

Cognitive Theory & Approaches

Counselling Theory & Approaches

1

The Early Roots of Psychotherapy

- Early psychotherapy was dominated by psychoanalysis (Freud) and behaviorism.
- Psychoanalysis focused on unconscious conflicts and childhood experiences.
- Behaviorism (Watson, Skinner) emphasized observable behavior and conditioning.
- Limited focus on thoughts and cognition in understanding emotional distress.

2

The Cognitive Revolution in Psychology

In the 1950s-60s, psychology shifted focus towards cognition (how people think). Key figures: Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis.

Beck: Negative thoughts contribute to emotional distress (Cognitive Therapy).

Ellis: Developed Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), emphasizing irrational beliefs.

3

The Birth of Cognitive Therapy

Aaron Beck's research on depression led to Cognitive Therapy (1960s).

Found that automatic negative thoughts influenced emotions and behaviors.

Introduced cognitive distortions (e.g., catastrophizing, overgeneralization).

Emphasized identifying and restructuring negative thought patterns.

4

The Development of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

01

CBT emerged by integrating Cognitive Therapy with behavioral techniques.

02

Focuses on modifying thoughts AND behaviors for better mental health outcomes.

03

Used for depression, anxiety, PTSD, OCD, and more.

04

Evidence-based approach with widespread clinical application.

5

Review of CBT

- Devised by A Beck looking at the common theme of depression
- Theme of underlying beliefs and cognitive content specificity (specific patterns of thought, lead to specific problems i.e. depression)
- Idea is to reduce impact of presenting issues through updating maladaptive beliefs and applying behavioural changes (Beck, 2011)
- Has inspired, and informed, other 3rd wave therapies (DBT, ACT, SFT etc.)

6

How this is
applied

1-1 (traditional)

Group

Psychoeducational

Online (current)

7

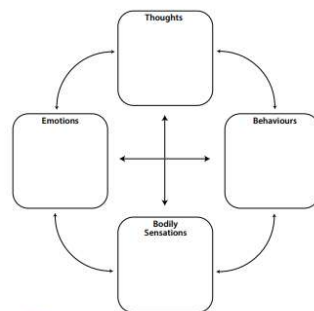
Case Formulation

Early Experiences

Core Beliefs

Rules / Assumptions I Live By

Critical Incidents



Copyright © 2019 Psychology Tools Ltd. All rights reserved.

PSYCHOLOGY TOOLS

Copyright © 2019 Psychology Tools Limited. All rights reserved.

8

Specifics

The more specific you get, the better the outcome

The reason for problems maintaining is different, depending on the issue (social anxiety is kept going by different reasons than health anxiety)

Specific formulations are available

9

It's not for everyone

Suitability for Short- Term
Cognitive Therapy Rating
Scale (Safran & Segal, 1993)

10 points to consider if it's
the right fit

10

10 points

- Access to automatic thoughts
- Awareness and differentiation of emotions
- Acceptance of personal responsibility for change
- Compatibility with cognitive rationale
- Alliance potential (in session)
- Alliance potential (outside)
- Chronicity of Problem
- Security operations
- Focality
- Optimism

11

How it is used in practice

- Using the formulation, it looks to identify and update areas that are maintaining the problem they have presented with
- This is ever changing and is never made, or modified, in isolation it includes;
 - Therapist input
 - Client input
 - Supervision
- Aim is to give an accurate perspective of the problem, not 'look on the bright side'

12



Cognitive

- Techniques aimed at updating cognitive elements maintaining the problem
 - Wide range of strategies to use
 - Socratic discussion/ Guided discovery
 - Thought challenging (classic)
 - Continuums
 - Imagery
 - Pros and cons
 - Problem solving
 - Surveys
- 

13



Behavioural

- Techniques aimed at updating behavioural elements maintaining the problem
 - These can be;
 - Behavioural experiments to test out predictions or ideas outside of therapy sessions
 - Exposure tasks
 - Building in meaningful activities (depression/PTSD)
 - Dropping safety behaviours
 - Mirroring
- 

14

CBT in practice



For really effective therapy the blend between the two works best



Cognitively questioning the beliefs/ thoughts/ assumptions we have but actively engaging in something to test this out



Brings about the biggest change and can bridge the head- heart lag

15

Recap

- Cognitive Therapy (CT) is a form of psychotherapy developed by **Aaron Beck** in the 1960s.
- It's based on the idea that **thoughts, emotions, and behaviors** are interconnected, and that negative or distorted thinking patterns contribute to emotional distress and maladaptive behaviors.
- The therapy aims to help individuals **identify, challenge, and change** these unhelpful thoughts to improve emotional well-being.

16