

2.4.3. Technical Sheet Challenging Thoughts and Beliefs

Activity Identification	Dimension	Number of Participants	Duration (minutes)
15 Challenge thoughts, core beliefs and build optimism	Transitional Skills	8 – 12	60

The aim of the activity

This section builds on part 1 and 2 of the cognitive activities and methods. To complete the circle of activities serves as the 3rd and final part. This activity aims to increase emotional self-regulation, flexible thinking, build resilience and optimism. Before doing this activity, it is important that you have worked with 'The Diamond'.

To help the participants identify which thoughts support or prevent them from reaching their goals develop their life projects and learn how to question the thoughts and feelings.

This activity or tool is for training alternative thoughts and core beliefs for further reflection: Thoughts that the persons can imagine are more positive and appropriate. This is done by helping the participants register, nuance and evaluate their thoughts, and teach them strategies of disputation by using different questions to change the unnecessary and unrealistic consequences that might occur from these in different situations.

Preparation

Print **The diamond handout** or use the participants' examples and the **Handout: Changeable Questions – pixie version**. One for each participant.

Think of a (personal) story to use as an example of disputations and energisation. Look at the handout for inspiration.

Instructions

1. Explain the concept of disputation strategies and energisation by using a story as an example to the participants. Go through the different disputation strategies described in the supporting information sheet.
2. Ask the participants to think of or use The Diamond -negative thoughts activity to have a simple example of a negative, irritating situation from their everyday life and hand out the sheets.
3. Instruct the participants to reflect on the consequences of and question their core beliefs by using the example from the previous part 1 and 2 (negative thoughts) or come up with a new one. Use the Handout: Changeable Questions – pixie version. This step will finalise the work with part 3. The result of questioning the core belief is a new emotional state of mind, has an energising effect, and builds optimism.
4. When each participant has finished they should share the story and the experience.





Sources / Links / Further Information

The activity 'Challenging ones' thoughts' and core beliefs are inspired by the ABCDE model from Seligman (2004) learned optimism.

Read more about cognitive behaviour: A. Beck (2010) and in E. H. Oestrich (2005) Cognitive Coaching the Disputation list is inspired by Tingleff, 2010 (link to chapter 4)

Actual version of this tool can be found here: <https://live2work.eu/go/challenging-thoughts/>