

A COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY PRACTICE

Reframing a Difficult Thought

How we tell the story of an event shapes the emotional weight we carry. This worksheet walks you gently through a difficult thought — not to argue with yourself, but to practice perspective and offer yourself the same balance you would offer a friend.

NAME _____ DATE _____

A note before you begin: This is not about replacing real concerns with false positivity. It is about loosening rigid thinking enough to see what else might also be true.

1 Notice the thought

Write the thought exactly as it sounds in your mind, without softening it.

“

_____”

2 Name the feeling

Be specific. "Sad and a little ashamed" is more useful than "bad."

EMOTION(S)

INTENSITY (CIRCLE ONE)
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3 Locate it in the body

Where do you feel this in your body? What sensations arrive with it?

4 Examine the thought from two angles

Hold both columns at once — that is the work of cognitive flexibility.

EVIDENCE THAT SUPPORTS THIS THOUGHT

EVIDENCE THAT GENTLY COMPLICATES IT

5 What might you say to a dear friend in this same situation?

Write the words you would actually offer them. Notice the tone — it is often warmer than the one you give yourself.

6 A more balanced way to hold this

Write a thought that honors the difficulty while leaving room for possibility. Avoid forced positivity — aim for honesty.

REFRAMED THOUGHT

Examples: "This is hard right now, and I have moved through hard things before." · "I do not know how this will resolve, and I can take the next small step." · "I feel afraid, and I am not alone in this."

7 Re-rate the feeling

After working through this thought, how intense is the feeling now? It does not need to be lower — just honest.

EMOTION(S) NOW

INTENSITY NOW (CIRCLE ONE)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 One small, kind action I can take now

Something small and within your influence — a glass of water, a message to a friend, five minutes outside, a deep breath.

◆ Your thoughts are not facts. They are weather, not climate. ◆