

Learned Optimism Adverse Events Log

Identifying ways to challenge your thoughts and feelings about adverse events (while creating new ways of thinking) is the hallmark of Martin Seligman's work on learned optimism. This log allows you to track adverse events then challenge them using Seligman's A-B-C-D-E model:

1. Adversity:

- Describe a recent adversity.
- Include who, what, when, and where of the situation.
- Be precise, detailed, specific, and accurate.
- Avoid letting your beliefs about the adversity influence your description.
- Be objective and use “truth statements” (focus solely on the facts).

2. Beliefs:

- Record what you were saying to yourself during the adversity event.
- What beliefs were running through your mind? Self-talk?

3. Consequences:

- How did your thoughts affect how you felt? Be specific!
- How did you react or behave?
- Did you experience body sensations?
- Do the consequences make sense given your beliefs?
- Identify other beliefs you may not have been aware of initially.

4. Disputation:

- Generate one piece of evidence to point out the inaccuracy in your beliefs.
- Is there another way you can look at this situation?
- What were environmental factors, other people involved, or issues outside of your control?
- View your beliefs from a different perspective. Did you learn something from this event?
- You might say, “That’s not completely true because...” or, “A more accurate way of seeing this is...” or, “The most likely outcome is...and I can...to manage or cope.”

5. Energization:

- How did your Disputation change your Energy?
- What happened to your mood and emotions?
- How did your behavior change?
- What new solutions did you see?

What to Do

Use the following chart for two weeks. First, fill out the first three categories (A-B-C). Then, go back and look for examples of pessimism and negativity. Highlight or circle them. You may need

to use an additional piece of paper if you run out of space. During the second week, use all five categories (A-B-C-D-E). You will actively challenge negativity and pessimism while teaching yourself to be more optimistic. Refer to the previous page for information about what to include in each section.

	Adverse Event #1	Adverse Event #2	Adverse Event #3	Adverse Event #4	Adverse Event #5
Adversity					
Beliefs					
Consequences					
Disputation	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?	Evidence? Alternatives? Implications? Usefulness?
Energization					

Reference: Seligman, M. E. P. (2006). *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*. 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Vintage Press.