

Lesson 7 – Cognitive Self-Change: Step 1 – Pay Attention to Our Thinking



Summary and Rationale

This lesson teaches the technique of thinking reports. Thinking reports are a way for us to observe our own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs. This is step 1 of cognitive self-change – **pay attention to our thinking**.

In this lesson group facilitators introduce the parts of the thinking report, present an example of a thinking report, and then each group member presents his/her own thinking report.

Note: This lesson may require two or more sessions to complete. It's very important for every group member to be given time to present a thinking report in class. This process should not be rushed. This is an important foundation skill for cognitive self-change and a key piece of the **Thinking for a Change** program.

Concepts and Definitions

A **thinking report** is a structured, objective report of what goes on inside our mind during a specific situation. A thinking report has 4 parts:

1. Brief description of the situation;
2. List of the thoughts we had;
3. List of the feelings we had; and
4. List of our attitudes and beliefs.

Objective process means without: blame, excuses, or judgment of right or wrong, and true or false. An objective thinking report is like a tape recording of what was happening in our mind.

Attitudes and **beliefs** are general ways of thinking that we carry with us into many different situations. Attitudes and beliefs can be rules, principles, values, or opinions about a range of different kinds of people or events. **Thinking for a Change** does not make a sharp distinction between attitudes and beliefs: both are general ways of thinking that shape and influence how we experience specific situations.

Objectives — As a result of this lesson the group members will:

1. Use thinking reports to observe and report their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs.
2. Establish, as a group norm, an objective, non-argumentative frame of reference for each group member to examine his/her own and others' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs, and behaviors.
3. Write a thinking report using a situation where they have identified a time they had a conflict with another person.

Major Activities

Activity 1 – Homework Review

Activity 2 – Overview of Lesson

Activity 3 – Present the 4 Parts of a Thinking Report

Activity 4 – Apply Thinking Report to Demonstration from Lesson 6

Activity 5 - Explain Importance of Objectivity in a Thinking Report

Activity 6 – Present Sample Thinking Report

Activity 7 – Guide First Group Member Through a Thinking Report

Activity 8 – Remainder of Group Members Present Thinking Reports (One at a Time)

Note: If necessary, activity 8 continues into a second session of lesson 7 until every group member has an opportunity to present a thinking report.

Activity 9 – Wrap-up

Activity 10 – Assign Homework

Supplements

Charts – Make before facilitating lesson. (See supplement section in each lesson for full text of chart page.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



C-6-1-Thinking Report-Pat
C-6-2-Thinking Report-Jones
C-7-1-Jim’s Thinking Report**

You will also chart a thinking report for each group member in this lesson.

**Keep this chart for use in lessons 8 and 9.

Handouts – Make copies before lesson. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



H-7-1-Homework Sheet

Presentation Slides – Make transparencies if projector is not available. (See supplement section of each lesson for camera ready pages.)

Denoted in lesson plan with this symbol:



P-7-1-Lesson Title
P-7-2-Cognitive Self Change
P-7-3-Homework Review
P-7-4-Step 1: Pay Attention to Our Thinking
P-7-5-Parts of a Thinking Report
P-7-6-Thinking Report, Pt. 1
P-7-7-Thinking Report, Pt. 2
P-7-8-Thinking Report, Pt. 3
P-7-9-Thinking Report, Pt. 4
P7-10-4 Parts of a Thinking Report
P-7-11-Objectivity – Definition
P-7-12-Staying Objective
P-7-13-Thinking Report Process
P-7-14-Definition of Attitudes and Beliefs
P-7-15-Report Your Thoughts and Feelings Exactly
P-7-16-Homework

Equipment	Supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Easel (chart stand) ▪ Projector to show presentation slides ▪ Projection screen or suitable surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chart paper ▪ Markers ▪ Masking tape ▪ Copies of handouts

Activity1: Homework Review

In our last session we looked at the kinds of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs people can have when they are in conflict with each other.

