NEW RIVER HEALING, LLC

Thought Record

Catch the thought, check it, and find a more balanced view

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Therapist:** Nathan Cooke, LCSW

Thoughts are not facts

When a feeling hits hard, there is usually a quick, automatic thought underneath it. These thoughts feel true in the moment, but they are often harsher or more extreme than the facts support. A thought record helps you slow down, catch the thought, and check it, so you can respond to what is actually happening instead of what you fear is happening.

Use it soon after a strong emotion, while the details are fresh. The goal is not positive thinking. The goal is accurate, balanced thinking.

THE EIGHT STEPS

1	Situation	Where were you, who was there, what happened? Stick to what a camera would record.
2	Emotions	Name each feeling and rate its intensity from 0 to 100%.
3	Hot thought	What went through your mind? Pick the thought that drives the strongest feeling and rate how much you believe it.
4	Evidence for	Facts, not feelings or interpretations, that support the hot thought.
5	Evidence against	Facts that don't fit the thought. What would a friend point out?
6	Thinking traps	Check any patterns you notice (see the list on page 2).
7	Balanced thought	A fairer statement that takes in all the evidence. Rate how much you believe it.
8	Re-rate	Rate your original emotions again. Any drop counts as progress.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Example	Jordan's thought record
Situation	Texted a close friend in the morning. By evening, no reply.
Emotions	Anxious 70% · Sad 40%
Hot thought	*"She's upset with me. I must have said something wrong." Belief: 80%*
Evidence for	She usually replies within a few hours.
Evidence against	She told me this week was packed at work. Our last conversation ended warmly. The last time she went quiet, she was just busy.
Thinking traps	Mind reading, catastrophizing
Balanced thought	*"I don't know why she hasn't replied. The most likely reason is a busy day. If I still haven't heard by tomorrow, I can check in." Belief: 70%*
Re-rate	Anxious 30% · Sad 15%

Step	My thought record
1 Situation *What happened? When and where?*	_____ _____
2 Emotions *Name each feeling, rate 0–100%*	_____ _____
3 Hot thought *What went through my mind?*	_____ _____ **How much I believe it: _____ %**
4 Evidence for *Facts only*	_____ _____
5 Evidence against *What doesn't fit the thought?*	_____ _____ _____
6 Thinking traps *Check any that apply*	☐ Catastrophizing ☐ Mind reading ☐ All-or-nothing ☐ Should statements ☐ Fortune telling ☐ Emotional reasoning ☐ Labeling ☐ Discounting the positive
7 Balanced thought *A fairer, more complete view*	_____ _____ **How much I believe it: _____ %**
8 Re-rate emotions *Same feelings, 0–100% now*	_____

Questions that help you find evidence against

- ▶ What would I tell a friend who had this thought?
- ▶ What is the most likely outcome, not the worst one?
- ▶ Will this matter in a week? In a year?
- ▶ Am I treating a feeling as if it were a fact?
- ▶ Is there anything I'm leaving out or discounting?
- ▶ What would I think if I were calmer?