

Figure 5.1. Disputing Irrational Beliefs (example).

Irrational belief	Question IB	Rational belief
I always fail.	Do I always fail?	I have done some useful things in the past so I don't and won't always fail.
I'm totally worthless.	Have I really never done anything worthwhile?	I have done some worthless and useless things BUT because I have had success at things, I cannot judge myself as a totally worthless person.
My partner treats me unfairly. He is a bad person.	Does my partner treat me unfairly? Is he a bad person?	He has done unfair things BUT he also has done many things to help me so I can't judge him as a totally bad person. No one is perfect.
Nothing good ever happens to me and never will.	Does nothing good ever happen to me?	The love and support of my family and friends are all good things that continue to happen to me.
I must always do whatever it takes to be comfortable.	Is it realistic to expect to always feel comfortable?	Comfort ebbs and flows. It may be better to stay uncomfortable temporarily if it will help me achieve my long-term goals.
When I mess something up, it proves I'm a complete failure.	Am I a complete failure?	I don't judge others as harshly as I judge myself. Everyone makes mistakes. I can make mistakes and learn from them; it makes me human, not a failure.
I have to be better and do better than the people around me or I am nothing.	Am I really nothing?	I don't need to prove I'm better than others to be OK. I can be happy just as I am, and deserve to accept myself.
Because my addictive behavior has proven that I'm a loser, I should never trust myself and my instincts, and will always need the advice of others.	Do I need others' advice?	I've made mistakes and will continue to make them. BUT I can trust my thoughts and feelings, and I don't need to rely on others' opinions to validate my self-worth.
Others are responsible for my unhappiness. I hate them, I want to punish them, or I complain bitterly when they disappoint me.	Are other people in charge of my happiness?	I'm responsible for my happiness. Holding others responsible is unrealistic, unfair, and doesn't lead to my long-term happiness.
I must find the one person or belief that will make my life stable.	Is there one person or belief that will make me happy?	Life is an ongoing process of learning many things and relating to many people. It's a journey on which I will change and grow.
I'm bored, and that makes me uncomfortable. The only thing I can do is engage in my addictive behavior.	Is using the only option I have?	I can do other things to relieve boredom. If I do one, I will be less bored and it will get my mind off my addictive behavior.