

THE CBT TRIANGLE WORKSHEET

Change the Thought. Understand the Feeling. Choose the Behavior.

THOUGHTS ↔ FEELINGS ↔ BEHAVIORS

What we **think**, what we **feel**, and what we **do** influence one another.

Sometimes we cannot control what happens around us.

But we can learn to recognize what we're telling ourselves about what happened—and make a more intentional decision about what happens next.

PART 1 — WHAT HAPPENED?

Describe the situation using only the facts.

Try to separate **what actually happened** from what you believe it meant.

THE SITUATION:

WHAT DO I KNOW ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

PART 2 — THOUGHTS

What did I tell myself?

Write down the first thoughts that appeared.

Don't judge them. Just identify them.

MY AUTOMATIC THOUGHT:

Examples:

"They don't care about me."

"I can't handle this."

"Nothing ever works out."

"I already messed up, so why bother?"

"Everyone is judging me."

"I need something to make this feeling stop."

"Things will never change."

HOW STRONGLY DO I BELIEVE THIS THOUGHT?

Circle one:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 = I barely believe it

10 = I completely believe it

PART 3 — FEELINGS

What emotion followed the thought?

Check everything that applies.

- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Afraid
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Lonely
- ☐ Rejected
- ☐ Ashamed
- ☐ Guilty
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Embarrassed

- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Hopeless
- ☐ Jealous
- ☐ Disappointed
- ☐ Numb
- ☐ Other: _____

THE STRONGEST EMOTION WAS:

HOW INTENSE WAS IT?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PART 4 — WHAT DID I NOTICE IN MY BODY?

Emotions often appear physically before we understand what's happening.

- ☐ Heart racing
- ☐ Tight chest
- ☐ Shallow breathing
- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Shaking
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Restlessness
- ☐ Stomach discomfort
- ☐ Headache
- ☐ Feeling hot
- ☐ Feeling numb
- ☐ Unable to sit still
- ☐ Other: _____

MY BODY WAS TELLING ME:

PART 5 — BEHAVIOR

What did the emotion make me want to do?

My urge was to:

I WANTED TO:

- ☐ Leave
- ☐ Isolate
- ☐ Argue
- ☐ Send a text/message
- ☐ Shut down
- ☐ Use a substance
- ☐ Engage in another unhealthy coping behavior
- ☐ Contact someone unhealthy for me
- ☐ Spend money impulsively
- ☐ Give up
- ☐ Avoid the situation
- ☐ Other: _____

WHAT DID I ACTUALLY DO?

PART 6 — SEE THE TRIANGLE

Write your answers in the three sections.

THOUGHT

What did I tell myself?

↓

FEELING

What did that thought make me feel?

↓

BEHAVIOR

What did that feeling make me want to do?

Now look at the entire pattern.

TRIGGER → THOUGHT → FEELING → URGE → BEHAVIOR

Ask yourself:

Where could I interrupt this cycle?

PART 7 — CHECK THE THOUGHT

An automatic thought can feel true without necessarily being completely accurate.

Ask yourself:

What evidence supports this thought?

What evidence does NOT support this thought?

Am I assuming I know what someone else is thinking?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I predicting something bad will happen?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I assuming the worst possible outcome?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I thinking in "always" or "never" terms?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Am I treating a feeling like a fact?

☐ Yes ☐ No

PART 8 — COMMON THINKING TRAPS

See whether your thought fits one of these patterns.

ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

"If I can't do this perfectly, I've completely failed."

☐ This might be me.

CATASTROPHIZING

"This is going to be a disaster."

☐ This might be me.

MIND READING

"I know what they're thinking about me."

☐ This might be me.

FORTUNE TELLING

"I already know how this will turn out."

☐ This might be me.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

"I feel like a failure, so I must be a failure."

☐ This might be me.

OVERGENERALIZING

"This happened once, so it always happens."

☐ This might be me.

LABELING

"I made a mistake, therefore I'm a failure."

☐ This might be me.

DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVE

"What I did right doesn't really count."

☐ This might be me.

PART 9 — CREATE A MORE BALANCED THOUGHT

Ask yourself:

What would I tell someone I care about if they were in this exact situation?

Is there another explanation for what happened?

What do I know versus what am I assuming?

WHAT I KNOW:

WHAT I'M ASSUMING:

A MORE BALANCED THOUGHT:

PART 10 — CHECK THE TRIANGLE AGAIN

Now use your new thought.

NEW THOUGHT

↓

NEW FEELING

↓

HEALTHIER BEHAVIOR

HOW INTENSE IS THE ORIGINAL EMOTION NOW?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

You don't need to make the emotion disappear.

The goal is to create enough space to make a better decision.

PART 11 — PAUSE BEFORE YOU ACT

When you're triggered, use:

S.T.O.P.

S — STOP

Don't immediately act on the urge.

T — TAKE A BREATH

Slow your breathing and give your body time to settle.

O — OBSERVE

Ask:

What am I thinking?

What am I feeling?

What is happening in my body?

What do I feel like doing?

P — PROCEED INTENTIONALLY

Ask:

Will what I'm about to do move me toward the life I'm trying to build—or away from it?

Then choose your next action.

PART 12 — MY HEALTHIER RESPONSE

THE TRIGGER:

MY AUTOMATIC THOUGHT:

THE EMOTION:

MY URGE:

MY OLD RESPONSE:

MY BALANCED THOUGHT:

MY NEW RESPONSE:

60-SECOND CBT CHECK

When you don't have time to complete the full worksheet, ask yourself four questions:

1. WHAT HAPPENED?

2. WHAT AM I TELLING MYSELF IT MEANS?

3. WHAT AM I FEELING?

4. WHAT ACTION WILL HELP ME RATHER THAN HURT ME?

REMEMBER

A thought is not automatically a fact.

A feeling doesn't have to become an action.

An urge doesn't have to become a behavior.

You may not control the first thought that enters your mind.

You may not control the first emotion that follows it.

But you can learn to recognize the pattern, pause, challenge your interpretation, and decide what happens next.

NOTICE IT → NAME IT → CHECK IT → CHOOSE

CENSOZO | MINDSTRONG

Supporting the Person. Supporting the Journey.

This worksheet can be used independently or alongside the **MindStrong Workbook, Trigger Identification Worksheet, 30-Day Recovery Calendar, and Family Coming Home From Rehab Guide.**

IMPORTANT

This worksheet is intended for educational and personal-development purposes. It is not a substitute for psychotherapy, medical care, detoxification, or professional substance-use treatment.

If you are experiencing a mental health or substance-use crisis in the United States, call or text **988** for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. For treatment information and referrals, SAMHSA's National Helpline is **1-800-662-HELP (4357)**. For a medical emergency, call **911**.