

Getting Started

The first step in the CBT process is obtaining a clear understanding of the problem, setting your goals and thinking about how your personal values and strengths can provide a driving force for change. You can work through the following exercises to help with these tasks.

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Exercise 1 – Problem List

Use the first column to identify the problems that you want to work on. In the second column identify unhelpful, unworkable or unsustainable coping strategies or patterns of avoidance. In the third column, identify helpful, workable and sustainable coping strategies that are consistent with your goals and personal values.

The Problem	Unhelpful Coping Strategies	Helpful Coping Strategies

Exercise 2 – Personal Goals

Use this exercise to identify 3 goals for therapy. Detail the small steps required to make each goal concrete.

Goal 1:			
Small Steps to Help Achieve This Goal			
Goal 2:			
Small Steps to Help Achieve This Goal			
Goal 3:			
Small Steps to Help Achieve This Goal			

Exercise 3 – Personal Strengths / Resources

Identifying and capitalising on your strengths and personal resources is an important part of achieving change and overcoming problems. Think about your skills, knowledge, experience, abilities and qualities. Think about what you recognise in yourself and what other people recognise in you. Your strengths will play an important part in the development of your CBT plan.

Skills	Knowledge	Experience	Abilities	Personal Qualities

Exercise 4 – Personal Values

Values provide a basis for guiding the way we act to overcome problems and achieve our goals. Use this exercise to first assess and prioritise your personal values. Then decide which six values will be the most instrumental in achieving your CBT goals. You may find that your six “change values” are different to your current priorities. Use the checkboxes to indicate the relative importance of each value. There are no right or wrong answers.

Value Description	Highly Important	Moderately Important	Less Important
Accepting: Open to and accepting of my own value and the value of other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Affectionate: Displaying and expressing love or strong feelings for others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aspiring: Actively seeking opportunities and striving for success.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assertive: Respectfully standing up for my rights and balancing my needs with the needs of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authentic: Being genuine, honest and true to myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caring: Helpful and considerate to myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Challenging: Stretching and continuously learning how to improve myself and encourage change in others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compassionate: Recognising and acting to alleviate suffering for myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conforming: Respectful and obedient of helpful rules and obligations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperating: Working collaboratively and harmoniously with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Courageous: Brave and persistent in the face of fear, threat or difficulty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative: Imaginative, resourceful and innovative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curious: Open-minded, exploratory and interested in new and alternative approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotionally aware: Open to and receptive to my own feelings and the feelings of others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encouraging: Promoting and rewarding behaviour that I value in myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality: Treating others fairly, consistently and equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fairness: Just, rational and reasonable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fitness: Maintaining or improving my physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flexible: Adjusting and adapting readily to changing circumstances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Forgiving: Coming to terms with or letting go of negative feelings towards myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Friendliness: Friendly and companionable towards others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Generosity: Sharing and offering time, attention and resources to myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Gratitude: Appreciative and valuing of the things that I have in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Honesty: Truthful and sincere with myself and others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humility: Modest about my contributions whilst allowing my achievements to speak for themselves.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Humour: Seeking out and engaging in the humorous side of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent: Self-directive, contained and able to support myself.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrious: Hard-working and productive with my time and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open-minded: Approaching issues from an objective position, listening to other points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Orderly: Properly prepared and organized in my life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patient: Waiting calmly and in line for what I want or need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respectful: Polite, considerate and showing positive regard to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Responsible: Taking responsibility and ownership of my thoughts, actions and emotions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe: Acting in a secure, protective and stable manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-aware: Aware of my own thoughts, feelings and actions, considering how I come across to others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-disciplined: Acting according to my goals and values, rather than my vulnerabilities or mood.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tenacious: Persisting despite problems and difficulties and without giving up.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tolerant: Coming to terms with, acknowledging and respecting things that clash with my own opinions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trusted: Discrete, loyal, faithful, sincere and reliable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Now choose the six most important change values which will be instrumental in the achievement of your goals. Insert these into the following change values table:

Priority	Change Value
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Exercise 5 – Costs / Benefits Balance-Sheet

Use this exercise to identify the costs and benefits of committing to change. On the cost side of this balance sheet, include the short-term difficulties, personal challenges and avoidance behaviours that you will be prepared to let go of or tolerate to achieve your goals. On the benefits side of the balance sheet, identify the advantages and opportunities that committing to change will provide. Complete this worksheet with reference to your goals and personal values.

Costs	Benefits

Exercise 6 – The CBT-Junction Model

Use this exercise to set direction and make choices that are helpful, workable and sustainable. Use the left side of the model to identify unhelpful thoughts, behaviours and avoidance patterns that you get caught up in. Use the right side of the model to identify your purpose, goals, values and opportunities for change.

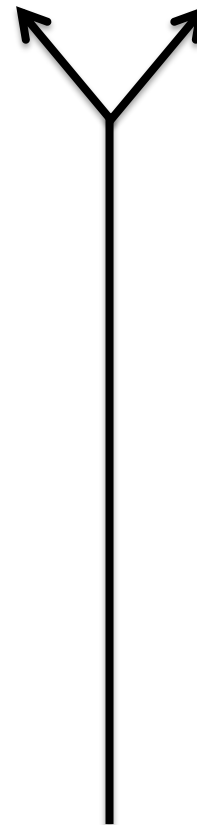
Acting according to my mood, vulnerabilities or self-limitations

Unhelpful thoughts that I get caught up in, emotions that I struggle with, counter-productive behaviours and patterns of avoidance.

Choice Point

Acting according to my purpose, values, goals and opportunities

My purpose, values, goals, strengths, opportunities to try a different approach, things I can do to improve the situation and my personal wellbeing.



Trigger

Unhelpful / Unworkable / Unsustainable

Helpful / Workable / Sustainable

Exercise 7 – CBT Learning Log

Use this table to record the most important learning points from each CBT session or exercise. This will provide a structured record of your learning that you can refer to in future:

Session	What did we cover?	What were the key learning points?	What was the CBT assignment?
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			