

# Class #2: The ABC Model

## What We Will Cover in Class #2:

1. Review homework
2. What do we mean by "coping"?
3. An explanation of the ABC approach to coping
4. Discussion of 3 steps for managing frustration
5. Relaxation Rating and Practice
6. Discussion of homework for next time

## 10 Unhelpful Ways of Thinking Common with Caregivers

What is depression? In the past, many people have viewed depression as an emotional problem. However, being depressed or discouraged is not caused by “emotional problems,” but by negative and counterproductive thoughts. These thoughts can make you feel apathetic, useless, beaten and inadequate. Generally, not too many people ask themselves whether these thoughts are accurate, but these thoughts play an important role in feelings of frustration and depression. When you feel discouraged or depressed because of something that has happened, try to identify what you were thinking, what type of negative thoughts you had at the time. These thoughts have a tremendous impact on the way you feel. Once you learn how to identify and challenge them, you will begin to change your mood.

When we look at things in an objective and realistic manner, our mood tends to be good. We base our responses on a realistic evaluation of what has happened. But, once in a while, we all make mistakes in the way we look at things. Nobody is perfect. It’s normal that sometimes we don’t think logically. The following is a list of ten unhelpful ways of thinking found in Dr. Burn’s book. Please consult this list

frequently and learn to identify these different errors in your way of thinking.

### 1. Thinking “All or Nothing”

This refers to the tendency to see things as either all good or all bad. When we judge ourselves or others according to perfectionist standards, we are thinking in terms of “all or nothing.” An example would be the person who makes a mistake and then concludes that she can’t do anything right.

### 2. Overgeneralizing

When people generalize too much, they conclude that one event reflects the way things will always be. For example, a caregiver may have a relative who is critical of the care the caregiver is providing. The caregiver may then conclude that “no one will ever understand how difficult the situation is.”

### 3. Mental Filter

A person filters out all the positive things in his life to the extent that he focuses only on the negative things. A caregiver may be using a mental filter when he becomes preoccupied with one problem behavior and ignores any positive aspects of caregiving.

### 4. Discounting the Positive

**Reading for this week:** Adapted from Table 3-1, “Definitions of Cognitive Distortions” from *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, by David D. Burns, M.D. Copyright © 1980 David D. Burns, M.D. By permission of William Morrow and Company, Inc.

## 5. Jumping to Conclusions

You reach a negative conclusion without having all the facts about a situation. Dr. Burns describes two common situations in which this occurs:

### Mind Reading

Someone makes an assumption that another person is thinking badly about him.

### Predicting the Future

A person makes assumptions that negative things are going to happen to her, or that people will respond to her in a negative way. A person may imagine that a future doctor visit will not go well. She will worry about this future possibility, taking her attention away from enjoying the present time.

## 6. Exaggerating or Reducing the Significance of Events

This mental error can go in two directions: either you exaggerate your negative qualities, or you minimize your positive qualities. You may think, "How can I ever take care of the household finances when I have a hard

time balancing my checkbook?" In the opposite direction, you may think, "Well, sure, I'm good with plants, but anyone can take care of plants."

## 7. Reasoning Emotionally

When we allow our emotions to guide our understanding of a situation, we are reasoning emotionally. The thought, "I feel lonely, therefore, nobody loves me," bases the conclusion on a feeling, and not on the real facts of the situation. The goal is not to ignore or to suppress our feelings, but to accept these feelings and try to view situations from a rational perspective.

## 8. Thinking "I Should"

The problem with saying "I should" is that the statement has more to do with opinions than with the reality of a situation. We usually say "you should" to others when we think we know what is best for them. This can often make us feel frustrated when the other person disagrees with us. By saying "I should" to ourselves, we can end up feeling depressed and angry, because what we are saying we "should" do is not what we really want in our hearts. Instead, it tends to be something that a critic in our life, such as a spouse, a parent, or a child in our life wants.

## 9. Labelling

This is an extreme form of generalization. Instead of seeing our faults as only part of our otherwise good features, we single them out as a

reflection of ourselves. You may act impatient in caring for your sick family member, and then conclude that you are an impatient person.

## 10. Personalizing

A person may assume responsibility for a negative event when she is not to blame. A caregiver may feel embarrassed by something her frail relative says to someone, as if the sick person's behavior were a reflection of her abilities as a caregiver, and not just a symptom of the illness.

### Examples of Unhelpful Thinking Patterns Common with Caregivers

Thinking: "All or Nothing"

"I can't do anything right."

"I can't satisfy anyone."

Overgeneralizing:

"Nobody appreciates what I'm doing."

"No one will ever know what it's really like."

Mental Filter:

"My mom's accusing me of stealing from her. She's never trusted me, or anybody."

Discounting the Positive:

"We had a good morning, but it'll never

Jumping to Conclusions:

a. Mind Reading:

"David said he would care for Dad today. I wonder what he really wants."

b. Predicting the Future:

"If I give him a bath, he'll just fall down and hurt himself."

Exaggerating the Significance of Events:

"How can I ever take care of the household finances when I can't even balance my own checkbook?"

Reducing the Significance of Events:

"Well, sure, I'm good with plants, but anyone can take care of plants."

Reasoning Emotionally:

"I'm afraid for what will happen in the future, thus things will definitely get worse."

Thinking "I Should":

"I should not even consider putting Mom in a nursing home. I must carry on."

Labelling:

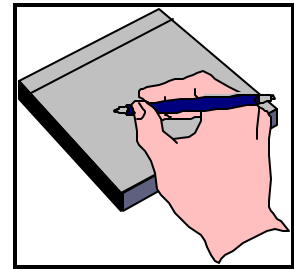
"I'm a bad daughter because I'm selfish. I want to go out and have a good time, but I have to stay at home."

Personalizing:

"If I hadn't left town for two days, he wouldn't have gotten sick."

## Homework to do Before Class #3

1. Daily relaxation practice and evaluation:  
Use Relaxation Diary.



2. Select a particular situation that during this week has caused you as a caregiver to feel frustrated and angry. Write down all your negative thoughts that have occurred to you as a result of what has happened. Be prepared to share these thoughts at the next meeting. Use the Thought Diary and complete only the first three sections.



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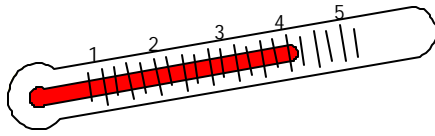
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# Relaxation Diary: Tension Rating Scale

## Use This Scale to Rate Your Level of Tension



- 1 = Not at all tense
- 2 = Slightly tense
- 3 = Moderately tense
- 4 = Really tense
- 5 = Terribly tense

### In-Class Practice Rating:

Before the relaxation exercise, I felt (rate your tension from 1 to 5): \_\_\_\_\_

After the relaxation exercise, I felt (rate your tension from 1 to 5): \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	TENSION	COMMENTS (why I felt this way, etc.)
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	

	Before relaxing: _____ After relaxing: _____	
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## Diary of Thoughts

1. Situation Causing Me to Feel Upset or Angry

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2. My Feelings

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3. Automatic or Negative Thoughts I Had About Myself in This Situation

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**ONLY COMPLETE SECTIONS 1, 2 AND 3.  
WE WILL COMPLETE THE OTHER SECTIONS LATER.**

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4. Danger Signals, Stop Signs

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5. Distortions, Unhelpful Thought Patterns

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6. Adaptive Thoughts, More Adaptive Ways to See the Situation

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