

# **Religious Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Depression In Clients with Chronic Physical Illness**

(Muslim Version)

## **Participant Workbook**

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This workbook is a variant of the treatment protocol  
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**Muslim version developed by Sasan Vasegh, M.D.**

**\*\*Please cite appropriately\*\***

## Session 1: Assessment and Introduction to RCBT

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**“Allah sets forth a parable that a goodly word is like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches are in the heaven, giving its fruit at all times by permission of its lord.” (14 (Ibrahim): 24,25)**

Write the verse down and post it somewhere you will see it often, perhaps on a sticky note placed on your mirror or fridge. You may want to make several copies and post them in places you will see it throughout the day.

#### 2. Activity and Mood Monitor

The goal of the first session's homework assignment is begin developing skills in self-monitoring daily mood and daily activities. The goal at this stage is not to change any regular habits. The self-monitoring logs have a place for recording your activities and mood every two hours. Please complete this log daily. It may be easiest to fill out the activity log twice during the day. For example, you could record all of your morning activities when you eat lunch and all of your afternoon and evening activities just before you go to bed. This record will give us some information as to which activities may lead to better moods and which activities may lead to worsened moods.

Here are few guidelines about self-monitoring:

- a. Keep the self-monitoring log with you throughout the day and record your activities as close as possible to the end of the time periods.
  - b. Record the activity in a very few words. For example, you could record "went out to dinner" or "washed my clothes" or "read a book" or even "watched TV."
  - c. Immediately after recording your activities, record your mood.
  - d. Purchase a notebook to put the logs in, so that you will have a record of your activities. We will make use of them later.
  - e. Make sure you have your logs with you during each session. They are necessary for the rest of the program
  - f. Be sure and include even trivial events on your chart such as missed the bus or read the newspaper.
3. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Thinking and Depression

### Signs of Depression

"I don't have a purpose in life anymore now that my chronic pain makes it too difficult to work."

"I am a very poor Muslim because I am depressed. A Muslim should not be depressed."

"I just can't motivate myself to do any of the things which I need to do. I'm a lazy person."

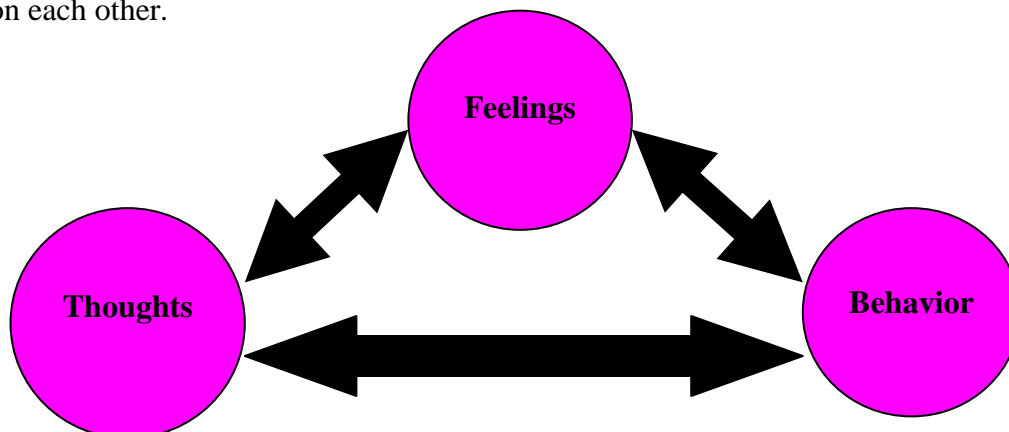
All of the above are statements that a depressed individual might make. While some of these statements and notions may seem to be correct on the surface they actually reflect a change in the way an individual thinks about him or herself. When people become depressed, they think about themselves and their environment in a different and more negative way.

Recent research has shown that depressed individuals are more likely to interpret an event more negatively than a non-depressed individual. Thus, depressive symptoms are related to the way in which individuals interpret and think about their situation in life. These thoughts and interpretations are also a reflection of one's past experiences. Not only are depressed individuals' interpretations more negative, but research also shows that their perceptions and interpretations are less accurate than those who are not depressed.

The interpretations that an individual makes of a situation influence his or her behavior, as illustrated in the following example. Imagine that you have a flat tire on a deserted highway and do not have anything to change the tire with, including a car jack. As you are standing there stranded, your next-door neighbor drives by and looks up briefly but keeps going. How would you feel about the fact that your neighbor kept driving? What would you most likely be telling yourself about the situation?

Now let's imagine, further, that you see your neighbor the next day and he comes over to you and apologizes for driving by you. "I'm so sorry I couldn't stop; my son fell and was bleeding from his head and I was rushing him to the emergency room." How might you be feeling now? What changed? What are you now telling yourself about the situation that is different from when you were standing on the road?

The following diagram represents the relative relationship that thoughts, feelings, and behavior have on each other.



The idea that our **thoughts and beliefs** and our **behaviors** play an important role in influencing our emotions is a very common idea in Koran and Islamic scriptures. Indeed, for Muslims the cognitive behavior model is more than 1400 years old! Let me give you some examples from the Koran:

Many verses in Koran imply that belief in God (our good thoughts and beliefs) and doing good (our good behaviors) can deeply affect our emotions and can eliminate most of human's fears and sorrows. For example, "whoever believes and acts aright, they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve" (6:48); and "verily those who say, 'our lord is Allah,' and remain firm (on that path), they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve" (46:13). And there are many other verses like this in the Koran. What do you think? Do you think that Islamic beliefs and righteous behaviors can influence our emotions or lessen our sufferings, sorrow and anxiety?

Actually,, the Holy Koran says, "Surely Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own condition" (13:11). What is your opinion? Do you think if we can change our thoughts or behaviors God may change our conditions?How?

