



**SANCTUM  
THERAPY**

Where connections grow stronger.

# The Clear Mind Workbook

A Sanctum Therapy guide to CBT: noticing the pattern, naming the truth, and choosing your next steady step.

**Sanctum tone:** We are not here to bully thoughts into submission. We are here to slow the room down, tell the truth, and practice a more grounded way of living.

Created for client reflection, therapy sessions, coaching conversations, and between-session practice.

# How to Use This Workbook

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, or CBT, is built on a practical idea: what we think, feel, do, and sense in the body are connected. When one part of the system gets louder, the others often follow. This workbook helps clients pause the automatic loop and work with it directly.

This is not about pretending everything is fine. It is about learning the difference between a thought, a feeling, a fact, a fear, a memory, and a choice.

**Use gently:** CBT works best when it is curious, not shaming. If a client is flooded, dissociated, or in active danger, stabilization and safety come first.

## A simple rhythm

1. Notice the trigger. 2. Name the thought. 3. Track the feeling and body response. 4. Test the thought. 5. Choose one grounded action.

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| 3. Thinking Traps                  | Name common distortions without self-attack          |
| 4. The Thought Record              | Separate facts, fears, and wiser responses           |
| 5. Core Beliefs                    | Find the deeper story underneath the reaction        |
| 6. Behavior Experiments            | Practice new evidence, not just new insight          |
| 7. Avoidance, Anxiety, and Courage | Take small steps without flooding the nervous system |
| 8. Integration Plan                | Build a weekly practice that actually fits real life |

# 1. The CBT Map

CBT gives clients a map for moments that feel fast, tangled, or emotionally convincing. The goal is not to erase emotion. The goal is to understand the sequence so the client can respond instead of react.

## The four-part loop

| Trigger / Situation                                | Thought / Meaning                                                 | Feeling / Body                                           | Action / Urge                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What happened? What was said? What did you notice? | What did your mind say this means about you, them, or the future? | What emotions showed up? Where did your body carry them? | What did you do, avoid, say, shut down, chase, check, numb, or over-explain? |

**Clinical note:** The thought may be verbal, visual, bodily, or implied. Some clients do not hear a sentence. They sense a conclusion: “I am unsafe,” “I am too much,” “I am about to be left,” or “I have failed.”

## Activity 1: Map one recent moment

Choose a small-to-medium moment from this week. Do not start with the most traumatic event. Start where your nervous system can stay present.

Situation / trigger

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Thought or meaning

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Feeling and body response

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Action, urge, or avoidance

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## 2. Catching Automatic Thoughts

Automatic thoughts are the fast conclusions the mind makes before we have had time to examine them. They often sound like truth because they arrive with emotion and body intensity.

### Common places to look

Listen for words like always, never, should, must, everyone, no one, ruined, trapped, stupid, rejected, unsafe, or too late. These words do not automatically make a thought wrong, but they are worth slowing down.

### Activity 2: The 90-second pause

When activated, pause before explaining, defending, fixing, texting, withdrawing, or deciding. Use this page to catch the thought before it becomes the plan.

| Prompt                                        | Your notes |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------|
| What just happened?                           |            |
| What did my mind immediately say this means?  |            |
| What am I afraid will happen next?            |            |
| What am I tempted to do right now?            |            |
| What would a steadier version of me do first? |            |

One sentence I can tell myself before I respond

### 3. Thinking Traps

Thinking traps are patterns of interpretation. Naming them helps create distance. The point is not “my thinking is bad.” The point is “my mind may be trying to protect me with an old strategy.”

| Thinking trap           | What it sounds like                       | Gentle correction                                    |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| All-or-nothing thinking | If it is not perfect, it is a failure.    | What is the more accurate middle?                    |
| Mind reading            | They think I am needy, weak, or annoying. | What do I know, and what am I guessing?              |
| Fortune telling         | This will definitely go badly.            | What are three possible outcomes?                    |
| Catastrophizing         | If this happens, I will not recover.      | What would support, repair, or next steps look like? |
| Emotional reasoning     | I feel it, so it must be true.            | What else could this feeling be pointing to?         |
| Personalization         | This is my fault.                         | What belongs to me, and what does not?               |
| Should statements       | I should be over this by now.             | What would be compassionate and honest?              |

#### Activity 3: Trap spotting

A thought I had this week

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Possible thinking trap

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A more balanced thought that does not betray reality

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## 4. The Sanctum Thought Record

A thought record is a structured way to slow down a painful moment. It helps the client move from emotional certainty to honest evaluation.

**Helpful stance:** Do not force positivity. A grounded replacement thought should feel believable enough that the nervous system can try it on.

### Activity 4: Full thought record

| Step                                              | Write it out |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Situation: What happened?                         |              |
| Emotion(s): Name and rate 0-100.                  |              |
| Body cues: Where did it show up?                  |              |
| Automatic thought: What did this seem to mean?    |              |
| Evidence for the thought: What supports it?       |              |
| Evidence against or missing: What complicates it? |              |
| Balanced thought: What is more complete and true? |              |
| Next right action: What can I do from steadiness? |              |

## 5. Emotions Are Data, Not Dictators

CBT can become too heady if it treats emotion like a problem to solve. Emotions carry information. They need listening, sorting, and leadership.

