

Before the dialogue

Core checks for use with one planned episode. Optional items are marked; unchecked items invite review rather than a performance score.

01 / Establish a useful focus

- ☐ Agree the purpose of exploring this thought with the client.
- ☐ Identify one recent situation and its relevance to the session goal.
- ☐ Consider current risk, practical adversity and any need to prioritise another response.
- ☐ Check that the planned cognitive work fits the shared formulation.

02 / Prepare for access and choice

- ☐ Ask about preferred language, pace and ways of working.
- ☐ Offer a choice about pausing, writing, speaking or using an example.
- ☐ Check the client is willing to explore this topic now.
- ☐ Optional: Arrange a visual scale, thought record or brief timeline if it improves access.

03 / Capture a starting point

- ☐ Write the thought, image or meaning in the client's own words.
- ☐ Separate the observable situation from the client's interpretation.
- ☐ Note relevant emotion, bodily response, urge and behaviour.
- ☐ Optional: Record belief strength and distress using agreed scales.

USE WITH ONE EPISODE

Chosen episode / exact client wording

Question or access adjustment to prepare

READY TO BEGIN: SHARED PURPOSE + SPECIFIC EPISODE + CLIENT CHOICE

Clinical basis: UCL CBT competence framework; Beck Institute, "Why CBT Therapists Don't Challenge Thoughts" and "Selecting Techniques in CBT". Original educational examples; adapt within training and supervision.

During the dialogue

Use these checks to monitor the conversation. Tick retrospectively if live marking would disrupt listening.

04 / Keep questions accessible

- ☐ Ask one question at a time and allow time for the answer.
- ☐ Replace abstract language with a specific event or concrete observation when needed.
- ☐ Follow the answer rather than advancing through a preset list.
- ☐ Explain or rephrase a question when the client indicates it is unclear.

05 / Preserve collaboration

- ☐ Reflect the client's answer and check you have understood it.
- ☐ Give information supporting the belief the same careful attention as exceptions.
- ☐ Check for feeling judged, invalidated or pressured to agree.
- ☐ Pause or change approach if the client withdraws consent or distress interferes with participation.

06 / Check the emerging meaning

- ☐ Summarise what the client discovered, including unresolved uncertainty.
- ☐ Invite their own conclusion rather than supplying the final wording.
- ☐ Ask which part fits and which part still feels unconvincing.
- ☐ Optional: Re-rate belief strength only when it adds useful information.

USE WITH ONE EPISODE

Client's learning / unresolved concern

What to return to next

IN-SESSION CHECK: ONE QUESTION + ACCURATE REFLECTION + CLIENT-OWNED MEANING

Clinical basis: UCL CBT competence framework; Beck Institute, "Why CBT Therapists Don't Challenge Thoughts" and "Selecting Techniques in CBT". Original educational examples; adapt within training and supervision.

After the dialogue

Use for documentation, an agreed between-session action and your own practice review.

07 / Agree a proportionate next step

- ☐ Choose a test, coping step or practical action linked to the client's goal.
- ☐ For a test, specify the prediction and observable outcome in advance.
- ☐ Agree feasibility, safety, consent and how observations will be recorded.
- ☐ Set a review point and check the client can explain the purpose of the task.

08 / Record the essentials

- ☐ Document the episode, target thought and relevant formulation link.
- ☐ Record the client's learning in their own words and any unresolved concerns.
- ☐ Note the agreed action and relevant risk or safeguarding decisions.
- ☐ Record uncertainty or lack of change accurately; avoid implying the client accepted a view they rejected.

09 / Review your contribution

- ☐ Identify a moment when your question opened useful exploration.
- ☐ Identify any question that implied a preferred answer or bypassed the client's experience.
- ☐ Choose one concrete adjustment for the next dialogue.
- ☐ Optional: Take an anonymised excerpt to supervision; follow consent and service rules for any recording.

USE WITH ONE EPISODE

Agreed task / review date

Supervision question or next practice adjustment

QUALITY CHECK: THE NOTE SHOWS WHAT THE CLIENT LEARNED, NOT JUST WHAT YOU ASKED

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