



RESILIENCY

How I... think

ACTIVITY: The ABCs of Resiliency

We have a tendency to think that certain situations cause us to act and feel a certain way. Yet in reality, people react differently to the same event. One person who is driving to work and gets a flat tire may become angry and yell and curse about their bad luck, while another person in the same situation may become filled with anxiety. A third person may calmly call for roadside assistance and use the wait time to read on their phone.

Psychologist Albert Ellis developed the ABC model to explain why people react differently to negative events. Whenever an adverse event happens we tell ourselves WHY it happened and WHAT it means. The ABC model says it is not the event itself that causes us to feel and act a certain way, it is our beliefs about the event that lead to our feeling and actions.

A

Adversity

This is the negative event or situation

B

Beliefs

This is what we tell ourselves about why it happened and what it means.

C

Consequences

The feelings and behaviors that result from our beliefs

Our beliefs – the things we tell ourselves about why events happen and what they mean- are not always accurate. Often they are based on our personal history, past experiences, and strong emotions. When our thoughts are inaccurate, or irrational, it is difficult to deal with situations effectively. Irrational thoughts often create strong emotional responses that undermine our ability to remain calm, think clearly and figure out how to handle things.

Using the ABC model can help us identify irrational thoughts and beliefs. When we become aware of our irrational thoughts and beliefs (and our personal patterns), we can begin to re-frame them to more adequately reflect reality. This helps us avoid getting “stuck” in intense emotions and gives us the clarity to find solutions, and acceptance, in difficult situations.

Sources/
More
Information

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) Network
www.rebttnetwork.org

The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life’s Hurdles Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte

ACTIVITY: The ABCs of Resiliency

Try This

- 1) Using the table on the next page, write down a negative event or experience you are going through or have gone through recently in the first column.
- 2) Next, write down any beliefs or thoughts you have about the event or experience. Be honest and try to capture what you have been telling yourself about the event.
- 3) In the third column, identify what feelings and behaviors have resulted from your beliefs.
- 4) The next step is to add a "D" to the ABC model. The "D" stands for dispute. This is where you will re-frame any irrational or inaccurate thoughts or beliefs. Use the following questions to guide you:
 - What evidence do I have to support my thoughts/beliefs?
What evidence do I have to dispute them?
 - How would I view this situation if it was happening to someone else?
 - Am I falling into any of the following common thinking traps:
 - Catastrophizing (or magnifying)** – Exaggerating the importance of something
 - Minimizing** – Minimizing the importance of something
 - Filtering** – Focusing on the negatives and ignoring the positives
 - Jumping to Conclusions** – Making a negative interpretation of an event or situation without looking at the facts
 - Personalization** – Always blaming yourself or making the situation about you
 - All-or-Nothing Thinking** – Looking at things in black and white categories
 - Overgeneralization** – Seeing a single event as a never-ending defeat or failure
 - Emotional Reasoning** – Assuming your emotions reflect the truth of a situation



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| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>A Adversity</p> | |
| <p>B Beliefs</p> | |
| <p>C Consequences</p> | |
| <p>D Dispute</p> | |



ACTIVITY: The ABCs of Resiliency

ESTIMATED TIME

15 minutes or longer
depending on discussion

MATERIALS

Required:

- A. Pen and paper
- B. Handouts

Champion/ Facilitator's Notes

- If facilitating this activity with a team, sharing personal experiences should be voluntary and may best be done in small groups or pairs. Consider your team's culture and relationships.
- Other options:
 - Share the ABC model with your team and have a general discussion (don't have them complete the individual activity). Have them look for examples of their own irrational or inaccurate thoughts in the upcoming weeks.
 - Have your group apply this concept and activity to a difficult situation or adverse event the team is going through or has been through recently. Can you identify irrational or inaccurate thoughts surrounding the situation?

Discussion Questions

- What irrational thoughts or "thinking traps" are common for you?
- Is it easy, or difficult, to identify your inaccurate thoughts and beliefs?
- How do you dispute your own inaccurate or irrational thinking?
- What are some other ways we can evaluate our thoughts and beliefs to see if they are accurate/rational?
- How could this exercise be useful moving forward?