

Coping Thoughts DBT Worksheet

Client Information

Name: _____ Date: _____

Therapist/Counselor: _____

Using Coping Thoughts

Objective: To better manage difficult emotions and challenging situations by using coping thoughts.

You Should Know Using “Coping Thoughts” will help you soothe yourself and calm your emotions when you are experiencing distress. You might be burdened by a constant stream of mind-generated negative or self-critical thoughts, seemingly on autopilot. You might worry you are stuck with those voices and can do nothing about it. However, you can change negative thought patterns. You can practice making a new inner “recording” by using this technique.

What to Do First, write down some of the typical negative, self-critical thoughts that arise when you are distressed. Be as honest as you can and try not to hold back. There is nothing wrong with having these thoughts – it might hurt to look at them closely, but bringing them into awareness will help you.

Next, review the list of possible coping thoughts you can say to yourself if you are in distress:

- Everyone makes mistakes.
- Nobody’s perfect.
- Nothing terrible is happening right now.
- I’m going to be OK.
- This, too, shall pass.
- I can ride out this uncomfortable feeling. It won’t last forever.
- My feelings come and go.
- I can take care of myself.
- My feelings are not bad. They are just feelings.
- I’m a survivor. I can survive this too.

- I can feel anxious and still get through this.
- I am a good person.
- This situation is only temporary.
- I am a strong person.
- I will be able to figure this out.
- I can decide what to do next.
- I don't have to know the answer right now.
- I dare to face my complicated feelings.
- This doesn't feel good, but it won't kill me.
- I can change my thoughts if I want to.
- I was hurt in the past, but I am working on healing now.
- I am worthy of love and respect.
- I am someone who can cope with difficulty.

Add your coping thoughts here:

Pick a few coping thoughts to practice when you are distressed or dealing with difficult emotions. Make a copy of your list that you can review anytime – on a note card, your phone or device, etc.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now, practice using coping thoughts for one week. Complete the following chart, then answer the questions. Make copies of the chart if necessary.

Date	Situation/ Trigger/ Negative Thought	How did you feel?	Coping Thought Used	What was the result?

Reflections on This Exercise

What did you learn about yourself when you wrote down your negative thoughts and used coping thoughts?

What, if anything, did you find challenging about this exercise?

How would you like to continue using coping thoughts? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____ (1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What can you do differently to make progress in this area?