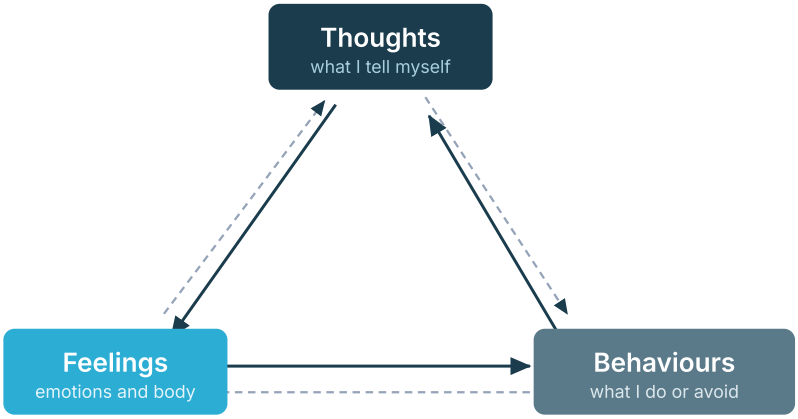
CBT Triangle Handout

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ mm / dd / yyyy

Therapist: _____ **Session number:** _____

THE IDEA IN ONE PICTURE

Cognitive behavioural therapy starts from a simple observation: what you think, how you feel, and what you do are linked. A situation does not cause a feeling on its own - the thought you have about it does much of the work.



Each one feeds the other two. Change any corner and the whole loop shifts.

Solid arrows: the usual direction. Dotted arrows: the return path.

The cognitive triangle. Thoughts, feelings and behaviours each influence the other two.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

Corner	Unhelpful loop	Alternative loop
Situation	A friend does not reply to your message all day.	A friend does not reply to your message all day.
Thought	She is annoyed with me. I must have said something wrong.	She is probably busy. People take a while to reply.
Feeling	Anxious, chest tight, low mood.	Mildly curious, settled.
Behaviour	Re-read the message twenty times, do not message anyone else, cancel evening plans.	Get on with the day, message someone else, keep evening plans.
What happens next	Rumination grows, isolation confirms the belief that something is wrong.	The reply arrives that evening and the episode ends there.

> **The point is not positive thinking**
>
> The alternative thought is not a cheerful one. It is a more accurate one. CBT asks what the evidence actually supports, not what would feel nicest.

YOUR TURN

Pick something from the past week that affected your mood. Work round the triangle.

	Write here
Situation	

	Write here
Thought	
Feeling (and rate 0-10)	
Body sensation	
What you did	
What happened next	

Question	Your answer
What is the evidence for the thought?	
What is the evidence against it?	
What would you say to a friend who had this thought?	
A more balanced thought	
Rate the feeling again (0-10)	

PRACTICE LOG

Date	Situation	Thought	Balanced thought	Feeling before / after

> **If this brings up more than you expected**
> Working through difficult thoughts can be unsettling. Bring anything that feels overwhelming to your next session. If you are in crisis in the United States, call or text 988.

Sources: Handout provided for use alongside therapy. It is not a treatment on its own and does not replace professional support.