



Cognitive Hardiness Inventory

Feedback Report

May 24, 2026



Introduction

Cognitive hardiness is a well-established psychological construct describing a stable set of attitudes and beliefs that enable individuals to manage the demands of work and life more effectively.

Rather than simply enduring difficult circumstances, cognitively hardy individuals actively reframe stressful situations — viewing them as meaningful opportunities for growth rather than threats to be survived. This capacity to transform adversity is not fixed; it can be developed and strengthened through intentional effort.

First conceptualized by Kobasa (1979), cognitive hardiness comprises three core dimensions that work together to shape how individuals respond to stress and change:

- **Commitment:** a deep sense of engagement with work, relationships, and life's activities, as opposed to detachment or alienation. Committed individuals find purpose and meaning in what they do, which sustains motivation even under pressure.
- **Challenge:** the tendency to view change, uncertainty, and difficulty as stimulating and developmental, rather than as sources of helplessness or hopelessness. Those who are high in challenge actively seek out learning opportunities in demanding situations.
- **Control:** a strong belief that one's actions and decisions genuinely influence outcomes — that life is not simply a matter of luck or fate. This sense of personal agency supports persistence and proactive coping in the face of setbacks.

Decades of published research have found cognitive hardiness to be consistently and positively associated with a wide range of outcomes, including better physical health, lower levels of burnout, stronger job performance, and greater psychological well-being. The three dimensions are conceptually distinct but work in concert: together, they form a durable foundation for resilience in both professional and personal domains.



Results

YOUR OVERALL COGNITIVE HARDINESS SCORE

37.6

Although **Cognitive hardiness** is multidimensional — encompassing *commitment, challenge, and control* — research consistently supports treating it as a unified construct for overall assessment purposes. Your composite score reflects the general strength of your cognitive hardiness profile. Equally, each of the three underlying dimensions offers specific and actionable insights: attention to any dimension that is relatively lower can meaningfully strengthen your overall resilience and capacity to manage stress.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESULTS

Your score is expressed as a t-score — a standardised metric that allows your result to be compared against a representative reference group. T-scores have a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. The table below shows how to interpret your score relative to others who have completed the **Cognitive Hardiness Inventory**.

A **higher** score on this scale **above 50** is desirable to optimize long term physical health and psychological well-being.

SCORE INTERPRETATION GUIDE

Very High $t \geq 70$ — Scored higher than approximately 98% of respondents

High $t \geq 60$ — Scored higher than approximately 84% of respondents

Moderately High $t \geq 55$ — Scored higher than approximately 69% of respondents

Average $t = 50$ — Near the middle of the distribution; approximately equal proportions scored higher and lower

Moderately Low $t \leq 45$ — Approximately 69% of respondents scored higher

Low $t \leq 40$ — Approximately 84% of respondents scored higher

Very Low $t \leq 30$ — Approximately 98% of respondents scored higher



INTERPRETING YOUR COGNITIVE HARDINESS SCORE

Cognitive hardiness functions as a psychological buffer between stressful circumstances and their impact on health and performance. Individuals with higher scores tend to appraise demanding situations as more manageable, draw on a broader range of coping resources, and sustain their well-being more effectively under pressure. Research suggests that higher cognitive hardiness is associated with lower rates of illness, reduced burnout, and stronger outcomes across a variety of job-related measures.

Importantly, cognitive hardiness is not a fixed trait. It is a relatively stable but developable set of attitudes — one that can shift meaningfully in response to coaching, structured training, and dedicated self-development practice.

Individuals who score high on **Cognitive Hardiness** tend to cope with stress through direct problem-solving rather than by avoiding or ignoring the situation. They also tend to interact with others by giving and receiving assistance and encouragement rather than by striking out or being overprotective. High **Cognitive Hardiness** scores suggest the possession of a generally hardy outlook on life associated with a lowered risk of job burnout, physical illness and psychological distress.

Whether your current score is low, average, or high, there is value in examining your patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaviour in the face of work and life challenges.

