

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

PART II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Thoughts 1

Version 2000:May, 2000

THOUGHTS 1 -- THOUGHTS AND YOUR MOOD

GOALS FOR LEADERS

- Welcome new participants
- Review group rules
- Have participants and group introduce themselves
- Review the cognitive behavioral treatment model
- Introduce the concept of thoughts and their relation to mood (helpful thoughts → improved mood; harmful thoughts → depressed/negative mood). Discuss the influence of thoughts on mood and vice versa.
- Introduce how thoughts and internal reality are related (the mind as an internal world, an internal reality)
- Discuss how your internal reality affects your external reality.
- Identify members of the group who will be graduating at the end of this module and begin the termination process

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- 1) Pens
- 2) CES-D
- 3) Dry erase board, chalkboard or large sheets of paper to present material to group
- 4) Index cards

SAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Welcome
- II. Agenda and Announcements
- III. Group Rules
- IV. Introductions
- V. What is Depression?
- VI. Review of the Model
- VII. New Material: The Relationship Between Thoughts and Mood
- VIII. Take Home Message
- IX. Personal Project
- X. Preview and Feedback

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I. WELCOME

II. AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Identify those group members who will be graduating at the end of the module.

III. GROUP RULES

IV. INTRODUCTIONS

V. REVIEW THE SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

VI. REVIEW OF THE MODEL

These sections are covered in the introduction section of the Manual for Group Leaders.

VII. NEW MATERIAL

1.WHAT ARE THOUGHTS?

PURPOSE: The purpose of this section is to help participants understand what thoughts are and how thoughts are related to mood.

ACTIVITY: DEFINING THOUGHTS

In this activity, ask participants to talk about and define thoughts.

[Sample introduction to the activity]

In this session, we are trying to understand the relationship between your thoughts and how you feel. To understand this relationship, we should think first about what we mean by thoughts. Let's start with your definition of thoughts. What are thoughts?

Brainstorm and write on the board the group members' responses. As you cover each of the following points, you can either provide examples that clearly illustrate the point or you can elicit examples from the group members.

Cover the following points:

- By "thoughts" we mean "sentences we tell ourselves." ("Self talk")
- At any point in time, we may have several thoughts, some of which we are aware of and many of which we are probably not aware of.
- Thoughts can have positive or negative effects on you.
- Thoughts can affect your body.
For example, when you have upsetting thoughts, your body may tense up.
- Thoughts can affect your actions (the way you behave or react to situations).
For example, if you go into a situation where you think "they won't like me" you are likely to behave in an uncomfortable and awkward way.
- Thoughts can affect your mood. (You will talk more about this later.)

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2. THOUGHTS AS PART OF MY INTERNAL REALITY

[Sample introduction to this section]

Before we continue talking about how thoughts affect how we feel, we want to acknowledge that depression is not all in your head. Most of you have very difficult realities. You are dealing with many of the triggers that are listed on the "Major Depression Information Sheet," like health problems, financial problems, loss of loved ones. These difficult real life situations, naturally can and do affect your mood and the way you think. During this group, we will talk about some of the difficult realities that you each face. When we talk about reality, we will often describe two different aspects of reality. Our external or objective reality and our internal or subjective reality. If you turn to page 11 of your books, there is a description of each type of reality.

Go over the list with participants. (The list is shown below.) It might be helpful to write these lists on the board, with internal reality on the left half of the board and external reality on the right half of the board.

External/Objective Reality - The facts; parts of your reality that are observable and measurable.

- the things you and others actually do
- illnesses you have experienced
- how much money you have
- how many people live with you
- your physical surroundings

Key point: although your external reality may seem fixed, parts of it are changeable. For example, you can decide where you spend your time. You decide whether you stay inside or go for a walk. There are parts of your external reality that you can manage.

Internal/Subjective Reality - The world of your mind, which is yours alone: not observable by others.

- thoughts
- memories
- beliefs
- expectations
- the way we understand what has happened to us.

Key point: You can change and manage your internal reality. You decide which aspects of your reality, good or bad, you focus on. Changes in your external reality will affect your internal reality. By changing your external reality, you can change future memories, beliefs, and expectations.

Both your external and internal reality are real. Both are important and both affect each other constantly.

Thoughts are part of our internal reality. We process what happens to us with our thoughts. We remember what happened to us through our thoughts. We can learn to change them and because they are always with us, we can change them at anytime and anyplace. Our thoughts are under our control and no one else's. Because they are inside us, others can't see them, so it's important for us to recognize that other people do not know what we are thinking. We may need

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to share our thoughts with others so that we can check them out and see if they're accurate and also so we can get help from others.

