

Automatic Thoughts: Catch the Thought

Automatic thoughts are quick words, images, meanings, or predictions that appear in response to a situation. This sheet helps you slow them down enough to see what your mind added.

Catch it -> Name it -> Separate fact from interpretation

Trigger / situation

What was happening just before the emotion shifted?

First thought, image, or meaning

Write the first thing that flashed through your mind - even if it seems irrational, embarrassing, or incomplete.

Emotion + intensity

What did you feel? Rate each emotion 0-100.

Body sensations

What did you notice physically?

The hot thought

Which thought best explains why the emotion became strong? Rewrite it as one clear sentence.

Camera test: what is observable?

What could a camera, audio recording, or neutral witness confirm?

What did my mind add?

Predictions, interpretations, assumptions, labels, or mind reading.

What deserves attention next?

Do I need to reframe the thought, solve a real problem, get information, tolerate uncertainty, or simply let the thought pass?