The **nine development exercises** included in the following section are designed for this purpose. They are beneficial for all respondents, and particularly impactful for those whose scores fall in the lower ranges. The exercises are organized around the three core dimensions of hardiness — commitment, challenge, and control — and offer practical, evidence-informed strategies for strengthening each one.



Navigating the Three Journeys of Developing Cognitive Hardiness

Research indicates that developing cognitive hardiness involves navigating three distinct "journeys." These stages provide a roadmap for effectively managing work and life challenges while fostering resilience.

Progress is rarely linear; you may move back and forth between these stages or spend more time in one than another. However, understanding this framework allows you to tackle challenges with greater clarity, ultimately leading to enhanced personal growth, hope, and fulfillment.

1. The Journey from *Understanding to Acceptance*

This initial stage is defined by active discovery. It involves dedicating time and energy to gathering information and researching the situation at hand.

Actionable Steps: Consulting experts, seeking out peers with similar experiences, and conducting independent research.

Goal: To move from confusion to a point of "informed acceptance."

While you may always seek new data, this stage concludes when you satisfy your "need to know" and acquire a perspective accurate enough to begin acting.

2. The Journey from *Coping to Managing*

Once the situation is understood, the focus shifts to application. This stage is about learning new techniques and practicing behaviors to regain a sense of control.

Actionable Steps: Implementing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral strategies to mitigate stress and unpredictability.

Goal: To "rebound" and build a sustainable management system for daily stressors.

As you master these techniques, you will likely feel a boost in confidence, empowerment, and optimism regarding your ability to handle complex challenges.



3. The Journey from *Changing to Flourishing*

This final stage represents a profound transformation. It goes beyond simply "getting by" and focuses on redefining what it means to live well despite adversity.

Actionable Steps: Identifying the "silver linings" of past hardships, exploring your "signature strengths," and realigning your time with your deepest passions.

Goal: To achieve an enhanced sense of self-efficacy—the belief that you can handle whatever life throws your way.

In this stage, leaders often find themselves redefining relationships, prioritizing what is truly meaningful, and experiencing a renewed sense of purpose. This is the hallmark of flourishing: a state of positive adaptation characterized by gratitude, hope, and mental well-being.

Note: As you begin the following exercises, consider which journey currently mirrors your experience. There is no "right" place to start—only the next step forward.



The Journey From Understanding to Acceptance - Exercise #1 "Deploying My Signature Strengths"

Research suggests that by identifying and deploying our "*signature strengths*" (defined as those skills, talents, and abilities that we both enjoy and are competent in) enhance our overall health, happiness, and well-being. Current research suggests that the number of positive experiences at work such as job satisfaction, pleasure, engagement, meaning are a function of the extent to which the circumstances at the workplace allow for the application of an individual's signature strengths.

One cognitive hardiness enhancing strategy is to define our signature strengths and make a commitment to utilize them either at or away from work on a frequent basis.

- List your signature strengths **as you see them** below:
- Describe the signature strengths that **others see in you** below:
- How might the **overuse** of your signature strengths be experienced by others?
- How might you utilize and deploy **more** of your signature strengths at *work*?
- How might you utilize and deploy **more** of your signature strengths at *home*?

Linley, P. A., Nielsen, K. M., Gillett, R., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2010). Using signature strengths in pursuit of goals: Effects on goal progress, need satisfaction, and well-being, and implications for coaching psychologists. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 6-15.



The Journey From Understanding to Acceptance - Exercise #2

"My Success Scorecard"

This personal success scorecard is a way to look at personal and life success from a more balanced perspective. These four areas form the basic structure of what people try to gain through the pursuit and enjoyment of success. What actions will you take to maximize each of the four areas below?

