

Behavioral Experiments to Test Beliefs Worksheet

A **behavioral experiment** is a CBT technique that involves testing negative automatic thoughts and re-evaluating underlying beliefs and assumptions. This technique encourages people to view negative thoughts objectively rather than as absolute truths. First, therapist and client identify a belief they want to test. Then, a specific hypothesis is derived from this general rule, and an experiment is formulated to test this hypothesis.

This *Behavioral Experiment* worksheet includes 6 steps:

1. **Clarifying the client's original dysfunctional belief** (e.g., "I can't enjoy my life being single"), and **rate** how strongly he/she believes this will happen
2. **Deriving a hypothesis** from this belief to come up with an alternative belief (e.g., "I may be able to enjoy some things as a single person"), and rate how strongly he/she believes this will happen
3. **Designing an experiment** to test this alternative belief. To do this, consider what circumstances need to be in place for the hypothesis to be tested: where would the client need to go? What would they need to do or observe?
4. **Carrying out the experiment**
5. **Recording your observations**
6. **Reflecting upon those observations.** How did the dysfunctional belief hold up against the alternative belief?

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Worksheet