At the beginning of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his companions were facing lots of distresses and difficulties, and again, it were verses from Koran and their belief in Allah, the prophet, and the afterlife that brought them comfort and strengthened their will power, because: "Surly in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!" (13:28).

We'll work on more examples from the Holy Koran as we go through this treatment together.

**Activity and Mood Monitor**

<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>Activity Engaged In</b>	<b>Mood</b>
6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
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6-8 am		
8-10 am		
10 am-12 pm		
12 pm-2 pm		
2 pm-4 pm		
4 pm-6 pm		
6 pm-8 pm		
8 pm-10 pm		
10 pm-12 am		

## Session 2: Behavioral Activation and Walking by Faith

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**“It may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing while it is evil for you, and Allah knows, while you do not know”**  
(2 (Baqarah): 216)

As you did last week, write the verse down and put it in a place, or ideally more than one place, where you will see it many times a day. The more you meditate on these verses the more your mind is renewed and the greater improvement you will begin to see in your mood.

#### 2. Plan and Complete Pleasant Events

Complete the two pleasant events you selected with your therapist between now and our next session. When you are finished the activity, complete the Planning Pleasant Activities Worksheet. Remember to complete the worksheets for both activities.

#### 3. Identify and Contact Member of Faith Community

Identify several possible faith companions and make contact with at least one of them. This is important over the long-term and relates directly to depression. Both the receiving and especially the giving of support to others (as will be addressed in the session on altruism) is key in this regard. Identifying people worse off than you are helps to get your mind off your problems, helps you realize that things could be worse, helps you to feel grateful for what you do have, and gives a sense of purpose and meaning that will result in eternal rewards as a service to God by caring for another. In approaching another person, you might say something like:

“I’m having a pretty difficult time now and I’m wondering if you would agree to pray for and with me during this period, and perhaps we could talk on the phone or go out for coffee once a week or every other week.”

#### 4. Reading

Please read the pages in your workbook titled, “The Categories of Unhelpful Thinking” to prepare for next week’s session. This is somewhat lengthy and to make the most of the limited time in session it very important that you have already reviewed this material

#### 5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.



*As Muslims, people have the comfort of knowing that they have a Mighty Lord—Allah—whom the Koran says is familiar with all of their pain, suffering, and trials. He knows how depression makes you feel; He knows how hard it is to deal with your physical illness. At least 10 times in a day, Muslims say to Allah in their prayers that "You (alone) we worship; and you (alone) we rely for help" (1:5). If you find yourself struggling to complete these activities, ask Allah for His grace and His help. He understands your struggle and He will give you the strength and encouragement you need.*

## Pleasant Activities List

Put a plus sign (+) next to any activity likely to generate some positive reaction in you.  
Put two (++) next to those that are positive and you are almost certain to do so.

1. Call a friend
2. Attend a movie
3. Clean the kitchen
4. Daydream
5. Rearrange furniture
6. Prepare a meal
7. Wash the car.
8. Outdoor yard work or gardening.
9. Buy a plant
10. Watch television
11. Take a mini-vacation
12. Go to an amusement park
13. Dinner with friends
14. Attend a play
15. Attend a concert
16. Visit a museum
17. Play a sport
18. Watch a sporting event in person
19. Watch sports with friends
20. Dance
21. Attend mosque or another religious service
22. Speak to a friend(s) on the Internet
23. Play video games
24. Text messaging
25. Twitter
26. Visit family members
27. Provide childcare for family or friends
28. Exercise alone
29. Exercise with others
30. Get a massage
31. Read a book or magazine
32. Write in a journal
33. Write a poem or short story
34. Play a musical instrument
35. Listen to music
36. Engage in a hobby, such as photography, scrapbooking, stamp/coin collecting, genealogy, knitting, crocheting, etc.
37. Take a bath or shower
38. Take a nap
39. Go shopping
40. Sailing, boating, fishing, or other water-related activity
41. Attend an educational class

## **Planning Pleasant Activities Instructions**

Implicit in the idea that mood is related to activity is the concept that mood can be improved by increasing specific activities. From the records you kept last week, you may be able to identify particular classes of activity that are associated with better mood. Even in the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad we see him spending some time alone with his disciples or family away from demands. The purpose of this exercise is to schedule more of these activities in order to improve your mood.

You can look at your Self-Monitoring Logs and the Pleasant Activity List for ideas. Choose activities that you have some control over, that bring a sense of mastery or accomplishment, and that you enjoy. Choose activities that take more than 10 or 15 minutes to perform, yet which can be accomplished in one day. Schedule activities that are additions to what you would ordinarily do. The following are some examples of pleasant activities:

- Have your hair done
- Browse in a bookstore
- Prepare a Chinese dinner
- Play tennis
- Visit an art museum
- Buy a new plant

Next, using the following worksheet, schedule and complete at least two activities between now and the next session. Be sure to complete the worksheet once you have engaged in the activity.

## Planning Pleasant Activity #1 Worksheet

### 1. Identify Activity #1 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. When will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Prediction

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
(where 0 is not positive and 10 is very positive)

### 4. Reflect

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas for Future Activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Planning Pleasant Activity #2 Worksheet**

**1. Identify Activity #2 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.**

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. When** will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Prediction**

On scale of 0 – 10 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Reflect**

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: On scale of 0 – 10 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas for Future Activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Unhelpful Thinking Styles and Theological Reflections

### **1. All-or-Nothing Thinking (AN):**

You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.

Example: An example would be a straight-A student who received a B on an exam and concluded, "Now I'm a total failure."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

This type of thinking causes one to fear any mistake or imperfection because that is taken as an indication of being worthless. This way of evaluating things is unrealistic because life is rarely completely either one way or the other. For example, no one is absolutely brilliant or totally stupid. Nothing on earth is totally one way or the other. Rarely, does everyone always like us, or rarely do we always find the perfect solution.

