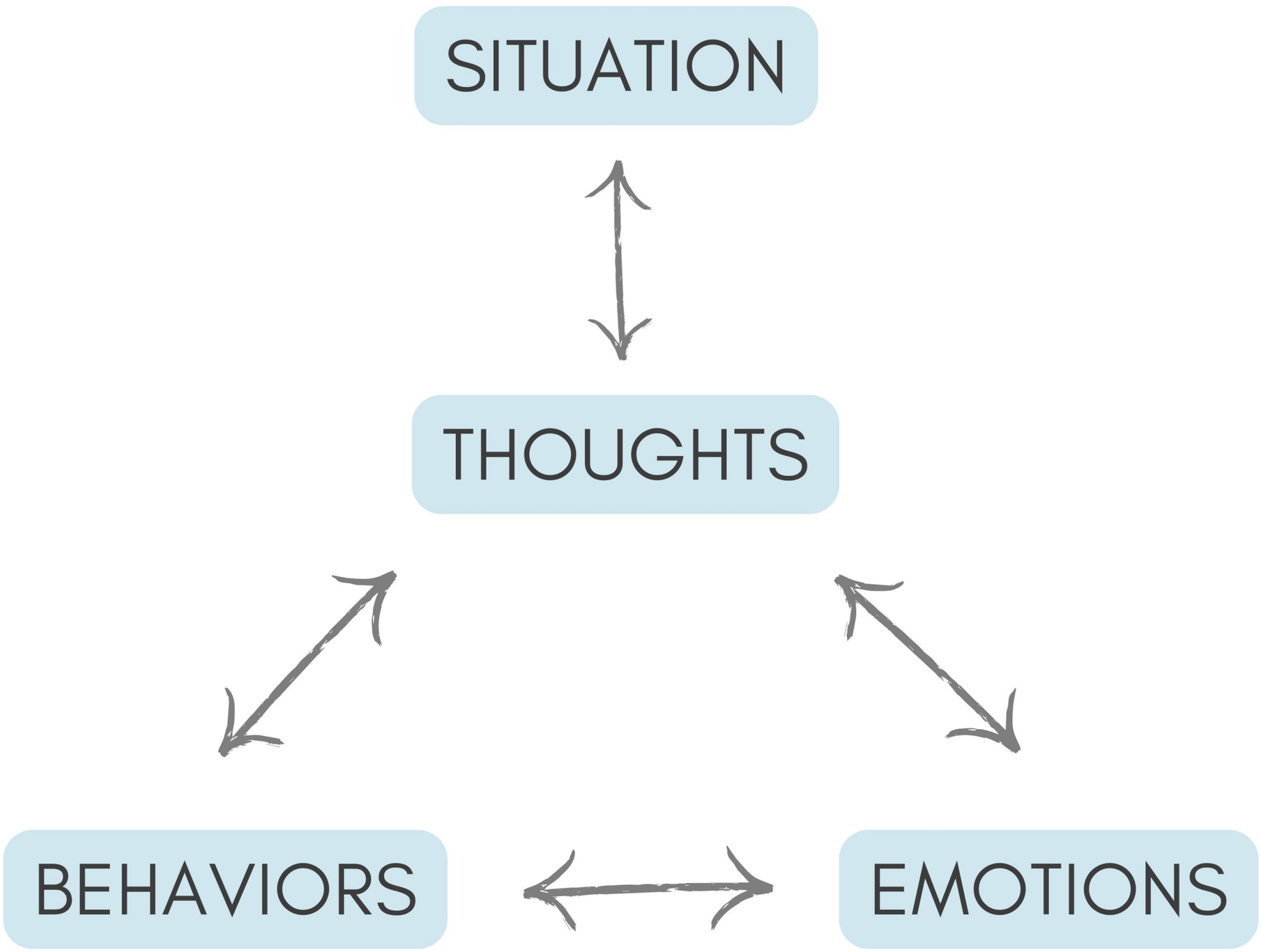
WYLDE COLLECTIVE

modern mental healthcare for all

WHAT IS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY?

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a widely used, research-backed therapy that helps people understand how their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected. It teaches practical tools to manage issues like anxiety and depression by changing unhelpful thought patterns and reactions.



