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WORKSHEET

5-column thought record

Use the worksheet to examine a concrete situation, the thoughts and feelings that followed, and a more balanced alternative thought.

Situation What happened? Keep it concrete.	**Automatic thoughts** What thoughts or images came up?	**Feelings** What did you feel, and how strongly?	**Alternative thoughts** Is there a more balanced understanding?	**New feelings** What changes when you view it this way?

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How to use the 5-column thought record

Version 2026-06-12

The 5-column thought record is used in cognitive behavioural therapy to separate situations, automatic thoughts, feelings and more balanced alternative thoughts. The aim is not to think positively, but to examine whether the first interpretation is the only possible one.

1 Situation

Describe the situation as concretely as possible: what happened, where were you, and who was present? Avoid interpretations in this field.

2 Automatic thoughts

Write down the thoughts, mental images or assumptions that came up quickly and almost automatically. They may feel like facts, but treat them here as hypotheses.

3 Feelings

Note the feelings that followed, optionally with intensity from 0 to 100. Bodily reactions can also be written here.

4 Alternative thoughts

Examine what supports and does not support the automatic thought. Formulate an alternative thought that is more precise and balanced, not artificially positive.

5 New feelings

Notice whether the feeling, intensity or impulse to act changes when the situation is understood in this new way.

Important when working with OCD

With OCD, the worksheet should be used with care. It should not become a way to analyse your way to complete certainty. The aim is to understand patterns and practise a more helpful response, not to neutralise intrusive thoughts.

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