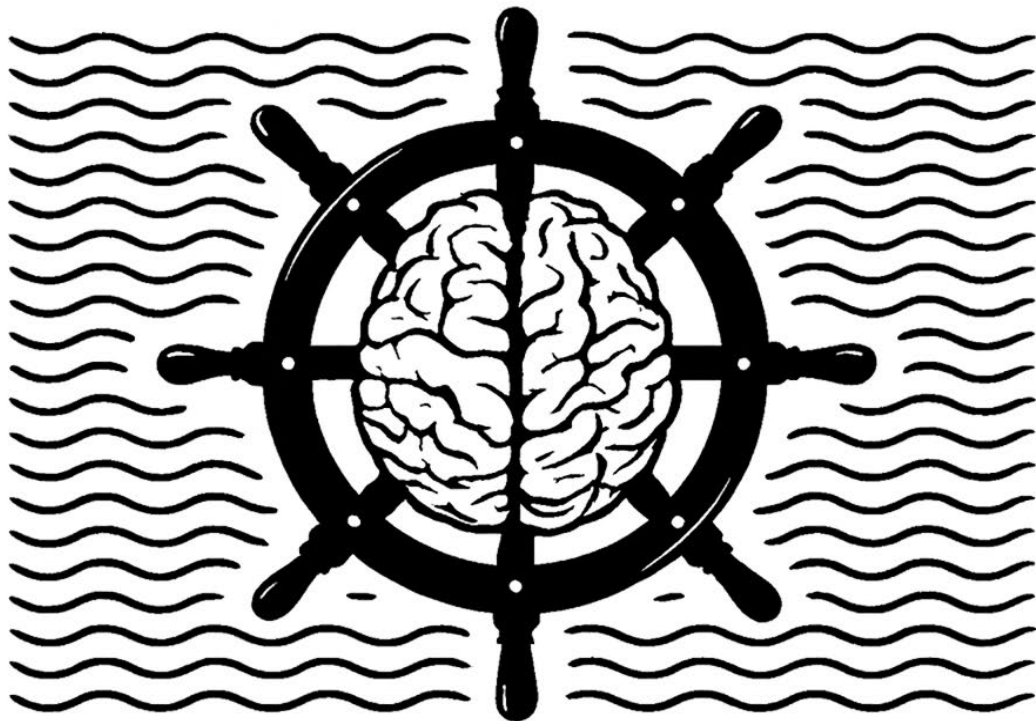




# NAVIGATING OVERTHINKING



## A CBT WORKBOOK

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# Facilitator's Guide - Navigating Your Overthinking

## A CBT Workbook

### Purpose of the Guide

This guide helps facilitators lead individuals or groups through the *Navigating Your Overthinking* workbook. Each session blends psychoeducation, CBT tools, and practical recovery-focused skills.

### General Guidelines

- **Safety and respect:** Begin each group with reminders about confidentiality and nonjudgment.
- **Normalize overthinking:** Present it as a common mental habit that can change with practice.
- **Balance sharing and privacy:** Encourage, but never force, personal disclosure.
- **Relate to recovery:** Continually connect content to SUD treatment goals.

### Session 1 — Understanding Overthinking

- **Read Aloud** from Section 1.
- **Discussion:** How does overthinking show up in your recovery?
- **Activity:** Identify personal signs of overthinking.
- **Homework:** Track one overthinking episode this week.

### Session 2 — Why We Overthink

- **Read Aloud** from Section 2.
- **Discussion:** Triggers and situations that spark overthinking.
- **Activity:** Trigger-mapping worksheet.
- **Homework:** Note one trigger and how you responded.

### Session 3 — The Cycle of Overthinking

- **Read Aloud** from Section 3.
- **Discussion:** How overthinking loops keep us stuck.
- **Activity:** Draw your own overthinking loop.
- **Homework:** Write down an example and how you might interrupt it.

### Session 4 — Challenging Overthinking Thoughts

- **Read Aloud** from Section 4.

- **Discussion:** Distorted thinking patterns participants notice most.
- **Activity:** Practice thought records as a group.
- **Homework:** Identify and reframe one overthinking thought.

### **Session 5 — Grounding Yourself in the Present**

- **Read Aloud** from Section 5.
- **Discussion:** Which grounding tools feel realistic to use daily.
- **Activity:** Practice 3 grounding exercises together.
- **Homework:** Use one grounding exercise each day.

### **Session 6 — Taking Action Instead of Overthinking**

- **Read Aloud** from Section 6.
- **Discussion:** How action can reduce overthinking.
- **Activity:** Create a 3-step action plan for something you've been overthinking.
- **Homework:** Complete step one of the plan.

### **Session 7 — Building an Anti-Overthinking Plan**

- **Read Aloud** from Section 7.
- **Discussion:** Elements of an effective plan.
- **Activity:** Write personal anti-overthinking plans.
- **Homework:** Begin using the plan and track results.

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## **Tips for Facilitators**

- Use **Read Aloud** passages to anchor each session.
- Keep discussion recovery-focused and skill-based.
- Reinforce that progress is about practicing new habits, not eliminating overthinking entirely.
- Praise small wins and consistency.