RECOGNISING OVERTHINKING

Our thoughts affect how we feel. When you're happy, you're likely thinking positively. If you're anxious or upset, negative or unhelpful thoughts may be driving those feelings. These thoughts can stop us from trying new things or make us feel overwhelmed. While it's normal to have them, frequent distress may signal a need to look more closely at your thinking patterns.

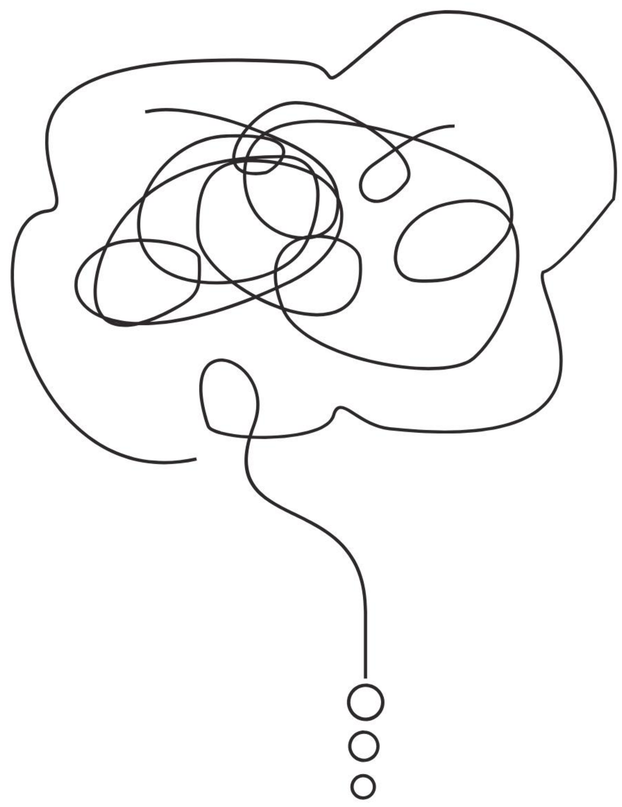
To feel better, we need to recognize and challenge these unhelpful thoughts. A useful tool is the ABC model, which shows how our emotions and behaviors stem from our thinking:

A - Activating event: Anything that happens, internally or externally (e.g., a situation, memory, or comment).

B - Beliefs and thoughts: These include automatic thoughts (like "I'm a failure") or deeper beliefs (like "real men don't cry").

C - Consequences: Emotional and behavioral outcomes, such as anxiety, sadness, or avoidance.

By identifying and challenging thoughts in step B, we can start changing how we feel and act.



NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Completing an ABC analysis is the first step in understanding your thought patterns and building skills to manage your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Here's an example of how an ABC analysis might look in a Thought Diary:

A - Situation

This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection.

E.g. Walking into a party

B - Thoughts/beliefs

1. *List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: "What was I thinking?" "What was I saying to myself?" "What was going through my head at the time?"*
2. *Find the most distressing (hot) thought and underline it*

E.g. "What if I say something wrong"
"Everyone will judge me"

C - Consequences

1. Write down words describing how you feel.
2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.
3. Rate the intensity of those feelings (0 to 100).

E.g.
Panic (90)
Stressed (60)

4. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.

E.g.
- Heart pounding, lightheaded, dry mouth, fast breathing
- Stopped for water

Now it's your turn to practice. Think of a recent situation that caused stress, overwhelm, or anxiety. Use the steps above to outline what happened, the thoughts or beliefs that came up, and the feelings or sensations that followed.

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

ADDRESSING OVERTHINKING

Now that you've practiced the ABC thought monitor, it's time to learn how to manage unhelpful thoughts.

To recap: you've identified the activating event, your automatic thoughts, and the emotional consequences. The next step is D - disputation, where you challenge your unhelpful thought by reviewing the evidence for and against it.

This isn't about thinking the opposite or being overly positive. Instead, aim for balanced thinking—considering both positives and negatives, like weighing facts in a courtroom.

Next, move to E - creating a balanced thought. Ask, "How can I rewrite this thought using the evidence I found?" This becomes your new, realistic and helpful belief.
You may still feel emotion, but with practice, balanced thinking helps reduce its intensity and makes the situation easier to handle.

