Therapy Care
Carey Webb MBACP · Counselling in Leigh-on-Sea, online and by phone · therapycare.co.uk

FREE RESOURCE · DECISIONS AND CHANGES · 10 TO 15 MINUTES

CBT pros and cons worksheet

When you're stuck on a decision, or in two minds about changing something, your thoughts can go round in circles. Writing down the pros and cons lets you see everything at once, notice what matters most to you, and choose a next step with a clearer head.

When it can help

- ✓ When you're stuck on a decision and keep going back and forth
- ✓ When part of you wants to change a habit, and part of you doesn't
- ✓ When worry or avoidance is making a choice feel bigger than it is
- ✓ Before talking a decision through with someone you trust

Two ways to use it

The pros and cons list
Two columns, for a choice: the pros and cons of doing it. Quick to fill in, and good for a one-off decision.

The four boxes
For a change you're thinking about: the pros and cons of changing, and of staying as you are. Staying the same usually has pros too, and seeing them helps explain why change can feel hard.

How to fill in the four boxes

Here's an example, for someone who keeps taking on extra work.

1 Name it
Write the change you're thinking about at the top, in a few words.

EXAMPLE
Saying no when I'm asked to take on extra work

2 Pros of changing
What might be better if you made the change, now and later?

EXAMPLE
More time in the evenings. Less tired. Feeling more in control.

3 Cons of changing
What might be harder, or what worries you about it?

EXAMPLE
My manager might be disappointed. I'll feel guilty at first.

4 Pros of staying as you are
What does staying the same give you, even if it isn't working overall?

EXAMPLE
No awkward conversations. People see me as reliable.

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5 **Cons of staying as you are**
What does carrying on as you are cost you?

EXAMPLE
I'm exhausted and snappy at home. I've stopped seeing friends.

6 **Rate it, then look back**
Rate how much each point matters to you, from 0 to 10. What stands out?

EXAMPLE
Exhausted 9, manager disappointed 4. Staying the same costs me most.

It isn't about adding up a score. One point that matters a lot can outweigh several small ones. The aim is to see the whole picture.

Using the two-column list instead

Write the choice at the top, then list the pros of doing it in one column and the cons in the other. Rate how much each one matters, from 0 to 10, and look back over it in the same way.

When you've filled it in, ask yourself

- ✓ Which points matter most to me, and why?
- ✓ Which are facts, and which are worries about what might happen?
- ✓ What does staying as I am give me, and is there another way to get it?
- ✓ What is one small step I could take this week?

Helpful tips

- ✓ Write down everything that comes to mind, even points that seem small or silly.
- ✓ Think about the short term and the long term. Avoiding something often feels better now and worse later.
- ✓ If you feel stuck, ask what you'd say to a friend in the same position.
- ✓ You don't have to decide straight away. Coming back to it another day can help.
- ✓ Keep it, and look at it again later. Your ratings may change as things move on.
- ✓ If the same decision keeps going round in your head, that's something we could explore together in counselling.

What's in this pack

- ✓ **Page 3:** a pros and cons list, printed sideways so there's room to write.
- ✓ **Page 4:** the four boxes. Print as many copies of either as you need.

> **A gentle note.** These tools aren't a replacement for counselling or medical care. If something here brings up a lot for you, it's okay to stop. You don't have to work through things on your own. If you'd like to talk to someone, your first counselling session with me is free: 07826 774307 or therapycare.co.uk.

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CBT PROS AND CONS WORKSHEET

My pros and cons list

One point on each line, rated from 0 (not at all) to 10 (a great deal).

What I'm deciding: _____ **Date:** _____

Pros What might be good about it?	**0 to 10** How much it matters	**Cons** What might be hard or worrying?	**0 to 10** How much it matters

Looking at it all, what stands out?

_____

_____

One small next step

_____

_____

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CBT PROS AND CONS WORKSHEET

My four boxes

One point on each line, rated from 0 (not at all) to 10 (a great deal).

The change I'm thinking about: _____ **Date:** _____

	Pros What might be better?	**0 to 10** How much it matters	**Cons** What might be harder?	**0 to 10** How much it matters
If I change What might be better, or harder?				
If I stay as I am What does it give me, and what does it cost me?				

Looking at all four boxes, what stands out?

_____

_____

One small next step

_____

_____