



## Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy – REBT

*Background*– REBT was first developed by Dr Albert Ellis in 1955 and it is a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). One of the basic premises of REBT is that the way we think directly impacts any emotional and behavioral problems we may experience. When using REBT, an individual is directed to identify erroneous or irrational thoughts and beliefs that trigger disturbances and interfere with our happiness and overall positive functioning. REBT tells us that these negative thoughts can be challenged, disputed and then changed for the better thus leading to improved, more positive emotions and behaviors. (*Information adapted from Wikipedia “Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy”*) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational\\_emotive\\_behavior\\_therapy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rational_emotive_behavior_therapy)

**Using REBT** – You can use REBT by following the **ABCDE** model. Here are all of the steps in the ABCDE model:

- ★ **A – Activating Event (Also referred to as Adversity)** – Something happens that triggers negative thoughts or feelings. (Usually something perceived as negative or challenging)
- ★ **B – Belief** – You form a belief about the event that is distorted from the actual truth and is therefore unhealthy
- ★ **C – Consequences** – This distorted or irrational belief triggers negative emotional and behavioral outcomes in our lives
- ★ **D – Disputes (Arguments)** – *This is where healing begins.* You challenge your irrational beliefs by coming up with evidence to help you argue against and tell yourself that your irrational beliefs are not true. This becomes the basis for forming new more positive and more accurate and realistic beliefs
- ★ **E – Effect** – Once you have effectively countered your irrational beliefs consistently, you will begin to experience new, positive emotional and behavioral outcomes with time

### **An example:**

**A – Activating Event (Adversity)** – “The person I really like does not want to go out with me. I asked and they said they were not interested”

**B – Belief** – “No one wants me, I’m no good” – “I am not attractive enough”

**C – Consequences** – Feeling: Sad and dejected – Behavior – Isolation, avoiding others, bad habits to cope (binge eating for example)

**D – Disputes (Arguments)** – *Remember, this is where healing begins.* Argument – “Just because this one person didn’t want to go out with me, that doesn’t mean that eventually I will find someone else if I keep on trying” – “One rejection does not mean that I am undesirable to others, there are more fish in the sea”

**E – Effect** – Feelings - Acceptance (You win some, you lose some but stay in the game and don’t quit) – Behavior - Keep trying, don’t give up – Focus on taking care of yourself and staying confident for the next possible relationship. Good habits – Walking, going to the gym, spending time with positive friends



What is needed:

- Insight/Self Awareness – Willingness to look inside yourself and be honest about your thoughts, beliefs and feelings
- Adaptability and Flexibility- Ability to be open minded to change thinking to a more positive reality even if it is challenging at first.
- Consistency and Persistency – Sticking with the new positive way of thinking until it becomes a new positive belief

**See if you have what it takes to apply the ABCDE model from REBT**

### **Group Activity**

Everyone in the group should come up with one Adversity/Activating Event – It is best to come up with a real one from your own life but if you absolutely cannot think of one, make up and interesting one. This would be an event that triggers negative thoughts and feelings such as:

- A disappointment
- A loss
- A failure
- A stressor that is difficult to cope with
- A repeated mistake
- Etc.

There are two ways to process this activity as a group, the choice is up to the group leader.

- 1) Self-Disclosure- This is the most challenging way to do this group which may be better for more motivated groups. Group members should just share out loud their own personal examples of adversities and go through the ABCDE process with help from the rest of the group
- 2) Random Draw – Group members each come up with their own activating scenarios (adversities). In person have everyone write it on a piece of paper and then collect them, drawing them randomly as the group and then processes them anonymously together. Or if on telehealth, collect the activating event scenarios through private chat feature and then make a list to pick from randomly and process them anonymously

Then, just go through some of the scenarios and use analyze the ABCDE process

- ★ **A** – Read or state out loud the **Activating Event (Adversity)**
- ★ **B** – Identify the negative **Belief(s)**
- ★ **C** – What may be the **Consequences** of the negative belief? (Think about both feelings and behavior)
- ★ **D** – Come up with some positive **Disputes (Arguments)** – (Think about realistic evidence)
- ★ **E** – Now, what is the positive **Effect**? Again, think about new, positive feelings and behaviors)

When done with the reviewing the group's scenarios together, at the close of group process the following:

**Who here thinks that they can use the ABCDE method from REBT in their own life in an effective way going forward? If so, how?**