We learned about the 3 steps of the skill of cognitive self-change:

Step 1: Pay attention to our thinking.

Pay attention to our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs.

Step 2: Recognize risk. Recognize when there is risk of our thinking leading us into trouble.

Step 3: Use new thinking. Use new thinking that reduces the risk, and that lets us feel good about ourselves when we think in this way.

Transition

Remember in the last lesson, we learned that when we take control of our thinking, we gain real power over our lives.

Your homework was to practice step 1: pay attention to our thinking. I would like each of



P-7-1



**Thinking
for a
Change**

Lesson 7 –
Cognitive Self-Change:
Step 1 - Pay Attention to Our
Thinking




P-7-2

Cognitive Self Change

Step 1 - Pay Attention to Our Thinking

Step 2 - Recognize Risk


Step 3 - Use New Thinking




P-7-3

Homework Review

- Report briefly on your example of a conflict with another person
- Identify at least one thought and one feeling you were having at the time
- Describe an attitude or belief that was part of your thinking



The goal is to make this a very objective

you to report briefly on your homework:

- Briefly describe the conflict you chose.
- Identify at least one thought and one feeling you experienced at the time.
- Describe an attitude or belief that was part of your thinking.

Who would like to begin?

Activity 2: Overview of Step 1 – Pay Attention to Our Thinking

Today we're going to practice the first step of cognitive self-change. What was that step?

(Answer: Pay attention to our thinking.)

We do this step by doing what we call thinking reports.

Activity 3: Present the 4 Parts of a Thinking Report

A thinking report is a way of paying attention

and matter-of-fact exercise, and at the same time to show how simple and easy it is to do.

Take no more than thirty seconds for each group member to describe their situation, and no more than one minute to report their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs.

Repeat with all group members.



P-7-4

Cognitive Self Change

[Step 1 - Pay Attention to Our Thinking](#)

Step 2 - Recognize Risk

Step 3 - Use New Thinking



P-7-5

to how you think and feel in a specific situation. A thinking report has 4 parts:

Thinking Report – Part 1: Situation

- State the facts of what happened.
- Who was involved and what was said and done.

Thinking Report – Part 2: Thoughts

- List every thought you can remember.
- Use the exact words that were in your mind at the time.

Thinking Report – Part 3: Feelings

- List all the feelings you remember having.
- Use words that seem right to you.
- Feelings can be either emotions (anger,

Parts of a Thinking Report

- Part 1** - State what happened (stick with the facts)
- Part 2** - List every thought you can remember (words that were in your mind at the time)
- Part 3** - List all the feelings you remember having
- Part 4** - List beliefs you held in this situation (beliefs are rules, principles and opinions that you carry into lots of different situations)



P-7-6

Thinking Report

Part 1 Situation:	State the facts of what happened <i>Who was involved and what was said and done?</i>



P-7-7

Thinking Report

Situation:	
Part 2 Thoughts:	List every thought you can remember. Use the words that are in your mind at the time.



P-7-8

fear, frustration, excitement, etc.), or bodily sensations (tightness in the stomach, racing heartbeat, feeling hot in the face), or both.

Thinking Report – Part 4: Attitudes and Beliefs

- List your attitudes and beliefs.
- Remember that attitudes and beliefs are rules, principles, values, or ways of thinking that you carry into lots of different situations.

The Four Parts of a Thinking Report

This slide shows all four parts of a thinking report. Now let’s talk about how a thinking report can help us pay attention to our thinking.

Activity 4: Apply Thinking Report to Demonstration From Lesson 6

Let’s look at how the 4 parts of a thinking report can apply to the conflict between Pat and Jones from our last lesson.

