

RECORDING AND CHALLENGING PESSIMISTIC THOUGHTS

Directions

When you have a pessimistic thought you “filter” your view of the world in a way which distorts reality. Some people think that pessimistic people just have a “bad attitude,” but in reality pessimists (as opposed to optimists) are much more likely to have mental health problems (particularly depression) as well as physical health problems.

The good news is that when you can “catch” your pessimistic thoughts, you can learn to change them to be more realistic.

Psychologists have identified three general types of pessimistic thoughts:

- 1) *Permanence*: This is when you think problems will affect you for a long indefinite amount of time, instead of being solvable and temporary.
- 2) *Pervasiveness*: This is when one bad thing in our life happens, and you assume that this will cause problems in other areas of your life
- 3) *Personalization*: This is when you attribute problems as being caused by you, as opposed to outside causes, even though they are not your fault.

Record your pessimistic thoughts as they occur during one day. At the end of the day, write rational responses to these thoughts.

RECORDING YOUR THOUGHTS Date _____

Pessimistic thought: _____ Time of day: _____

What kind of pessimistic thought is this?

How much do you believe this? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Rational response: _____

How much do you believe this? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Pessimistic thought: _____ Time of day: _____

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