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My Thought Record

Catch one upsetting moment, weigh the evidence and write a balanced thought. A self-help version of an idea used in CBT, not therapy. If the thought is about harming yourself, stop and see selfgrowth.org/help.

01 Before I start

Check in first. This sheet is for everyday moments. If anything below is true, set the sheet aside and look at the support section at the end.

Tick any that are true right now:

- [ ] The moment I'm thinking of involves harming myself or not wanting to be here
- [ ] It is tied to something painful that happened to me, and I don't feel ready to revisit it
- [ ] I'm afraid of someone, or I'm not safe where I am. A worried thought may be accurate. See selfgrowth.org/help
- [ ] My worry or low mood is getting in the way of my life, or I'm worried about how long it has lasted
- [ ] None of these. I'm ready to look at an everyday moment

If I ticked any of the first four, the person or line I'll turn to first (a friend, my GP, Samaritans 116 123, 988 in the US) is:

02 1. The situation

What happened, as a camera would have seen it. What actually happened, not what it might mean: who, where, when, what was said or done. Leave out what you made of it.

The situation:

03 2. How I felt

Name the feeling in a word or two, such as nervous, embarrassed or low. If you can, rate how strong it was. The number is only for you, and there's no score that means anything.

The feeling(s):

How strong was the strongest feeling?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Barely there — As strong as it gets

04 3. The thought

What went through your mind just before or as the feeling began? Write it as a sentence, the way it sounded in your head. If there are several, pick the one that carried the most feeling and write it out again. If this thought is about harming yourself, stop here and see selfgrowth.org/help.

The thought(s):

How much do I believe the main thought right now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

05 4. The evidence

Take the main thought and look at what is on each side. Stick to facts you could point to. Feelings and guesses go in the thought box, not here. If one side is empty, leave it empty.

Evidence for the thought

What supports it?

Evidence against it

What doesn't fit, or what am I overlooking?

Some questions that can help: Have I been in a situation like this before, and what happened? What would I say to a friend who had this thought? Is there another way to read it?

06 5. A balanced thought

Put both sides together in a sentence that is fair, not cheerful. It should include the hard parts if they're real. If you can't believe a balanced thought yet, write a smaller one you can.

A balanced thought:

How much do I believe this balanced thought?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Not at all — Completely

How strong is the feeling now? (It's fine if it hasn't changed.)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Barely there — As strong as it gets

One small thing I could do next, or 'nothing, that's fine':

07 My blank thought record

For later moments. Use one row per moment. It's for noticing, not scoring.

Situation	Feeling	Thought	Evidence for and against	Balanced thought

08 If this is bringing things up

A worksheet is a small tool. Some thoughts need a person. Tick anything that fits and decide who you'll tell.

- [ ] My worry or low mood is getting in the way of my life, or feels too heavy to look at alone
- [ ] It affects my sleep, work or relationships
- [ ] I'll talk to my GP, or refer myself to a talking therapy (NHS Talking Therapies in England)
- [ ] I'll tell someone I trust this week
- [ ] If I think about harming myself: Samaritans 116 123 (UK and Ireland), call or text 988 (US), findahelpline.com elsewhere

When you're done, a moment to reflect

- Was it easier to write the situation, the thought or the balanced thought? What does that tell me?
- Did the evidence on one side surprise me?
- Did anything change after the balanced thought, or nothing at all? Can I be okay with either?
- Is there a moment this week that a thought record would help with, and one that it wouldn't?

Free worksheet from selfgrowth.org. Free self-growth worksheets for real life. Fill it in online and it saves as you go: selfgrowth.org/worksheets/thought-record-worksheet

If things feel heavier than a worksheet can hold

These are self-reflection tools, not therapy. If you're struggling, especially if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, please reach out to someone now. In the US, call or text **988**. In the UK & Ireland, call **116 123** (Samaritans). Elsewhere, find a free helpline at **findahelpline.com**. If you're in immediate danger, call your local emergency number.