

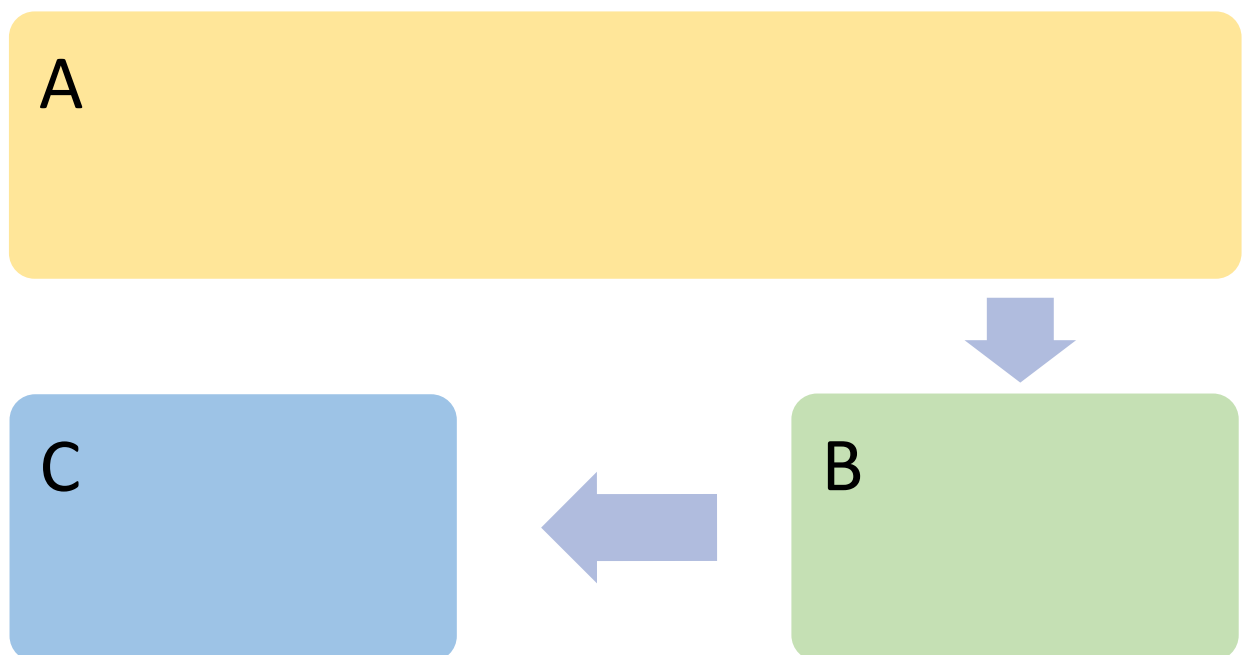


## BUILDING RESILIENCE

### Work sheet 6

Think about a recent event or situation that caused you to experience stress.

- Describe it briefly in box A
- Write down the consequences of the event or situation in box C (feelings and behaviours)
- Try to identify the beliefs (box B) about the event (A) that led to the behaviours (C)



Complete this exercise every time you experience stress for a few days. Do any recurring beliefs appear in box B? If so, try the thought diary technique overleaf, to start investigating these beliefs in more detail.

Thought diaries are a really helpful way of reframing events in a more balanced way. First, write down the activating event in detail. Then, note down your feelings at the time and how intense they were from a scale of 0 to 100%. We often experience a number of emotions during difficult times, so write down each emotion and give each one an intensity rating. Next, write down your thoughts at the time. Try to be really specific here, because we're now going to put that thought on trial! Remember that thoughts aren't facts, so we need to look for evidence that supports the thought, and evidence against it. Then, weighing up the evidence, write a new, alternative and more balanced thought. It doesn't necessarily have to be positive, just more realistic. Finally, write down your emotions now and rate their intensity.

Keeping a thought diary contributes to the development of a challenge mindset, so add an entry every time you experience stress, anxiety, upset, or another emotion you find challenging. Keep practising the technique to help you reframe events.

Event or situation that caused stress	Emotions and rate their intensity (0-100%)	What were your thoughts at the time?	Write down any evidence for the thought	Write down any evidence against the thought	Write an alternative, more balanced thought	Emotions and rate their intensity now (0-100%)

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Over time, you may notice that you habitually use specific thinking traps. Do any of the following sound familiar?

<b>Thinking trap</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Mental filter</b>	Dwelling on negative details, excluding everything else	Focusing on one piece of negative feedback after an assessment or appraisal, ignoring any praise
<b>All or nothing</b>	Seeing things as black or white	"I struggle so much to remember floorwork phrases, I'm a terrible dancer"
<b>Emotional reasoning</b>	Assuming feelings are facts	"I feel anxious, therefore I'm going to lose control"
<b>Over-generalising</b>	Taking a one-off negative event and assuming it is an enduring pattern	"I was awful in that audition. This always happens to me"
<b>Jumping to conclusions</b>	Drawing negative conclusions about what others think of us, or about what may happen in the future	"She just ignored me in the street. She must hate me"  "Why bother applying for that funding? I won't get it"
<b>Judgements</b>	Making judgements about ourselves, others and events instead of describing facts	"I look terrible in this outfit, everyone else looks much better than me"

<b>Magnifying or minimising</b>	Exaggerating the importance of some things while minimising the importance of others	“Even though I got the job, I didn’t do very well in the interview”
<b>Catastrophising</b>	Imagining and believing that the worst possible scenario will happen	“I’m going to mess up this presentation, and everyone will think I’m an idiot. I won’t get asked to present again”
<b>Shoulds and musts</b>	Placing rigid and absolute demands on ourselves, others and events	“My partner should know how I feel”

Once you have identified the unhelpful thinking styles you typically adopt, you can use that knowledge when you experience difficult emotions. It can help you to stop unhelpful thinking styles in their tracks and to replace them with more balanced thoughts.

Keep using thought diaries if you find them helpful, adding an entry each time an event or situation causes you to feel anxious, stressed, worried or angry. Consistent practice of creating more balanced thoughts will help you to deal with stress more easily in the moment.