

The Doubtful Dieter

✓ Your Goal: Alter Your Fate

- Know that self-doubt can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Negative thinking can promote negative outcomes.
- Know that people who can respond to life's difficulties in a more positive way tend to:
 - ▶ Be healthier
 - ▶ Catch fewer infections
 - ▶ Live longer
- Commit to the Doubtful Dieter strategies—these will help you:
 - ▶ Take control
 - ▶ Alter your fate
 - ▶ Improve your outcomes
 - ▶ Reach your goals and lose weight

✓ Your Goal: Confront Your Beliefs

- Use an ABC record to track your negative beliefs:
 - ▶ **A** is for the adversity.
 - ▶ **B** is for the beliefs.
 - ▶ **C** is for the consequences.
- Take as much time as you need to record five ABCs from your own life that relate to your eating, exercise, or mood. (See the Sample ABC Records for examples.) Using your own ABCs, notice how negative beliefs prevent you from taking positive actions.
- Pay attention to how the following can make you feel hopeless and helpless:
 - ▶ Blaming yourself
 - ▶ Making a problem seem bigger than it really is
 - ▶ Letting a problem seem permanent and unfixable

Sample ABC Records for Doubtful Dieters

Adversity: While at work, I couldn't resist and ate two doughnuts.
Belief: I am so weak. My coworkers know I'm on a diet and must think I'm a real pig.
Consequences: After work, I ate three bowls of ice cream because I had already ruined my diet.

✓ **Your Goal: Distract and Dispute**

- You can use the STOP method to *distract* your attention from your negative beliefs:
 - ▶ **S** is for Slow down.
 - ▶ **T** is for Take a breath.
 - ▶ **O** is for Observe objectively without attitude or emotion.
 - ▶ **P** is for Plan a different response.
- You can also distract yourself by snapping a rubber band on your wrist or by writing down your negative beliefs the moment they occur.
- Give yourself permission to schedule a later time to think about the adverse situation and what happened. This can help diminish the seriousness of the actual situation.
- Practice *disputing* your beliefs by:
 - ▶ Considering the evidence and realizing that your beliefs are not based in fact
 - ▶ Thinking of alternative causes that you can change and are less personal (see the Sample ABCDE Record for examples)
- Know that once you're able to dispute your negative beliefs, your coping responses will become more positive and effective.

✓ **Your Goal: Help Yourself**

- You can help dispute your beliefs and cope better by adding two more steps to the ABC record:
 - ▶ **D** is for Disputation.
 - ▶ **E** is for Energization.
- Bring completed ABCDE records to discuss at your next visit.
- For more information on ABCDE records and overcoming negative beliefs, read *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* by Martin E Seligman (New York: Vintage; 2006).
- You may also want to find a mental health professional with experience in cognitive behavioral therapy.

Sample ABCDE Records for Doubtful Dieters

Adversity:	While at work, I couldn't resist and ate two doughnuts.
Belief:	I am so weak. My coworkers know I'm on a diet and must think I'm a real pig.
Consequences:	After work, I ate three bowls of ice cream because I had already ruined my diet.
Disputation:	Okay, so I skipped my 350-calorie breakfast this morning and I was starving and had 600-calorie doughnuts instead. That's only one meal. It doesn't mean I blew my diet.
Energization:	At noon, I got right back on track by eating the healthy lunch I brought from home. It's easier to make good food choices when I'm not starving. I also reminded myself that if I eat my breakfast, I'll be less likely to make poor food choices.