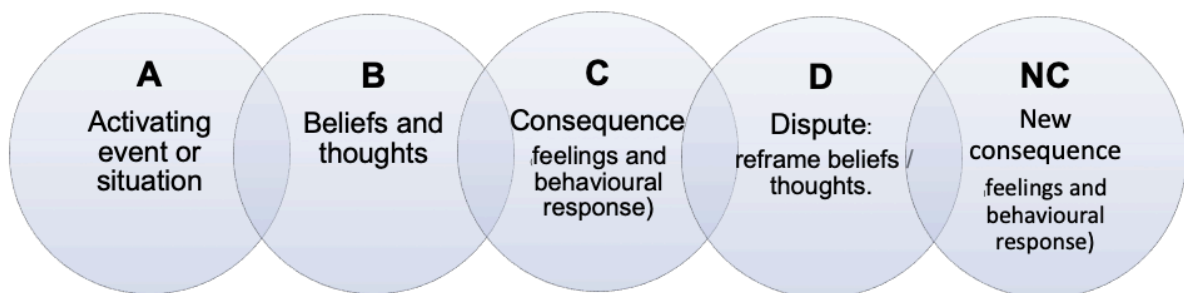


Extra: a CBT worksheet – the ABCD-NC guide in visuals and examples

A CBT handout-worksheet by iVeronicaWalsh.wordpress.com

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) teaches you skills to build intentional awareness and self-regulation of stress-thinking or depression-thinking (cognitive distortions), and emotional dysregulation and self-sabotaging behaviours. The ABCD technique outlined in this post is a fundamental ‘mapping’ component of CBT, helping you to concretely identify and examine and dispute bad thinking habits in a simple and structured way that your brain will like – and to change how you respond to stressors. It’s the basic ‘homework’ for self-management.



1. Part 1 explains the first three components of the **ABC** technique. It emphasizes the importance of keeping a structured journal to track and change bad habits and patterns in a way that your brain will like.
2. Part 2 focuses on ‘**D**’ – disputing and challenging and reframing the ‘**B**’ beliefs and thoughts. It provides a practical example of how to reframe.
3. Part 3 discusses the creation of ‘**NC**’ – (new consequences). It explores how reframing thoughts can lead to a change in emotional and behavioural responses.

Begin building your own CBT toolbox by following these structured models for journaling. It’s a science – believe it!

Part 1: Understanding the ABCD-NC Mapping Technique

Definition: The ABCD-NC technique stands for:

Activating Event or situation

Beliefs and thoughts about the event or situation

Consequences – feelings and behaviours caused by accepting the beliefs and thoughts

Disputing the beliefs and thoughts, reframing them to evidence based rational self-talk

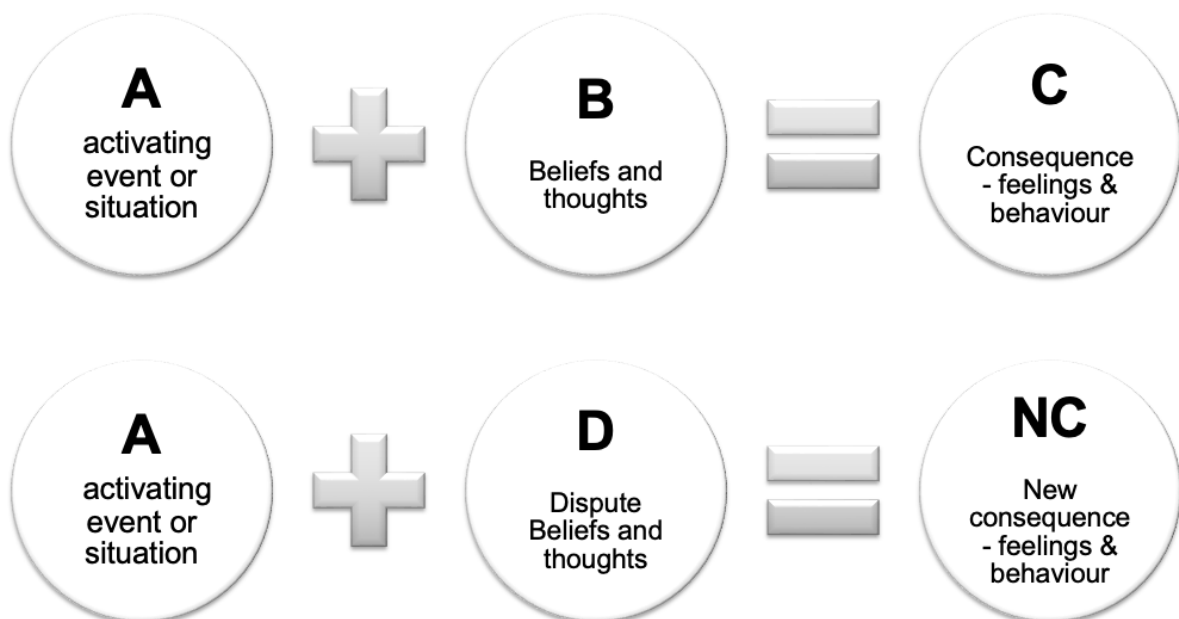
NC - **N**ew **C**onsequences – feeling and behavioural change due to the new moderated self-talk

This exercise is a way to map and examine and change bad habits and patterns through structured journaling.

