

4 Steps in Cognitive Restructuring

STEP ONE – Identify the upsetting situation. Describe the event or problem that’s upsetting you. Who (or what) are you feeling unhappy about?

STEP TWO – Record your negative feelings. How do you feel about the upsetting situation? Use words like sad, angry, anxious, guilty, frustrated, hopeless. Rate each negative feeling on a scale from 1 (for the least) to 100 (for the most).

STEP THREE – Use the triple-column technique. Tune in to the negative thoughts that are associated with these feelings. What are you saying to yourself about the problem? Write these thoughts in the Automatic Thoughts column and record how much you believe each one between 0 (not at all) and 100 (completely). After you identify the distortions in these thoughts, substitute Rational Responses in the right-hand column and record how much you believe each one between 0 (not at all) and 100 (completely). Make sure that your Rational Responses are convincing, valid statements that put the lie to your Automatic Thoughts

STEP FOUR – Outcome. Indicate how much you now believe each Automatic Thought (between 0 and 100). Once your beliefs in these thoughts are greatly reduced, indicate how much better you feel.

From: Burns, D. D. (1989). The Feeling Good Handbook

The Daily Mood Log

STEP ONE: DESCRIBE THE UPSETTING EVENT _____

STEP TWO: RECORD YOUR NEGATIVE FEELINGS – and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, lonely, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating
1.		3.		5.	
2.		4.		6.	

STEP THREE: THE TRIPLE-COLUMN TECHNIQUE

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses
Write your negative thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0-100).	Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought.	Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0 and 100).

(Continue on next page)

The Daily Mood Log (continued)

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses

STEP FOUR: Outcome – Re-rate your belief in each Automatic Thought from 0 to 100 and put a check in the box that best describes how you now feel:

not at all better; somewhat better; quite a bit better; a lot better.

CHECKLIST OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. All-or-nothing thinking: You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. Overgeneralization: You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. Mental filter: You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4. Discounting the positives: You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities “don’t count.”
5. Jumping to conclusions: (A) Mind reading – you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there’s no definite evidence for this; (B) Fortune-telling – You arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
6. Magnification or minimization: You blow things way up out of proportion or you shrink their importance inappropriately.
7. Emotional reasoning: You reason from how you feel: “I *feel* like an idiot, so I really must be one.” Or “I don’t *feel* like doing this, so I’ll put it off.”
8. “Should statements”: You criticize yourself or other people with “shoulds” or “shouldn’ts.” “Musts,” “oughts,” and “have tos” are similar offenders.
9. Labelling: You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying “I made a mistake,” you tell yourself, “I’m a jerk,” or “a fool,” or “a loser.”
10. Personalization and blame: You blame yourself for something you weren’t entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behaviour might contribute to a problem.