Overview of cognitive work in CBT

Underlying assumptions:
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- How an individual interprets life events plays a role in determining how he or she responds to those events (Beck, 1991).
- Patients are seen as being excessively negative in their beliefs and suffering from the use of maladaptive information processing strategies.
- Seeks to teach patients to identify their maladaptive beliefs and processing tendencies and to systematically test the accuracy of those beliefs and tendencies.
- Encourages examining the accuracy of their beliefs, and engaging in a series of “experiments” in which behaviors are systematically varied in order to test the accuracy of those beliefs.

Overarching goals of CBT
- Provide patients with clear and credible rationale for understanding their disorder and mechanisms of therapeutic change
- Offer highly structured sessions and a viable course of action for addressing their concerns
- Be active and problem-focused
- Encourage self-monitoring and the assessment of progress
Overview of CBT

- Short term, time-limited psychotherapy
- 20 sessions over 10–15 weeks
- Collaborative, empirical approach to identify and resolve problems
- Comparable to scientific investigation:
  - Collecting data (events, thoughts, feelings)
  - Formulating hypotheses based on data
  - Testing and revising hypotheses (i.e. thinking patterns) based on new information

Cognitive Work in CBT

- Homework assignments ("experiments") are critical to treatment
- Designed to help patient:
  - Develop objectivity about situations
  - Identify underlying assumptions
  - Develop and test alternative conceptualization and assumptions

Identifying Thoughts

- Automatic thoughts
- Often based on legitimate concerns
- But conclusions and meanings drawn from experiences are not reasonable
- "Valid but not useful" (Beck, 1995)
- Introduce the concept of an internal dialogue
- Have the person think of a recent example when something went wrong
- Ask person what they were thinking when that happened
Cognitive Errors

ABSTRACT INFERENCES
* Drawing a conclusion that is not supported by evidence
  * "Jumping to conclusions"

SELECTIVE ABSTRACTION
* Focusing on a detail taken out of context, ignoring other more salient features, and conceptualizing whole experience based on this element
  * "Blowing it out of proportion"
    * "One person has been saying negative things about me, so why would anyone like me?"

OVERGENERALIZATION
* Drawing general conclusion based on single incident
  * "I felt nervous with others at the party; I don't think I have what it takes to make friends."

MAGNIFICATION / MINIMIZATION
* Error in evaluation based on over- or underemphasizing selected aspects of situations
  * "Doing poorly shows how inadequate I am!"
  * "Getting good grades doesn't mean I'm smart."

PERSONALIZATION
* Inappropriately relating external events to oneself without an obvious basis for making such connections
  * "She didn't say hello to me because I must have done something wrong."

DICOTOMOUS THINKING
* View a situation in only two categories instead of on a continuum
  * "All or none thinking"; "Black or white"
    * "If I'm not a total success, I'm a failure"
Cognitive Errors

* CATASTROPHIZING
  * Predict the future negatively without considering other, more likely outcomes
  * "Fortune telling"
  * "I'll be so upset, I won't be able to function at all."

* DISQUALIFICATION / DISCOUNTING
  * Unreasonably disregard positive experiences or qualities as without value
  * "I did well on the project not because I'm good - I got lucky."

* MIND READING
  * Belief that one knows what others are thinking, and failure to consider other, more likely possibilities
  * "He's thinking I'm a failure."

* LABELING
  * Place a fixed, global label on oneself and others without considering evidence that leads to a less disastrous conclusion
  * "I'm a loser"; "I'm no good."

* EMOTIONAL REASONING
  * Think that something must be true because one "feels" it strongly, ignoring contrary evidence
  * "I know I did okay, but I still feel like a failure."

Connecting Thoughts to Feelings:

ABC Model

A = ADVERSITY (Any negative event)

B = BELIEFS (Beliefs and Interpretations about A)

C = Consequences (Behavior and Feelings following A)
ABC MODEL

A
Adversity

C
Consequences

A
Adversity

B
Beliefs

C
Consequences

Daily Thought Record (DTR)

DTR contains three columns:

1. Situation
   * Objective description of what is happening
2. Feelings
   * Feeling word and intensity
3. Thoughts
   * "What is going through my mind?"