### Activity 5: Emotion sorting

| Emotion | Possible message                                 | Needs wise leadership when...                        |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Anxiety | Something feels uncertain, risky, or important.  | It starts demanding certainty before movement.       |
| Anger   | A boundary, value, or wound may be involved.     | It turns protection into punishment.                 |
| Sadness | Something matters, changed, or was lost.         | It says nothing can ever change.                     |
| Shame   | I may be exposed, defective, rejected, or wrong. | It attacks identity instead of guiding repair.       |
| Guilt   | I may need accountability or repair.             | It becomes endless payment instead of honest action. |

The emotion I am feeling

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What the emotion may be trying to protect

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What wise leadership would say back

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## 6. Core Beliefs: The Story Under the Story

Core beliefs are deeper conclusions about the self, others, the world, or God/spiritual safety. They often formed for a reason. They may have protected the client once, but now they may be running the present from an old room.

### Common core belief themes

| Self                                                                                           | Others                                                                                             | World / future                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I am too much. I am not enough. I am unsafe. I am responsible for everyone. I am hard to love. | People leave. People cannot be trusted. I have to earn care. If I upset someone, I will lose them. | Nothing changes. Good things do not last. I cannot relax. I have to stay prepared. |

### Activity 6: Downward arrow

Start with a surface thought. Ask, “If that were true, what would it mean about me, others, or the future?” Continue until you find the deeper belief.

Surface thought

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If that were true, it would mean...

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Underneath that, I am afraid that...

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The deeper belief may be...

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# 7. Challenging Core Beliefs Without Gaslighting Yourself

A core belief usually does not change because someone argues with it once. It changes through repeated experiences of truth, safety, repair, and new action.

## Activity 7: Belief reframe ladder

| Old belief                     | Bridge belief                                                                    | Practiced belief                                           |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| I am too much.                 | Some people may not have had capacity for me. That does not prove I am too much. | My needs and presence can belong in healthy relationships. |
| I am responsible for everyone. | I can care without carrying what is not mine.                                    | I can be loving and boundaried at the same time.           |
| I cannot handle discomfort.    | Discomfort is hard, but I have survived hard things before.                      | I can feel this and still choose my next step.             |

My old belief

A bridge belief I can actually believe this week

One small behavior that would support the bridge belief

# 8. Behavior Experiments

Insight matters, but the nervous system often needs lived evidence. A behavior experiment is a small, respectful test of a new belief.

**Keep it small:** The best experiment is not dramatic. It is specific, measurable, and safe enough to complete.

## Activity 8: Design an experiment

| Question                                                 | Plan |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Old prediction: What does my fear say will happen?       |      |
| New action: What will I try?                             |      |
| Size: How can I make this a 2/10 challenge, not a 10/10? |      |
| Support: What will help me stay regulated?               |      |
| Result: What actually happened?                          |      |
| Learning: What did this teach me?                        |      |

# 9. Avoidance, Anxiety, and Courage

Avoidance reduces anxiety in the short term. That relief teaches the brain to keep avoiding. CBT gently reverses the pattern by helping the client approach what matters in tolerable steps.

## Activity 9: The courage ladder

Choose one avoided area. Build a ladder from easiest to hardest. Do not skip the lower rungs. Repetition is part of treatment, not a sign of failure.

| Rung | Step | Anxiety 0-100 | Completed? |
|------|------|---------------|------------|
| 1    |      |               |            |
| 2    |      |               |            |
| 3    |      |               |            |
| 4    |      |               |            |
| 5    |      |               |            |
| 6    |      |               |            |

What I learned after practicing the lower rungs

# 10. Communication From the CBT Map

CBT can help clients communicate without dumping raw activation onto another person or collapsing into silence. The goal is honest, boundaried, relational clarity.

## Activity 10: Clean communication script

| Part           | Sentence starter                                                |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observation    | When I noticed/heard/saw...                                     |
| Feeling        | I felt...                                                       |
| Meaning I made | The story my mind started telling was...                        |
| Ownership      | I know that may not be the full truth, so I am slowing it down. |
| Need / request | What would help is... / Would you be willing to...?             |
| Boundary       | What I can do is... What I cannot do is...                      |

Write your version in your own words

## 11. Weekly Practice Plan

CBT becomes useful when it becomes practiced. Choose a few tools you will actually use. Overcomplicated plans usually become avoidance dressed up as preparation.

### Activity 11: My weekly rhythm

| Day       | One moment to notice | Tool I will practice | What helped |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| Monday    |                      |                      |             |
| Tuesday   |                      |                      |             |
| Wednesday |                      |                      |             |
| Thursday  |                      |                      |             |
| Friday    |                      |                      |             |
| Weekend   |                      |                      |             |

**Simple is strong:** One completed thought record teaches more than ten worksheets you meant to do.

## 12. Therapist / Coach Reflection Page

Use this page at the end of a session or week. It helps translate insight into direction.

The pattern we noticed today

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The protective strategy that makes sense

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The cost of the strategy now

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The new thought or belief we are practicing

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The next brave, small, concrete step

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# Closing: Come Back to the Clear Room

CBT is not a demand to think perfectly. It is a practice of coming back to clarity when the old rooms get loud.

*You are allowed to notice the thought without obeying it. You are allowed to feel the feeling without becoming it. You are allowed to tell the truth without attacking yourself. You are allowed to take one grounded step before you know the whole path.*

## My three anchor statements

1

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2

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3

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## Notes and appropriate use

This workbook is educational and reflective. It is not a substitute for individualized mental health care, risk assessment, crisis support, or trauma treatment. Adapt language and pacing for the client's clinical needs.

Conceptual foundation: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy principles associated with the work of Aaron T. Beck and Judith S. Beck, adapted here into original Sanctum Therapy-style client language and exercises.