



Novel Advanced Cognitive Techniques: Third Wave and Beyond

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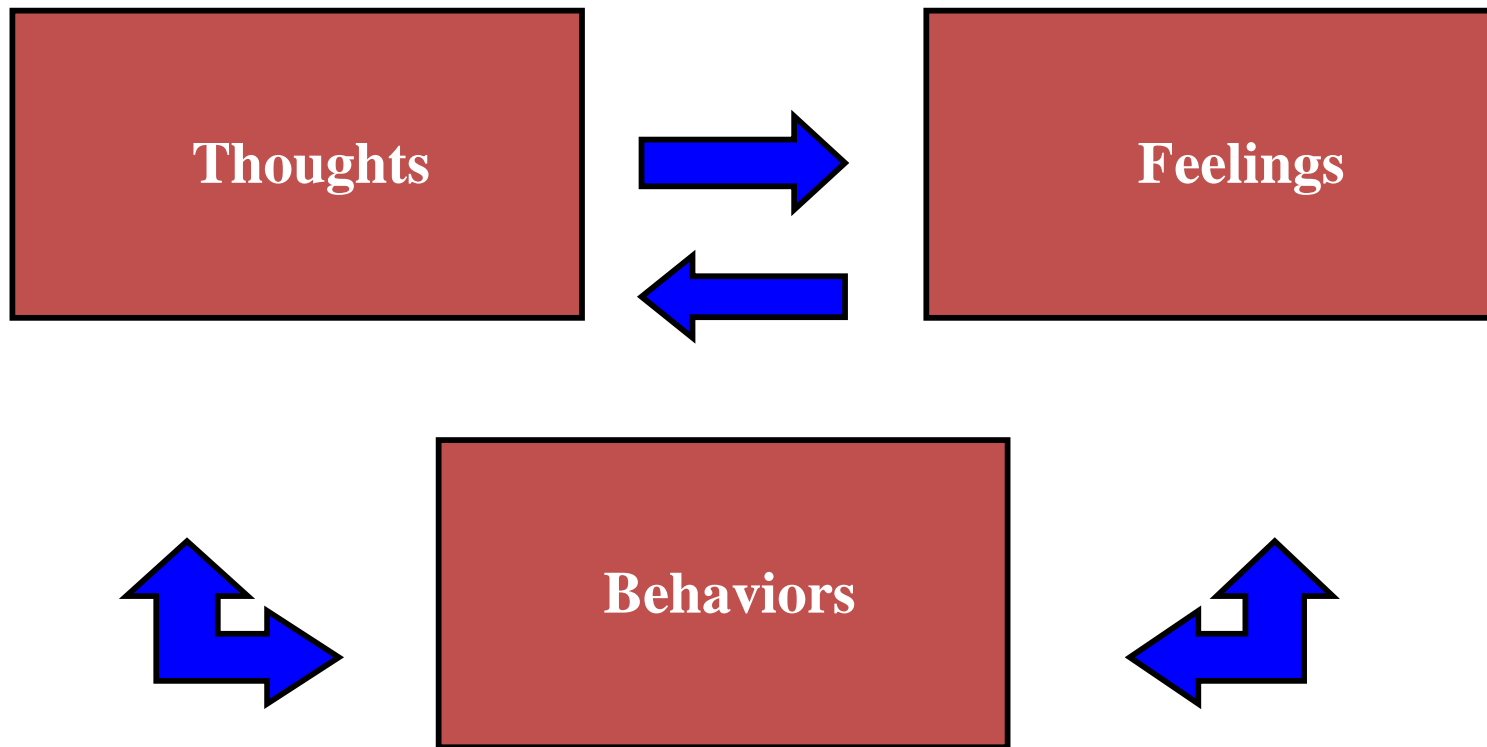
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Disclosures

I receive royalties from Oxford University Press for co-authoring treatment manuals. I receive royalties from Springer for co-editing a book. I receive honoraria from the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) for being Associate Editor of a journal.

