

**Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy  
for Depression In Clients with Chronic Physical Illness**

(Christian version)

**Therapist Workbook**

Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, Ph.D.

Debbie Schechter

Michelle J. Pearce, Ph.D.

Harold G. Koenig, M.D.

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With contributions from Rebecca Propst, Ph.D.

This workbook is a variant of the treatment protocol  
originally designed by A. T. Beck, M.D.

**Workbook developed largely by  
Michelle J. Pearce, Ph.D.**

**\*\*Please cite appropriately\*\***

Contact Information:

Michelle Pearce, Ph.D.  
Department of Family and Community Medicine  
Center for Integrative Medicine  
University of Maryland School of Medicine  
520 W. Lombard Street, East Hall  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Office: (410) 706-6164

## Session 1: Assessment and Introduction to RCBT

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**"Finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)**

Write the verse down and post it somewhere you will see it often, perhaps on a sticky note placed on your mirror or fridge. You may want to make several copies and post them in places you will see it throughout the day.

#### 2. Activity and Mood Monitor

The goal of the first session's homework assignment is begin developing skills in self-monitoring daily mood and daily activities. The goal at this stage is not to change any regular habits. The self-monitoring logs have a place for recording your activities and mood every two hours. Please complete this log daily. It may be easiest to fill out the activity log twice during the day. For example, you could record all of your morning activities when you eat lunch and all of your afternoon and evening activities just before you go to bed. This record will give us some information as to which activities may lead to better moods and which activities may lead to worsened moods.

Here are few guidelines about self-monitoring:

- a. Keep the self-monitoring log with you throughout the day and record your activities as close as possible to the end of the time periods.
- b. Record the activity in a very few words. For example, you could record "went out to dinner" or "washed my clothes" or "read a book" or even "watched TV."
- c. Immediately after recording your activities, record your mood.
- d. Purchase a notebook to put the logs in, so that you will have a record of your activities. We will make use of them later.
- e. Make sure you have your logs with you during each session. They are necessary for the rest of the program
- f. Be sure and include even trivial events on your chart such as missed the bus or read the newspaper.

3. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Thinking and Depression

### Signs of Depression

"I don't have a purpose in life anymore now that my chronic pain makes it too difficult to work."

"I am a very poor Christian because I am depressed. A Christian should not be depressed."

"I just can't motivate myself to do any of the things which I need to do. I'm a lazy person."

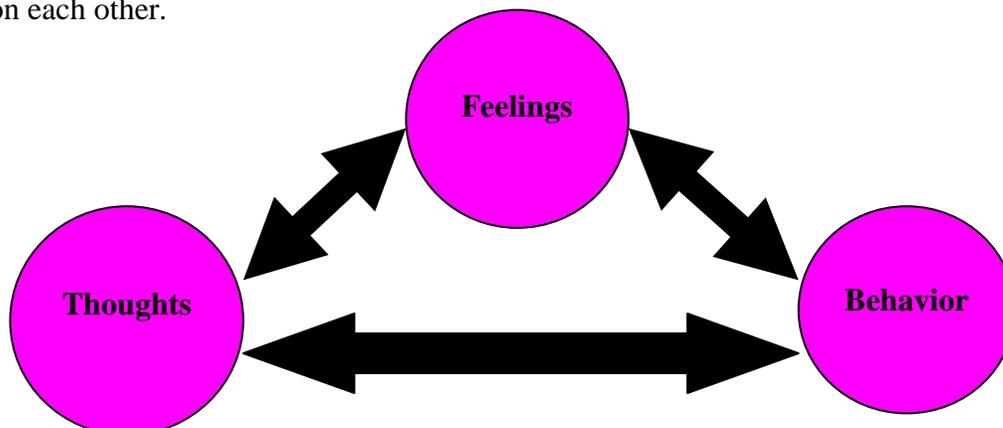
All of the above are statements that a depressed individual might make. While some of these statements and notions may seem to be correct on the surface they actually reflect a change in the way an individual thinks about him or herself. When people become depressed, they think about themselves and their environment in a different and more negative way.

Recent research has shown that depressed individuals are more likely to interpret an event more negatively than a non-depressed individual. Thus, depressive symptoms are related to the way in which individuals interpret and think about their situation in life. These thoughts and interpretations are also a reflection of one's past experiences. Not only are depressed individuals' interpretations more negative, but research also shows that their perceptions and interpretations are less accurate than those who are not depressed.

The interpretations that an individual makes of a situation influence his or her behavior, as illustrated in the following example. Imagine that you have a flat tire on a deserted highway and do not have anything to change the tire with, including a car jack. As you are standing there stranded, your next-door neighbor drives by and looks up briefly but keeps going. How would you feel about the fact that your neighbor kept driving? What would you most likely be telling yourself about the situation?

Now let's imagine, further, that you see your neighbor the next day and he comes over to you and apologizes for driving by you. "I'm so sorry I couldn't stop; my son fell and was bleeding from his head and I was rushing him to the emergency room." How might you be feeling now? What changed? What are you now telling yourself about the situation that is different from when you were standing on the road?