When ready, try the full ABCDE model using the example on the next page.



OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

Example:

A - Situation

This may be either: An actual event or a situation, a thought, a mental picture or recollection.

E.g. Walking into a party

B - Thoughts/beliefs

1. *List all statements that link A to C. Ask yourself: “What was I thinking?” “What was I saying to myself?” “What was going through my head at the time?”*

E.g. "What if I say something wrong"
"Everyone will judge me"

C - Consequences

1. Write down words describing how you feel.
2. Underline the one that is most associated with the activating event.
3. Rate the intensity of those feelings (0 to 100).

E.g.
Panic (90)
Stressed (60)

4. Jot down any physical sensations you experienced or actions carried out.

E.g.
- Heart pounding, lightheaded, dry mouth, fast breathing
- Stopped for water

D - Disputing thoughts

Take some time to consider evidence for and against your thought.

E.g. "Sometimes when I am anxious I go quiet and feel uncomfortable". Perhaps others are also feeling nervous being in a space with new people. Maybe others are caught up with their own thoughts and would likely not notice anything I said or did "wrong" even if it was to happen"

E - Evaluation/End result

After looking at all the evidence for and against your hot thought, and having considered the disputation questions, replace the unhelpful thought with helpful, balanced thought/s. Finally, rerate the emotions felt after establishing the balanced thoughts when thinking about the situation.

E.g. ""I might feel a bit uncomfortable when first arriving at the party, but this is completely normal and most people probably feel similar feelings. I know I have been to parties before and this has ended up going well and been nothing to worry about. As such I am likely to be more than capable to handle any tricky situations that may come up.

E.g.
Panic (25)

OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

D - Disputing thoughts

E - Evaluation/End result

Helpful Tip:

When disputing thoughts, focus on facts—not opinions or feelings. Think like you're in a courtroom: look for solid evidence, not "maybes" or "what ifs." Feelings aren't facts.

OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

D - Disputing thoughts

E - Evaluation/End result

Helpful Tip:

'What if' thoughts often assume the worst and that you won't cope. Remind yourself you've handled challenges before—unexpected moments can lead to growth and learning.

OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

D - Disputing thoughts

E - Evaluation/End result

Helpful Tip:
Consider the benefits of seeing things differently. Ask yourself, "What else could explain this situation or my assumptions?"

OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

D - Disputing thoughts

E - Evaluation/End result

Helpful Tip:
Think about the value of another perspective. What might someone you trust say about this situation?

OVERCOMING OVERTHINKING

A - Situation

B - Thoughts/beliefs

C - Consequences

D - Disputing thoughts

E - Evaluation/End result

Helpful Tip:
Try viewing the situation from another angle. What advice would you give a friend if they came to you with the same thought?

GOOD THINGS ABOUT ME

While challenging anxious thoughts is helpful, it's also important to recognize your strengths. Reminding yourself of what you're good at builds confidence and resilience—especially when you're feeling low or anxious. Complete the sentences below to help shift your focus toward your abilities and inner strengths.

I was really happy when... _____

I'm proud of... _____

My family was happy when I... _____

I'm good at... _____

What makes me special is... _____

My friends like me because... _____

My special skill is... _____

I always feel better when I... _____

SELF-ESTEEM JOURNALING

To finish, practice positive journaling to boost self-esteem. Each day for a week, write three statements about your successes, strengths, gratitude, or positive experiences.

DAY	STATEMENT	YOUR REFLECTION
MONDAY	Something I did well today...	
	Today I enjoyed...	
	I felt proud when...	
TUESDAY	Today I accomplished...	
	I had a positive experience with...	
	Something I did for someone else was...	
WEDNESDAY	I felt good about myself when...	
	I was proud of someone else who...	
	Today excited me because...	
THURSDAY	I felt proud when...	
	A positive thing I witnessed was...	
	Today I accomplished...	
FRIDAY	Something I did well today...	
	Today I enjoyed...	
	I was proud of someone else who...	
SATURDAY	Today I had fun when...	
	Something I did for someone was...	
	I felt good about myself when...	
SUNDAY	A positive thing I witnessed was...	
	Today was interesting because...	
	I felt proud when...	