

8. Shifting your thinking in order to build a more resilient mindset



Change your thoughts to change your feelings & actions!

The **ABCDE model** is used in Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC), and provides a useful process for changing the way you think and feel about things that happen to you.

The way we think about things directly affects the way we feel about them, so getting a grip on some of the unhelpful beliefs you may be holding about life, a situation, other people, or even yourself, can be hugely liberating. It will help you to choose to **behave differently**.

Choosing to **change the way you interpret things** has a transformative impact on your ability to stay strong, positive and resilient in the moment and beyond.

Start by noticing when you are emotionally triggered into feeling powerless, hopeless, angry, hurt, or other crippling emotional states because of something that has just happened to you or around you.

Then follow this ABCDE process to **challenge your thinking** and change those debilitating emotions in order to **build your resilience**.



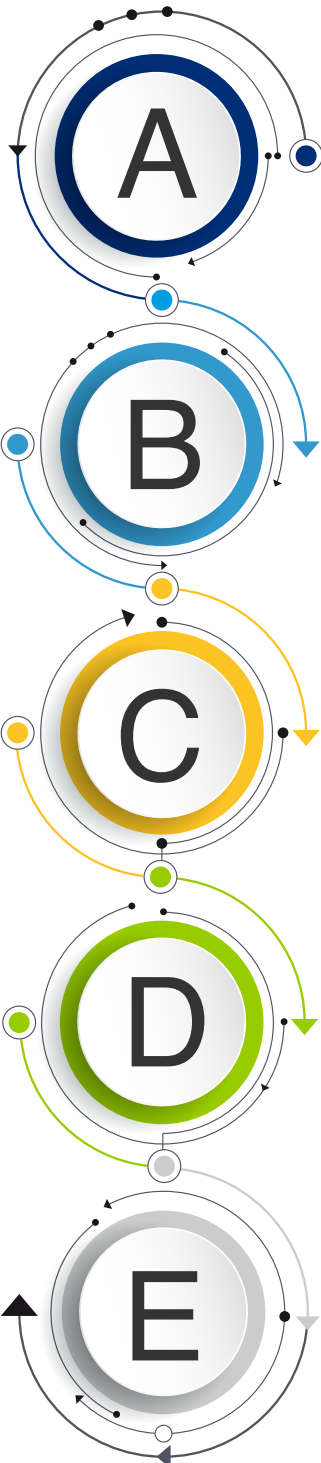
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The **ABCDE model** provides a useful process for changing the way you think about things that happen to you. Below are some questions and examples for each stage to show you how to use the model, with a blank version on the next page for you to use this yourself and change how you think.

Examples



Activating Event

What was the event or situation that triggered the unhelpful thoughts/feelings?

EXAMPLE: We are facing a tsunami of anxious patients who want to be seen and speak to us

Beliefs about the Event

What are your thoughts about this situation? What unhelpful beliefs are you holding?

EXAMPLE: I should be able to cope with this better than I am, I'm obviously not cut out for this as so many people are better than me

Consequences of these Beliefs

Recognise the emotions your thoughts and/or beliefs are creating. How are these impacting on your behaviour? What is the cost of that for you?

EXAMPLE: I feel defensive and short with people and just try to work harder and longer every day to hide how inadequate I feel. I feel completely overwhelmed

Dispute & Debate

Challenge your thoughts – is this an actual fact, or an assumption? What evidence is there to support these thoughts/beliefs? What evidence is there to 'counter' the negative thoughts?

EXAMPLE: Who says I should be any better at this than anyone else? We're all learning how to handle this new situation. I don't have to be perfect at everything immediately

Evaluate & Effective Thinking

Ask yourself: "What's a more helpful way of looking at this situation?", "What more positive beliefs could I hold about myself currently?"