The following diagram represents the relative relationship that thoughts, feelings, and behavior have on each other.



The idea that our thoughts and assumptions play an important role in influencing not only our emotions but also our behaviors is actually a very common idea in both the Old and New Testaments. Indeed, for Christians the cognitive behavior model is 2000 years old! Let me give you some examples from the Bible:

- The first words of both John the Baptist and Jesus in their public ministries were, “Metanoia” literally meaning “Change your mind” or “Change how you think”, which the Bible translated as “Repent”. To repent means to change your attitude, change your mind, change how you think (Matthew 4:17).
- The apostle Paul told the Roman Christians, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God --- what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans: 12:2). In other words, Paul is saying that transformation comes about by renewing your mind.
- The Old Testament speaks about the same idea: ‘ . . . for as he thinks in his heart, so is he’ (Proverbs 23:7. KJV).

**Activity and Mood Monitor**

<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		

8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
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4 pm-6 pm		
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10 pm-12 am		
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6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
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10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		

## Session 2: Behavioral Activation and Walking by Faith

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“We walk by faith and not by sight.”** (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:7)

As you did last week, write the verse down and put it in a place, or ideally more than one place, where you will see it many times a day. The more you meditate on these verses the more your mind is renewed and the greater improvement you will begin to see in your mood.

2. Plan and Complete Pleasant Events

Complete the two pleasant events you selected with your therapist between now and our next session. When you are finished the activity, complete the Planning Pleasant Activities Worksheet. Remember to complete the worksheets for both activities.

3. Identify and Contact Member of Faith Community

Identify several possible faith companions and make contact with at least one of them. This is important over the long-term and relates directly to depression. Both the receiving and especially *the giving of support to others* (as will be addressed in the session on altruism) is key in this regard. Identifying people worse off than you are helps to get your mind off your problems, helps you realize that things could be worse, helps you to feel grateful for what you do have, and gives a sense of purpose and meaning that will result in eternal rewards as a service to God by caring for another. In approaching another person, you might say something like:

“I’m having a pretty difficult time now and I’m wondering if you would agree to pray for and with me during this period, and perhaps we could talk on the phone or go out for coffee once a week or every other week.”

4. Reading

Please read the pages in your workbook titled, “The Categories of Unhelpful Thinking” to prepare for next week’s session. This is somewhat lengthy and to make the most of the limited time in session it very important that you have already reviewed this material

5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

*As Christians, we have the comfort of knowing that we have a High Priest—Jesus Christ—whom the Bible says is familiar with all of our pain, suffering, and trials. He knows how depression makes you feel; He knows how hard it is to deal with your physical illness. The Bible says that we can boldly approach the throne of grace to receive help in our time of need (Hebrews 4:16). If you find yourself struggling to complete these activities, ask Jesus for His grace and His help. He understands your struggle and He will give you the strength and encouragement you need.*

## Pleasant Activities List

Put a plus sign (+) next to any activity likely to generate some positive reaction in you.  
Put two (++) next to those that are positive and you are almost certain to do so.

1. Call a friend
2. Attend a movie
3. Clean the kitchen
4. Daydream
5. Rearrange furniture
6. Prepare a meal
7. Wash the car.
8. Outdoor yard work or gardening.
9. Buy a plant
10. Watch television
11. Take a mini-vacation
12. Go to an amusement park
13. Dinner with friends
14. Attend a play
15. Attend a concert
16. Visit a museum
17. Play a sport
18. Watch a sporting event in person
19. Watch sports with friends
20. Dance
21. Attend church or another religious service
22. Speak to a friend(s) on the Internet
23. Play video games
24. Text messaging
25. Twitter
26. Visit family members
27. Provide childcare for family or friends
28. Exercise alone
29. Exercise with others
30. Get a massage
31. Read a book or magazine
32. Write in a journal
33. Write a poem or short story
34. Play a musical instrument
35. Listen to music
36. Engage in a hobby, such as photography, scrapbooking, stamp/coin collecting, genealogy, knitting, crocheting, etc.
37. Take a bath or shower
38. Take a nap
39. Go shopping
40. Sailing, boating, fishing, or other water-related activity
41. Attend an educational class

## **Planning Pleasant Activities Instructions**

Implicit in the idea that mood is related to activity is the concept that mood can be improved by increasing specific activities. From the records you kept last week, you may be able to identify particular classes of activity that are associated with better mood. Even in the Gospels we read of Jesus spending time alone with His disciples away from demands. The purpose of this exercise is to schedule more of these activities in order to improve your mood.

You can look at your Self-Monitoring Logs and the Pleasant Activity List for ideas. Choose activities that you have some control over, that bring a sense of mastery or accomplishment, and that you enjoy. Choose activities that take more than 10 or 15 minutes to perform, yet which can be accomplished in one day. Schedule activities that are additions to what you would ordinarily do. The following are some examples of pleasant activities:

- Have your hair done
- Browse in a bookstore
- Prepare a Chinese dinner
- Play tennis
- Visit an art museum
- Buy a new plant

Next, using the following worksheet, schedule and complete at least two activities between now and the next session. Be sure to complete the worksheet once you have engaged in the activity.

