
Understanding Beliefs

Trauma impacts our minds by shaking our core beliefs and instilling new beliefs about ourselves, others, or the world around us. Once ingrained, we may intentionally or inadvertently continue to uphold these beliefs, trusting them to keep us safe without knowing whether they really are.

This writing and reflection activity is intended to begin parsing out what some of those beliefs are, so that you can evaluate them and decide whether to challenge them.

Consider ways in which your behavior has changed since your experiences of trauma. Have the ways in which you carry yourself or interact with others changed? Are there changes in how you get to know new people, or maneuver through a new situation?

When considering these changes, what shifts in belief or attitudes do they reflect? What are the new “rules” that weren’t there before? How have you changed your expectations or assumptions of others?

Complete the following sentences:

I now believe that I need to...

I now believe that others are...

I now believe that the world at large is...

Take a moment to read back over the completed sentences. What are your initial reactions (thoughts, feelings, physical sensations) to them?

How do these beliefs connect to your day-to-day behavior and interactions?

Which beliefs feel safe or necessary, and which beliefs feel constricting or overly cautious?

Information from CBT-i manual: <https://aims.uw.edu/nyscc/training/sites/default/files/CBT%20Manual.pdf>
