

- 1. The situation.** Briefly describe the situation that led to your unpleasant feelings. This will help you remember the situation later if you review your notes.
- 2. Initial thought.** What thought first crossed your mind? This was probably a subconscious or automatic thought that you have had before.
- 3. Consider the consequences.** Why do you want to change your thinking? Consider the short-term and long-term consequences if you don't change? Look at the psychological, physical, professional, and relationship consequences.
- 4. Challenge your initial thought.** How successful has this thinking been for you in the past? What facts do you have that support or challenge your initial thought? What strengths do you have that you may have overlooked? What advice would you give someone else in the same situation?
- 5. [Optional] Negative thinking.** Summarize the kind of negative thinking behind your initial thought. Identify one or more types: All-or-nothing, Focusing on the negatives, Catastrophizing, Negative self-labelling, Excessive need for approval, Mind reading, Should statements.
- 6. [Optional] Background.** When did you start to have initial thoughts like this? How deep do the roots go? Do you know anyone else who thinks like this? How successful has this thinking been for them?
- 7. Alternative thinking.** Now that you understand your negative thinking, look for a healthier way of thinking about the situation. How could you have handled it differently?
- 8. Positive belief and affirmation.** Write down an affirmation, in a positive form, that reflects your healthier approach. Choose something that you can use as a reminder.
- 9. Action plan.** What can you do if this situation arises again? Knowing your tendencies, how can you prepare for the situation? Write a list of strengths you bring to the situation? What can you do if you fall back on old habits?
- 10. Improvement.** Do you feel slightly better or more optimistic? This step reinforces the idea that if you change your thinking, you will change your life.