## Planning Pleasant Activity #1 Worksheet

### 1. Identify Activity #1 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. When will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Prediction

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
(where 0 is not positive and 10 is very positive)

### 4. Reflect

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Planning Pleasant Activity #2 Worksheet

### 1. Identify Activity #2 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. When will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Prediction

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Reflect

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Unhelpful Thinking Styles and Theological Reflections

### **1. All-or-Nothing Thinking (AN):**

You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.

Example: An example would be a straight-A student who received a B on an exam and concluded, "Now I'm a total failure."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

This type of thinking causes one to fear any mistake or imperfection because that is taken as an indication of being worthless. This way of evaluating things is unrealistic because life is rarely completely either one way or the other. For example, no one is absolutely brilliant or totally stupid. Nothing on earth is totally one way or the other. Rarely, does everyone always like us, or rarely do we always find the perfect solution.

#### *B. Theological reflection*

The idea that nothing on earth will ever be perfect, including people and their activities is certainly a common theme in the New Testament. Romans 3:23, for example, says that everyone has failed in some way, or to use the New Testament language, they have sinned. However, Romans 3:24 goes on to say that even though we are not OK, that is OK. In other words, we are accepted by God anyway, through His forgiveness. This theme is expressed in Romans 8:1: "there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ." Romans 5:12 continues this theme and says that "we are justified by faith, and we therefore have peace with God." In other words, we need merely to have faith in the perspective that we are OK as far as God is concerned.

### **2. Overgeneralization (OG):**

You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Example: An example of this type of thinking would occur when a shy young man, who is self-conscious of his artificial leg, mustered up his courage to ask a woman for a date. When she politely declined because of a previous engagement, he said to himself, "I'm never going to get a date. No one wants to date a guy with only one leg." He believed that all women will turn him down just because one declined his offer. And, he erroneously assumed it was because of his artificial leg. The pain of rejection is generated almost entirely from overgeneralization.

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is logically incorrect to conclude that one thing that happened to you once will occur over and over again. It is also incorrect to assume that all situations are similar; or that all individuals are similar.

### *B. Theological reflection*

There are also several stories in the Bible that suggest that one failure does not therefore mean that there will always be failure. Perhaps the most vivid story is that of Jesus and Peter. In John 18: 15-17 we read that Peter denied that he even knew Jesus. This could surely be considered a major affront. One might assume with some justification that Peter had failed as a friend and could never again consider himself to be a worthy friend of anyone, especially Jesus. However, later we see Jesus asking Peter if he loves Him and Peter responding in a positive manner. We then see Jesus being willing to trust Peter with something that is very important to Jesus. (John 21:15-19 describes this situation). It certainly sounds as if one major catastrophe or mistake does not mean that the individual will continue to make those mistakes.

### **3. Mental Filter (MF):**

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolors an entire beaker of water.

Example: A woman with severe arthritis failed to complete one task that she had hoped to complete. She became more depressed and angry at herself for not completing that task. She overlooked the fact that there had been many tasks that she had, in fact, completed.

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is more sensible to clearly view one's environment and be aware of the positive things one has done in addition to negative occurrences. It is not adaptive to filter out anything positive. It is irrational to say, "I should preoccupy myself with dangerous or negative ideas." Nothing is gained by dwelling on them.

#### *B. Theological reflections:*

The Scriptures usually emphasize that one should reflect on the positive rather than the negative. One should certainly reflect on what is true, and that includes seeing the positive things you have accomplished. This theme is reflected in Philippians 4:8 which says, "... whatever is true, or lovely, or gracious ... think on that. If there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise ...think about that." While the emphasis here might be on values and ideas, it could also refer to one's actions.

### **4. Disqualifying the Positive (DP):**

You disqualify positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences. You don't just ignore positive experiences as in the Mental Filter, but you clearly and swiftly turn them into their very opposite.

Example: An example would occur when someone praises your appearance or your work and you automatically tell yourself, "They're just being nice."

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Again, it is maladaptive not to pay attention to feedback you get from your environment. We should take that feedback at face value and incorporate it into our understanding of ourselves. If we disbelieved everything everyone told us, we might still believe the world was flat. An adjusted person is one who pays attention to everything in their environment.

*B. Theological Reflections*

We must not be like the Israelites in the wilderness who made a negative interpretation of God's actions towards them. (They also probably thought the worse about other people's actions towards them.) When God took them into the wilderness, they distorted the situation and said, "God has brought us here to slay us."

Similarly, in the New Testament, a constant theme is put forth that every individual has some valuable important talents. This applies to even the individual who may think they were sitting in the back row when talents were handed out. One place where such a theme is discussed is in I Corinthians 12:4-31, especially verses 15-17 and 21-14. Those seemingly less important individuals are actually very valuable people in the larger scheme of things and have much to offer.

**5. Jumping to Conclusions (JC):**

You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusions. There are two areas in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions.

Mind Reading (MR):

This is one area in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you do not bother to check this out.

Example: Suppose a friend says she does not have time to have a conversation with you on the telephone at a certain point. The depressed individual may conclude, "She is ignoring me and does not want to talk with me, because she does not like me anymore."

