeopardizes that.

Importance  
80 /100

## Best long-term solution

What is the best outcome for you in the long-term?

I like some of the short-term benefits, but the long-term costs outweigh them. I need to quit smoking, and I might also need to find some ways to replace some of the short-term benefits.

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