In the situation from our last lesson, what

Thinking Report

Situation:	
Thoughts:	
Part 3 Feelings:	List all the feelings you remember having Use words that seem right to you <i>Feelings can be either emotions or bodily sensations, or both</i>



P-7-9

Thinking Report

Situation:	
Thoughts:	
Feelings:	
Part 4 Attitudes/Beliefs:	List your attitudes and beliefs <i>Attitudes and beliefs are rules, principles, values, or ways of thinking that you carry into lots of different situations</i>



P-7-10

4 Parts of a Thinking Report

Part 1 Situation:	State the facts of what happened
Part 2 Thoughts:	List every thought you can remember
Part 3 Feelings:	List all the feelings you remember having
Part 4 Attitudes/Beliefs:	List your attitudes and beliefs

Recap the demonstration from lesson 6 (the conflict between Pat and Jones).

Answers will vary depending on which

were some of the facts?

In the last lesson, we listed the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs of Pat and Jones.

What needs to be added to these charts to make these complete thinking reports, according to the definition?

(Answer: A brief, factual description of the situations.)

That's right – we need to add the situations. The situations need to be brief and factual.

For Pat

Who can give us a brief, factual description of the situation from the point of view of Pat?

Make the description brief and factual.

Opinions and beliefs about right and wrong are an important part of the report, but they belong below the situation in the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs sections.

scenario was used.



C-6-1 – Pat, and



C-6-2 – Jones

Review the two charts of thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs (Pat and Jones) from lesson 6.

Insist that the description be brief and factual. If a suggestion is long, ask how that description could be made shorter.

Point out that we're not interested in the story of what was going on. We're interested in a factual

For Jones

Let's have another group member give us a brief and factual description of the situation from the point of view of Jones.

Again, make the description brief and factual. Opinions and beliefs about right and wrong are an important part of the report, but they belong below the situation in the thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs sections.

Transition

The ability to write a brief, factual description of a situation is a basic skill that will be used throughout the program. It will be important in the lessons of problem solving, the last component of **Thinking For A Change**.

Although the description of the situation is different from the two different points of view, both can be completely factual and accurate.

Activity 5: Explain Importance of

description from Pat's point of view.

Add situation statement to Pat's chart.

For your discussion about Jones, use the same facilitator guidelines that you use above for Pat.

Add situation to Jones' chart.

Objectivity in Thinking Reports

Objectivity Definition

Being objective means saying your thoughts *exactly* as they are going through your head.

Emotional language or judgments of what is right or wrong are not objective. So you don't want to include those kinds of statements in objective descriptions.

So that's the definition of objectivity. But why is it so important in a thinking report?

A thinking report is like a microscope that lets you look inside your head and see the thoughts and feelings that are going on in there. You are taking an objective look at your thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs.

A thinking report is a picture of what goes on in your head. That's the goal. To achieve that goal, you must do more than understand the definition of objectivity, you must stay totally objective. To help you do this:

- Remember the thoughts and feelings you had.
- Don't judge your thinking.
- Don't look at thoughts as right or wrong,



P-7-11

Objectivity – Definition



Saying your thoughts exactly as they go through your head



P-7-12

good or bad.

- Look at your thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs as pure information about what was in your mind during a specific situation.

This is important because you have to be aware of your thinking before you can choose to change it. Thinking reports teach you to become aware of your thinking.

Staying Objective

- Remember the thoughts and feelings you had
- Don't judge your thinking
- Don't look at thoughts as right or wrong, good or bad
- Look at your thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs as pure information about what was in your mind during a specific situation

The objectivity of a thinking report is the key to making cognitive self-change work.

Reinforce this objectivity at every opportunity.

As a facilitator, you must make your own objectivity very clear.

This will be essential when group members begin to give reports of their own.

It helps to repeat some of the report being given, using a purely objective (neutral, non-judgmental) tone of voice.

Write down the reports, numbering the thoughts and being absolutely neutral about the content

Activity 6: Present a Sample Thinking Report

Here's a thinking report done by a member of another group. This is a good example of objectivity in a thinking report.

