

Thought Record

Noticing our thoughts
and how they impact us

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Our thoughts can hit us very suddenly, out of the blue like a bolt of lightning. When this happens we can end up feeling a certain way without knowing why. This is especially true with negative thoughts.

CBT calls these “automatic” thoughts because, yes you’ve guessed it, they happen automatically without us even knowing!

The Thought Record technique helps us identify automatic thoughts, when we notice a sudden shift in our mood. It encourages us to pause, slow things down and reflect on why the shift happened. From there it helps us to work backwards to identify the automatic thoughts and when they arose, rather than getting lost in them.

We start with the situation that triggered the thought, perhaps somebody’s throwaway comment, then follow it up by looking at the thought itself.

After this, we make a note of the emotions we experienced and then finally our behavioural response. Did we avoid something, resort to comfort food or close off from people? Remember all of this may be from a simple throwaway comment!

With this vital information we can not only see our thoughts externally, but also then learn to better navigate and understand situations that trigger the difficult thinking patterns that take us on a downward spiral.

Why not try it the next time you notice a sudden unexplained shift in your mood?

Don’t get dragged forward with the thought, instead pause, see the change in mood and work backwards from there. Once identified, take a look at the thought in isolation, from the outside, rather than from within it – it will look different that way.

This sounds tricky, but like all things, practice will help, so keep trying.



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Practise Thought Record:

What happened?

Date:

What kind of thoughts triggered
in your mind after?

What emotions showed up for
you following those thoughts?

How did you behave in response to what happened? What actions did you take?

What happened?

Date:

What kind of thoughts triggered
in your mind after?

What emotions showed up for
you following those thoughts?

How did you behave in response to what happened? What actions did you take?