Simple CBT Model



Cognitive Restructuring

- We are always interpreting the meaning of what goes on around us
- These interpretations strongly determine emotional states
- However, interpretations can be faulty

Cognitive Restructuring

- Identify inaccurate and unhelpful thoughts and related emotions
 - In session
 - Self-monitoring homework
- Evaluate accuracy/usefulness of thoughts
- Modify thoughts

When More is Needed...

- Sometimes clients will do cognitive restructuring but the same patterns keep coming up over and over
- They do cognitive restructuring on each individual thought, but generalization doesn't occur
- In those situations, advanced cognitive strategies are needed to modify the underlying core beliefs

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Identify Core Beliefs

- Look for recurrent themes on thought records, etc.
- Use downward arrow technique

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Downward Arrow Technique

- Identify the interpretation
- If that were true, what would that mean to [about] you?
- ...and what would be so bad about that...?

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Downward Arrow Example

My girlfriend is looking at me in a strange way



She thinks that everything I say is really stupid



She's going to dump me



I will never find anyone who can love me



I'm unlovable

Common Core Beliefs

- Everybody hates me
- The world is a dangerous place
- I am bad
- I am unlovable
- I am inferior
- I am worthless
- I am vulnerable
- I am weak

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Modify Core Beliefs

- First, state maladaptive belief, then work towards healthier belief
- E.g., “I am a complete failure” becomes “I am good enough”
- Can use advanced cognitive strategies to modify core beliefs

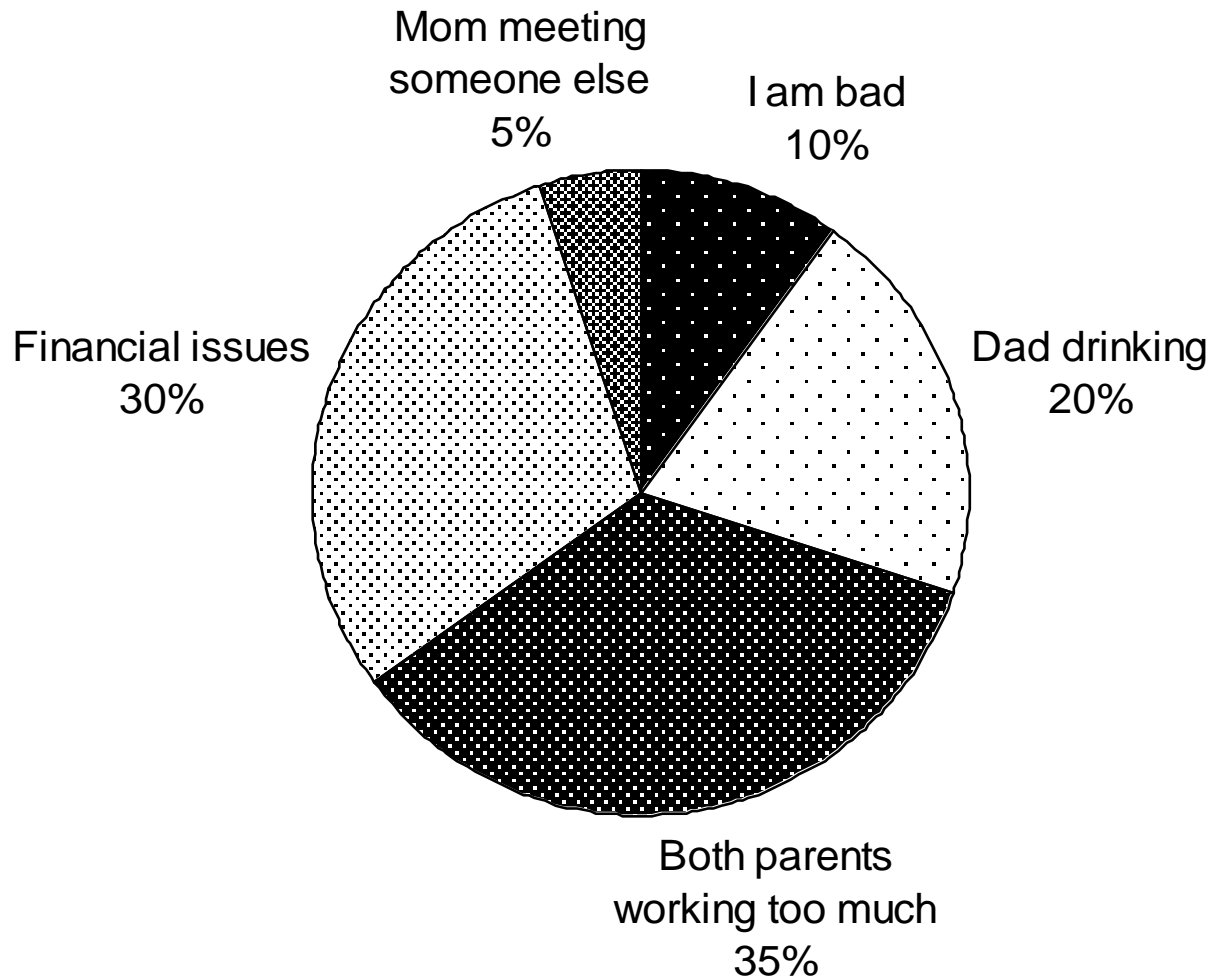
Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Pie Graph Technique:

“My parents are getting a divorce and it is all my fault”

- Identify all possible interpretations of a situation
- Draw circle and assign portions of the pie to each one
- Draw most negative interpretation last

Advanced Cognitive Strategies



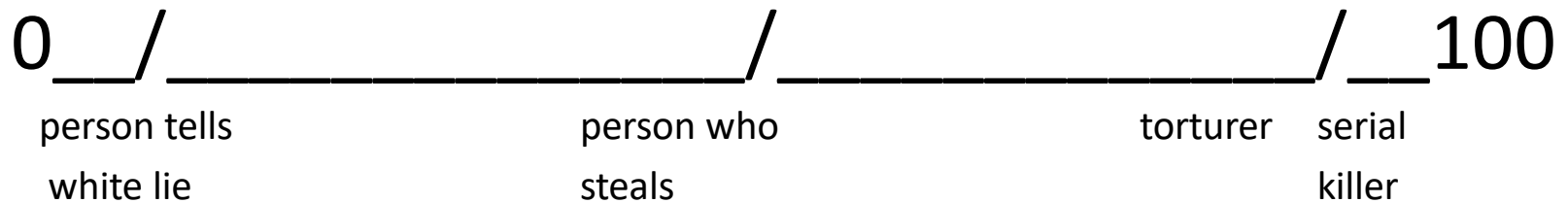
Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Continuum Technique

- Draw scale ranging from 0 (none) to 100 (extreme) representing the variable of concern
- Ask patient to indicate the meaning of the extreme ends of the scale
- Identify several interim steps
- Place patient's own behavior on continuum

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Example: I am a bad person



- Being late for a treatment session pales in comparison to being a serial killer

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Taking Another Perspective

Double Standard

- “Would you condemn a friend for this?”
- Costs and benefits of double standard

Advanced Cognitive Strategies

Advantages/Disadvantages

- Pros and cons of avoiding shopping malls
- Advantages? Feel better (not anxious having a panic attack, going crazy, having a heart attack)
- Disadvantages? Never get new outfits, never get to experience that NOTHING bad would happen if she did
- Are advantages/disadvantages valid?

