

# Worksheet

Professional Version | US English

# Self-Critical Thought Challenging Record



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## Description

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This *Self-Critical Thought Challenging Record* is designed to help clients to challenge their self-critical thoughts. Clients are encouraged to record their self-critical thoughts in specific situations, and then to generate alternate perspectives.

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## Instructions

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Clients should be instructed to record specific instances in which self-critical thoughts, feelings, or responses were prompted.

- 1. In the first column (Situation),** clients should be instructed to record what they were doing when they started to notice a significant change in how they were feeling. Training clients to record specific details (such as who they were with, where they were, and what had just happened) is often helpful when later elaborating a memory for an event, or simply in understanding the reasons for subsequent thoughts and responses.
- 2. In the second column (Emotions and body sensations),** clients should be instructed to record their emotional reactions in that moment (which can typically be described using single words, e.g. sad, angry, disappointed) and associated body sensations (e.g. tightness in my stomach). Clients should be encouraged to rate the intensity of these sensations on 0–100% scale.
- 3. In the third column (Self-critical thoughts),** clients should be directed to record any automatic cognitions. They should be reminded that cognitions can take the form of verbal thoughts, but can also take the form of images, or memories. If a recorded cognition is an image (e.g. “I had a picture in my mind of people laughing at me”) clients should be directed to question what that image means to them (e.g. “It means I’m a failure”) and to record that idiosyncratic meaning. They should be encouraged to rate their degree of conviction in the self-critical thought (0% = not at all, 100% = completely).
- 4. In the fourth column (Alternative perspectives),** clients should be instructed to generate alternate ways of interpreting the situation. Reframing angry thoughts will likely need to be practiced in-session. Suggestions might include making efforts to depersonalize a situation (“everyone gets upset when things don’t go their way”) or to take alternate perspectives (“this is a setback, but in the scheme of things a relatively minor one. Is it going to matter to me in 6 months time?”).
- 5. In the fifth column (Outcome),** clients should be instructed to rate how they feel emotionally once they have generated alternative perspectives. They should also be encouraged to rate their degree of conviction in the alternative thoughts (0% = not at all, 100% = completely).

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## References

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Beck, A.T., Rush, A.J., Shaw, B.F., & Emery, G. (1979). *Cognitive therapy of depression*. New York: Guilford.

Fennell, M. (2016). *Overcoming low self-esteem: A self-help guide using cognitive behavioural techniques*. Hachette UK.

# Self-Critical Thought Challenging Record

<b>Situation</b> Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	<b>Emotions or body sensations</b> What did you feel? (Rate intensity 0–100%)	<b>Self-critical thoughts</b> What went through your mind? (Rate degree of belief in each thought 0–100%)	<b>Alternative perspectives</b> What other ways are there of looking at these thoughts?	<b>Outcome</b> How do you feel now? (Rate degree of belief in each thought now 0-100%)
		<p>If you had an image or memory, what did it mean to you?</p>	<p>What is the evidence that my self-critical thought is true? What am I trying to achieve? Is this way of thinking likely to help me achieve that goal? In what ways could my thinking be inaccurate?</p>	

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<b>Situation</b> Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	<b>Emotions or body sensations</b> What did you feel? (Rate intensity 0-100%)	<b>Self-critical thoughts</b> What went through your mind? (Rate degree of belief in each thought 0-100%)	<b>Alternative perspectives</b> What other ways are there of looking at these thoughts?	<b>Outcome</b> How do you feel now? (Rate degree of belief in each thought now 0-100%)
Cooking dinner for family and burned the potatoes.	Despair and anger with self - 80%	I'm pathetic - 100%	Labelling myself like this doesn't help solve the problem. It's just like how mum used to treat me.	Calmer, not as angry at myself. Belief - 50%
Watching my toddler play with other children at a playground - she pushed another child out of her way.	Embarrassment and sadness - 70%	I'm a bad mother. Other children who are raised properly don't act like bullies - 90%	She's only two and doesn't know what she's doing - she's just excited to get on the slide. I'm forgetting that I saw my friend's son do exactly the same thing a few weeks ago and we laughed about it	I feel faintly ridiculous. It's almost funny that my mind could judge me so harshly and so quickly. Belief - 0%

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