

Testing Core Beliefs

You might think that, just as we have used Thought Records to test automatic thoughts, we can test core beliefs by gathering evidence that supports and doesn't support the core beliefs. This approach does not work so well for core beliefs, because we see our experiences through the lens of the core belief that is active, we often don't notice or believe experiences that don't support this core belief

Marissa, for example, believed that she was unlovable. When she tried to test this idea, she did not value evidence like invitations to lunch from people at work, warm greetings from several colleagues when she arrived at work, the love she received from her children, or the high regard from some of her friends even when they told her how much they loved her. This was important evidence that Marissa was lovable, but Marissa discounted it because she thought, "They were just feeling sorry for me," or "They don't really know me yet." When a core belief is active, we distort our experiences to fit the belief. Instead of testing our negative core beliefs, it is usually more helpful to

Look for evidence to support or strengthen new core beliefs.

If we find there is a lot of evidence to support our new core beliefs, then we will begin to believe them.

When new core beliefs are as strong as our negative core beliefs, then we can be more flexible in our thinking.

EXERCISE: Recording Evidence That Supports Your New Core Belief

At the top of Worksheet 12.6, write down your new core belief from Worksheet 12.5.

Over the next few weeks, notice and write down small events and experiences that support your new core belief. Over the next few months, continue to look for and write down experiences that support your new belief.

Keep in mind that the evidence you are looking for may be quite small. For example, evidence Marissa recorded for her lovability included people smiling and appearing happy to see her, people asking her to spend time with them or agreeing to her invitations to spend time together, and compliments given to her.

PTO

WORKSHEET 12.6. Core Belief Record: Recording Evidence That Supports a New Core Belief

New Core Belief: _____

Evidence or experiences that support my new belief:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
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