Thought Log

Event	Emotion / Behavior	Thought or "self-talk"	Identify the irrational thought	Counterstatement-new healthier thought
Received "constructive" feedback from my supervisor on a project I've been working on.	Disappointed. Sad. Anxious about job performance.	*"Nothing I do is right. I'm going to job fail. I am not qualified for a job at this level."*	Overgeneralization. Catastrophizing. All-or-nothing thinking.	*"I'm not perfect. I'm still learning. Coaching can be hard to hear, but it will help me improve. It's all part of the learning process."*

Common "Irrational Beliefs"

- **Jumping to conclusions:** Settling on a belief when there is little or no evidence to support it.
  - ➢ "If I don't do well on this project, my leaders will think I'm incompetent."
- **Mental filtering:** Over focusing on the negative, while ignoring the positive
  - ➢ "I didn't know the answer to a question today. Maybe I'm not suited for this job."
- **All-or-nothing:** Exaggerated "black and white" thinking.
  - ➢ "If I don't get selected for the open position, my career is over."
- **Perfectionism:** Very high expectations that something can only be a certain way.
  - ➢ "The hotel isn't as good as the reviews said. Our vacation is ruined."
- **Rigid, inflexible thinking:** Leaving no room for a realistic, alternative outcome.
  - ➢ "People shouldn't act that way." "I must get a high rating every year." Or, "Society should be just and fair."
- **Overgeneralization:** Maintaining global beliefs based on one factor or a single situation.
  - ➢ "My coworker just got a new position. Everyone else has gotten promoted but me."
- **Personalization:** The tendency to automatically blame yourself.
  - ➢ "I wasn't selected for the open position. I always interview very poorly."
- **Externalization:** The tendency to automatically blame others.
  - ➢ "I wasn't selected for the project. The project leader is threatened by my skills."
- **Mind Reading:** Assuming that you know what others are thinking, or expecting others to know what you are thinking.
  - ➢ "My supervisory hasn't responded to my email. She must be upset about what I said."
- **Catastrophizing:** Worst case scenario thinking. Exaggerating the impact of a negative event.
  - ➢ "I was rated "meets" even though I performed better. My boss is looking for an excuse to fire me."
- **Future or past orientation:** spending too much time focused on the part or future. Assuming you can predict the future or the past is destine to repeat itself.
  - ➢ "This date is not going to go well. First dates never work for me."
- **Emotional reasoning:** Interpreting our experience, fact, and reality based on how we feeling in the moment
  - ➢ "I feel stressed and over worked. Our leaders don't know how to manage people." or "I feel bad when you say that. You must be a horrible person."

Challenging "Irrational Beliefs"

- **Jumping to conclusions:** Settling on a belief when there is little or no evidence to support it.
  - ➢ Slow down and ask your, "what evidence do I have for this way of perceiving the situation?"
- **Mental filtering:** Over focusing on the negative, while ignoring the positive
  - ➢ Make a pro/con list about event outlining positives and negatives. Balance every negative with a positive.
- **All-or-nothing:** Exaggerated "black and white" thinking.
  - ➢ Ask yourself, "are those the only two options?" or "Doesn't something have to be all good or all bad?"
- **Perfectionism:** Very high expectations that something can only be a certain way.
  - ➢ Remind yourself, there is no such thing as perfect. What seems perfect for you may not for me. Things rarely turn out *exactly* how we want them to, and when they don't we cope just fine.
- **Rigid, inflexible thinking:** Leaving no room for a realistic, alternative outcome.
  - ➢ Look out for words like "should, must, need, ought and have to." They offer no alternative outcome. And life demands flexibility.
- **Overgeneralization:** Maintaining global beliefs based on one factor or a single situation.
  - ➢ Ask, "do thing *always* work out this way. Where is my evidence for that belief?"
- **Personalization:** The tendency to automatically blame yourself.
  - ➢ No one is perfect. We all make mistakes. But ask yourself what factors other than YOU may be involved?
- **Externalization:** The tendency to automatically blame others.
  - ➢ Ask, "even if 99% of the blame is on others or outside influences, what is the 1% that maybe I can control?"
- **Mind Reading:** Assuming that you know what others are thinking, or expecting others to know what you are thinking.
  - ➢ Look for objective evidence of your belief. How do you *know* what another person is thinking? Gather data. When I doubt, ask the other person what s/he really thinks.
- **Catastrophizing:** Worst case scenario thinking. Exaggerating the impact of a negative event.
  - ➢ Look for words like "horrible, terrible, awful." Things are never as bad as they seem at first. And we generally cope just fine. Ask, "what's the worst that can really happen, and how will I response?"
- **Future or past orientation:** spending too much time focused on the part or future. Assuming you can predict the future or the past is destine to repeat itself.
  - ➢ Be where your feet are. Focus on the here and now. Identify what you *can* and *can not* control.
- **Emotional reasoning:** Interpreting our experience, fact, and reality based on how we feeling in the moment
  - ➢ Identify and separate how you feel about the situation versus the facts. Is your perception driven by emotion?