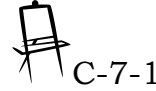
What Happened:

Jim was on supervised release from jail. Because he was on intensive supervision, he was allowed to leave home only to go to work and to come straight back home, without stopping or visiting friends. The authorities checked on him several times a week. He was often caught on small violations: Late coming home from work; Talking to people he was not supposed to talk to; Being in places he was not supposed to be.

Jim was asked to do a thinking report on a time he went to visit friends when he wasn't supposed to.

Let's review the report.

reported, no matter what it is.



C-7-1

Jim's Thinking Report

Situation: I was in trouble for being out of the area.

Thoughts:

1. I know that if I do these things I will be going back to jail.
2. It's really starting to get to me.
3. I feel locked up in my own apartment.
4. I really resent this
5. I shouldn't have to follow these rules.
6. Maybe it would be better to just go back to jail and get my sentence over with.
7. I feel like I'm not in charge of my life anymore.
8. I can't stand it.

Feelings: Uncomfortable, angry, controlled, threatened

Attitudes and Beliefs:

Nobody has the right to control my life.
If I let them do this to me, I'm a chump.

This report must be written on chart paper before the session begins. Also, you will use this chart again in lessons 8 and 9. Make sure to **keep this chart!**

Look closely at Jim's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs. Note that he listed the thinking that *led up* to him breaking the rule (being out of the area), which was the situation. When we do thinking reports, we must focus on the thoughts and feelings that lead us into risky behavior.

Read the report to the group. Your goal as facilitator is to model objectivity. Don't imply any personal judgment as to whether the thoughts and feelings are good or bad, justified or unjustified.

This is an *extremely* important point. Group members must learn to pay attention to the thinking that *leads up* to risky behavior.

A common error is to focus on what we think or feel about a situation after it happened, as opposed to the thinking that led up to our behavior. Another common mistake is to list our thoughts and feelings about the consequences of our behavior.

Facilitators need to be keenly aware of this distinction and guide group members to list their thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs that led up to the

Activity 7: Guide the First Group Member Through a Thinking Report

I want you to practice doing thinking reports now. You can use your homework situation or think of another conflict situation.

Who would like to get us started? Remember, everyone will have the opportunity to do this.

Okay, (*group member name*), you will start by telling us in general about the conflict situation. Then I'll ask you and other group members for advice on how to write it down in the form of a thinking report.

Thinking Report

Part 1: Situation

The first part of the thinking report is the situation statement. Before we write this down, take your time and explain what happened.

Now, let's write a brief, objective factual statement.

Do you think you can sum up the conflict in a

situations.

Once you tell group members that they will be doing thinking reports, give them a minute to think of a situation.

Ask for a volunteer to begin.

As the group member describes the situation, ask questions as needed to get a clear and complete picture of the conflict.

When the situation is clear, move on to the situation statement. If necessary, ask your co-

brief, factual sentence or two?

facilitator to describe the situation briefly, stating just facts.

Then ask the reporting group member if this situation statement is accurate.

Ask the large group if they agree that this is a brief, factual statement of the situation.



– Chart group member’s thinking report.

When everyone has agreed, write the situation statement down and label part 1 of the thinking report, “Situation” or “SIT.”



– Chart group member’s thinking report.

Write down the thoughts, numbering them and being absolutely neutral about the content reported, no matter what it is.

Make a point of making

Part 2: Thoughts

Now let’s hear the thoughts you had that contributed to this conflict. Remember that we want to focus on the thinking that led up to the conflict, as opposed to what you thought about it afterward.

You are the only person who knows what you were thinking in this situation. I may ask you some questions as we go along, but you will be the final authority on your thinking report and

what we ultimately write on the chart paper.

It is helpful to think of your thoughts in the order you had them. Remember to report your thoughts objectively – use the exact words that went through your head. This is important!

Now, what thoughts can you remember having in this situation?

the reporting group the final authority in this and all other aspects of his/her thinking report.

As you facilitate it is helpful to remember:

If group members honestly present their thoughts and they are labeled as bad thoughts, it will shut this process down.