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One should never make an assumption about what someone is thinking without asking them because it is usually impossible to know what another person is thinking, no matter how sure we are we know. Jumping to conclusions about what the other is thinking is also maladaptive because our negative reactions to their imagined thoughts may set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, we may react negatively to them when we suspect they do not like us, when in fact they do. However, our negative reactions will soon turn them off.

*B. Theological reflections*

In the New Testament, Jesus provides a perfect example of someone who chooses to

check out what people were actually thinking about him, rather than merely make assumptions. A good example of this is in Mark 8:27, when He said, "who do men say that I am?" It may be also that we begin to try to read other's minds because we are overly concerned about their perceptions of us, to the extent of basing our worth on their perceptions of us. Jesus, however, presents an example of someone 'who was not overly concerned about others' impression of Him, and indeed, surely did not have the favor of most people. He even went so far as to contend that, "Blessed are you when men hate you," (Luke 6:22).

### The Fortune Telling Error (FT):

The second way in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions is they anticipate that things will turn out badly. They feel convinced that their predictions are an already established fact.

Example: Depressed individuals will tell themselves that they are never going to recover, "I will feel miserable forever."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

No one has ever successfully predicted the future; there are so many factors that could have an impact upon the future. Furthermore, our predictions are likely to be even more off base if we predict only negative events because probability suggests that both positive and negative events will occur.

#### *B. Theological Reflections*

Often our jumping to conclusions regarding the future implies a fear about the future. The New Testament certainly emphasizes the idea that God will give us a spirit of power and love, the ability to control our fears rather than a spirit of timidity (2 Timothy 1:7). There is also the theme of anxiety concerning the future in Matthew 6:25-34. Essentially, by worrying and imaging a negative future we do not improve the situation. Our thoughts should be on the present. (verse 34).

### **6. Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization (MM):**

You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick".

Example: A depressed individual accidentally misfiled some papers while working at his job. He concluded, "I made a mistake. How horrible! Everyone will think I am incompetent." An example of minimization would occur when the same employee was told by one of his or her colleagues that he had done a good job on a report. His reaction was to think, "Oh well, doing the report was very simple and anyone could do a good job on it."

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is important to have an accurate perception of ourselves and our performance. It is also important to realize that everyone makes mistakes and that they are to be expected. It is impossible for anyone to be perfect.

*B. Theological reflections*

Perhaps Christ's temptation in the garden (recorded in Matthew 26:39, 42) was a temptation not to drink the cup of humanness, not to identify with humanity in their imperfections. Often the negative events that happen to us are merely part of that humanness, and we do not wish to accept that. Becoming close to Christ, therefore, does not mean perfection; but rather sharing in His poverty.

In the Old Testament, Psalm 88 goes even further in lessening the sting of negative events. In that particular Psalm, the suggestion is made that perhaps the negative events are precipitated by God, the implication being that God has a good purpose behind them. Indeed, this was the theme of a Christian writer, Juliana of Norwich, writing in *Revelations of Divine Love* she contends that the Lord rejoices at the tribulations of His servants... and He lays on His beloved something that is no lack in His (God's) sight but by which the person is lowered in the world. This He does to preserve the individual from pomp, and to make them holy.

As far as the minimization of our positive aspects, we have only to recall again the New Testament discussion of gifts. More specifically, every individual has something that is valuable, and should consider it so (I Corinthians 12:4-31).

**7. Emotional Reasoning (ER):**

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore, it must be true."

Example: A depressed individual may tell himself, "I feel overwhelmed and hopeless, therefore, my problems must be impossible to solve, or I'll feel inadequate, therefore, I must be a worthless person.

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One cannot assume that one's emotions are a reflection of the true state of things. Our emotions are a reflection of our thoughts and beliefs, which as we have seen are a product of our past and may be distorted. Emotions may also be a reflection of our physiology and how tired we are, but they are not necessarily a reflection of the true state of affairs.

*B. Theological Reflections*

Both the Old Testament and the New Testament speak much about negative emotions and their role in our life.

a) John 1:12 suggests that our standing with God may be dependent upon our actions and belief, but it says nothing about it being dependent upon our feelings.

b) Christian writers have often commented that faith is only faith when there is darkness, when the individual does not even feel God. As long as there is a feeling of God's presence, we do not have to go on blind faith. Juliana of Norwich has commented that our prayers are most precious to God when we feel nothing because then we have faith.

c) Often in our growth as a Christian, we must go through difficult times. This is certainly the impression one gets in Psalm 63 where the writer reports a general dissatisfaction, a dryness and a longing for God. If that dryness and longing were not there, then the individual would not rejoice to find God, who is often described as the living water (John 4:10 and John 7:38). Water only tastes good to the thirsty.

d) Finally, the spiritual injunction that one should give up their life in order to save it could be applied to emotions. Often we seek God only for selfish ends, only to feel good, rather than for God's purposes (Matthew 10:39). Feelings of longing or desolation may actually be positive in that they imply a growth process we are willing to go through.

