

REPLACING WHAT-IF STATEMENTS

By noticing irrational beliefs and replacing them with more balanced ones, we can change both our emotions and behaviors (Ivtzan et al., 2016). Similar to Albert Ellis's ABCDE model, the steps below help build a healthier belief system and ease the anxiety that comes from catastrophizing.

1. Identify and understand the "What-ifs" (Catastrophic Consequences).
 - a. What are you afraid will happen?
 - b. What is the worst thing that could happen?



2. Replace "what if" questions with factual statements
 - Change the "what if" questionAs into clear statements
 - Ex. I did not do well in the job interview. I did not get the job.



3. Use the following questions to understand and challenge the truth behind each statement:

- Have you been in a similar situation before? What happened?
- What was different, and what was the same?
- What are the best and worst thing that can happen?
- Why am I so sure that something will go wrong?
- What evidence is there to support this statement, and what evidence is there to make it untrue?
- What would I say to a friend?
- Does this thought help me or hurt me?
- What would change if I replaced this thought with something more positive?



4. What thoughts reflect the evidenced you discovered in step 3?

- Based on what you have learned in step 3, how could you make each “what if” question into an accurate statement?
- Ex. I am well prepared for the interview. I have the experience and skills they have advertised. I usually receive positive feedback from interviews.



5. What are you going to do next?

- Based on what you have identified, write down a list of actions that will help you be more prepared for the event.
- Ex. I will research the company, refresh some of my skills, and talk to others interviewed there previously.



References

■ Ivtzan, I., Lomas, T., Hefferon, K., & Worth, P. (2016). Second wave positive psychology: Embracing the dark side of life. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.