In the end an individual's objective awareness of his/her thinking becomes a powerful motivator for change because it promotes an honest, self-reflective process without defensiveness or distortion.

Label this section of the report "Thoughts" or "TH."

Ask a few simple, probing questions if the reporting group member gets

stuck. Examples: “Do you remember the very next thought after this one?”

“When you had this thought, did you have more thoughts about the person?”

The reporting group member may have expressed some thoughts while he/she was describing the situation that he/she isn't remembering now.

Remind him/her of these.

If he/she gets stuck remembering thoughts, ask for his/her feelings.

Then go back and see if remembering these feelings helped him/her remember any more thoughts.

Keep the process brief and simple. An important goal of this activity is to demonstrate how easy it is to do thinking report.

Part 3 – List your feelings

Good job. Now let's look at your feelings. Can you remember the feelings you had?

Remember that feelings can be either feelings, like happiness or sadness, or physical sensations like a clenched jaw or butterflies in the stomach.

Again, we're not talking about how you felt about the situation afterward, but rather the feelings you were having at that time.

End by asking the group if this list of thoughts gives us a clear idea of what the reporting group member was thinking.



– Chart group member's thinking report.

Label this part of the thinking report "Feelings" or "F." Then list the feelings named or described by the reporting group member.

Use the group member's words. Don't translate his/her words into other terms.

Emphasize that he/she is the authority on his/her thinking report.

Feelings that seem to be more like thoughts than feelings are okay. Accept them as feelings if that's how the reporting group

member presents them.

The point is to capture what was going on in the person's mind, whatever it was (not to make a technical distinction between feelings and thoughts).

Ask a few simple probing questions to help him/her remember more details of his/her feelings. Example: "When you had this thought about the other person, do you remember what you were feeling then?"

When you have written a few feelings and the reporting group member doesn't remember anything else to add to the report, stop.

Transition

Good job. This is exactly what the first 3 parts of a thinking report are supposed to be.

1. You gave a brief, factual description of



P-7-13

the situation.

2. You listed a number of thoughts that you had, just as you remember having them.
3. You listed the feelings that went along with these thoughts.

Now let's go one step further and find the attitudes and beliefs you have about this situation.

Part 4: Attitudes and beliefs

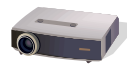
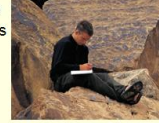
Remember, attitudes and beliefs are the rules, values, principles, or opinions that shape our thinking about many different situations. It may be hard to put attitudes and beliefs into exact words, but we can usually come close.

Let's briefly review your thoughts and feelings.

Do you think there was an underlying belief or attitudes that you were expressing with these thoughts and feelings?

Thinking Report Process

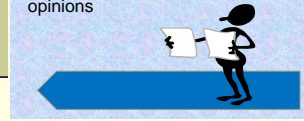
1. Brief, factual description of the situation
2. List the thoughts you had, just as you remember having them
3. List your feelings
4. List your attitudes and beliefs



P-7-14

Definition of Attitudes and Beliefs

- A set of principles, values or opinions



Read through the thoughts and feelings.

After the reporting group member offers an idea or two, ask the group their guesses about the person's attitudes and beliefs. The guesses by other group members

Very good. Your report looks like a clear, complete picture of what you were thinking and feeling, and it includes the beliefs and attitudes that were part of your thinking.

may help the person identify beliefs or attitudes they had, or maybe not. In any case, get the person to identify at least one underlying belief or attitude that may not have been expressed as a specific thought.

Allow the reporting group member to have the final word.



– Chart group member's thinking report.

After some discussion, write down one or two attitudes and beliefs.

Remember, you are reinforcing their performance in giving a thinking report. You are not reinforcing (or condemning) the content of their thinking or their behavior in the situation.

Summary

This is how we do thinking reports:

- We practice being completely objective.
- We don't make judgments.
- We don't blame.
- We don't make excuses for our thinking.
- We don't suggest how we should have thought or how we could have thought differently.
- We report our thoughts and feelings exactly as they were.