## **8. Should Statements (SS):**

You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements towards others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.

Example: One example is the depressed housewife who says to herself, "I should keep my house cleaner, and I shouldn't complain," or, "I should be able to get my work done during the day."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

"Should" statements generate a lot of unnecessary emotional turmoil in your daily life, and, paradoxically, usually do not motivate you to change your behavior. Usually, you resent the source of the "shoulds." Saying, "I should do this", or "I must do this," usually causes one to feel pressured and resentful.

### *B. Theological Reflection*

One of the central themes of the New Testament is that Christ has given us a spirit of freedom and accepted us, and we should not condemn ourselves by getting upset at ourselves if we do not perform the way we think we should perform (Romans 8: 31), or the way others think we should. Saying, "I shouldn't do that," leads to a spirit of condemnation. Even if we do not do any "shoulds," God still loves us, (Romans 5:8). We are made OK with God simply by grace, not by our pressured determination to keep all the "shoulds" in one's life. (Romans 5:1-2).

## **9. Labeling and Mislabeled (L or ML):**

This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him or her: "You are an idiot." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

Example: An individual fails to get a job which they applied for and they call themselves a "failure."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

We are not our behavior. Labeling yourself is not only self-defeating, it is irrational. You cannot be equated with any one thing you do. Your life is made up of many events, thoughts, actions, and emotions. For example, you do not call yourself a "Breather" just because you breathe. Likewise, you do not call yourself a "failure" because you made a mistake.

### *B. Theological Reflection*

God does not base our worth on our activities. Likewise, He does not label us based on our activities. God has a great love for us and rejoices in us even when our activities would not merit that. The parable of the lost coin in Luke 15:8-10 suggests our worth is not based on our activities but is a reflection of much more. Likewise, in the story of the prodigal son, Luke 15: 1-24, we read that the son's worth was not based on his behavior.

## **10. Personalization (P):**

You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event for which you were not primarily responsible.

Example: One example is the child who misbehaves or is rude. The depressed mother says, "I am a failure or a bad mother," (as if she could control everything her child did).

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Essentially, the person with this problem has confused influence with control. While we obviously have some influence over people, especially our children, we cannot control everything they do. What another individual does is ultimately their responsibility and decision, not yours. We are not omnipotent.

### *B. Theological Reflection*

God has control over the events that happen in the world. However, for the most part, we do not. We should not presume to be God or try to do so. This is especially important when negative events happen to us.

## Session 3: Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts: The Battlefield of the Mind

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**“You, God, will keep in perfect peace all those who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You.”***(Isaiah 26:3)*

#### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have. Turn to the next page in this workbook for instructions. Remember, “God’s thoughts are higher than our thoughts and His ways are higher than our ways” (Isaiah 55:9). We need to continually fill our mind with God’s words so that our can be full of God’s “higher thoughts. His thoughts lead to feelings of joy, peace, and hope, the kind of emotions we would rather feel than depression and hopelessness.

#### 3. Thought Log

Please write down your thoughts once a day using the ABC method. Be sure to fill out all of the sections and categorize each thought into one of the unhelpful thought categories. If you have more than one stream of ideas in one time period, you can indicate several categories. There are seven thought logs included in the manual this week so that you can fill one out each day.

Remember that this is a learning experience; you should not worry about completing the logs perfectly.

#### 4. Positive Activity

Add another positive activity to your week. Follow the same procedure for scheduling this activity as we used in Session 2.

#### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

#### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## **Contemplative Prayer: Praying God's Word**

Contemplative prayer is a way to meditate on God's word and leads to a more intimate relationship with Him. One of the most common metaphors for contemplative prayer is of the lover or friend. God desires our simple presence more than any action or service we might give. Indeed, prayer has been described as a gift to God. Prayer is also a discipline, undertaken as one would undertake to learn to play the piano. Practice is the key.

One way to engage in contemplative prayer is to take a verse from the Bible, one of God's thoughts, and meditate on it. In other words, you spend some quiet time thinking about the verse, repeating it to yourself, and saying it as a prayer to God. It's like letting yourself be saturated in God's words. Some forms of meditation have you focus your attention on your breath. When you notice yourself thinking about something else, you are to bring your attention back to your breath. Contemplative prayer is different in that instead of focusing on your breath you focus on God's words. This leads to a contemplative, prayerful state.

It's normal to find that your mind has wandered to thinking about something else. When you notice that this has happened, don't get upset with yourself. Simply bring your attention back to the verse. It might be helpful to have the verse written on a piece of paper or underlined in the Bible in front of you so that you can more easily keep your attention on the words. It is also normal to find yourself wanting to pray to God as you are in this state. If that happens just go with it and pray whatever comes up in your heart.

### **The Method**

1. Choose a scripture. Begin with your memory verse for the week.
2. Sit comfortably, but not too comfortably, back straight, chest open so the breath is free and open.
3. Read the passage slowly. Savor each phrase. What word phrase or idea speaks to you?
4. Read the passage again. Where does this passage touch your life? What do you see, hear, touch, or remember?
5. Read the passage a third time. Listen quietly.
6. Note insights, reflections, and personal response to the reading in your journal.
7. Follow the steps in order or go back and forth between them as you feel moved.
8. Finish by waiting for a few moments in silence.

