

Self-Criticism Self-Monitoring Record

If you are prone to self-criticism, you are likely to spend a lot of time focusing on your flaws and mistakes, whilst also ignoring your successes and achievements. As a result, you might see yourself as inadequate or worthless, and label yourself in negative ways (e.g., “stupid”, “ugly”, or “loser”).

Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) suggests that the way we think and act influences how we feel. One way to learn more about your experience of self-criticism is to use a *Self-Monitoring Record*. It's like a diary that can help you become more aware of what triggers your self-criticism, the form it takes, and your response to it.

Self-Criticism - Self-Monitoring Record		
Situation <small>Describe the situation that triggered your self-criticism.</small>	Self-critical thoughts <small>What were you thinking and saying? (Thoughts, images or memories)</small>	Emotions & body feelings <small>What did you feel? How strong were those feelings? (Rate them on a scale from 0 to 100%)</small>
<small>What were you doing? What were you thinking?</small>	<small>What were you saying to yourself?</small>	<small>How strong were those feelings? (Rate them on a scale from 0 to 100%)</small>



How could this tool help me?

- It can help you to understand more about the form that your self-criticism takes.
- It can help break ‘big’ emotional experiences into smaller parts that you can work with (e.g., your thoughts, feelings, and responses to particular situations).
- It can help you and your therapist learn more about what contributes to your self-criticism, and how you can overcome it.



How should I use it?

To start, you will need to choose a prompt – the thing that will remind you to complete the self-monitoring record. It's often helpful to choose a particular type of situation that you want to monitor. For example, “times when I put myself down” or “times when my inner critic gives me a hard time”.

Each column will prompt you to record a different part of your experience.

- **Situation.** What was happening just before you started to criticize yourself? What might have triggered it? Your triggers might include people, places, objects, smells, thoughts, feelings, or other sensations.
- **Self-critical thoughts.** What were the critical thoughts running through your mind? What were you saying to yourself?
- **Emotions and body feelings.** What did you feel? How strong were those feelings? (Rate them on a scale from 0 to 100%)
- **Responses.** What did you do? How did you cope with those feelings?
- **Consequences.** How did responding in that way make you feel (immediately, later on)? What was helpful or unhelpful about responding in that way?



Helpful tips

- If possible, practice completing the record with your therapist at least once.
- Try to fill the record in as soon as possible after you criticize yourself, while your memory of what happened is still clear.
- Self-monitoring takes time to master: the more you practice, the easier and more helpful it will become.

Self-Criticism – Self-Monitoring Record

Situation Describe the situation that triggered your self-criticism	Self-critical thoughts What went through your mind? (Thoughts, images, or memories)	Emotions & body feelings What did you feel? How strong was that feeling? (0–100%)	Responses What did you do? How did you cope with those feelings?
<p>Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?</p>	<p>If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?</p>		

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Monday 5:00pm my boss criticized me in front of my colleagues.	I'm terrible. I shouldn't be doing this job. I'm never going to be good at anything.	Shame – 80% my face felt hot. Humiliated – 80%	Swallow back tears. Try to avoid my colleagues. Try harder on my next piece of work.
Wednesday 8:00pm my team lost after I let in two goals.	I'm useless. I wasn't concentrating. We lost because of me.	Deflated – 90% Hopeless Disappointed	Didn't go for a drink to commiserate with the rest of the team. Went home early. Kept going over what I could have done differently.
Friday 7:00pm my girlfriend was unfaithful to me. I found out from a friend.	Image of myself alone. I don't deserve love and I'm always going to be alone.	Anxious – 100% Sadness – 100% Shame – 100%	Cried. Started eating ice cream and couldn't stop.
Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?		

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Monday 5:00pm my boss criticized me in front of my colleagues.	I'm terrible. I shouldn't be doing this job. I'm never going to be good at anything.	Shame – 80% my face felt hot. Humiliated – 80%	Swallow back tears. Try to avoid my colleagues. Try harder on my next piece of work.	Felt glad that I didn't break down in front of my colleagues. Felt worse later and kept worrying about what my colleagues were thinking of me. Felt anxious about how my boss would treat me.
Wednesday 8:00pm my team lost after I let in two goals.	I'm useless. I wasn't concentrating. We lost because of me.	Deflated – 90% Hopeless Disappointed	Didn't go for a drink to commiserate with the rest of the team. Went home early. Kept going over what I could have done differently.	Felt easier not to be around people, less awkward. Couldn't sleep that night. Felt ashamed to go back to soccer practice the next time.
Friday 7:00pm my girlfriend was unfaithful to me. I found out from a friend. Who were you with? What were you doing? Where were you? When did it happen?	Image of myself alone. I don't deserve love and I'm always going to be alone. If it was an image or memory, what did it mean to you?	Anxious – 100% Sadness – 100% Shame – 100%	Cried. Started eating ice cream and couldn't stop.	Eating distracted me a bit and felt comforting. I felt sick afterwards.