As we mentioned before, we may also have many thoughts that we are not aware of. This means that there is a whole part of our internal reality that we may not be aware of. We may have learned ways of thinking or processing information in the past that are such a big part of our life and of our reality that we don't question them. They occur automatically.

These hidden thoughts also affect us and may negatively affect our mood. In this module we will learn to identify some of these hidden thoughts, identify patterns in our thinking, figure out whether they are helpful, and make changes to improve our mood. What we are really doing is learning to manage our internal reality in a way that helps us to improve our mood.

3. HOW DO THOUGHTS AFFECT HOW WE FEEL?

PURPOSE: To help participants understand the connection between thoughts and mood.

[Sample introduction to the section]

Now that we have an idea of what thoughts are and that we all have them, let's see how thoughts affect our mood.

Pick one of the following options to clearly demonstrate the link between thoughts and mood.

OPTION 1 – “Learning how to change how we feel”

[sample introduction to the activity]

To understand the connection between thoughts and mood, let's try an experiment. I want you to try and remember a pleasant activity that you did recently.

Go around the room and make sure that everyone has a pleasant event that they can focus on. It should be an activity that they did within the last two weeks if possible. It can even be a brief activity, like having a cup of tea, taking a walk.

Go ahead and first take a few deep breaths. Breathe in and breathe out. in. out. in. out. Now picture yourself doing that activity. What did you do? How did you feel?

(pause briefly)

Now as you are imagining this activity, I want you to try and notice how you feel right now. Let's share some of these feelings with other members of the group.

Ask participants to share how they are feeling. Begin a group discussion about how just remembering the event triggered different feelings.

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In the activity we just did, we found that just thinking about things we did before changed the way we feel now. Sometimes we think happy thoughts, sometimes we think sad, embarrassing, or angry thoughts. The point is that the thoughts we have affect the way we feel now. Sometimes our thoughts may have to do with our reactions to other people, sometimes they may not. Our thoughts about others can also affect the way that we feel.

OPTION 2

[sample introduction to the activity]

For another example of how thoughts are connected to mood, let's turn to the cartoon on page 12 in your books.



Go through the cartoon and begin a group discussion. Try to ensure that the following key points are covered:

- Each character was faced with the same external reality: it is raining.
- Each character had a different mood because it is raining.
- The difference in mood is related to what each character is thinking (examples below).
 - Character 1: "I hate rain. I'm getting all wet, and I'll probably catch a cold."
 - Character 2: "Oh it's raining. I can run home and make hot chocolate and feel all cozy."

The thoughts are part of the characters' internal reality. In this example, the characters can't change their external reality, it is raining.

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- How might changing their internal reality, meaning their thoughts affect how they feel?

Elicit responses from participants.

4. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THOUGHTS THAT I HAVE?

PURPOSE: To help participants understand the difference between helpful and harmful/unhelpful thoughts and to have them begin identifying thoughts that they have that fit each category.

ACTIVITY A: IDENTIFYING HARMFUL/UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

[Sample introduction to the activity]

We each have many thousands if not more thoughts that pass through our head each day. Some are neutral, such as if I thought “today is Monday,” others may be more harmful or helpful. But with so many thoughts going through our head, we often don’t pay attention to them even though they may affect our mood a lot. What we want to do now is to try and pay attention to some of the different types of thoughts that we might be having.

Please turn to page 13 in your books. This is a worksheet where you can write down different types of thoughts that you might have. In the first half, are thoughts that might be harmful or unhelpful. Let’s try and identify some of the harmful or unhelpful thoughts that you might have.

Are there times when particular thoughts that you have can lead you to feel depressed?

Which thoughts are most likely to trigger depression?

Which thoughts are most likely to keep the depression going once it starts?

Which thoughts drain you?

Which thoughts make you feel bad about yourself?

Elicit responses from the group and write the responses on the board. If group members have problems identifying thoughts, you can point out the list of “Helpful and Harmful Thoughts” on pages 14 and 15 of their books.

Points to cover include:

- Depression is not “all in your head.”
- Your mood is affected by real things that happen to you (e.g. health problems, financial problems).
- All thoughts are real, but many are not accurate. Sometimes thoughts contribute to mood problems.

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ACTIVITY B: IDENTIFYING HELPFUL THOUGHTS

[Sample introduction to the activity]

We have talked about how thoughts can bring us down, now let's talk about the opposite.

What kind of thoughts help you to feel better?

Which thoughts can get you out of a depression?

Which thoughts can keep you feeling good when you are not depressed?

Which thoughts give you strength?

Which thoughts help you feel good about yourself?

Elicit responses from the group and write the responses on the board.

