

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

PART II: Lecture Notes for Instructors: Thoughts 3

Version 2000: May, 2000

**THOUGHTS 3 --DECREASING AND TALKING BACK TO YOUR
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD**

GOALS FOR LEADERS

- Review last week's main points (mistakes in thinking).
- Help participants understand the relationship between negative thinking and mood.
- Introduce a variety of ways to decrease negative thinking (changing internal reality).

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- 1) Pens
- 2) Dry erase board, chalkboard or large sheets of paper to present material to group

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SAMPLE SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Agenda and Announcements
- II. Review
- III. Personal Project Review
- IV. New Material: Disputing Harmful Thoughts
- V. Take Home Message
- VI. Personal Project
- VII. Preview and Feedback

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I. AGENDA AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Go over the agenda and ask participants whether they have any topics they would like to add to the agenda. Make any announcements.

II. REVIEW

Review the material covered in Thoughts 2. Use the review to check on how much participants remember from the last session, reinforce what they have learned, and educate group members who were absent last session.

[sample review statement]

Last week we talked about and identified harmful patterns of thinking. We also did a relaxation exercise with an orange(or whatever object you used) to help focus on thoughts and decrease harmful thoughts. What are some of the things that you remember most from last week?

Elicit responses from the participants.

III. PERSONAL PROJECT REVIEW

Review the homework from the previous session.

WEEKLY PROJECT

- Track the positive and negative thoughts you have each day.

OPTIONAL PROJECT

Find out which optional personal project participants did and then review what they learned from doing the project.

- 1) Practice the relaxation exercises.
- 2) Continue tracking thoughts you have on 3x5 cards
- 3) Try to figure out whether there are specific harmful thought patterns that apply to you.

BRIDGE (Approximately 5 minutes)

Introduce this week's material, linking it to material taught in previous sessions.

[sample bridge]

Last week, we found out that harmful or negative thoughts tend to make you feel more depressed, and we identified different patterns of harmful thoughts. Today, we will learn how to deal with the kinds of harmful thoughts that we have.

There are many different ways that you can decrease harmful and unrealistic thoughts. We will talk about some of these ways and try them out today. Feel free to try out different methods, and you may discover one or two different ones that work better for you, while others work better for someone else.

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As we go through these different exercises, we recognize that there are parts of your external reality that are real and can't be changed easily, and we don't want to discount that (we'll also talk more about this next week), but we want to make sure that your internal reality is not all negative or all positive (either would be a mistake in all-or-none thinking), that harmful thoughts are balanced by thoughts that produce healthier mood states and that optimistic thoughts are also realistic.

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IV. NEW MATERIAL

1. WHAT CAN YOU DO ONCE YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED YOUR HARMFUL THOUGHTS?

PURPOSE: The purpose of this section is to help participants understand that once they have been able to identify harmful thoughts, they can change or stop these thoughts, which in turn can help decrease their negative mood.

[Sample introduction to the section]

Once you have identified your harmful thoughts, it is easier to deal with them. You can take a really good look at them and decide whether they are properly realistic, accurate, or overly harmful.

First try and identify a negative thought that you have. It could be one that you have had over the past week. Write it down on page 28 in your book.

Go around and make sure everyone has identified a harmful thought. It will be important to make sure that they have not identified a statement of fact. Often people will have thoughts about things that are difficult. We are not talking about modifying thoughts like “I have diabetes” or “my family member just died.” In such cases, the person would want to identify and accept the feelings they have about these losses. We would want to empathize with them about how difficult this situation is but then draw the distinction about having thoughts about a difficult situation and having thoughts that add unnecessary suffering to an already difficult situation. (i.e. because I have diabetes I will never be able to have fun.) One way to do this it to have them fill in the blank: “I have diabetes and because of that “

Now we have several options for dealing with that thought. These options are outlined beginning on page 29 in your books.

Leaders go over the options. Select specific ones that seem more relevant for the individuals in the group but let them know that they will want to read over all the options.

As you go over the different options, have the participants try them using some of them using the negative thoughts they identified as part of the personal project. To make this more interactive, each person (depending on the number of persons in the group) can take turns going to the board, presenting their thought and then working with the group to manage this thought.

Try to cover the following points:

- Harmful thoughts increase negative mood.
- Harmful thoughts affect our internal reality.
- Harmful thoughts can also affect our external reality.
- Harmful thoughts can be accurate or inaccurate.

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- The more unbalanced, unnecessary, destructive, and negative our thoughts are, the more they are likely to negatively affect our mood, our behaviors, and the way we treat other people.

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OPTION 1: Examine the evidence

(Adapted from the manual “Cognitive Behavioral Therapy of Depression by Kaiser Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry, San Francisco, January 1999 and based on work by Beck)

The next time you have a thought that brings your mood down or causes a strong negative feeling, try following these 3 steps.

STEP 1: Mostly True, Mostly False or Neither?

- What is the evidence that my thought is 100% true.
- What is the evidence that my thought is 100% false.
- How much of it do I think is true (percentagewise) and how much of it do I think is false (percentagewise)?

STEP 2: Talk with another person, someone whose opinion you trust

- Often we think differently when we say our thoughts out loud to others.
- Different people have different points of view, what is this person’s point of view?
- If your friend has this thought or problem, what would you tell him or her? Should you maybe use your own advice?

STEP 3: So what?

- What if my thought is 100% true, or mostly true, what can I do about it?

OPTION 2: Do an experiment

When you’re unsure as to whether your thought is accurate, could you do an experiment where you could gather more evidence to see if it is true.

