

The **A B C D**  
*Cognitive Behavioural Therapy Model*

Human emotions and behaviours are determined by our belief systems and the way we process events, rather than the actual event itself.

**A**

### Activating event

A situation or person that triggers dysfunctional thinking.

These situations or people don't cause their feelings - their beliefs about these events do. Individuals may or may not have control over the activating event, but can focus their attention on how to manage their reaction to activating events that they have little or no control over.

**B**

### Belief system

An individual's belief system that they filter everything through.

These can be rational beliefs, (consistent with reality, based on fact and data), or irrational beliefs (not supported by evidence or reality). It is usually irrational beliefs that are the source of an individual's concern.

**C**

### Consequences

The emotional or cognitive consequences of the interaction between the activating event and belief system (A and B).

These are the obvious signs of discomfort, such as anxiety, depression, anger, fear, guilt and so on. Rational beliefs tends to lead to healthy outcomes, while irrational beliefs tend to lead to unhealthy consequences.

**D**

### Disputation

Disputing the irrational beliefs and thought patterns.

An individual has to come to the realisation themselves that their belief system is the cause of their problem, and have to want to change that. Once irrational beliefs are eliminated, these then need to be replaced with a more healthy rational and consistent belief system.