My Life Mission:

Focus	Objectives	Outcomes
Well-Being	H1 Healthy Coping H2 Lifestyle Practices H3 Positive/Negative Emotions H4 Identification/Deployment of Passions H5 Developing Resilience	• Psychological Well-Being/ Happiness • Physical Health/Wellness • Optimism/Hope/Resilience • Post Traumatic Growth • Stress • Job Burnout • Depression
Achievements	A1 Energy/Time Management A2 Identification/Deployment of "Signature Strengths" A3 Personal/Professional Goals A4 Seek and Use Feedback	• Job/Work Satisfaction • Achievements/Accomplishments • Rewards/Recognitions • Engagement/Commitment • Career/Professional Development
Relationships	R1 Decreasing Toxic Relationships R2 Positivity to Negativity Ratio R3 Networking/Fostering Social Exchanges R4 Enhancing Emotional Intelligence	• Family Utility/Satisfaction • Partner/Marital Utility/ Satisfaction • Peer/Boss Utility/Satisfaction • Social Utility/Satisfaction • Identify/Reputation
Legacy	L1 Spirituality/Religiosity L2 Identification/Deployment of Core Values L3 Defining and Realizing "Ideal Self" L4 Volunteering/Giving Back L5 Gratitude Giving/Forgiveness	• Life Meaning/Purpose (Inner Focus) • Religious Engagement • Expressing/Acting on Values • Community/Volunteer Engagement (Outer focus)



The Journey From Understanding to Acceptance - Exercise #3 "Developing Successful Habits"

One aspect of cognitive hardiness is feeling passionate, committed, and persisting in specific rituals, habits, and behaviors that help promote mental and physical health and well-being.

This cognitive hardiness exercise provides a proven method for translating intentions into deliberate practice and successful habit change. Habits in our life are associated with three things:

1. A *cue, trigger, situation, or stimulus* to tie new behaviors to (e.g., weekly staff meeting, checking my email in the morning)
2. Specific measurable and observable *behaviors* that can be repeated within a defined timeframe; and
3. A mental or actual *reward*. Individuals high in cognitive hardiness utilize these steps to make behaviors become easy, automatic, and satisfying.

Directions: Complete the steps below to define a goal intention and translate it into long-term commitments.

Goal Intention & Outcome	"I intent to...."
Situation, Cue, or Trigger	"If or when...."
Observable Behavior	"I will...."
Reward	"My reward for successful goal attaining will be...."

Nowack, K. (2017). Facilitating Successful Behavior Change: Beyond Goal Setting to Goal Flourishing. Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 70, 1-19.



The Journey From Coping to Managing - Exercise #1

"How I Appraise Work and Life Stress Stressors"

All of us react to stress based on the situation and our personality or style. Use the questions below to summarize how you typically respond to work and life stress, pressure, and challenge. Which techniques do you **typically** use when you are under stress (check all that apply). How can you shift your self-talk and appraisal of challenging and stressful situations from a less threatening to a more challenging and growth promotion appraisal?

Positive Appraisal

- Look at things optimistically, rather than pessimistically.
- Use humor in the situation to lessen the impact of the stress.
- Emphasize the advantages, benefits, and consequences.
- Focus on happier times and situations.
- Use positive self-talk and avoid catastrophic thinking.
- Relabel and frame the experience in a different way.

Negative Appraisal

- Focus on the worst-case scenario.
- Blame and criticize yourself or others for the problem
- Bring it up and talk about it excessively without closure.
- Avoid dealing with the situation all together.
- Shut out and repress emotions to avoid the hurt and pain.

**Problem-focused Coping**

- Get exercise to clear my mind and get energized.
- Seek social support to express my feelings and emotions.
- Take charge of the things I can control.
- Seeking spiritual guidance or using my beliefs to get through the stressful situation.
- Seek information to better understand my issues and challenges.
- Get adequate sleep to energize my battery.
- Give gratitude for what I have in life.
- Practice forgiveness with others.