### **Instructions**

Practice this for 20 minutes once or twice daily, and then discuss with your therapist any problems you encountered in doing this, or share how praying in this way made you feel.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 1

(\*To be Completed During Session 3\*)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 2

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 3

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 4

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 5

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 6

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 7

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

**Planning Pleasant Activity #3 Worksheet**

**1. Identify Activity #3 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.**

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. When** will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Prediction**

On scale of 0 – 100 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Reflect**

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

*Outcome:* On scale of 0 – 100 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

*Conclusion:* What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Ideas for Future Activities:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session 4: Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts: Bringing All Thoughts Captive

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**"We refute arguments and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the true knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ." (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10:5)**

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Thought Log Monitor

Complete the ABCDE thought monitor at least once a day.

Be on the outlook for automatic negative thoughts that trigger emotional upset and negative behaviors such as avoidance. The goal is to improve on the ability to spot these negative patterns at the time they occur, and to attempt to develop alternative ways of responding through the use of more effective beliefs and expectations.

Remember to use your religious beliefs and practices, as well as scriptures, to help challenge your unhelpful and negative beliefs.

4. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

*Remember, the Bible says our mind is a battlefield. We are at war! Identifying our thoughts and challenging them—making sure they are consistent with what God says-- is serious business. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10” 3-5, we are told to challenge our thoughts and not to believe everything we think. Just because we think it doesn't mean it's true. These verses say, “We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments... We capture rebellious thoughts put them in obedience to Christ.” We want to win the battle going on in our minds and God's word is the most powerful way to do this. When we put His words of truth in our minds we can change the way we think and as a result how we feel, no matter what the situation.*

## Disputing Questions

Use these questions to challenge your automatic thoughts. Be sure to answer each question you pose to yourself. You will find each question helpful for many different thoughts. Several examples are also presented to help you get started.

1. Do I know for certain that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Do I know for certain that I won't have anything to say?*
2. Am I 100% sure that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Am I 100% sure that my anxiety will show?*
3. What evidence do I have that \_\_\_\_\_?  
What evidence do I have that the opposite is true?  
**Example:** *What evidence do I have that they did not understand my speech?*  
*What evidence do I have that they did understand my speech?*
4. What is this worst that could happen? How bad is that? How can I cope with that?
5. Do I have a crystal ball?
6. Is there another explanation for \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Is there another explanation for his refusal to have coffee with me?*
7. Does \_\_\_\_\_ have to lead to or equal \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *Does "being nervous" have to lead to or equal "looking stupid"?*
8. Is there another point of view?
9. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean? Does \_\_\_\_\_ really mean that I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** *What does "looking like an idiot" mean? Does the fact that I stumbled over my words really mean that I look like an idiot?*

**ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 1)**  
**(\*To Complete During Session 4\*)**

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

### ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 3)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 4)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 5)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 6)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 7)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 5: Dealing with Loss Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (*Romans 8:37-39*)

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

### 3. Thought Log

Use the ABCDE thought log to actively address one or two losses you have experienced as a result of your illness. You and your therapist should have come up with a concrete plan to do so in session. Two ABCDE thought log worksheets have been included in this section of the workbook for this exercise. Remember that integrating your religious beliefs and practices into the use of each of these tools makes them even more effective.

### 4. Active Surrender

Reflect on the things in your life that you want to surrender to God. Use the worksheet provided to make a list. Then, set aside a block of time to surrender these things to God in prayer. This is another effective tool to address the losses you have experienced as a result of your illness.

### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Words of Encouragement

*It may be comforting to know that a number of individuals in the Bible suffered great losses. In fact, one could argue that there isn't a single individual mentioned in the Bible that didn't lose something important to them or who didn't suffer in some significant way. Even the disciples suffered greatly, most of whom were eventually put to death, and these were the individuals with whom Jesus developed the closest relationship! We can see that it doesn't matter who we are or what we do in life, as Christians we will suffer.*

*Thankfully, God offers us many, many words of comfort and encouragement in the Bible. Before He ascended to heaven, Jesus said to his disciples, "In the world you will have trials and distress; but be of good cheer and be courageous for I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). Although, Jesus said problems and suffering are inevitable while we are on earth, He promised to see us through each one of them. Indeed, in Matthew 5:4 Jesus said, "Blessed are all those who mourn for they will be comforted." Paul later says to the Corinthians "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Perhaps the reason Jesus calls us blessed when we mourn is because we get to be comforted by Jesus Himself, and His comfort and compassion are so great that we are then able to comfort others that are facing troubles.*

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 1)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.



## Session 6: Coping with Spiritual Struggles and Negative Emotions

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**“The righteous cry out and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. The righteous person may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.” (Psalm 34:17-19)**

#### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer.

#### 3. Spiritual Struggles and Spiritual Resources

It is important to remember the following points:

- It is normal to question God in the face of illness.
- It is normal to feel negative emotions toward God.
- God created us to experience a range of emotions and He can accept all of them.
- God wants us to be honest with Him and to bring all of our concerns to Him.