Daily Thought Record - Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My teacher said me I was not paying attention in class.</td>
<td>Sad (8)</td>
<td>He doesn't like me. He was mean to tell me. He needs me to focus and I don't think I can do my work and I'll keep thinking I'm dumb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Daily Mood Log

STEP ONE: Describe the upsetting event

STEP TWO: Record your negative feelings and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP THREE: The Triple-Column Technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Automatic Thoughts</th>
<th>Distortions</th>
<th>Rational Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think your negative automatic thoughts you notice you believe in such a way 0-100</td>
<td>Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought</td>
<td>Challenge your negative thoughts and replace it with a rational one 0-100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortions

Identifying Distortions

- All-or-nothing thinking
- Overgeneralization
- Mental Filter
- Discounting the Positives
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Magnification or Minimization
- Emotional Reasoning
- "Should" Statements
- Labeling
- Personalization and blame
Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine the Evidence

Test of Evidence

* Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it.
* Useful strategy to test overgeneralizations, faulty conclusions, and ill-founded inferences

Test of Evidence

* Reasons for conclusions
  “What convinces you 100% that your thought is true?”
* Search for contrary evidence
  “What facts make you less certain about your conclusion?”
* Alternative explanations
  “What is another way of looking at ______ other than your conclusion?”
* Derive conclusion based on facts and plausible alternative explanations
Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method

The Double-Standard Method

* Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh, condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.

* "Would you say the same things to your friend in a similar situation?"

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
The Experimental Technique

* Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought
* Belief: "I am about to die of a heart attack!"
* Experiment: Jog or run up and down several flights of stairs – Physiological similarities to anxiety show that person is not dying and can manage the symptoms.

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray

Thinking in Shades of Gray

* Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range from 0 to 100.
* When things do not work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure.
* See what you can learn from the situation.
Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method

The Survey Method

- Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic.
- Example: If you believe that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they ever felt that way before a talk.
Define Terms

* When you label yourself as "stupid" or "inferior" or "a loser," ask what is the definition of "stupid."

* Apply definition universally.

Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion.
2. Examine Evidence.
3. The Double-Standard Method.
4. The Experimental Technique.
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray.
6. The Survey Method.
7. Define Terms.
8. The Semantic Method.

The Semantic Method

* Simply substitute language that is less colorful and emotionally loaded.

* Helpful for "should statements."

* Example:
  * "I shouldn't have made that mistake!"
  * "It would have been better if I hadn't made that mistake."
Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms
8. The Semantic Method
9. Re-Attribution

Re-Attribution

Instead of automatically assuming that you are "bad" and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to it.

- Responsibility pie
  - List all possible reasons for event
  - Allocate portion of pie to each cause

Responsibility Pie

- Event: Parents getting separated:
  - Father's Drinking: 45%
  - Poor Communication skills: 15%
  - Financial stress: 20%
  - Parents work situation: 25%
  - Financial stress: 20%
Ten Ways to Untwist Your Thinking

1. Identify Distortion
2. Examine Evidence – Test of Evidence
3. The Double-Standard Method
4. The Experimental Technique
5. Thinking in Shades of Gray
6. The Survey Method
7. Define Terms
8. The Semantic Method
9. Re-Attribution
10. Cost-Benefit Analysis

Cost-Benefit Analysis

The attitude or belief I want to change: I want all people to like me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages of Believing This</th>
<th>Disadvantages of Believing This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It will feel good when people approve of me.</td>
<td>1. I’ll feel lousy when people don’t like me or approve of me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I’ll work hard to make people like me.</td>
<td>2. Other people will control my self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’ll be very sensitive to other people’s feelings.</td>
<td>3. People will not respect me in the long run if I don’t stand up from what I believe in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised Attitude: It can be great to have people like me and approve of what I do. When people are more critical of me, I can understand their point of view.