



Module 8

The End Result

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E : The End Result

We've spent some time examining the link between thinking and feelings, and discussed how to identify your unhelpful thoughts and thinking styles. In the previous module, we talked about looking for evidence that might prove or disprove your unhelpful beliefs as well as considering other alternative ways of viewing the situation. Now let's look at how you can change the way you are thinking in order to improve how you are feeling.

By this time, if you have been using the Thought Diary, you would have described an **A**ctivating Event, identified your automatic and unhelpful **B**eliefs and thoughts (including the Hot Thought) that have contributed to your experiencing distressing emotions (**C**onsequences), and recognised a few unhelpful thinking styles you might have used. You would have also used the **D**etective Work and **D**isputation section to challenge your hot thought. Now, take a good look at the evidence you have listed and the answers to the other challenging questions. Is there enough evidence to believe that your hot thought is true all of the time? Are there other alternative explanations?

At this point, ask yourself, "How can I revise my hot thought to take into account all the evidence I have listed?" Then, write out an alternative explanation. This becomes your new, balanced thought. A balanced and helpful thought or belief is one that takes into consideration all the evidence, objective information, and alternative viewpoints. This is the fifth step of the ABC analysis – the **E**nd Result, where you replace your original, unhelpful thought with this new, balanced, and helpful belief.

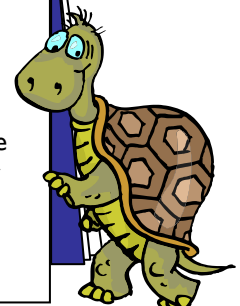
After you have written down your new, balanced thought or belief, ask yourself, "How do I feel now?" Look at the most intense emotion you identified in section **C**, and re-rate how intense that emotion feels for you now. Often, you will find that it is not as extreme and distressing.

Finally, read through the Detective Work and Disputation section again, and re-rate how much you believe the hot thought now.

This final step of replacing your unhelpful (hot) thoughts with balanced thoughts is very important. Challenging your beliefs and evidence testing is the process of change, but the final step is where you **MAKE** the change. You'll probably find that this process becomes easier after some practice. So keep it up. Over the next two pages, an example of the full Thought Diary (steps A to E) is provided, followed by one that is blank, for your use. Keep practising and remember that you can be your own expert at managing your moods!

Turtle Tip

Make sure you create a balanced thought that is meaningful and convincing to you. The more believable it is, the more likely it is to change the way you feel.



Thought Diary (example)

A Activating Event

This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection.

At my brother's place and a friend of his drops by. He starts talking to me.

C Consequences

1. Write down words describing how you feel.
2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.
3. Rate the intensity of that feeling (0 to 100).

Anxious (70)

Irritated (40)

1. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.
 - Heart pounding, sweating, fast breathing
 - Avoided eye contact
 - Excused myself from the conversation

B Beliefs

1. List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: "What was I thinking?" "What was I saying to myself?" "What was going through my head at the time?"
2. Find the most distressing (hot) thought and underline it
3. Rate how much you believe this thought between 0 to 100.

"I wish he wouldn't talk to me"

He will notice that I look like a 'nervous wreck'"

"I won't have anything to say"

Thought discovery question: "... and what does this mean?"

"He'll think I'm an idiot" (85)

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Do you recognise any unhelpful thinking styles you might have been using? (Mental filter, jumping to conclusions, personalisation, catastrophising, black & white thinking, shoulding & musting, overgeneralisation, labelling, emotional reasoning, disqualifying/ignoring positives)

- Jumping to conclusions - Predictive thinking
- Jumping to conclusions - Mind Reading,

D Detective Work & Disputation

My HOT Thought He'll think I'm an idiot	
FACTUAL EVIDENCE FOR MY HOT THOUGHT	FACTUAL EVIDENCE AGAINST MY HOT THOUGHT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once at a party a few years ago, someone came and spoke to me, and a few minutes later asked me if I was OK because I looked a little nervous - Sometimes, people have called me an idiot when I've made a mistake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have had many conversations where people have said that they have enjoyed talking to me, or that they have appreciated my opinion – even when I've been anxious when talking to them. - I have spoken to him before and he didn't say anything negative - People often call other people "idiots" when they are angry and upset, and most of the time they don't mean it

Disputation questions:

How realistic are my thoughts, beliefs, and expectations?

- If I was to ask people who knew me, most people would not say I'm an idiot
- Chances are, people are more worried about their own lives and aren't going to even think about how I look
- Everyone makes mistakes, so just because I make a mistake now and then doesn't mean I'm an idiot

If I were not anxious, how might I view the situation differently?

- I might remember that people have said that they have appreciated talking to me because they are interested in what I have to say

E End Result

Balanced Thoughts: After looking at all the evidence for and against your hot thought, and having considered the disputation questions, replace the hot thought with helpful, balanced thought/s.