If you and your therapist identified spiritual resources that would be helpful in addressing any spiritual struggles you have, make a plan to use these resources this week to address that issue. Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, prayer, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with clergy, Bible studies, repentance and forgiveness, attending religious or spiritual services, attending support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, attending activities sponsored by spiritual or religious groups like pot-lucks, bingo, and discussion groups. Several ABCDE thought logs have also been included in the workbook for this session; this may also be a helpful tool in addressing spiritual struggles this week.

#### 4. Repentance and Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be a powerful antidote for some spiritual struggles (e.g., resentment, anger, bitterness) and an integral part of the process of healing. Indeed, research has shown strong relationships between emotions such as anger and resentment and physical health problems and compromised immune functioning.

One of the most powerful verses about the relationship between our mind, body, and spirit is recorded in 3<sup>rd</sup> John 1:2: “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.” We learn from this verse that our ability to prosper in life and in our bodies is contingent upon the state of our soul, which is made up of our mind, will, and emotions. If we harbor unforgiveness and bitterness toward others, God, or ourselves, our souls are not prospering and because of this nothing else in our life can prosper either.

God instructs us to forgive others as He has forgiven us. That doesn’t mean He wants

you to change your mind and decide that what happened to you was right or justified. God never changes His mind about our sin—He always sees it as evil. What forgiving someone does mean is that we give up the right to hold this action against the person. We give up our right to feel resentful, bitter, and angry. When we make a decision with our will to forgive someone, even when we don't feel like it, God can then begin to change our feelings. Usually our feelings are the last part to change. That doesn't mean you haven't forgiven, it just means your feelings having yet come into alignment with the decision you made with your will to forgive.

Is there anyone you would like to forgive? That could include others, yourself, and even God (although He never sins, we can perceive a wrong against us in our minds). Is there anything you would like to ask forgiveness for (i.e., repent of), either from God or from others? If yes, and if you did not address these in session, make a list of the people you want to forgive or the things for which you need forgiveness.

Take some time to pray about each item on your list. It is important that your prayers be specific and that you do not just offer one blanket prayer for all the items listed. You can use a prayer such as the following:

*“Heavenly Father, I purpose and choose to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person) for \_\_\_\_ (the action). I release him/her and cancel their debt to me completely. I will no longer hold any accusation against them. Even now I release them from this sin. I ask that you would forgive them for this sin and separate the sin from them forever. Please forgive me for the unforgiveness/bitterness (or other feelings against this person) that I have stored in my heart. I give you all my feelings of \_\_\_\_ and ask that You would cause my feelings to line up with my decision to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person). I also purpose and choose to forgive myself. Thank you for forgiving me and making me righteous in your sight. Holy Spirit, please heal my heart and tell me your truth about the situation.”*

After you have finished praying, you might try closing your eyes and imagining yourself standing or kneeling before Jesus or before the cross. See yourself giving the list of wrongs that others have done to you, and that you have just forgiven, to Jesus. Give the list of your own sins to Jesus, too, and see Him nailing these lists to the cross. Listen as Jesus says, “You are forgiven. Go in peace.” Continue to listen to hear what else Jesus might have to say to you or what else He might do as you stay in this image. When you are done thank Jesus for what He has just done for you.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally some time this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.



## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 1)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 3)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 7: Gratitude Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“Thank God in everything no matter what the circumstances may be; be thankful and give thanks, for this is the will of God for you who are in Christ Jesus.” (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:18)**

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

### 3. Grateful Feelings Exercise: Counting our Blessings

Use your gratitude list, particularly your gratitude toward God for all that He is and all that He has done, as well as gratitude for those in your faith community, to help challenge negative thoughts and to replace negative emotions. Continue to add to your gratitude list this week as you think of more things for which you are grateful.

### 4. Gratitude Expression Exercise: Celebrating our Blessings

Express your feelings of gratitude toward the individual you identified in session. This ordinarily takes place in person, by phone, or letter. Complete at the specific time and place you chose in session. Remember to include the following:

- Precisely and specifically what it was that the other person did for you. Thus, "you were a nice person to me", is not as suitable as, "when I was in the hospital you came to visit me and you prayed for me every day."
- Include as many of these concrete activities for which you feel grateful as possible.
- Be sure to note what the meaning of the person's activities was for you. That is, how the activity or way of being made you feel, influenced your life, caused you to grow, taught you things you needed to know, etc.

### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.





## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 1)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 8: Altruism and Generosity Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to me.’”** (*Matthew 25:40*)

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Altruistic Acts

Carry out the specific altruistic acts to be done for the particular persons at a particular time you and your therapist chose in session. Be sure to have more than one option in case other people are unavailable.