Consider the following model:

A – Activating event or situation. **B** – Beliefs & thoughts. **C** – consequence / feelings and behaviour.

D – Dispute and reframe the beliefs and thoughts. **NC** – new consequence / feelings and behaviour.



Example of the ABCD-NC in action:

1. **Activating Event or Situation (A):** This is the initial trigger or situation that sparks your emotional and behavioural response. Write down what happened or what you observed.
 - Example: “**Received criticism at work from an angry boss.**”
2. **Beliefs and Thoughts (B):** What thoughts did you have about the activating event?
 - Example 1 – self-critical: “*I’m terrible at my job. She doesn’t like me. I’m in big trouble here.*”
 - Example 2 – other-critical: “*she’s a bitch – how dare she – I’m not standing for this, she’s horrible*”.
3. **Consequence (C):** How did accepting your initial thoughts and beliefs influence your emotional and behavioural response to the event? What did you feel or do as a result?
 - Example 1 – *Felt sick, felt anxious, couldn’t focus, avoided the open area where she sits, went over and over it in my head all week.*
Example 2 – Felt angry, wouldn’t do the things she suggested, vented about it to colleagues constantly.

Part 2: Challenging and Changing Your Beliefs – Dispute and Reframe (D):

- Challenge your initial distorted self-talk by asking:
 - What actually and literally happened? Am I missing context?
 - Am I doing negative-predicting and negative-mind-reading?
 - Is there evidence that supports my thoughts?
 - Do I have any evidence against my thoughts?
 - Am I thinking in overly dramatic terms that don’t take into account other experiences I have had in work, and with this person?
 - Are there alternative views and explanations?
 - What is a calm rational alternative way to look at this situation?
- **Replace ‘B’ with ‘D’ new rational evidence based self-talk**

- Example 1: *“She was giving me feedback, with suggestions on what I could do in a different way, and opinions she has about the work, and that’s not the end of the world. I’ve had good outcomes in work before, and I have received positive and neutral feedback before. Everyone makes mistakes, so even if she is being critical I don’t have to be hugely hopeless about it – I can take it on board and focus on the areas she pointed out. I’m ok, it’s ok. I’ll see how it goes. I am of value, I’m doing my best – and maybe I can do it differently.*
- Example 2: *I disagree with some of her points, and am upset at her tone and the way she approached me, but well, maybe she’s having a bad day, she’s human, I don’t know what’s going on in her life. It’s actually ok if I believe she’s being a bit unreasonable and unprofessional, but I can just continue to do my best and see how it goes. It’s normal to be anxious in response to a stressful event, but I don’t need to have rage – it would be smarter to respond to this in an emotionally intelligent way, replace my rage with manageable rational ‘annoyance’ instead – and get on with the job and accept sometimes people behave imperfectly even though I would prefer they did not (that includes me!).”*

Part 3: Creating a New Consequence (NC):

- After disputing your irrational beliefs and reframing how you explain the situation to yourself, does it change the ‘consequential’ emotional and behavioural response for you? How do you feel now? How would you prefer to respond to the event?
- Example general: *“Feeling more confident and less anxious, I plan to approach my boss to discuss or clarify the points she made if I get an opportunity, I’ll plan for this and write my key ideas down to prepare to communicate in a effective way – or maybe I will just accept it was a negative situation for me – it was a stressor, but I can aim to influence her to think well of me and my work through my actions – maybe I can just let it go and move on“*

Think different – feel different – behave different – with CBT.s

Conclusion: The ABCD CBT Technique is a valuable tool for understanding and managing your ‘attributional style’ (how you explain the world to yourself), and your reactions. By identifying the activating event, challenging irrational distorted beliefs, and creating new, more rational evidence based precise self-talk, and more emotionally intelligent responses/choices of reaction and action – you can literally change how you think and feel and behave, and improve your emotional well-being. Apply apply apply – the brain ‘rewires’ through learning and doing – when we get better outcomes repeatedly, we develop better habits.

Use this simple table guide / template to begin with your own key ideas...

A
B
C
D
NC

For more free CBT resources and handouts for mapping and journaling go to my downloads page: [LINK](#)