Finally, remember that when we do thinking reports we focus on the thinking that led up to the situation, as opposed to what we think or feel about the situation after the fact.

Helping Another with his/her Thinking Report

The rest of us can try to help another group member give his/her thinking report. We can ask questions and make suggestions about how he/she might have been thinking. We can try to help him/her remember more thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs. But the person giving the report is always the final



P-7-15

Report your thoughts and feelings exactly

Helpful Hints for Staying Objective

- Don't judge
- Don't blame
- Don't make excuses
- Don't "second guess" (suggestions about how you should have or could have thought)

13

authority on how he/she was thinking. That's one principle that holds true all the way through **Thinking for a Change**.

We don't make judgments and we don't tell group members how they are supposed to act or how they are supposed to think.

As the individual giving the report, you are always the final authority on how you think and how you are going to think.

Thinking for a Change will teach you important skills to give you more choices and more control over how you think and how you feel, and this will give you more control over how you act. It's up to you to decide if and when to use these skills.

If group members truly accept the principle that "We are our own authority," the ground is set for a cooperative relationship.

The goal is a relationship without the power struggle that goes on when a group member feels he/she is being made to do something, or is being told there is something wrong with how he/she is.

This may be as far as you can get (depending on time) in this session of lesson 7. If so, explain that the lesson will continue at the next session until everyone

has had a chance to present a thinking report.

This explanation will be the wrap-up for this session of lesson 7. There is no additional homework to do for the second session of lesson 7.

You will begin the second session of lesson 7 with a brief reminder of what has been done (“We’re practicing thinking reports”), and then continue with activity 8 until everyone has presented a thinking report.

Follow the guidelines of activity 7 to coach each group member in presenting his/her thinking report.

Activity 8 – Remainder of Group Members Present Thinking Reports

Let’s do some more thinking reports. Who would like to go next? Remember everyone will have an opportunity to do a thinking report.

Activity 9: Wrap-up

You have learned and practiced a lot in this lesson.

You have learned to do the 4 parts of a thinking report, and by doing that you have learned to do step 1 of cognitive self-change: **pay attention to our thinking.**

You have learned to be objective about your thinking and feelings. That means you have learned to look at your thoughts and feelings without making any judgments or blame or any justifications or excuses. You treat your thoughts and feelings as pure information.

And this sets the stage for step 2 of cognitive self-change: **recognize risk.** In step 2 you learn about how your thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and beliefs lead you to do the actions that you do.

You will pay special attention to hurtful or illegal actions, and the thinking that leads you to do those things.

Step 2 will be done with the same objectivity as in step 1 – without any blame, judgment, or criticism of how a person thinks or how a person acts. Treat the connections between your thoughts and actions as another kind of pure information: This thinking leads to that action. No blame. No judgment.

Activity 10: Assign Homework

Think of a time when you broke a rule or hurt someone. This could mean violating the law or breaking a rule; and it could mean hurting someone physically or emotionally.

Complete a thinking report on what happened. As you write your thinking report, remember to focus on the thinking that led you to break the rule or hurt someone, as opposed to what you thought and felt afterward.

A thinking report has 4 parts:

1. Write a brief, factual description of the situation.
2. Write down as many thoughts as you can remember having.
3. Write down all the feelings you remember having at the time.
4. List one or two attitudes or beliefs that underlie your thinking in this situation.

In our next lesson we'll continue to practice making complete thinking reports.

Completing the homework assignment is critical.

It is an opportunity for each group member to transfer the skills he/she has practiced in the session to real life situations.

As he/she completes the homework, the new skills begin to integrate into his/her thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs, and behavior.




P-7-16

Homework

- Think of a time when you broke a rule or hurt someone.
- Write a thinking report.
- Focus on the thinking that *led* you to break the rule or hurt someone.

The situation can be a time when you violated the law or broke a rule; or when you hurt someone physically or emotionally





H-7-1-Homework Handout