#### *B. Theological reflection*

The believers at the time of Prophet Muhammad had many ups and downs. Some of them felt sad and lost their courage at the time of difficulties, but God revived their strength by normalizing these ups and downs, implying that victory and defeat are not all-or-nothing concepts: " if a wound has afflicted you (at the battle of Uhud), a wound like it has also afflicted the (unbelieving) people; and we alternate such days between the people ..." (3:140). So although some of the Muslim people failed in their duty at that time, but they were **not** failures through and through.

### **2. Overgeneralization (OG):**

You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Example: An example of this type of thinking would occur when a shy man, who is self-conscious of his artificial leg, mustered up his courage to ask an employer for a job. When the employer politely declined because of lack of a position, he said to himself, "I'm never going to get a job. No one wants to employ a guy with only one leg." He believed that all employers will turn him down just because one declined his offer. And, he erroneously assumed it was because of his artificial leg. The pain of rejection is generated almost entirely from overgeneralization.

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is logically incorrect to conclude that one thing that happened to you once will occur over and over again. It is also incorrect to assume that all situations are similar; or that all individuals are similar.

### *B. Theological reflection*

There are also several stories in the Koran that suggest that one failure does not therefore mean that there will always be failure. Perhaps the most vivid story is that of the Battle of Uhud. In this battle, Muslims initially had a better position and were near to victory, but suddenly because of the disobedience of some of them, they were defeated and most of them ran away and many were martyred. But after this sad and hard time, Muslims moved on with many more victories and joys: "So indeed, hardship is followed by ease, Indeed, hardship is followed by ease" (94:5-6). It certainly sounds as if one major catastrophe or mistake does not mean that the individual will continue to make those mistakes or the catastrophe will continue forever.

### **3. Mental Filter (MF):**

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolors an entire beaker of water.

Example: A woman with severe arthritis failed to complete one task that she had hoped to complete. She became more depressed and angry at herself for not completing that task. She overlooked the fact that there had been many tasks that she had, in fact, completed.

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is more sensible to clearly view one's environment and be aware of the positive things one has done in addition to negative occurrences. It is not adaptive to filter out anything positive. It is irrational to say, "I should preoccupy myself with dangerous or negative ideas." Nothing is gained by dwelling on them.

#### *B. Theological reflections:*

The Scriptures usually emphasize that one should reflect on the positive rather than the negative. One should certainly reflect on what is true, and that includes seeing the positive things you have accomplished with the help of God. This theme is reflected in Holy Koran 3:103 which says, "... remember the favor of Allah bestowed upon you when you were enemies, and how he united your hearts, so that by his favor you became brothers." Although Muslims had hard times too, here Allah draws their attention to positive changes in their life following Islam, thereby increasing their positive feelings and gratitude towards God.

### **4. Disqualifying the Positive (DP):**

You disqualify positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences. You don't just ignore positive experiences as in the Mental Filter, but you clearly and swiftly turn them into their very opposite.

Example: An example would occur when someone praises your appearance or your work and you automatically tell yourself, "They're just being nice."

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Again, it is maladaptive not to pay attention to feedback you get from your environment. We should take that feedback at face value and incorporate it into our understanding of ourselves. If we disbelieved everything everyone told us, we might still believe the world was flat. An adjusted person is one who pays attention to everything in their environment.

*B. Theological Reflections*

In the Holy Koran, a constant theme is put forth that every believer is valuable because of his belief in Islam, even the individuals who may think they were sitting in the back row when talents were handed out. One place where such a theme is discussed is in 2:221, which says: "certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress woman, even though she should please you; ... and certainly a believing servant is better than an idolater, even though he should please you". So there may be many positive qualities in one's life which are disqualified and neglected by the negative thoughts.

**5. Jumping to Conclusions (JC):**

You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusions. There are two areas in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions.

Mind Reading (MR):

This is one area in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions. You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you do not bother to check this out.

Example: Suppose a friend says she does not have time to have a conversation with you on the telephone at a certain point. The depressed individual may conclude, "She is ignoring me and does not want to talk with me, because she does not like me anymore."

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One should never make an assumption about what someone is thinking without asking them because it is usually impossible to know what another person is thinking, no matter how sure we are we know. Jumping to conclusions about what the other is thinking is also maladaptive because our negative reactions to their imagined thoughts may set up a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, we may react negatively to them when we suspect they do not like us, when in fact they do. However, our negative reactions will soon turn them off.

*B. Theological reflections*

In the Holy Koran, it is recommended to rely on people's own declaration and not to try to read their minds to take advantage of them, as it says, "O you who believe! When you go to war in Allah's way, make investigation, and do not say to any one who offers you peace: you are not a believer ...". It may be also that we begin to try to read other's minds because we are overly concerned about their perceptions of us, to the extent of



basing our worth on their perceptions of us. Prophets in the Holy Koran, however, present examples of those who were not overly concerned about others' impression of them, and indeed, surely did not pay much attention to the unjust words directed against them, such as being sorcerers (43:49), insane (68:51) or liars (54:25).

#### The Fortune Telling Error (FT):

The second way in which depressed individuals jump to conclusions is they anticipate that things will turn out badly. They feel convinced that their predictions are an already established fact.

Example: Depressed individuals will tell themselves that they are never going to recover, "I will feel miserable forever."

##### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

one can successfully predict the future with 100% certainty; there are so many factors that could have an impact upon the future. Furthermore, our predictions are likely to be even more off base if we predict only negative events because probability suggests that both positive and negative events will occur.

##### *B. Theological Reflections*

Often our jumping to conclusions regarding the future implies a fear about the future. The Holy Koran certainly emphasizes the idea that God will give us a spirit of power and love, the ability to control our fears rather than a spirit of timidity. For example, remember when Prophet Muhammad was facing danger of being found and killed by the heathens in the cave. At that hard time, he told his companion, "do not sorrow, surely Allah is with us" (9:40). Essentially, by worrying and imagining a negative future we do not improve the situation. Our thoughts should be on the present and on trusting God, like, " ... Allah is sufficient for us and He is the best one in whom we trust" (3:173).