The Journey From Coping to Managing - Exercise #2

"The Feelings Wheel"

The Feelings Wheel can help people recognize and communicate what they are feeling. The inner circle is labeled with names of primary feelings (angry, disgusted, sad, happy, surprised, and bad). The outer rings contain names of secondary feelings. If you look at the wheel, you'll see that each of the core emotions is directly across from its polar opposite. Use **The Feelings Wheel** to find accurate labels for whatever you are experiencing.

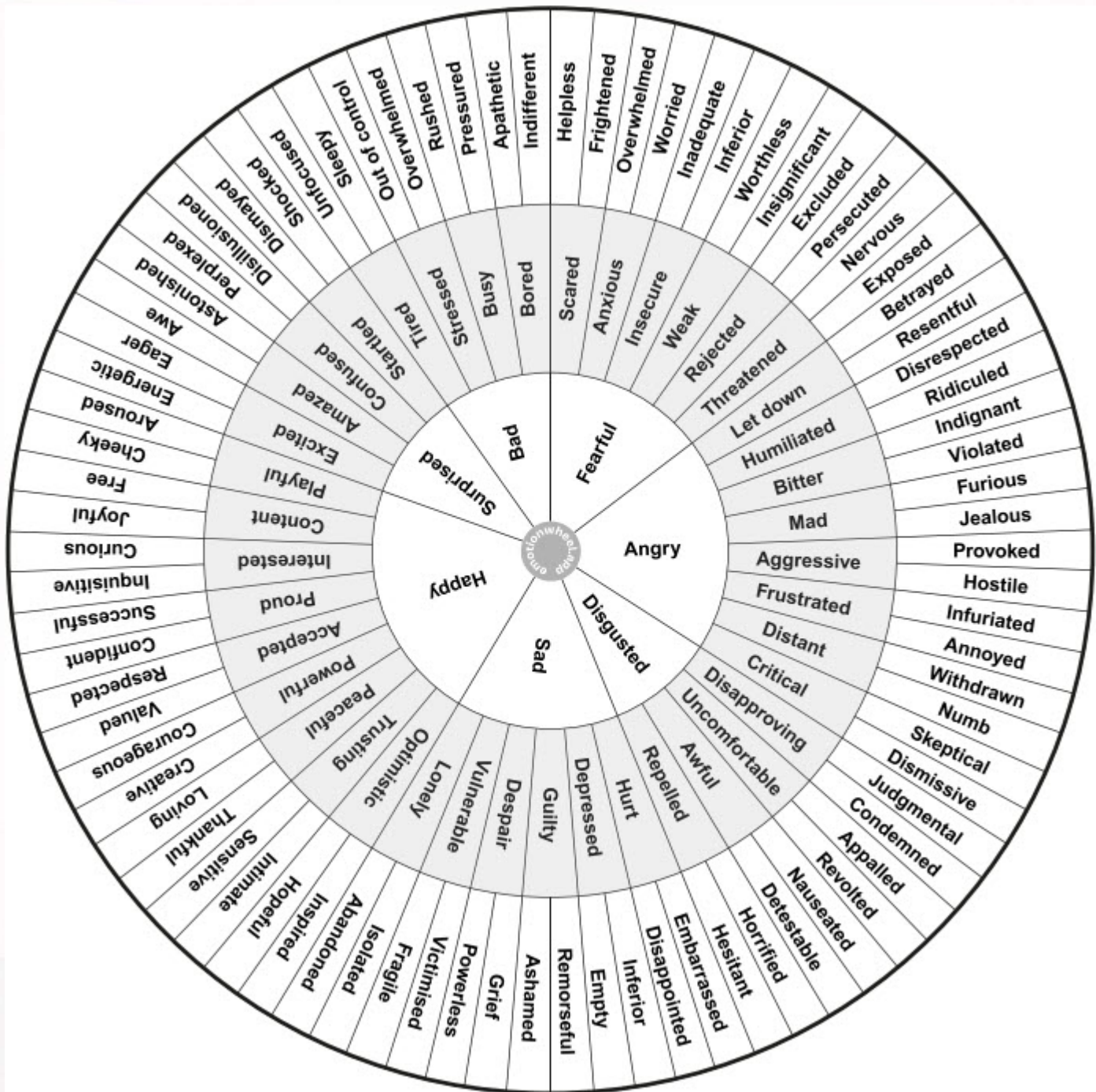
Directions:

