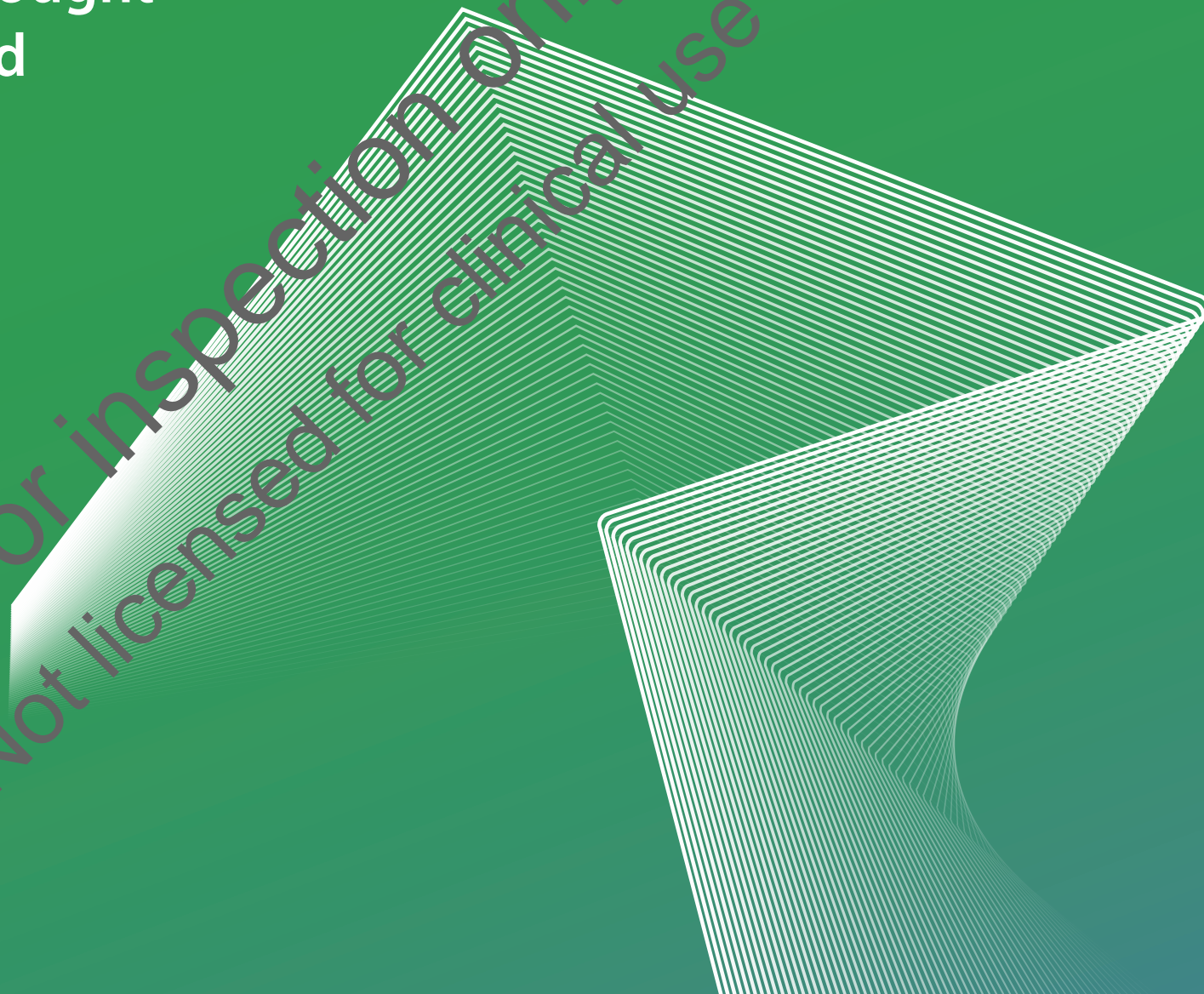


PSYCHOLOGYTOOLS

**Compassionate Thought  
Challenging Record**

British English

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# Compassionate Thought Challenging Record

## Description

This *Compassionate Thought Challenging Record* is designed to help clients to generate alternate compassionate perspectives to their automatic negative cognitions. Once automatic cognitions have been identified clients are encouraged to consider what self-compassionate responses might look like. Clients can be cued to think about the qualities of compassion in order to enter a compassionate mindset.