Points to cover include:

- Specific thoughts make it less likely that you will become depressed.
- Specific helpful thoughts can make a depressed mood less intense and less long and can decrease the frequency of depressed moods.

[Sample wrap up]

We have talked about harmful thoughts, what kind of thoughts are more common for you right now?

Briefly elicit participants' responses. You may want to reassure them that when people are depressed, it is common that they have more negative/harmful thoughts.

5. PURPOSE OF THE MODULE

PURPOSE: To explain why CBT is helpful and how reducing harmful/negative thoughts and increasing helpful, positive, and realistic thoughts can help improve mood.

[Sample introduction to the section]

As we mentioned earlier, we are going to spend the next three weeks learning ways to identify thoughts that influence how we feel. We will be talking about ways to increase positive, helpful thoughts and decrease negative or harmful thoughts so that your mood will improve. In the past, many group members have found that they have been able to make changes in their thoughts, in their internal reality and that when they did, they were also able to make changes in their external reality or at least to cope with it better. In this group, you will learn to change those things that you can change for the better and to best manage those parts of your external reality that you cannot change.

It may be useful to give specific examples that are pertinent to specific group members or ask veteran members to share how the program has been useful to them.

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VIII. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Go over the take home message.

Some thoughts make my mood worse.
Some thoughts make my mood better.
If I can find out which they are,
I can use my thoughts to improve my mood.

My mind is my internal reality.
Harmful thoughts are like pollution in my internal world.
I can try to keep my internal world healthy.

IX. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

WEEKLY PROJECT

1) continue tracking mood using the mood scale and track the number of positive events you do each day. Explain the mood scale to new members. The mood scale and explanation for how to use it are shown in page 17 of their books.

2) Track your thoughts

[Sample introduction to personal project]

Today we've talked a lot about the relationship between thoughts and mood. The first step in changing your thoughts and improving your mood is to identify those thoughts that are most powerful in terms of your own mood.

Therefore, this week, your personal project is to keep track of your mood each day. Here are some index cards (pass out index cards, 7 cards for each person; one card per day). They are small so that you can carry one card each day and write down thoughts that make you feel worse on the side of the card labeled (-) for negative mood and thoughts that make you feel better on the side of the card marked (+) for positive mood. We expect that you will be able to identify 5-10 thoughts each day. Bring them with you for next session.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

select one of the following activities to do

1) Go through the list of "Helpful and Harmful Thoughts" on pages 14 and 15 of your books and mark thoughts in each category that could apply to you. Share the most powerful ones with the group next session.

2) Talk to someone about what you have learned today.

X. PREVIEW AND FEEDBACK

Let the participants know that next week you will continue talking about thoughts and that you will begin talking about specific types of thought patterns that affect mood.

Congratulate group members for attending the group and acknowledge that coming to group is a big step in improving their mood.

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Before ending the group, encourage group members to provide feedback regarding today's session. Questions to encourage discussion are listed below.

- What was helpful about today's session?
- What was not helpful?
- What suggestions do you have to improve your therapy?

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GROUP LEADER SELF EVALUATION FORM: THOUGHTS 1

INSTRUCTIONS

Content Covered: Rate the degree to which you feel this material was covered (0=not at all, 10=fully covered) If not done this session but done later, when it is done write in the date and rate how well you feel you covered it.

Satisfaction with Teaching: Rate the degree to which you are satisfied with the way you and your co-leader taught the material (0=not at all satisfied, 10=extremely satisfied).

Participant Process: Rate on average the degree to which participants seemed to participate, understand and complete the exercise (0=on average very poor no one understood or no one was able to complete exercise; 10=everyone seemed to understand keypoints and complete the exercise).

	Taught/ Done? (0-10)	Satisfaction w/ Teaching (0-10)	Participant Process (0-10)
Welcome	_____	_____	_____
Hand out CES-D	_____	_____	_____
Group rules	_____	_____	_____
Introductions	_____	_____	_____
Review of symptoms of depression	_____	_____	_____
Review of CBT treatment model	_____	_____	_____
New Material			
1. Defining thoughts	_____	_____	_____
2. Thoughts as part of internal reality (vs. external reality)	_____	_____	_____
3. How thoughts affect how we feel			
Option 1: remember pleasant activity	_____	_____	_____
Option 2: cartoon	_____	_____	_____
4. What are some of the thoughts I have			
Identifying harmful/unhelpful thoughts	_____	_____	_____
Identifying helpful thoughts	_____	_____	_____
5. Purpose of module	_____	_____	_____
Take Home Message Reviewed	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Assigned	_____	_____	_____
Preview and Feedback	_____	_____	_____