

# Can changing how you feel and act be as easy as remembering your ABC?



## INFORMATION SHEET

The **ABC model** is a simple but powerful tool from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), originally developed by psychologist **Albert Ellis** in the 1950s as part of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT). The model helps us understand how our thoughts influence our feelings and actions and is widely used to support positive mental health.

Let's look at how it works.

### A = Activating Event

This is the situation or event that triggers a reaction.

### B = Beliefs

These are the thoughts or beliefs you have about the event—often automatic and sometimes irrational.

### C = Consequences

These are the emotional and behavioural outcomes that result from your beliefs.



## WORKPLACE EXAMPLE

### ✗ Possible irrational belief

#### A = Activating Event

My manager asks if I have completed a piece of work I was tasked with.

#### B = Beliefs

They think I'm not working hard enough and are trying to catch me out.

#### C = Consequences

I say I've nearly finished knowing I have much more to do. I feel frustrated, angry and resentful, which impacts my ability to work efficiently.

### ✓ Rational belief

#### A = Activating Event

My manager asks if I have completed a piece of work I was tasked with.

#### B = Beliefs

They're just asking where I'm up to with the task to update their own line manager and to check if I need any support.

#### C = Consequences

I feel reassured and supported, it's just part of us all being accountable for the work we do. I now work more efficiently with a positive mindset.

## How to Use the ABC Model

### Choose an activating event (A):

What happened? Describe the situation that triggered your response.

### Reflect on your beliefs (B):

What thoughts went through your mind? Are these beliefs rational, or could they be unhelpful or unrealistic?

### Consider the consequences (C):

How did you feel and what did you do because of those beliefs?

### Go back to (B) and challenge irrational Beliefs:

- Ask yourself: Is there evidence for this belief?
- Could there be another way to look at the situation?
- What would be a more balanced or helpful belief? (Most of the time this will be much closer to the truth!)

### Replace with Rational Beliefs:

By changing unhelpful beliefs to more rational ones, you can influence your feelings and actions in a positive way.

### Consider the consequences (C):

How did you feel and what did you do because of those beliefs?

## Practice makes progress

The more you practise using the CBT ABC model, the more likely your automatic reactions will become more rational and positive over time.

We've created two interactive resources for you: one to document your initial reaction to a situation, and another to help you work on changing your beliefs and consequences to benefit your wellbeing and behaviour.

### Interactive CBT ABC irrational or negative thoughts activity sheet

DOWNLOAD →

### Interactive CBT ABC rational or positive thoughts activity sheet

DOWNLOAD →

We hope you can see the difference this can make to your wellbeing — both at work and in your personal life!