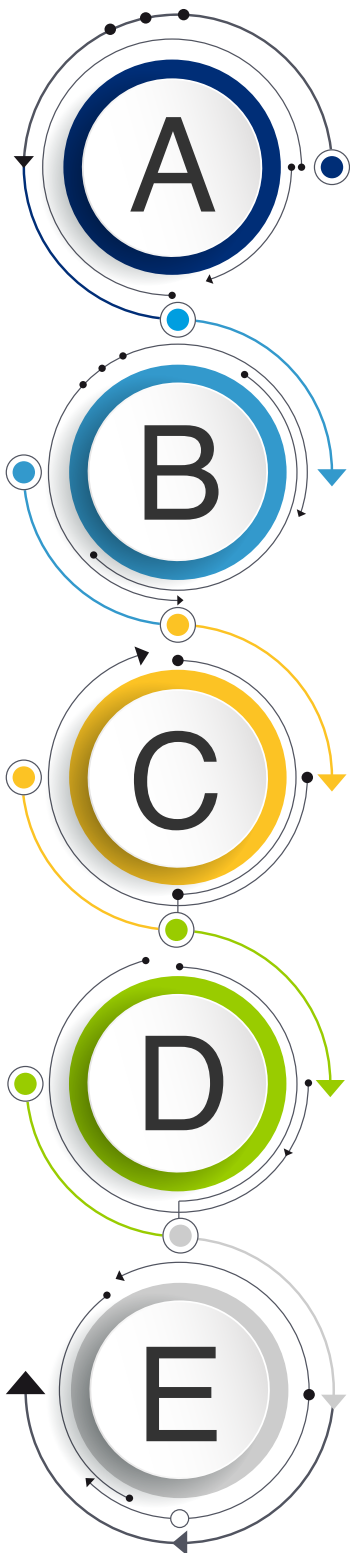
EXAMPLE: How can I respond more effectively to each patient in the moment so that they and I can feel better about our interaction? How can I be more compassionate to myself? What will give me a better outcome?

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EXERCISE: Shift your own thinking by doing this for yourself below



Activating Event

Beliefs about the Event

Consequences of these Beliefs

Dispute & Debate

Evaluate & Effective Thinking



Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Try to avoid these when wanting to change your feelings and actions

In order to effectively use the ABCDE model, it is important to be aware of any negative commentary running through your head if you are going to be able to shift your thoughts and, therefore, emotions and behaviour. You may already be aware of it but many people are not, because it is just an unconscious accompaniment to their daily life. Fleeting thoughts such as, “I’m not good enough”, “I’ll never cope”, “It’s all too much”, are powerful; they suck up our vitality and confidence and take a lot of energy that we could better expend elsewhere. The following are just some examples of ‘unhelpful’ or ‘self-limiting’ thinking patterns that individuals can slip into:

“
IT WENT WRONG
BEFORE SO WILL GO
WRONG THIS TIME!
”

All or Nothing Thinking

Thinking in black and white; things are right or wrong; because something’s gone wrong on one occasion it’s always going to go wrong.

“
NOTHING GOOD
EVER HAPPENS
TO ME!
”

Over-Generalising

When overly broad language is used to evaluate events or people, using words such as “always”, “never”, “ever”, “everybody” and “nobody”.

“
I HAVEN’T HEARD
BACK FROM X SO
THEY DON’T LIKE ME
”

Jumping to Conclusions

Making assumptions, rather than basing your thoughts on facts or evidence.

“
IT’S A
COMPLETE
DISASTER!
”

Catastrophising & Minimisation

Blowing things up into massive issues and minimising the positive things you have achieved/that are happening.

“
I DIDN’T GET THE
PROMOTION SO I
MUST BE BAD AT
MY JOB
”

Labelling

E.g. telling yourself you’re ‘stupid’ because something hasn’t gone well.

“
I DIAGNOSED 29
PATIENTS TODAY BUT
FOCUS ON THE ONE
I COULDN’T
”

Mental Filter

Focussing on all of the negatives rather than any of the positives.

“
YOU WOULD SAY
THAT AS YOU’RE
MY FRIEND
”

Disqualifying the Positive

For example, rationalising any positive feedback you receive as simply being down to the individual being nice to you.

“
I FEEL WORTHLESS
DESPITE BEING
VALUED BY OTHERS
”

Emotional Reasoning

Thinking that the way you feel is reality, e.g. I feel inadequate therefore I’m no good at my job.

“
I AM A DOCTOR
SO I MUST NOT
WORRY
”

Use of Should/Must

Using these words to or about yourself are not always helpful as they can evoke a strong sense of obligation or guilt and/or pressure.

“
THIS IS ALL
MY FAULT!
”

Personalisation

Taking things that have happened or comments made too personally.