For example, if your thought is, “If I go to the party, I will not have a good time” (negative fortune telling) it might be useful to actually go with an open mind and see how it really is.

What are some experiments you might try?

OPTION 3: Finding the antidote to my pattern of thinking

Follow these 3 steps.

STEP 1: Identify my thought pattern

- Does my harmful thought fit a pattern?
- Which pattern? (see page 32-34 participant books)

STEP 2: Identify the antidote to the pattern

- What is the antidote to the pattern (see page 32-34 participant books)
- What does it mean to me?
- How can I apply it to my specific thought or my specific situation?

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STEP 3: Apply the antidote

- When I apply the antidote how does my thinking change?
- When my thinking changes does my feeling change?

Give an example using the three steps to make sure that they are clear to the participants. Try to give an example that pertains to one or more group members.

2. HOW ABOUT JUST STOPPING HARMFUL THOUGHTS: WORRY TIME AND THOUGHT STOPPING

[Sample introduction to the activity]

It's sometimes necessary to have thoughts that produce negative mood states, as long as they don't occur all the time. Avoiding harmful thoughts totally is not realistic. But limiting how often you focus on them is quite possible. Schedule five or ten minutes a day where you can focus on these thoughts when it is necessary to do so. For example, If you find a lump in your breast, you need to decide what to do. Denying it's there is dangerous.

We call this "worry time." Think about the problem and decide what to do. When the time is over, move on with the rest of the day. Try not to focus anymore on the negative thoughts and proceed to more other pleasant thoughts and activities.

Ask participants what they think about having a scheduled "worry time." Elicit and discuss their ideas. Then, if participants seem to like the idea, have them identify a good worry time for themselves, which should be free of distraction and consistent across days and times.

Facilitate a Guided Imagery Exercise, and have participants close their eyes and focus on their harmful thoughts. You can even verbalize out loud for some of the participants their harmful thoughts [this part of the exercise demonstrates Worry Time]. Do this for a few minutes, and as participants are deeply into their "worry time," leaders can slam a book on the table, ring a bell, have their pager go off and/or some other stimulus to stop the harmful thoughts - this is a great exercise to demonstrate thought stopping.

Note: This exercise is not appropriate if there are group members with poor heart conditions, and/or other medical conditions that would be affected by the "startle" effect. If you choose to do so, you will want to warn members that you are going to do so and only after warning them, proceed with the exercise.

Members should be "startled" or distracted by your action (book slamming down, bell ringing, loud stimulus). Leaders can ask participants what happened in this exercise, and demonstrate that members stopped thinking of harmful thoughts b/c there was something else in the way. Proceed to note that a more benign way of thought stopping may be to:

- (1) Carry a rubber band around wrist and lightly snap it when harmful thoughts occur.

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- (2) Replace the harmful thought with another thought. Use a card of positive thoughts to “replace” a harmful thought.
- 3) Do a relaxation exercise, like the orange exercise, which helps train us to keep our thoughts in the present.
- 4) Take mental inventory of all major muscle groups, focus on breathing peacefully and relax. (Wave image: imagine an ocean with large strong waves. As you relax allow the waves to become smaller. Continue relaxing until the surface is completely calm.)

3. HOW CAN I BALANCE MY THOUGHTS - Adding “yes, but” to thoughts

[Sample introduction to the activity]

When people are depressed, they often have many harmful thoughts and have problems thinking positive things about themselves or their situation. This is like “all or nothing thinking” everything is all negative. One way to fight back against this pattern is to try and balance this out and add a “yes but” to your thoughts. In this method you don’t have to ignore or deny your problems to decrease harmful thoughts. You can balance thoughts about a difficult situation by adding a more positive or hopeful statement to them.

Leaders -- Use examples of negative thoughts from participants. Have either participants or leaders write some harmful thoughts on the left side of the board, then add the “yes but” statements on the right side of the board to balance or cancel out the harmful thoughts.

Example of negative thought.

Add the YES BUT statement

“I feel nervous a lot.”

“Yes, I feel nervous a lot, but I am still relatively healthy.”

“I am always depressed.”

“Yes, I may be depressed right now, but I am taking this class to help me change my mood.”

V. TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Go over the take home message.

You can learn ways to decrease and talk back to your harmful thoughts and improve your mood.

VI. PERSONAL PROJECT ASSIGNMENT (5-10 minutes)

WEEKLY PROJECT

- a) Continue tracking mood using the mood scale and track significant positive and negative thoughts you have each day.

OPTIONAL PERSONAL PROJECT

- b) Select one of the following activities to do
 - 1) Read through all the ways to decrease harmful thoughts.
 - 2) Select two options and try them out.

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VII. PREVIEW AND FEEDBACK

[sample introduction to activity]

Next week we will spend time identifying positive thoughts and finding ways to increase the frequency of thoughts that have a positive impact on your mood. Also, we will review the thoughts module and discuss the ways in which you can use your thoughts to help you plan the kind of life that you want to have.

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?

GROUP LEADER SELF EVALUATION FORM: THOUGHTS 3

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? (0-5)	Satisfaction with Teaching (0-10)	Participant Process (0-10)
Review	_____	_____	_____
Personal Project Review	_____	_____	_____
1. What can you do once you have identified harmful thoughts?	_____	_____	_____
Option 1: examine the evidence	_____	_____	_____
Option 2: do an experiment	_____	_____	_____

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Option 3: Finding the antidote to my pattern of

thinking

Worry Time

Thought Stopping

How can I balance my thoughts: "Yes but"

exercise

Take Home Message

Personal Project Assignment

Preview and Feedback