#### **6. Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization (MM):**

You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick".

Example: A depressed individual accidentally misfiled some papers while working at his job. He concluded, "I made a mistake. How horrible! Everyone will think I am incompetent." An example of minimization would occur when the same employee was told by one of his or her colleagues that he had done a good job on a report. His reaction was to think, "oh well, doing the report was very simple and anyone could do a good job on it."

##### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

It is important to have an accurate perception of ourselves and our performance. It is also

important to realize that everyone makes mistakes and that they are to be expected. It is impossible for anyone to be perfect.

#### *B. Theological reflections*

God actually wants us to alter our point of view, so that many things that people consider not so important should be very important to us, and many important things in other people's view should not be so important to us. For example, have you ever done monetary help to others? If so, do you consider it of a very great value? According to the Holy Koran, even a small amount of monetary or other help to other people, if done with belief in God, is regarded as very valuable. It says: "who is he that will lend Allah a good loan so he will multiply it many multiples! Allah grasps and outspreads, and to Him you shall be returned" (2:245). Here, helping people by lending them money is regarded as helping Allah directly!

On the other hand, all good things you do might be so valuable in God's eyes but may be less remarkable to other people, like tolerating life difficulties and continuing your efforts to help yourself, fighting hopelessness, and even trivial things like doing your housework and earning money for your living!

### **7. Emotional Reasoning (ER):**

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore, it must be true."

Example: A depressed individual may tell himself, "I feel overwhelmed and hopeless, therefore, my problems must be impossible to solve, or I'll feel inadequate, therefore, I must be a worthless person."

#### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

One cannot assume that one's emotions are a reflection of the true state of things. Our emotions are a reflection of our thoughts and beliefs, which as we have seen are a product of our past and may be distorted. Emotions may also be a reflection of our physiology and how tired we are, but they are not necessarily a reflection of the true state of affairs.

#### *B. Theological Reflections*

Many verses in Koran speak about Emotional Reasoning, where people actually feel like their thoughts are true, but they are not: "when we give people a taste of mercy, they rejoice in it, but when evil befalls them through the forwarding of their own hands, they become despondent" (30:36). So many people when having good fortune feel like it will last forever and become overly happy, and when they face troubles they feel like it will last forever and fall into despair, but both feelings (actually strong beliefs) are incorrect and temporary.

## **8. Should Statements (SS):**

You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements towards others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.

Example: One example is the depressed housewife who says to herself, "I should keep my house cleaner, and I shouldn't complain," or, "I should be able to get my work done during the day."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

"Should" statements generate a lot of unnecessary emotional turmoil in your daily life, and, paradoxically, usually do not motivate you to change your behavior. Usually, you resent the source of the "shoulds." Saying, "I should do this", or "I must do this," usually causes one to feel pressured and resentful.

### *B. Theological Reflection*

Several verses in Holy Koran emphasize the concept that, "Allah does not impose upon any soul a duty but to the extent of its ability" (2:286, 2:233, 6:152, 23:62, and 7:42). "Should statements" on the contrary, often expect us or other people to do or feel what they cannot do or feel under those circumstances. Therefore, they cause resentment and despair and are dysfunctional. For example, when you are depressed, if you tell yourself, "I shouldn't be so weak, I shouldn't feel sad like that"; you usually feel bad about yourself and this can lead to more sadness, weakness, and depression. Even Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is encouraged in the Koran not to be so hard on himself: as God says to him, "we have not sent down the Koran to you for you to be distressed" (20:2); so we could be taught that being hard on ourselves can sometimes be dysfunctional.

## **9. Labeling and Mislabeled (L or ML):**

This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him or her: "You are an idiot." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

Example: An individual fails to get a job which they applied for and they call themselves a "failure."

### *A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

We are not our behavior. Labeling yourself is not only self-defeating, it is irrational. You cannot be equated with any one thing you do. Your life is made up of many events, thoughts, actions, and emotions. For example, you do not call yourself a "Breather" just because you breathe. Likewise, you do not call yourself a "failure" because you made a mistake.

*B. Theological Reflection*

God does not base our worth only on our activities. Likewise, He does not label us based only on our present activities. God shows great mercy for us even when our activities would not merit that. An example in Koran is Prophet Yunus. He left his people without Allah's command but eventually was rescued and respected by God and even was sent to another 100 thousand people to preach to them (37:147); so he was not a failure because of his mistake. Furthermore, we still have our future acts, and our worth cannot be evaluated only based on our present acts or our lowest level of function. For example, in the battle of Uhud, Muslims were defeated but they weren't failures, because eventually they could overcome their despair and had many future victories.

**10. Personalization (P):**

You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event for which you were not primarily responsible.

Example: One example is the child who misbehaves or is rude. The depressed mother says, "I am a failure or a bad mother," (as if she could control everything her child did).

*A. Why is this thinking incorrect?*

Essentially, the person with this problem has confused influence with control. While we obviously have some influence over people, especially our children, we cannot control everything they do. What another individual does is ultimately their responsibility and decision, not yours. We are not omnipotent.

*B. Theological Reflection*

God has control over the events that happen in the world. However, for the most part, we do not. We should not presume to be God or try to do so. This is especially important when negative events happen to us.

## Session 3: Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts: The Battlefield of the Mind

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verse

**"Surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest."** (13 (Raad):28)

#### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have. Turn to the next page in this workbook for instructions.

#### 3. Thought Log

Please write down your thoughts once a day using the ABC method. Be sure to fill out all of the sections and categorize each thought into one of the unhelpful thought categories. If you have more than one stream of ideas in one time period, you can indicate several categories. There are seven thought logs included in the manual this week so that you can fill one out each day.

Remember that this is a learning experience; you should not worry about completing the logs perfectly.

#### 4. Positive Activity

Add another positive activity to your week. Follow the same procedure for scheduling this activity as we used in Session 2.

