



PROFESSIONAL GUIDE

THE PURPOSE OF THE THOUGHT JOURNAL

The Thought Journal is a structured, 8-week self-awareness program that builds on the principles of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), positive psychology, and emotion regulation.

Its goal is for the child to:

- become aware of their emotions and thoughts,
- learn to manage anxiety and physical tension,
- develop their own coping strategies,
- strengthen their self-confidence and hope for the future.

PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- **Emotion regulation:** journaling exercises help children recognize, name, and manage emotions more calmly.
- **Cognitive restructuring:** children learn to notice negative thoughts and then search for new, more helpful thoughts to replace them.
- **Body-mind connection:** exercises make them aware that anxiety can also manifest itself in physical symptoms and show how to involve the body in calming down.
- **Positive focus:** awareness of gratitude, resources, relationships, and ideas for the future strengthens self-confidence and resilience.

STRUCTURE

The program is structured in a weekly format, gradually leading the child from awareness of emotions to future goals.

1. Recognizing emotions
2. Observing thoughts
3. The relationship between body and anxiety
4. Positive thinking
5. Activities that bring comfort
6. My resources and courage
7. Connections and support
8. Future, hope and goals

Each week includes: daily short exercises, creative tasks (drawing, coloring, symbol creation), and a weekly summary reflective task.

RECOMMENDED AREAS OF APPLICATION

Child psychology consultation and therapy – in case of anxiety, lack of self-confidence, difficulties in expressing emotions.

School psychology – as a preventive program, to support group processing.

Family and mediation work – exercises carried out together with parents strengthen family communication.

Complementing trauma processing – provides a controlled, structured framework for self-expression.

METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE

1. Introduction to the child

Getting to know each other: Show the diary for the first time, and look through it together. Make it clear that this is their own “safe notebook.”

Emphasize freedom: indicate that the child can decide what they write or draw and what they share.

2. Weekly structure


Weekly focus: Choose 1-2 exercises each week that are particularly important to discuss in the session.

Highlight: Encourage the child to show the weekly summary task (e.g., “My support tree”), as these are often complex self-expressions.

3. Therapeutic integration

Cognitive restructuring: If the child writes a “negative thought” task, use it to show the thought-emotion-behavior connection.

Relaxation techniques: combine the “quiet place” or “calming movement” tasks with breathing or relaxation exercises. Methodological suggestions for use



Projective interpretation: drawing tasks (“my feeling takes shape”, “thought as an animal”) can provide symbolic insight that is worth exploring gently.

4. Involving parents

Psychoeducation: give the parent a brief information about the weekly topic so that they can create a supportive environment at home.

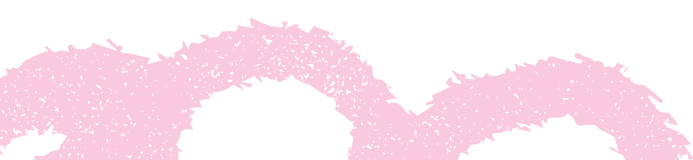
Freedom to share: clarify with the parents that they should not force sharing of the diary content, as this may violate the child’s sense of security.

5. Monitoring progress

Look for patterns: pay attention to which feelings and thoughts return most often.

Identifying blockages: if the child consistently skips certain tasks, this can be an important signal (e.g. avoiding drawing connections may indicate isolation).

Positive reinforcement: every completion, no matter how short, is worth reinforcing (“It’s great that you wrote this down, that was a brave thing to do!”).



6. Flexibility

It is not mandatory to complete everything: you can select tasks, skip them or come up with your own version.

Age-appropriateness: for younger children, drawing and coloring should be preferred, and for older children, reflection and writing should be preferred.

Combinability: use it together with other methods (e.g. family drawing, free play, role-playing) so that the child's experiences can be processed on multiple levels.

WHAT THE THOUGHT JOURNAL PROVIDES

Using the Thought Journal helps:

- develop emotional awareness and verbalization,
- recognize and restructure negative thought patterns,
- perceive and understand bodily signals,
- expand your coping tools,
- strengthen your positive self-image and resilience.

LIMITATIONS AND WARNING

- The diary is not a diagnostic tool, but a therapeutic/preventive aid.
- In case of serious psychological disorder, trauma or crisis, it does not replace professional intervention, but can only be used as a supplementary method.
- The creative nature of the tasks allows for individual adaptation, but the child's refusal must always be respected.