4. Pray for Someone Daily

Pick one person for whom you will pray for daily this week. This might be the person you have made contact with from your faith community, another friend, or relative. Pray for this person each day. Praying for someone other than ourselves helps to get our minds off of our own problems and is a great way to be generous with our time and energy. It also helps to put our own problems in perspective.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

*Remember, the Great Commandment that Jesus told the young man asking him what he needs to do in order to gain eternal life: Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus also said we are to be generous: "Freely you have received, freely give." God has a neat way of rewarding us when we obey him: giving to others has just as positive an effect, if not more, on the giver as it does on the receiver! Jesus called himself a servant, and indeed he was the greatest servant of all because he gave his life up for us. Jesus says in Mark that “whoever desires to be great among you must be your servant. And whoever wishes to be most important among you must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to have service rendered to him, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.”* (*Mark 10:43-45*).

### Altruistic Acts

Make a list of the ways you have been helpful in the past and ways that you could be helpful now. Then rank each item on your list from easiest to most difficult (0-100 with 100 being the most difficult of all).

<b>Helpful/Generous Act</b>	<b>Degree of Difficulty (0-100)</b>	<b>Activity Chosen</b>

Next, select several of the easier acts you would like to initiate. Answer the following questions for each act you choose:

*Helpful/Generous Act #1:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
  
- 2. When will you do it?**
  
- 3. Why will you do it?**
  
- 4. How will you do it?**
  
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

*Helpful/Generous Act #2:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

*Helpful/Generous Act #3:* \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

Remember to connect your goal of helping others with the famous passage in the gospel of Matthew 25: 35-40 in which Jesus describes that anyone who has done something for another person, such as giving them a cup of cold water, visiting them when they were sick or in jail, and so on, was really doing it to Jesus.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 8: Optional)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 9: Stress-Related and Spiritual Growth Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“Consider it wholly joyful whenever you encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and patience. But let endurance and patience do a thorough work, so that you may be fully developed, lacking in nothing.”** (*James 1:2-3*)

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

### 3. Complete the Spiritual Reflections Worksheet

### 4. Positive Changes

Add to your list of the changes in your life that you could view as positive or that have caused growth, including spiritual growth. It will be helpful to look to your faith and God’s promises in the Bible to help you view some of the changes that have occurred as positive. Also think about the paradoxes in Christianity and how these might help you reframe your situation.

Reflect on the meaning of these changes in terms of your character and the predictions you make regarding negative beliefs. In particular, what power do these changes give you to stop avoiding unpleasant experiences and to face them courageously?

### 5. Read Paradoxes in Christianity worksheet

If you can think of other paradoxes in Christianity, add them to the worksheet.

### 6. Daily Prayer for Someone

Continue to pray daily for someone other than yourself this week. It could be the same person you prayed for last week or someone different.

### 7. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.





## Paradoxes in Christianity

There are many paradoxes in Christianity. These paradoxes can help us see situations in our lives from another perspective. Some of these paradoxes include the following:

1. When you are weak, then you are strong. God's power is most evident when we are weak.
  - “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:9-11)
2. In Christ, you can do all things; without Him you can do nothing.
  - “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Phil 4:13)
  - “Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.” (John 15: 4-6)
3. God chooses the foolish things of the world rather than the wise.
  - “Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 26-29)
4. We are called to be holy and perfect, but Jesus said that even the religious experts of His day were not perfect enough; no one is good except God.
  - “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)
  - “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
  - “The words ‘it [righteousness] was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” (Romans 4:23-25)

## Session 10: Hope and Relapse Prevention Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**“He gives power to the faint and weary, and to him who has no might He increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall stumble and fall exhausted; But those who wait for the Lord [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] shall change and renew their strength and power; they shall lift their wings and mount up [close to God] as eagles [mount up to the sun]; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint or become tired.” (Isaiah 40:29-31, Amplified Bible)**

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have. This is an important practice that we encourage you to continue to do daily.

### 3. Continue to Use the Tools Daily

In order to maintain the gains you have achieved in treatment you need to keep using the tools you have learned. These tools include the following:

- Challenging and changing your negative interpretations (Additional ABCDE sheets are included at the end of this workbook. Feel free to make extra copies for yourself)
- Gratitude
- Altruism (choose a specific activity for a specific person)
- Finding the positives in your life
- Praying for someone else
- Maintaining communication with God
- Look for examples in the Bible for encouragement
- Spending time with others
- Connecting with your faith community, specifically the person(s) identified earlier in treatment
- Filling your mind and heart with the Word of God

One way to remind yourself to continue to put into practice the things you have learned is to incorporate them into a daily devotional period. Each day during this time you can review your thoughts and behavior with God to make sure they line up with the truth in His Word. You might find it helpful to use a journal during this time.

#### 4. Make Use of Your Spiritual Resources

Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, prayer, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with clergy, Bible studies, repentance and forgiveness, existential psychotherapy, attending religious or spiritual services, attending support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, attending activities sponsored by spiritual or religious groups, such as pot-lucks, bingo, and discussion groups.

#### 5. Anticipate Set Backs

Remember that there will be set backs and times that are more challenging and difficult than others. It is at these times that it is even more important to engage in the activities and resources you learned, especially if you don't feel like it.

#### 6. Continue Contact Member of Faith Community

Continue to be in regular contact with the member of your faith community. Remember to pray for him or her daily, too.

**Congratulations on a job well done!**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.  
*St. Francis of Assisi*

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs

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**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Christian worldview, the Bible and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.