#### 5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

#### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## **Contemplative Prayer: Praying God's Word**

Contemplative prayer is a way to meditate on God's word and leads to a more intimate relationship with Him. One of the most common metaphors for contemplative prayer is of the lover or friend. God desires our simple presence more than any action or service we might give. Indeed, prayer has been described as a gift to God. Prayer is also a discipline, undertaken as one would undertake to learn to play the piano. Practice is the key.

One way to engage in contemplative prayer is to take a verse from the Koran, one of God's thoughts, and meditate on it. In other words, you spend some quiet time thinking about the verse, repeating it to yourself, and saying it as a prayer to God. It's like letting yourself be saturated in God's words. Some forms of meditation have you focus your attention on your breath. When you notice yourself thinking about something else, you are to bring your attention back to your breath. Contemplative prayer is different in that instead of focusing on your breath you focus on God's words. This leads to a contemplative, prayerful state.

It's normal to find that your mind has wandered to thinking about something else. When you notice that this has happened, don't get upset with yourself. Simply bring your attention back to the verse. It might be helpful to have the verse written on a piece of paper or gently underlined in the Koran in front of you so that you can more easily keep your attention on the words. It is also normal to find yourself wanting to pray to God as you are in this state. If that happens just go with it and pray whatever comes up in your heart.

### **The Method**

1. Choose a scripture. Begin with your memory verse for the week.
2. Sit comfortably, but not too comfortably, back straight, chest open so the breath is free and open.
3. Read the passage slowly. Savor each phrase. What word phrase or idea speaks to you?
4. Read the passage again. Where does this passage touch your life? What do you see, hear, touch, or remember?
5. Read the passage a third time. Listen quietly.
6. Note insights, reflections, and personal response to the reading in your journal.
7. Follow the steps in order or go back and forth between them as you feel moved.
8. Finish by waiting for a few moments in silence.

### **Instructions**

Practice this for 20 minutes once or twice daily, and then discuss with your therapist any problems you encountered in doing this, or share how praying in this way made you feel.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 1

(\*To be Completed During Session 3\*)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 2

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.



## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 3

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 4

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 5

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 6

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## ABC Method for Challenging Beliefs Leading to Negative Emotions

### Session 3: Worksheet 7

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Unhelpful Thought Category:** Specify the unhelpful thought category(s). (See Unhelpful Thinking Styles Worksheet) that best describes the error(s) in the belief.

## Planning Pleasant Activity #3 Worksheet

### 1. Identify Activity #3 from the Pleasant Activity List or your imagination.

Activity planned: \_\_\_\_\_

Who has to be contacted or notified? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. When will each be accomplished?

Date of activity: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Prediction

On scale of 0 – 100 how positive will the event be to you? \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Reflect

Date activity was accomplished: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome: On scale of 0 – 100 how positive was the event for you? \_\_\_\_\_

Conclusion: What seems to make events pleasant at this point? What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Ideas for Future Activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Session 4: Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts: Bringing All Thoughts Captive

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**"Indeed, we created the human. We know the whisperings of his soul, and are closer to him than the life-vein" (50 (Qaaf):16)**

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Thought Log Monitor

Complete the ABCDE thought monitor at least once a day.

Be on the outlook for automatic negative thoughts that trigger emotional upset and negative behaviors such as avoidance. The goal is to improve on the ability to spot these negative patterns at the time they occur, and to attempt to develop alternative ways of responding through the use of more effective beliefs and expectations.

Remember to use your religious beliefs and practices, as well as scriptures, to help challenge your unhelpful and negative beliefs.

4. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

5. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Disputing Questions

Use these questions to challenge your automatic thoughts. Be sure to answer each question you pose to yourself. You will find each question helpful for many different thoughts. Several examples are also presented to help you get started.

1. Do I know for certain that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** Do I know for certain that I won't have anything to say?
2. Am I 100% sure that \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** Am I 100% sure that my anxiety will show?
3. What evidence do I have that \_\_\_\_\_?  
What evidence do I have that the opposite is true?  
**Example:** What evidence do I have that they did not understand my speech?  
What evidence do I have that they did understand my speech?
4. What is this worst that could happen? How bad is that? How can I cope with that?
5. Do I have a crystal ball?
6. Is there another explanation for \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** Is there another explanation for his refusal to have coffee with me?
7. Does \_\_\_\_\_ have to lead to or equal \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** Does "being nervous" have to lead to or equal "looking stupid"?
8. Is there another point of view?
9. What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean? Does \_\_\_\_\_ really mean that I am a(n) \_\_\_\_\_?  
**Example:** What does "looking like an idiot" mean? Does the fact that I stumbled over my words really mean that I look like an idiot?



**ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 1)**  
**(\*To Complete During Session 4\*)**

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

### ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 3)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 4)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 5)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 6)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 4, Worksheet 7)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 5: Dealing with Loss

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“Allah charges no soul except to its capacity. What it has earned is for it, and what it has committed is against it. 'Our lord, do not take us to account if we have forgotten, or made a mistake. Our lord, do not burden us with a load as you have burdened those before us. Our lord, do not over burden us with more than we can bear. And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy on us. You are our guide, so give us victory over the unbeliever people.’” (2 (Baqarah):286)**

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Thought Log

Use the ABCDE thought log worksheets to actively address one or two losses you have experienced as a result of your illness. You and your therapist should have come up with a concrete plan to do so in session. Two ABCDE thought logs and one behavioral experiment worksheet have been included in this section of the workbook for this exercise. Remember that integrating your religious beliefs and practices into the use of each of these tools makes them even more effective.

4. Active Surrender

Reflect on the things in your life that you want to surrender to God. Use the worksheet provided to make a list. Then, set aside a block of time to surrender these things to God in prayer. This is another effective tool to address the losses you have experienced as a result of your illness.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.