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## **Closing the Program**

- Reflect on growth and changes participants notice.
- Encourage continued use of CBT tools.
- Suggest revisiting the workbook during high-stress periods.

# Navigating Your Overthinking

## A CBT Workbook

### How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is designed to help you understand overthinking, recognize its effects on your recovery, and practice CBT tools to manage it. Each section begins with a **Read Aloud** paragraph meant to provide insight and motivation, followed by reflection questions, exercises, and coping strategies. The material is tailored for individuals in SUD treatment, where overthinking often fuels anxiety, self-doubt, and relapse risk.

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## Section 1 — Understanding Overthinking

### Read Aloud

Overthinking is when your mind gets stuck replaying events, imagining worst-case scenarios, or analyzing situations long past the point of being helpful. In recovery, overthinking can amplify cravings, magnify fears, and make it hard to trust yourself. Understanding that overthinking is a mental habit—not a permanent part of you—is the first step toward change.

### Key Ideas

- Overthinking is often fueled by anxiety and uncertainty.
- It can be about the past (rumination) or the future (worry).
- Breaking the cycle is possible with awareness and practice.

### Journal Prompts

- What does overthinking look like for you?
  - When are you most likely to get caught in overthinking?
  - How has overthinking impacted your recovery?
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## Section 2 — Why We Overthink

### Read Aloud

Overthinking often develops as a way to feel in control, avoid mistakes, or prepare for every possible outcome. In reality, it often drains energy and increases stress. For people in recovery, overthinking can be linked to fear of relapse, guilt about the past, or pressure to make perfect

choices. Recognizing why you overthink helps you respond with compassion instead of frustration.

### **Common Triggers**

- Uncertainty about the future
- High-pressure situations
- Fear of making mistakes
- Regret or guilt from past choices

### **Journal Prompts**

- What situations or feelings most often trigger your overthinking?
  - Do you notice any patterns between overthinking and craving?
  - Which of your overthinking habits feel most exhausting?
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## **Section 3 — The Cycle of Overthinking**

### **Read Aloud**

Overthinking creates a loop: a thought enters your mind, you dwell on it, your stress increases, and the thought becomes harder to let go of. This cycle can lead to mental exhaustion, poor sleep, and even decision paralysis. Breaking the cycle means interrupting it early and shifting your focus to the present moment.

**CBT Insight** Thought → Emotional Reaction → More Thoughts → Increased Distress → Reinforcement of the Thought.

### **Journal Prompts**

- What's a recent example of an overthinking loop you experienced?
  - How did it affect your emotions and behavior?
  - What might have helped you break that loop sooner?
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## **Section 4 — Challenging Overthinking Thoughts**

### **Read Aloud**

One of the most effective CBT tools for overthinking is cognitive restructuring—identifying and challenging unhelpful thoughts. Often, overthinking is driven by distorted thinking patterns like catastrophizing or mind-reading. By questioning the accuracy and helpfulness of your thoughts, you can reduce their power.

## **Common Overthinking Distortions**

- Catastrophizing (imagining the worst possible outcome)
- Mind-reading (assuming you know what others think)
- Overgeneralizing (believing one event defines all future events)
- Perfectionism (demanding flawlessness from yourself or others)

## **Journal Prompts**

- What's one overthinking thought you have this week?
  - What evidence supports it? What evidence challenges it?
  - What would be a more balanced thought?
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# **Section 5 — Grounding Yourself in the Present**

## **Read Aloud**

Overthinking pulls your mind into the past or future. Grounding techniques help bring your attention back to the present, reducing mental chatter and calming your nervous system. Practicing these skills regularly makes it easier to interrupt overthinking before it spirals.

## **Grounding Tools**

- 5-4-3-2-1 sensory exercise
- Deep, slow breathing
- Naming 3 things you can see, hear, and feel
- Mindful walking

## **Journal Prompts**

- Which grounding exercise feels most effective for you?
  - How do you feel after using a grounding tool?
  - How can you remind yourself to ground when overthinking starts?
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# **Section 6 — Taking Action Instead of Overthinking**

## **Read Aloud**

Overthinking can keep you stuck in planning and analyzing instead of doing. The antidote is taking small, intentional actions. You don't have to feel ready before you act—action can create clarity and reduce overthinking.

### **Action Tips**

- Set time limits for decision-making
- Break big tasks into small, easy steps
- Focus on progress, not perfection

### **Journal Prompts**

- What's one thing you've been overthinking that you could take action on today?
  - What's the smallest possible first step?
  - How can you support yourself in following through?
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## **Section 7 — Building an Anti-Overthinking Plan**

### **Read Aloud**

Managing overthinking is an ongoing process. Creating a personal plan gives you tools to turn to when your thoughts start spiraling. Over time, you'll build confidence in your ability to catch and redirect unhelpful thinking.

### **Plan Components**

- Your most common overthinking triggers
- The grounding tools that work best for you
- Steps you'll take when you notice overthinking starting

### **Journal Prompts**

- What will your first step be when you catch yourself overthinking?
- Who can help you stay accountable to your plan?
- How will you measure your progress?