1. Start with the inner wheel and select the label that you most strongly identify with currently.
2. Describe in a few sentences why you feel this way.
3. Look at the next layers. Are any of the labels associated with your predominant feeling a more detailed or accurate label to define how you are feeling?
4. Daily Reflection: At the end of each day, take a moment to contemplate and look at the wheel. What did you experience today? Why?
5. Long-Term Reflection: The wheel can also be used to explore deeper and longer-term emotions that may be impacting you. Maybe you have been anxious about job and financial security. By peeling the layers and exploring the feeling labels, this insight might help you to take specific action. When we develop the ability to understand and express our emotions, we benefit in many ways.



The Feelings Wheel helps you:

- **Identify and Label Your Feelings.** This will help you to stop negative and dysfunctional emotions that you might ruminate on. Instead of pushing the feeling away you can make sense of it.
- **Increase Self-Awareness.** By paying attention to your feelings, you can change your self-talk by modifying your reaction to the situation, event, or interpersonal interaction. By having language to label your emotions you are more insightful about how you are feeling in the moment and better equipped to cope effectively with negative thoughts giving rise to these feelings.
- **Regulating Emotions:** You can adopt another label for what you are feeling. For example, you might reframe "fearful" standing in front of an audience to speak and call it "excitement" to minimize your stress response.
- **Communicating to Others:** The Feelings Wheel gives you labels to share and communicate more accurately with others. It can expand your vocabulary to describe exactly what you are feeling and experiencing.
- **Understanding Others:** The Feelings Wheel can give you a greater appreciation for what's going on beneath the surface with others. It can also provide insight into the nuances and layers associated with what others are experiencing to provide support and understanding.



Torre, J. B., & Lieberman, M. D. (2018). Putting Feelings Into Words: Affect Labeling as Implicit Emotion Regulation. *Emotion Review*, 10(2), 116-124.



The Journey From Changing to Managing - Exercise #3

"Changing My Mindset Towards Change and Life Transitions"

Individuals who are cognitively hardy view change of any type as a growth opportunity and appraise it as a challenging situation to overcome, rather than stress or threat. This requires looking at changes in our life through the lenses of our mindsets, self-talk, and appraisal of our situation. This worksheet will help you work through any personal or work related “change” and transition steps that result in successful acceptance, adjustment, and well-being.

Directions:

1. Write a description of a current work and/or life *change* or transition you are experiencing.
2. As it relates to the change or transition you’re experiencing, write down ways you can grow, learn, and benefit as you move through your change journey

Thoughts: Reappraisal of self-defeating and negative thoughts (how can I see this change differently?)	
Feelings: Express, label, and identify my feelings (how am I feeling about this change and how would I label it?)	
Impact on Others: How will I share how my change affects others at work/home (how do my thoughts, feelings, and actions impact others?)	
Consequences: How will I reward and celebrate adoption of new thoughts, feelings, and behaviors associated with successfully moving through my change journey and transitions surrounding it ?	



The Journey From Changing to Flourishing - Exercise #1

"Understanding My Circles of Influence and Control"

The **Circles of Influence** concept, developed by Stephen Covey can help you recognize which things you can directly influence and control, and which you can't even though they impact you.

Cognitively hardy individuals separate these circles and develop proactive beliefs and actions to change thoughts, situations, and behaviors when facing work/life challenges, expending less mental energy worrying about what is outside our control.

My Circles of Control and Influence

1. Things I Can Directly Control
2. Things I Can Not Control
3. Things I Can Influence

Directions: Start by listing any current concerns, hassles, challenges, and stressors.