## Words of Encouragement

The important question is, what can we do when we suffer an important loss to decrease our suffering and increase our strength? There are several important means towards this goal, which we will discuss 2 of them in this session. One is re-interpreting the losses, and the other is Active Surrender which we will discuss later if we have time.

One important way to decrease our suffering is to try to look at the losses in a different way or from different aspects. We can use the holy Koran in this regard, because the stories we read about in the Koran are there to encourage us, to provide a model for us to interpret the events in our own lives, and to create in us strength and hope. For example, It may be comforting to know that a number of individuals in the Koran suffered great losses. In fact, one could argue that there isn't a single individual mentioned in the Koran that didn't lose something important to them or who didn't suffer in some significant way. Think of Prophet Jacob (Ya'qub). He and God had a very special relationship. Yet, according to Holy Koran, over and over again he suffered great losses, for example, losing his beloved son Yusuf, losing his eyes (12:84), and losing his other son. Even Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his believer companions and family members suffered greatly; many were eventually put to death, and these were the individuals with the closest relationship to Allah! We can see that it doesn't matter who we are or what we do in life. As Muslims or human beings we will suffer: "we will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient; who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: surely we are Allah's and to him we shall surely return; on those will be prayers and mercy from their lord, those are guided" (2:155-157). So one coping method with losses is to try to remember the sufferings of Allah's close friends. As human beings or Muslims, we all may suffer.

Another way for re-interpreting the losses is to try to look at the loss as a situation that though difficult, can have probable fruitful results if we try to be patient and trust God. According to Koran, both pleasant and unpleasant events may be regarded as good or bad for a given person: "we test you by evil and by good by way of trial, and to us you shall be returned" (21:35). A pleasant event such as becoming rich can be good for people if they feel grateful and use their wealth wisely for themselves and their family and to help other people, but if they become arrogant and boastful and feel needless to God, the same wealth is bad for them and only leads to their spiritual deterioration. On the other hand, unpleasant events such as diseases and losses can be really worse if they lead to despairing from God's comfort: "none but unbelievers despair of the comfort of Allah" (12:87); but if people consent to God's consent and try to be patient and to do what they can for their improvement, these same events can be keys to their feeling closer to God and reaching to the eternal joy in the afterworld, as Allah says, "those who are patient will be paid back their reward in full without measure" (39:10).

So in summary, according to Holy Koran, Muslims (such as yourself) who patiently try to help themselves are blessed and achieve a relatively high spiritual rank. The Koran emphasizes that there is good tidings for such people. As it says, "believers, seek assistance in patience and prayer, surely Allah is with those who are patient" (2:153), and also, " give good tidings to the humble; whose hearts, when Allah is mentioned, quake, who endure their misfortunes with patience, and establish their prayers, and spend of that which we have provided them" (22:34-35).

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 1)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 5, Worksheet 2)

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.



## Session 6: Coping with Spiritual Struggles and Negative Emotions

### Home Practice Activities

#### 1. Memory Verses

**"We shall certainly test you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of goods, life and fruits; and give glad tidings to the patient. Who, when a misfortune befalls them, say: surely we are Allah's and to him we shall surely return. On those will be blessings and mercy from their lord; and those are the really guided" (2 (Baqarah):155-157).**

#### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer.

#### 3. Spiritual Struggles and Spiritual Resources

It is important to remember the following points:

- It is normal to question God in the face of illness.
- It is normal to feel negative emotions toward God.
- God created us to experience a range of emotions and He can accept all of them.
- God wants us to be honest with Him and to bring all of our concerns to Him.

If you and your therapist identified spiritual resources that would be helpful in addressing any spiritual struggles you have, make a plan to use these resources this week to address that issue. Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, prayer, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with clergy, Koran studies, repentance and forgiveness, attending religious or spiritual services, attending support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, attending activities sponsored by spiritual or religious groups like pot-lucks, bingo, and discussion groups. Several ABCDE thought logs have also been included in the workbook for this session; this may also be a helpful tool in addressing spiritual struggles this week.

#### 4. Repentance and Forgiveness

Forgiveness can be a powerful antidote for some spiritual struggles (e.g., resentment, anger, bitterness) and an integral part of the process of healing. Indeed, research has shown strong relationships between emotions such as anger and resentment and physical health problems and compromised immune functioning.

There are verses in the Koran that point to a mind-body relationship. One of the most typical is 12:84 is about prophet Jacob, which says, "and he (Jacob) turned away from them, and said: alas for Joseph! And his eyes became white on account of the grief." We learn from this verse that our body is connected sincerely with our soul, and extreme negative emotions, even when justified, can harm bodily organs. So if we harbor unforgiveness and bitterness toward others, God, or ourselves, our souls suffer and because of this nothing else in our life can we enjoy much either.

God instructs us to forgive others as He has forgiven us. That doesn't mean He wants you to change your mind and decide that what happened to you was right or justified. God never changes His mind about our sin—He always sees it as evil. What forgiving someone does mean is that we give up the right to hold this action against the person. We give up our right to feel resentful, bitter, and angry. When we make a decision with our will to forgive someone, even when we don't feel like it, God can then begin to change our feelings. Usually our feelings are the last part to change. That doesn't mean you haven't forgiven, it just means your feelings having yet come into alignment with the decision you made with your will to forgive.

Is there anyone you would like to forgive? That could include others, yourself, and even God (although He never sins, we can perceive a wrong against us in our minds). Is there anything you would like to ask forgiveness for (i.e., repent of), either from God or from others? If yes, and if you did not address these in session, make a list of the people you want to forgive or the things for which you need forgiveness.

