

Exercise 13 – Cognitive Disputation “Putting Your Thoughts on Trial”

In this exercise you will test the evidence for and against your thoughts. Evidence must be presented in factual or logical terms and interpretations or suppositions are not admissible. The exercise is presented in five parts. Start by briefly outlining the situation that led to the negative or distressing thought. The “Prosecution” box provides facts that support the negative interpretation. The “Defence” box answers with a positive interpretation. The “Witness” box offers an objective and neutral perspective and the final “Judgement” offers a fair, balanced and justified summing up.

The Situation / Trigger What happened or triggered the problem?	The Prosecution What facts support a negative interpretation?	The Defence What facts support a positive interpretation?	The Neutral Witness What would an independent observer say?

The Balanced Judgement – Having assessed the evidence, what is a balanced, realistic and fair interpretation?