1. For each concern, please write the letters above corresponding to those you can control (C), those you can influence (I), and those outside your control (O). What do you notice? How many things are outside your control?
2. With those things on your list of concerns that are outside your control, what can you do to move them into your circle of influence?
3. With those outside your control, what can you do to shift your thinking, focus, and energy into those concerns that you can directly influence and/or control?

You may not control your circumstances, but you do control your response. From the way you interpret a challenge to the lifestyle choices you make daily, your power lies in your perspective and your actions. By living intentionally and aligning your behavior with your values, you reclaim control over your environment and your peace of mind.



The Journey From Changing to Flourishing - Exercise #2

"Controlling My Emotions: Physiological Sigh"

Individuals who are cognitively hardy are able to control their emotions and effectively manage stress through the use of breathing exercises. Current research suggests that a specific type of breathing, sometimes referred to as the physiological “sigh” is particularly effective in emotional and behavior control. In fact, this breathing technique has been shown to produce greater improvement in mood, reduction in respiratory rate, and physical relaxation compared with mindfulness meditation or other deep breathing techniques.

Daily cyclic sighing can be useful to enhance our ability to control our innate “fight or flight” response. When you inhale, your diaphragm and other muscles move down in a way that allows the chest to expand, which creates more room for your heart. The heart then expands which causes the blood to move slower through the larger space. For the psychological sigh to be effective, it’s best to take longer exhales than inhales. In fact, it starts out as a normal breath, but before you exhale, you take a second breath on top of it.

How exactly do you practice this cyclic sigh breathing technique? Follow these 4 steps below:

1. Take an initial deep inhale through your nose.
2. Towards the end of the first inhale, take an immediate and additional inhale (similar to a sigh response).
3. Slowly exhale through your mouth and feel a sense of both muscular and emotional tension melting away and an overall sense of relaxation.
4. Repeat three to four times in a row several times a day.

Balban et al., (2023). Brief structured respiration practices enhance mood and reduce physiological arousal. *Cell Reports Medicine*, 17, 4(1):100895.



The Journey From Changing to Flourishing - Exercise #3

"Shifting Our Locus of Control: Positive Explanatory Style"

Explanatory style is the term psychologists use to describe how we describe events in our life that either enhance our sense of control or contribute to our stress response. Individuals who are cognitively hardy tend to utilize a positive or realistic optimistic explanatory style that minimize the perceived severity of work and life stress and our ability to “bounce back” and recover from challenging life events.

In contrast, individuals lower on cognitive hardiness might generally view their world through a negative or pessimistic explanatory mindset contributing to a perception of little or no control or ability to influence the things that happen in life.

Directions: Try to imagine yourself in the following situations and answer the questions below for each one.

1. Imagine you have been recently laid off and are trying to look for a new job:

- Write down one main cause of the situation.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=Never and 5=Always) how likely is it that the cause you gave will continue to affect you?
- Is the cause you gave something that just effects this situation or does it affect other areas of your life (1=Just this situation to 5=All areas of my life)

2. Imagine a friend or colleague is very upset with you:

- Write down one main cause of the situation.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=Never and 5=Always) how likely is it that the cause you gave will continue to affect you?
- Is the cause you gave something that just effects this situation or does it affect other areas of your life (1=Just this situation to 5=All areas of my life)?



3. Try to imagine you have a serious injury:

- Write down one main cause of the situation.
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=Never and 5=Always) how likely is it that the cause you gave will continue to affect you?
- Rate the extent to which the cause affects other areas of your life (1=Just this situation to 5=All areas of my life).

Scoring: Calculate a total score by adding your responses to each rating questions above. Your score will range from 6 to 30.

6-12: Your scores suggest a tendency to utilize more of an optimistic explanatory style.

13-18: your scores suggest a tendency to sometimes utilize both an optimistic and pessimistic explanatory style.

19-30: your scores suggest a tendency to sometimes utilize a pessimistic explanatory style.



