The Use of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy in Primary Care Counseling

Presented by: Dr. Anthony Ho
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What is Cognitive Approach?

“In a nutshell, the cognitive model proposes that distorted or dysfunctional thinking (which influences the patient’s mood and behavior) is common to all psychological disturbances. Realistic evaluation and modification of thinking procedures produces an improvement in mood and behavior”

(Judith Beck, 1995)
ABC Model of Thinking

Activating Event
↓
Beliefs
↓
Emotional Consequences
Therapeutic Goal

- To change clients’ faulty styles of processing information; and

- To teach clients how to modify biased ways of processing information.

- In summary, to teach clients to identify, evaluate and modify their own dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs.
Key Principles

- Based on the finding that changes in thinking lead to changes in feeling and acting
- Collaborative empiricism is emphasized
- A short-term form of therapy
- An active and structured approach to treatment
- Present-oriented
- It is psychoeducational
- Inductive reasoning and socratic questioning are skillfully implemented
- Homework is used throughout therapy
Features of the Cognitive Approach

Life Experiences

\[ \downarrow \]

Core Beliefs / Schemas

\[ \downarrow \]

Intermediate Beliefs
(Rules, Attitudes and Assumptions)

\[ \downarrow \]

Critical Incidents

\[ \downarrow \]

Automatic Thoughts

\[ \Rightarrow \]

Symptoms / Behaviour
Core Beliefs

- Central ideas about ourselves that underlie may of our automatic cognitions and usually are reflected in our immediate beliefs.

- Core beliefs can be described as “global, overgeneralized, and absolute” (Beck, 1995)
Distorted Cognitions

- Catastrophizing
- Magnification
- Overgeneralization
- Jumping to conclusion
- Selective Negative Focus / Selective abstraction
- Emotional Reasoning
- Shoulds
- Polarized Thinking / All or none thinking
- Personalizing
Initial Assessment

- Presenting problem
- A = What went on before?
- B = What did you think immediately?
- C = How did you feel? What did you do?
Eliciting Automatic Thoughts

- What did you guess you were thinking about?
- Did you think you were thinking about a or b?
- What did this situation mean to you?
- What was going through your mind then?
Predisposing Factors (Early Experiences)

- How core beliefs and assumptions are formed
  - E.g. Mother often absent -> “nobody wants me”
  - E.g. Over critical father -> “I’m not good enough”
Precipitating Factors (Critical Incident)

- How intermediate and core beliefs are activated
- E.g. Previous relationship abruptly ended
- Onset of current problem, frequency, duration, etc.
Perpetuating Factors
(Current Situation)

- **Cognition:** Negative automatic thoughts
  - E.g. Difficulty forming close relationships because of “personalization”
  - “I’m useless. She stays with me only because she feels sorry for me.”
- **Emotions:** E.g. depression, anger
- **Behaviors:** E.g. tearfulness, inactivity
- **Physiology:** E.g. loss of appetite
Identifying Cognitive Distortions

- Systematic negative bias
- Consistent errors in processing
- Recognizing the distortions
- Evaluating those distortions
Cognitive conceptualization

- Relevant background data
- Core beliefs
- Conditional rules
- Compensatory strategies
- Situation specific
- Automatic thoughts
- Meaning of AT
- Emotion / Behavior
COGNITIVE CONCEPTUALIZATION DIAGRAM

Patient’s name: Mrs. A__________ Date: 29.11.2005

Diagnosis/ problem: Anxiety-depression, sexual dysfunction, marital disharmony

Relevant Childhood Data
Parents like boys much more than girls.
Did not feel being loved and the parents only concerned about money.

Core Belief (s)
I am not lovable.
I do not have much value.
I am no good.

Conditional Assumption/Beliefs/Rules
I am not attractive. People do not like me.
If my husband does not have sex with me, he does not love me.
If my children do not listen to my teaching, they don’t love me.

Compensatory Strategies
On guard for any girls around my husband.
Scold the children to make them listen to me.
Situation 1
Decrease in sexual activities

Autonomic Thought
I am not attractive

Meaning of A.T.
My husband does not love me anymore.

Emotion
Sad

Behavior
Lacked of motivation to do things.
**Situation 2**
Husband chats with female colleagues.

**Autonomic Thought**
My husband loves those younger and prettier girls.

**Meaning of A.T.**
I am less attractive than younger girls.
My husband loves them instead.

**Emotion**
Jealous, angry.

**Behavior**
Blamed husband for chatting with the girls.
**Situation 3**
Children not following suggestions – disobedient.

**Autonomic Thought**
They do not pay any respect to me.

**Meaning of A.T.**
I do not worth their respect anymore. I will lose control on them soon.

**Emotion**
Angry, anxious.

**Behavior**
Scolded children. Worked out future plans for them.
Cognitive Techniques

- Teach ABC model
  - Distinguish thoughts and emotions
  - Different types of distorted thinking
  - Cultivate more positive and meaningful beliefs
- Encourage a problem solving mindset
  - Think about alternatives and solutions
- Encourage a self-reflective mindset
  - Self exploration of thinking, distorted?
Self-questioning Techniques

- Evidence question
  - Evidences for my beliefs?
  - Evidences against my beliefs?
- Alternative question
  - Alternative thinking and solutions
- Impact question
  - Effects of my thinking and behavior?
  - What if I change my thinking and behavior?
Dysfunctional Thought Record

- Date and time
- Situation
- Automatic thoughts + extent of belief (0-100%)
- Emotions + intensity (0-100%)
- Adaptive responses: nature of distortion, modified cognition and re-rating of response
- Outcome: emotions + intensity (0-100%)
Behavioral Techniques (1)

- Based on theory of behaviorism
- Classical conditioning
  - In an experiment, ringing of bell Vs a dog’s salivation
- Operant conditioning
  - Reinforcement
  - Punishment
Behavioral Techniques (2)

- Relaxation and meditation
- Reinforcement and punishment
- Activity scheduling
- Graded task assignment
- Problem solving training
- Social skill training
References

- Sapp, M. (2004), Cognitive-Behavioral Theories of Counseling- Traditional and Nontraditional Approaches. Charles C Thomas, Ch.8(pp138-156)
Thank You