Maybe I won't have much to say, but that doesn't mean I'm an idiot. I can't read minds, and there is no evidence that he will think I'm an idiot. Everyone makes mistakes now and then, anyway. Many people have said they've enjoyed talking to me and said that they have appreciated my opinion.

Re-rate Emotion: Now, re-rate the emotion you underlined in C, from 0 to 100.

40

Re-rate Hot Thought: Read through Detective Work & Disputation. Now re-rate how much you believe the hot thought, between 0 to 100.

30

Thought Diary

A Activating Event

This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection.

B Beliefs

1. List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: "What was I thinking?" "What was I saying to myself?" "What was going through my head at the time?"
2. Find the most distressing (hot) thought and underline it
3. Rate how much you believe this thought between 0 to 100

C Consequences

1. Write down words describing how you feel.
2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.
3. Rate the intensity of that feeling (0 to 100).

1. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Do you recognise any unhelpful thinking styles you might have been using? (Mental filter, jumping to conclusions, personalisation, catastrophising, black & white thinking, shoulding & musting, overgeneralisation, labelling, emotional reasoning, disqualifying/ignoring positives)

D Detective Work & Disputation

My HOT Thought	
FACTUAL EVIDENCE FOR MY HOT THOUGHT	FACTUAL EVIDENCE AGAINST MY HOT THOUGHT

Disputation questions:

- What other ways are there of viewing the situation?
- If I were not anxious, how would I view the situation?
- Realistically, what is the likelihood of that happening?
- How might someone else view the situation?
- Does it really help me to think this way?
- Think of some helpful self-statements

E End Result

Balanced Thoughts: After looking at all the evidence for and against your hot thought, and having considered the disputation questions, replace the hot thought with helpful, balanced thought/s.

Re-rate Emotion: Now, re-rate the emotion you underlined in C, from 0 to 100. _____

Re-rate Hot Thought: Read through Detective Work & Disputation. Now re-rate how much you believe the hot thought, between 0 to 100. _____

F : **Following Through**

Often, many people say they can understand the new helpful thought or belief in their minds, but find it difficult to “feel” it or believe it. They understand that the new belief is balanced and helpful, but at the same time, are not all that convinced. This is probably because the balanced thought or belief may have been newly ‘activated’ into the knowledge system, but has yet to be integrated into the person’s belief system.

This will take time and a bit of practice because you have probably established a habit of thinking in an unhelpful way, especially when you are anxious. Now is the time to uproot the old habits and establish a new pattern of balanced and helpful thinking. This process requires that you re-train yourself to think in a helpful way and continue to practice it until it becomes an unconscious skill. It’s all about repetition, repetition, repetition. One day, it will feel right and you might not even realise it. Remember how we learned to tie our shoelaces? We kept practising until we were no longer conscious of the way we bring the laces together and how we tie the bow. Learning to think in helpful ways goes through the same process.

Thought cards

You might want to write out your balanced beliefs on small cards and carry them in your pockets or handbags so that you can refer to them regularly and in situations where you may become upset or distressed. Remember that it takes a little time for a new habit to be established. Be persistent in practicing your new helpful beliefs so that they will be integrated into your belief system. Use the Thought Diary whenever you feel upset or distressed, and work through the process of identifying, challenging, and changing your unhelpful beliefs. When you become familiar with this process, you can become better at managing your moods.

Turning your thoughts into actions

Another important way of integrating the helpful and balanced thoughts into your belief system is to **ACT ON THEM!** This means applying the balanced thoughts to your life and translating them into action. Ask yourself, “**How can I change what I do to reinforce my balanced thoughts?**” In the example that we’ve been using over the last few modules, the balanced thoughts are: *Maybe I won’t have much to say, but that doesn’t mean I’m an idiot. I can’t read minds, and there is no evidence that he will think I’m an idiot. Everyone makes mistakes now and then, anyway. Many people have said they’ve enjoyed talking to me and that they have appreciated my opinion.* What do you think this person could do to reinforce their balanced thoughts? Sometimes, taking a look at the consequences (the “C”) might give you some ideas. For example, they could try to stay in the situation for at least 2 minutes, or they might aim to keep eye contact while the other person is talking. If you have completed a thought diary, you can probably already think of some ideas for yourself.

Following through is especially important if you often avoid doing certain things or avoid certain situations. Avoidance of actions or situations can maintain and perpetuate anxiety because you never give yourself the chance to show that you can stay in the situation. We will be discussing this further in the modules to come, but for now try to make small changes that can more strongly reinforce your balanced thoughts.

We’ve worked through a substantial portion of how you can change your thinking to combat social anxiety. Now, just keep going. Follow through. Keep reviewing and practising those helpful and balanced thoughts **AND** act on them!

Reviewing the ABC's - and the DEF's

We've spent quite a while on looking at all the different components of how thoughts influence feelings, and how you can start changing your thoughts to change your feelings. It might be useful to review this process now, and summarise all the new steps that you've learnt. Below is an outline of the general steps you need to take in order to replace unhelpful thoughts with more balanced thoughts.

