

Identifying Underlying Assumptions (UAs)

Thought most related to emotion or behavior: _____

Underlying assumptions (UAs) are deeper thought patterns supporting our automatic thoughts. UAs can serve as unspoken rules that help us make sense of the world. Some times we unaware our UAs because they are operating effortlessly in the background of our mental landscape. Below are some questions you can ask yourself to identify UAs related to your automatic thoughts. These UAs may provide a greater understanding of your emotional reactions to situations.

If {Thought X Above} is true, then _____

What is so bad about {Thought X Above}? _____

What does {Thought X Above} reveal about my rules of how the world works? _____

What does {Thought X Above} mean about myself or others? _____

Updating Underlying Assumptions

You may find that your current UAs are holding you back from making the changes you want, and updating them may be in your best interest. Remember, they are YOUR beliefs, so you are free to do so. One way to start that process is to reflect upon how much you really believe the thought to be true, and if that rating changes over time and across different situations. You can also brainstorm alternatives and consider how much you believe those to be true. After completing this activity below, take note of your thoughts the next time the UA is operating in your life. How true does it seem at that time? How able are you to recall the alternative or more flexible ways of thinking about the UA? How are your emotions impacting your UAs?

What is the underlying assumption (UA) you would like to update?

% True

What are some alternative or more flexible ways of thinking about the underlying assumption (UA)?

% True

Behavioral Experiments to Test Underlying Assumptions

A behavioral experiment is action you can take to test whether the original UA or one of the alternative beliefs actually holds true. The results can be used to update your UAs. Your therapist may be a valuable resource for offering ideas about behavioral experiments to try. Often, behavioral experiments need to be repeated several times and under different circumstances to make meaningful changes in the way you react to situations. So you may need to improve upon the experiments as you proceed.

What behavior(s) could you actively do (or repeat) to disprove the prediction or underlying assumption (UA), and/or support the alternative way of thinking?

How True (%) is UA Before Experiment?	What happened when I did experiment?	How True (%) is UA After Experiment?	Any ways to improve my experiment?