Strategies to Foster a Positive Explanatory Style

1. You can alter your explanatory style. Start by changing the way you talk to yourself about stressful experiences. Ban catastrophic language like “always” or “never” from your vocabulary.
2. When faced with challenging events, situations, or even failures, brainstorm reasons for why these events might have occurred. Reflect on the reasons that cannot be attributed to your behavior and are largely or out of your control.
3. List your signature strengths, core values, and positive affirmations about yourself. Reflect on how despite challenge, conflict, adversity, or failure at work or in life these qualities and attributes about you are unchanging and a true measure of who you are as a person.
4. As you think about negative events and situations that you have experienced, brainstorm what aspects of your life remained intact and were largely unaffected by the outcomes such as maintenance of your strong support network, new opportunities that developed in the face of failure, or others. Viewing such events through this lens will help put into perspective that such outcomes are likely to be short-lived or likely to be related to any other aspect of your life.
5. Seek mentoring, coaching, and counseling to explore how your negative self-talk and pessimistic mindset can interfere with meaningful relationships, increase stress, and erode self-esteem. Seeking informational and emotional support can help shift your perception and appraisal of unwanted and undesirable work and life events.
6. Identify your own self-talk distortion. Some examples could include frequent use of reflecting on what you “should have done” or immediately thinking about the “worst case” scenario possible or magnifying the negative and minimizing the positive. Utilize self-talk reframing by asking such questions like “Is there another way to look at this situation?” or “What are some other possible reasons this could have happened?”



COGNITIVE HARDINESS WORKBOOK

Your **Cognitive Hardiness** feedback report provides you with information on set of psychological traits—commitment, control, and challenge—that act as a buffer against stress, allowing individuals to remain healthy, motivated, and productive under high-pressure conditions. Initiating and maintaining new behavior is often challenging—particularly when our level of motivation and level of confidence about being successful are low.

This workbook will now help you translate the insights you have gained from your **Cognitive Hardiness feedback** report into an **Action Plan** to enhance your resilience, physical health and psychological well-being. The Workbook consists of three sections, to give you the necessary tools to do some critical reflection, creating, and implementing a personal wellness plan.

Step 1 Summary

A series of open-ended reflective questions to help you better understand the key insight that came out of your **Cognitive Hardiness** feedback report.

Turn to this section to summarize your overall observations from your report to identify the potential lifestyle changes you might want to make to enhance your overall hardiness, resilience, and wellbeing.

Step 2 Reflection

Use this section to identify aspects of your cognitive hardiness (commitment towards work/life goals, beliefs about behaviors that influence work and life success, and altering your self-talk about stress and changes that occur in life).

Step 3 My Cognitive Hardiness Practice Plan

Use this section to finalize specific coping strategies, habits, and behaviors you are motivated to focus on to enhance your hardiness, resilience and well-being.

Share your **Cognitive Hardiness** action plan with others, identify how you track and monitor your progress, and utilize your support network to support you towards completion of your wellness action plan.



Cognitive Hardiness Action Plan

Step 1: Summary

Enhancing **Cognitive Hardiness** involves the ability to remain healthy and high performing under stress and involves cultivating the three core attitudes known as the “3Cs” Commitment, Control, and Challenge. Here are some ways to enhance each and consider selecting one or two to enhance your hardiness, resilience, and overall wellbeing:

Cultivating Commitment (vs. Alienation)

- *Identify Core Values*: Define what matters most to you and your most important values as a strong sense of self and purpose increases commitment.
- *Identify Purpose and Meaning*: Define your current work, life, and personal purpose and meaning in life.
- *Practice Self-Care*: Prioritize lifestyle practices such as sleep, physical activity, social support, eating/nutrition, and mindfulness/breathing relaxation techniques.

Developing Control (vs. Powerlessness)

- *Focus on Influence*: Identify what is actually within your power to change (e.g., your thoughts) and let go what is not (e.g., behavior of others)
- *Problem-Focused Coping*: Actively seek solutions and take steps to resolve stressful situations, rather than avoiding them or complaining about them
- *Stop-Think-Act*: Cultivate self-regulation and control by consciously taking a moment to pause, reflect on how you are feeling, and consider your options before reacting.