Take some time to pray about each item on your list. It is important that your prayers be specific and that you do not just offer one blanket prayer for all the items listed. You can use a prayer such as the following:

*“O God, I purpose and choose to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person) for \_\_\_\_ (the action). I release him/her and cancel their debt to me completely. I will no longer hold any accusation against them. Even now I release them from this sin. I ask that you would forgive them for this sin and separate the sin from them forever. Please relieve me from the unforgiveness/bitterness (or other feelings against this person) that I have stored in my heart. I give you all my feelings of \_\_\_\_ and ask that You would cause my feelings to line up with my decision to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person). I also purpose and choose to forgive myself and ask you to forgive me. Thank you for forgiving me and making me righteous in your sight. O God, please heal my heart and tell me your truth about the situation.”*

Close your eyes and try to imagine yourself standing or prostrating before Allah or God. Then give the list of wrongs that others have done to you, and that you have just forgiven, to Him. Hand the list of your own sins to God, too, and hear Him saying, “You are forgiven. Go in peace.” Listen to hear what else God might have to say to you or what else He might do as you stay in this image. When you are finished, thank God for what He has just done for you.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally some time this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.

## Forgiveness Exercise

Is there anyone you would like to forgive? That could include others, yourself, and even God (although He never sinned against us, we can perceive a wrong against us in our minds). Is there anything you would like to ask forgiveness for (i.e., repent of), either from God or from others? If yes, make a list of the people you want to forgive or the things for which you need forgiveness.

Take some time to pray about each item on your list. It is important that your prayers be specific and that you do not just offer one blanket prayer for all the items listed. You can use a prayer such as the following:

*“O God, I purpose and choose to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person) for \_\_\_\_ (the action). I release him/her and cancel their debt to me completely. I will no longer hold any accusation against them. Even now I release them from this sin. I ask that you would forgive them for this sin and separate the sin from them forever. Please relieve me from the unforgiveness/bitterness (or other feelings against this person) that I have stored in my heart. I give you all my feelings of \_\_\_\_ and ask that You would cause my feelings to line up with my decision to forgive \_\_\_\_ (the person). I also purpose and choose to forgive myself and ask you to forgive me. Thank you for forgiving me and making me righteous in your sight. O God, please heal my heart and tell me your truth about the situation.”*

**I need forgiveness for....** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**I need to forgive.....** \_\_\_\_\_  
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## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 1)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.



## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 6, Worksheet 3)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 7: Gratitude

### Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“Remember me so that I will remember you, and be thankful to me, and do not be ungrateful to me” (2 (Baqarah):152).**

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Grateful Feelings Exercise: Counting our Blessings

Use your gratitude list, particularly your gratitude toward God for all that He is and all that He has done, as well as gratitude for those in your faith community, to help challenge negative thoughts and to replace negative emotions. Continue to add to your gratitude list this week as you think of more things for which you are grateful.

4. Gratitude Expression Exercise: Celebrating our Blessings

Express your feelings of gratitude toward the individual you identified in session. This ordinarily takes place in person, by phone, or letter. Complete at the specific time and place you chose in session. Remember to include the following:

- Precisely and specifically what it was that the other person did for you. Thus, "you were a nice person to me", is not as suitable as, "when I was in the hospital you came to visit me and you prayed for me every day."
- Include as many of these concrete activities for which you feel grateful as possible.
- Be sure to note what the meaning of the person's activities was for you. That is, how the activity or way of being made you feel, influenced your life, caused you to grow, taught you things you needed to know, etc.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.





## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 1)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 7, Worksheet 2)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 8: Altruism and Generosity Home Practice Activities

1. Memory Verse

**“Who is he that will lend Allah a good loan so that he will multiply it for him many times! Allah grasps and outspreads and to him you shall be returned”**  
(2 (Baqarah):245)

2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks’ memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

3. Altruistic Acts

Carry out the specific altruistic acts to be done for the particular persons at a particular time you and your therapist chose in session. Be sure to have more than one option in case other people are unavailable.

4. Pray for Someone Daily

Pick one person for whom you will pray for daily this week. This might be the person you have made contact with from your faith community, another friend, or relative. Pray for this person each day. Praying for someone other than ourselves helps to get our minds off of our own problems and is a great way to be generous with our time and energy. It also helps to put our own problems in perspective.

5. Contact Member of Faith Community

If you have not already done so, please make contact with a person(s) in your faith community and plan a time to get together with them, ideally sometime this week.

6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.



### Altruistic Acts

Make a list of the ways you have been helpful in the past and ways that you could be helpful now. Then rank each item on your list from easiest to most difficult (0-100 with 100 being the most difficult of all).

Helpful/Generous Act	Degree of Difficulty (0-100)	Activity Chosen

Next, select several of the easier acts you would like to initiate. Answer the following questions for each act you choose:

Helpful/Generous Act #1: \_\_\_\_\_

1. **For Whom?**
  
2. **When will you do it?**
  
3. **Why will you do it?**
  
4. **How will you do it?**
  
5. **How frequently will you do it?**

Helpful/Generous Act #2: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

Helpful/Generous Act #3: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. For Whom?**
- 2. When will you do it?**
- 3. Why will you do it?**
- 4. How will you do it?**
- 5. How frequently will you do it?**

Remember to connect your goal of helping others with verse 73:20 in the Koran, in which God describes that anyone who does good (like giving others a goodly loan) is as if doing it directly to God: "Who is he that will lend Allah a good loan so that he will multiply it for him many times! Allah grasps and outspreads and to him you shall be returned" (2:245)

## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs (Session 8: Optional)

**Activating Event:** Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**Beliefs:** What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**Consequent Feelings and Behavior:** What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**Dispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation:** Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**Religious Beliefs and Resources:** How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**Effective New Belief and Consequence:** What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.

## Session 9: Stress-Related and Spiritual Growth Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verses

**"(Prophet Yaqub said) O my sons! Go and inquire respecting Yusuf and his brother, and despair not of Allah's mercy; surely none despairs of Allah's mercy except the unbelieving people." (12 (Yusuf):86,87)**

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have.

### 3. Complete the Spiritual Reflections Worksheet

### 4. Positive Changes

Add to your list of the changes in your life that you could view as positive or that have caused growth, including spiritual growth. It will be helpful to look to your faith and God's promises in the Koran to help you view some of the changes that have occurred as positive.

