**CBT Coaching tool**

# Overview

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) has an excellent record in achieving long lasting changes within an individual. Although CBT, as the name suggests, is most often associated with ‘therapy’ it is well known that its philosophical stance and powerful techniques can be applied in many different areas. Cognitive behavioural approaches to coaching are now well established and it is one of the most researched, effective and extensively used forms of coaching. It is now widely believed that CBT not only works ‘best’ in the therapy room but it is also ‘best’ in business coaching.

This Coaching Tools aims to help you:

* Generate awareness of your potential for distorted thinking or “cognitive distortions”
* Provides a tool to “track” when these distortions happen, and ways in which to think in a more realistic way

# Cognitive Distortions

The language we use in everyday life both represents and impacts how we experience our world. We attempt to capture thoughts, ideas and to describe what we see around us using words. Inevitably, things get "lost in translation".

We lose information through "generalisations", "deletion" of information and "cognitive Distortion". Distortion is where some aspects of ideas and experiences are given more weight and focus than others. We all do this both consciously and unconsciously, and how we do this provides pointers to our underlying beliefs about ourselves, others and the world.

**Below is a list of the Top 10 Cognitive Distortions:**

***Which of these do you do?***

1. **All or Nothing Thinking:** Seeing things as black-or-white, right-or-wrong with nothing in-between. Essentially, if I'm not perfect then I'm a failure.



* I didn't finish writing that paper so it was a *complete* waste of time.
* There's no point in playing *if I'm not 100%* in shape. • They didn't show, they’re *completely* unreliable!

1. **Overgeneralization:** Using words like always, never in relation to a single event or experience.

* I'll *never* get that promotion • She *always* does that…

1. **WB hh00935_ Minimising or Magnifying (Also Catastrophising):** Seeing things as dramatically more or less important than they actually are. Often creating a "catastrophe" that follows.

* *Because* my boss publicly thanked her she'll get that promotion, not me (even though I had a great performance review and just won an industry award).
* I forgot that email! *That means* my boss won't trust me again, I won't get that raise and my wife will leave me.

1. **"Shoulds":** Using "should", "need to", "must", "ought to" to motivate oneself, then feeling guilty when you don't follow through (or anger and resentment when someone else doesn't follow through).

* *I should have* got the painting done this weekend.
* *They ought to* have been more considerate of my feelings, *they should know* that would upset me.

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1. **Labelling:** Attaching a negative label to yourself or others following a single event.

* I didn't stand up to my co-worker, *I'm such a wimp!* • *What an idiot*, he couldn't even see that coming!

1. **Jumping to Conclusions:**

**1) Mind-Reading:** Making negative assumptions about how people see you without evidence or factual support.

Your friend is preoccupied and you don't bother to find out why. You're thinking:

* She *thinks I'm exaggerating* again or • He still *hasn't forgiven me* for telling Fred about his illness.

**2) Fortune Telling:** Making negative predictions about the future without evidence or factual support

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* I *won't be able* to sell my house and *I'll be stuck* here (even though housing market is good).
* *No-one will understand.* *I won't be invited back* again (even though they are supportive friends).

1. **Discounting the Positive:** Not acknowledging the positive. Saying anyone could have done it or insisting that your positive actions, qualities or achievements don't count…

* That *doesn't count*, *anyone* could have done it.
* I've *only* cut back from smoking 40 cigarettes a day to 10. *It doesn't count* because I've not fully given up yet.

1. **Blame & Personalization:** Blaming yourself when you weren't entirely responsible or blaming other people and denying your role in the situation

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* *If only I was* younger, I would have got the job
* *If only* *I* *hadn't* said that, they wouldn't have…
* *If only she hadn't* yelled at me, I wouldn't have been angry and wouldn't have had that car accident.

1. **Emotional Reasoning:** I feel, therefore I am. Assuming that a feeling is true - without digging deeper to see if this is accurate.

* I feel such an idiot (it must be true). • I feel guilty (I must have done something wrong).
* I feel really bad for yelling at my partner, I must be really selfish and inconsiderate.

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1. **Mental Filter:** Allowing (dwelling on) one negative detail or fact to spoil our enjoyment, happiness, hope etc

* You have a great evening and dinner at a restaurant with friends, but your chicken was undercooked and that *spoiled the whole* evening

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| **When you have read through all the potential cognitive distortions, identify which of these you believe you do** |  |
| **What is the regularity of the distortions? Are there any particular triggers that take you into one or more of these? (e.g. presentations, relationship with a particular person)** |  |

# PsychCoach: The ABCDE of Thinking in a Realistic Way

***Guidance for completion***

The idea of this section is to complete the CBT tracking tool below whenever you feel anxious or worried, and so do it over a period of a couple of weeks or longer. You will find self assessment and reflection a useful approach to review, and will be important to look at in detail with your Coach.

Fill in the C column first when you feel anxious or worried. Work out what was happening when you started to feel that way (column A). Then work out what the self-talk was (column B). Evaluate the self-talk/beliefs (column E), and dispute the self-talk (column D). You can evaluate by working out the real chances of the worry happening. You can dispute the self-talk by consciously thinking in a more realistic way.

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| **A**  **What was the event?** | **B**  **What was the self-talk or belief that caused the feeling?** | **C**  **Note your reactions** | **D**  **How can you think about this in a more realistic and helpful way?** | **E**  **In what way are you distorting or exaggerating the situation?** |
| **ACTIVATING EVENT** | **BELIEFS/SELF TALK** | **CONSEQUENCES/ FEELINGS/ EMOTIONAL REACTIONS** | **DISPUTING PROCESS** | **EVALUATION PROCESS** |
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