Embracing Challenge (vs. Threat)

- *Reframe/Reappraise Stressors*: View difficult situations, stressors, setbacks, surprises and life challenges as “opportunities for growth” rather than threats to security.
- *Learn from Mistakes*: Instead of focusing on failure, ask “what can I learn from this?” and use it to adjust your attitude and feelings.
- *Seek New Experiences*: Activity step outside your comfort zone to take prudent risks, take on new projects, extend yourself to network with others different from you to increase your “tolerance for ambiguity.”



Cognitive Hardiness Wellness Plan

Step 2: Reflection

Now that you have selected one or two specific **Cognitive Hardiness** factors that you are prepared to begin making immediate behavior change, answer the following reflective questions below to maximize your success and begin creating a detailed **Cognitive Hardiness Action Plan**.

1. What will be the positive outcomes of changing my behavior in the **Cognitive Hardiness** area(s) I have selected to work on?
2. How can I make my behavioral change goal(s) *realistic* and achievable?
3. How can I track and *monitor* my progress on my behavioral change goal?
4. What are some possible *barriers* to successfully changing my behavior?
5. What actions and steps can I take to anticipate, overcome, and *prevent* these barriers from interfering with my successful behavioral change effort?
6. How can family members, friends, or co-workers support and *assist* me to successfully change my behavior?
7. How will I *reward* myself for successfully maintaining my behavior change goal for 30 days?
8. What can I do to continue to motivate myself to keep a high level of commitment to my wellness goal, even if I temporarily slip back into my old habits (i.e., what is a viable relapse prevention plan I can implement to avoid a "slip" turning into a full relapse back to my old habits)?



Cognitive Hardiness Plan

Step 3: Practice Plans

You are now ready to complete your **Cognitive Hardiness Action Plan**. Concentrate on one wellness goal at a time and complete your plan carefully and thoughtfully. Keep in mind that in order to be effective, your action plan activities and goals must be specific, measurable, action oriented, realistic and time bounded.

Your action plans will be most effective if you use a two-step model that includes:

- Identification of a trigger or cue (e.g., time of day or situation).
- Specific wellness behavior you wish to practice (e.g., exercise or practicing mindfulness meditation for a specific amount of time).

Cognitive Hardiness Behavior:

Specific Behavioral Change Goal/Activities:

Target Dates:

How I Will Track and Measure My Behavioral Change Goal Success:

Results/Outcomes:



Cognitive Hardiness Plan

Implement and Evaluate

You are now ready to begin implementing and then evaluating the efforts of your **Cognitive Hardiness** Action Plan. Anticipate and prepare for situations that might challenge your commitment and ability to sustain your new habits. Evaluate your progress and reward yourself for your successful accomplishments. Utilize the following strategies to prevent relapse and ensure long-term success of your action plan.

- Practice coping with *unavoidable* high-risk situations
 - Think about what you could say and do when faced with temptation.
 - *Use relaxation and other stress management techniques to handle strong emotions (e.g., anxiety).*
 - Get advice and watch others.
 - Develop a set of self-instructions that will help you in high-risk situations.
 - Test your coping skills in actual high-risk-of-relapse situations (e.g., a smoker could interact with other smokers without smoking; a dieter could go out with friends having fast food and just have a healthy choice; a business traveler could schedule some light exercise into his/her busy day; a student studying during final exams can go to bed early enough to get adequate sleep, etc.).
- Prepare in advance for a lapse (*to avoid a relapse*)
 - Attempt to limit the loss of control and reduce the feeling that you have failed. Instead, if you slip, just admit that you have made a mistake.
 - *Make an agreement to limit the slip* (e.g., one dessert, one day without exercise).
 - *Make an agreement to use family and friends to help you succeed.*
 - Learn from this experience. Learn your weaknesses and plan how to overcome them.
 - Recommit yourself to your **Cognitive Hardiness** Action Plan.