## Instructions

Clients should be instructed to record specific instances in which unwanted thoughts, feelings, or responses were prompted.

1. In the first column (Situation) clients should be instructed to record what they were doing when they started to notice a significant change in how they were feeling. Training clients to record specific details (such as who they were with, where they were, and what had just happened) is often helpful when later elaborating a memory for an event, or simply in understanding the reasons for subsequent thoughts and responses
2. In the second column (Emotions and body sensations) clients should be instructed to record their emotional reactions in that moment (which can typically be described using single words, e.g. angry, anxious, miserable) and associated body sensations (e.g. tension in my neck). Clients should be encouraged to rate the intensity of these sensations on 0–100% scale.
3. In the third column (Automatic thought) clients should be directed to record any automatic cognitions. They should be reminded that cognitions can take the form of verbal thoughts, but can also take the form of images, or memories. If a recorded cognition is an image (e.g. *"I had a picture in my mind of myself doing the same job ten years from now"*) clients should be directed to question what that image means to them (e.g. *"It means I'm a failure and always will be"*) and to record that idiosyncratic meaning.
4. In the fourth column (Compassionate response) clients should be instructed to consider what a truly self-compassionate response to that thought would be. Clients will often find it helpful to have been given an introduction to the theory of compassion, and to have explored the role of other-compassion and self-compassion in their lives. Imaginative techniques such as the use of compassionate imagery can help clients to elicit a compassionate mindset from which they will find it easier to generate self-compassionate responses.

## References

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- Gilbert, P. (2010). An introduction to compassion focused therapy in cognitive behavior therapy. *International Journal of Cognitive Therapy*, 3(2), 97-112.
- Gilbert, P. (2014). The origins and nature of compassion focused therapy. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 53(1), 6-41.

Compassionate Thought Challenging Record

Situation Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	Emotions & body sensations What did you feel? (Rate intensity 0–100%)	Automatic thought What went through your mind? (Thoughts, images, or memories)	Compassionate response What would a truly self-compassionate response be to your negative thought?
			<p>Try to respond to yourself with the compassionate qualities of wisdom, strength, warmth, kindness, and non-judgement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What would my best friend say to me?</li><li>• What would a truly compassionate being say to me?</li><li>• What tone of voice would I need to be talked to in order to feel reassured?</li></ul>

# Compassionate Thought Challenging Record

Situation Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	Emotions & body sensations What did you feel? (Rate intensity 0–100%)	Automatic thought What went through your mind? (Thoughts, images, or memories)	Compassionate response What would a truly self-compassionate response be to your negative thought?
<p>At college in a maths class</p> <p>We're all working through questions on a mock exam paper</p>	<p>Feeling of heat rising up my body and an increasing sensation of panic</p>	<p>I'm so useless!</p> <p>I'll never be able to do this</p> <p>Everyone else looks like they're getting on fine</p> <p>I'm never going to get the job</p> <p>I want if I can't pass maths</p>	<p>You're not useless! Give yourself a mental hug right now!</p> <p>You know everyone finds this subject difficult – just this morning Emma was saying how she was thinking about quitting</p> <p>And instead of thinking about how far you have to go just think about how far you've come – a few months ago you didn't even know what an equation was and now you can solve them</p> <p>Be kind to myself, remind myself of how grandad used to encourage me when I was small</p> <p>Try to respond to yourself with the compassionate qualities of wisdom, strength, warmth, kindness, and non-judgement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would my best friend say to me?</li> <li>• What would a truly compassionate being say to me?</li> <li>• What tone of voice would I need to be talked to in order to feel reassured?</li> </ul>

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