Bottom Line

- If patients can start to chip away at their core beliefs, it will have a ripple effect and impact automatic thoughts, feelings and behaviors

3rd Wave Therapies

- Less symptom focused
- Incorporates mindfulness
- Focus on changing the way one reacts to thoughts rather than changing content of thoughts
- Increasing skills to live more adaptive life
- Based on acceptance = acknowledgment of reality as it is in a given moment without attempts to change

Examples of “3rd Wave” Therapies

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
- Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)
- Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
- Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy

DBT Overview

CBT =
change -
oriented

DBT added
acceptance-
oriented
strategies

Healthy
emotion
regulation *requires*
both -
crucial to *teach &*
model both

Linehan, 1993

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- Aim is psychological flexibility which is achieved through such things as accepting one's emotional experiences
- Focus on defining values and modifying behaviors to make them more consistent with values (e.g., if one is engaging in behaviors that are consistent with values, one will feel more satisfied and fulfilled)

Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2016

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

- MBCT is a program for patients with recurrent major depression
- Goal is cultivation of mindfulness techniques to disengage from thoughts that initiate or sustain depression
 - Develops a set of skills so patient relates differently to depression when it comes and, therefore, depression is less intense
- Periods of depression can strengthen connections between normal sadness and negative thoughts that lead to depression

(Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2012)

MBCT

- Uses mindfulness to emphasize patience, compassion, open-mindedness, persistence vs. trying to problem solve problem of depression using cognition
- Uses A-B-C model of emotions to identify automatic thoughts and interpretations that lead to depression

(Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2012)

MBCT

- Practice includes increasing awareness in daily activities, observing the breath, body scan, mindful yoga, meditation, tracking pleasant and unpleasant events
 - e.g., Body Scan: increases experiential knowing, reconnection with the body, uncouples links between body sensations and thinking that perpetuate rumination and unhappiness, increases the ability to tolerate unpleasant sensations

(Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2012)

Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy

- A treatment for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Narrow, threat-focused attention + judgmental reactivity toward emotions and thoughts lead to experiential avoidance including worry
- Avoidance decreases physical arousal and offers distraction, but ultimately increases distress
- Over time, GAD pts are less likely to engage in valued actions leading to diminished quality of life

(Orsillo & Roemer, 2011; Hayes-Skelton, Roemer & Orsillo, 2013)

Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy for GAD

- Goals:
 - To help patients expand awareness (beyond narrow threat focus)
 - To help patients develop compassionate and de-centered stance toward inner experience
 - To target behavioral avoidance by encouraging engagement in valued actions

(Orsillo & Roemer, 2011; Hayes-Skelton, Roemer & Orsillo, 2013)

Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapy for GAD

- Treatment Phase 1:
 - Teach the model: function of anxiety, costs of avoiding and trying to control inner experience, benefits of accepting, willing stance
 - Introduce mindfulness and begin series of mindfulness practices
 - Values-based writing exercises to identify needed actions
- Treatment Phase 2:
 - Applying mindfulness and acceptance skills as pt pursues valued actions identified in phase 1

(Orsillo & Roemer, 2011; Hayes-Skelton, Roemer & Orsillo, 2013)

Application to COVID-19 Pandemic

- Need to help patients differentiate between valid concerns and negative thinking patterns.
- Emphasis on labeling thoughts as unhelpful, rather than incorrect.
- Therapists can encourage patients to use radical acceptance, mindfulness.
- Treatment can include validation of the difficulty of tolerating uncertainty.
- Therapists are living through the same situation and facing many of the same challenges.

Additional Resources-Online Courses

- Some of the slides used in this presentation were drawn from the MGH Psychiatry Academy online courses entitled, Advanced Psychotherapy Strategies; CBT, DBT and Dynamic Concepts for use with Challenging Cases (Harley, Jacobo and Prairie, course directors) and The Fundamentals of CBT (Petersen, Sprich and Wilhelm, course directors).
- Please visit our web site www.mghcme.org for more information.

Additional Resources—Books

DBT

- *DBT Skills Training Manual, 2nd Edition* (Linehan, 2015).
- *Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder* (Linehan, 1993)

Cognitive Therapy

- *Cognitive Behavior Therapy; Basics and Beyond, 2nd Ed* (Beck, 2011).

ACT

- *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; The Process and Practice of Mindful Change, 2nd Ed* (Hayes, Strosahl & Wilson, 2016)

MBCT

- *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression* (Segal, Williams & Teasdale, 2002)

Mindfulness and Acceptance

- *Mindfulness- & Acceptance-Based Behavioral Therapies in Practice* (Roemer & Orsillo, 2009)