Reflect on the meaning of these changes in terms of your character and the predictions you make regarding negative beliefs. In particular, what power do these changes give you to stop avoiding unpleasant experiences and to face them courageously?

### 5. Daily Prayer for Someone

Continue to pray daily for someone other than yourself this week. It could be the same person you prayed for last week or someone different.

### 6. Be sure to have your completed homework sheets readily available to you during your next session so that you can review them with your therapist.



## **Spiritual Reflections**

1. What does it say or what could it mean spiritually if you find some benefit from your tragedy or loss?
2. If there was any positive change in you, your perspective, or relationships, how do you make sense of that from a spiritual point of view? How does it make faith real for you?
3. What does having this faith or spiritual view mean in terms of coping with day-to-day struggles?
4. How can this view help you when you start to feel discouraged?
5. Any spiritual or faith perspective fades in and out. What concrete steps can you take on a regular basis to remind yourself of these helpful perspectives?

## Session 10: Hope and Relapse Prevention Home Practice Activities

### 1. Memory Verse

**"Surly those who say, 'Our lord is Allah', and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them saying: 'don't be scared and don't be sad! And receive the glad tidings of the garden which you were promised!'"**  
(41 (Fussilat):30)

### 2. Contemplative Prayer

Spend 20 minutes a day in contemplative prayer. Begin by using the memory verse for this week, and then try with previous weeks' memory verses or other favorite scriptures you may have. This is an important practice that we encourage you to continue to do daily.

### 3. Continue to Use the Tools Daily

In order to maintain the gains you have achieved in treatment you need to keep using the tools you have learned. These tools include the following:

- Challenging and changing your negative interpretations (Additional ABCDE sheets are included at the end of this workbook. Feel free to make extra copies for yourself)
- Gratitude
- Altruism (choose a specific activity for a specific person)
- Finding the positives in your life
- Praying for someone else
- Maintaining communication with God
- Look for examples in the Koran for encouragement
- Spending time with others
- Connecting with your faith community, specifically the person(s) identified earlier in treatment
- Filling your mind and heart with the Word of God

One way to remind yourself to continue to put into practice the things you have learned is to incorporate them into a daily devotional period. Each day during this time you can review your thoughts and behavior with God to make sure they line up with the truth in His Word. You might find it helpful to use a journal during this time.

### 4. Make Use of Your Spiritual Resources

Spiritual resources include, but are not limited to, prayer, journaling, social support from friends, conversations/counseling with clergy, Koran studies, repentance and forgiveness, existential psychotherapy, attending religious or spiritual services, attending support groups, like the ones providing help for physical or mental disorders, attending activities sponsored by spiritual or religious groups, and discussion groups.

## 5. Anticipate Set Backs

Remember that there will be set backs and times that are more challenging and difficult than others. It is at these times that it is even more important to engage in the activities and resources you learned, especially if you don't feel like it.

## 6. Continue Contact Member of Faith Community

Continue to be in regular contact with the member of your faith community. Remember to pray for him or her daily, too.

### **Congratulations on a job well done!**

The final prayer:<sup>1</sup>

O God, ...

Point me straight to:

Resist who is dishonest towards me, with good counsel;

Repay who separates from me, with gentle devotion;

Reward who deprives me, with free giving;

Recompense who cuts me, off with joining;

Oppose who slanders me, with excellent mention;

Give thanks for good; and,

Shut my eyes to evil!

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<sup>1</sup> Imam Ali ibn al-Hussain (PBUH) (Ali the son of Hussain) is the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 12 Shia Muslim Imams (sacred leaders) and is the son of Imam Hussain the 3<sup>rd</sup> Shia Imam. Imam Hussain is the grand son of Prophet Muhammad and the son of the prophet's daughter Fatimah. Ali ibn al-Hussain is more often called by one of his epithets such as Imam Sajjad (the one who prostrates very much) or Zein al-Abedin (the ornament of the worshippers). Sahifah Sajjadiyah (the supplications of Imam Sajjad) is famous among Shia Muslims and consists of many beautiful supplications. The above prayer is quoted from one of his prayers in the Sahifah called "His Supplication on Nobel Moral Traits and Acts Pleasing to God". All of the Sahifah is available from: <http://www.al-islam.org/sahifa/>. Sunni Muslims, too, usually respect Imam Sajjad, but they do not refer to him as Imam and do not use the phrase "Peace Be Upon Him" (PBUH) after his name. So the Psychotherapist should first ask the Sunni patient like: "There are many beautiful prayers in Islam, and I have chosen one of them as our termination prayer to pray together. This supplication is from Ali the son of Hussein the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) who is respected by most Sunni and Shia Muslims. Do you mind if we say it together?" and then if agreed, say the prayer.



## ABCDE Method for Challenging Beliefs

**A**ctivating Event: Describe the situation around the time the negative emotion(s) began.

**B**eliefs: What negative thoughts or expectations automatically went through your mind when you were in that situation?

**C**onsequent Feelings and Behavior: What painful feelings did these thoughts or expectations lead to? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very intense. What behavior did these beliefs and feelings lead to?

**D**ispute the Beliefs and Deal with the Situation: Is there any evidence that those beliefs or expectations are not totally accurate or true? Describe the contrary evidence. Specify the unhelpful thought category that best describes the error in the belief. Even if the situation can't change, what evidence do you have that you could manage it (based on your talents, past experience, support persons, and/or resources)?

**R**eligious Beliefs and Resources: How can your view of God, your Muslim worldview, the Koran and religious writings, spiritual wisdom, and other sources provide evidence that challenge your automatic negative beliefs and beliefs that you can't cope?

**E**ffective New Belief and Consequence: What is a different way to now look at the situation? How did your feelings change after you looked at the situation differently? Rate each feeling using a scale of 1-10, where 10 is very painful.