STEP 1. Recognise the activating event and the consequences ("A" & "C")

The very first step in being able to manage your feelings is to initially recognise when you are experiencing a strong feeling and to be able to name the feeling. It also means recognising what kinds of situations activate the whole thinking-feeling process and what kinds of consequences result.

- Activating events are an objective "snapshot" of the situation, with facts only – not beliefs or feelings.
- Activating events include situations and events, but also memories and thinking about something.
- Consequences include emotions especially (there could be more than one), as well as physical sensations and behaviours.
- In the thought diary, underline the strongest emotion, then rate the intensity between 0-100.

STEP 2. Identify the thoughts and beliefs ("B")

Now that you know what you are feeling it is necessary to identify what you are saying to yourself or thinking. These are your beliefs, and you usually need to slow down your thinking and look at what's going on beneath the surface thought to get a good idea of how your thinking is influencing your feeling.

- Use the unhelpful thought discovery questions to get at the underlying thoughts (eg "what is so bad about that?")
- In the thought diary, underline the "hot thought" – the thought that relates most to the strongest emotion – and rate how much you believe the thought between 0-100.
- Identify any unhelpful thinking styles that relate to the unhelpful thoughts.

STEP 3. Do some detective work and disputation to weigh up the evidence ("D")

Okay, so now you have identified the beliefs, and the "hot thought" that is producing the intense feeling. Now the next very important step is to do some detective work and disputation, examining the evidence for and against what you are thinking.

- Identify what evidence there might be for the hot thought
- Ask yourself the disputation questions, such as looking at things from a different perspective, assessing the realistic probability of things, and making sure your not missing the positives.
- Challenge the unhelpful thinking styles

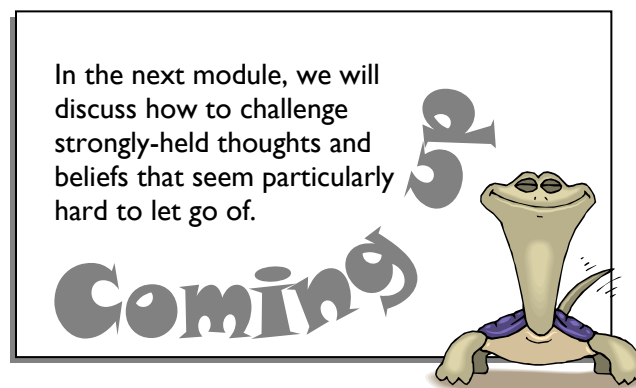
STEP 4. Replace the unhelpful thought with a balanced thought ("E" and "F")

Now that you have thoroughly examined all of the evidence, you are in a position to generate a more balanced thought. Rather than being unrealistically positive, a balanced thought is a thought that takes into consideration the evidence that does and does not support your hot thought.

- Incorporate aspects of the evidence for and against the hot thought that can contribute to a helpful, balanced thought.
- In the thought diary, re-rate what was your most intense emotion between 0-100.
- In the thought diary, re-rate how much you believe in your hot thought between 0-100.
- Try to strengthen your new balanced thought by using thought cards or finding ways to turn your thoughts into actions.

Module Summary

- After completing A to D, ask yourself, “How can I revise my hot thought to take into account all the evidence I have listed?” Then, write out an alternative explanation, which becomes your new, balanced thought
- A balanced thought or belief is one that takes into consideration all the evidence, objective information, and alternative viewpoints
- Replace your original, unhelpful hot thought with this new, balanced, and helpful belief
- Integrating balanced beliefs into your system takes practice and repetition
- You could write out your balanced beliefs on cards and refer to them regularly and in situations where you may become upset or distressed
- Integrating helpful and balanced thoughts into your belief system also requires you to act on them – applying them to your life and translating them into action
- In reviewing the ABCDEF process, there are a number of steps to follow
 1. Recognise the activating event and the consequences (“A” & “C”)
 2. Identify the thoughts and beliefs (“B”)
 3. Do some detective work and disputation to weigh up the evidence (“D”)
 4. Replace the unhelpful thought with a balanced thought (“E” and “F”)



About The Modules

BACKGROUND

This module was created in 2003 by Patrick Kingsep at the Centre for Clinical Interventions, under the supervision of the Centre's Founding Director, Paula Nathan.

The concepts and strategies in these modules have been developed from evidence-based psychological practice, primarily Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy (CBT). CBT for social anxiety is based on the approach that anxiety is a result of problematic cognitions (thoughts) and behaviours.

REFERENCES

These are some of the professional references used to create the modules in this information package.

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“SHY NO LONGER”

This module forms part of:

Kingsep, P., & Nathan, P. (2003). *Shy No Longer*. Perth, Western Australia: Centre for Clinical Interventions.