

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

A. WHAT IS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)?

CBT is a form of psychotherapy that focuses on the present. CBT is effective for many conditions, including anxiety. During a course of CBT, you typically meet with your therapist once a week for several weeks. You will learn a variety of therapy skills that you can use on your own.

The basic idea is that your thoughts influence your mood and behavior. If you can change your thoughts, your mood and behavior will change too. CBT is not the same as positive thinking. Most of our thoughts are not entirely accurate. CBT uses techniques that help you examine and shift those thoughts into more neutral, realistic ones.

B. CBT CONCEPTS

Automatic thoughts: thoughts that “pop up” in your mind without conscious awareness. They may happen very quickly and take some practice to catch/identify

Cognitive distortions: common patterns of inaccurate or unbalanced thinking (see handout)

Balanced thinking: creating thoughts that use all of the data available and eliminates cognitive distortions. New thoughts must be true and believable. This can be difficult at first, but it will get easier with practice. It really helps to put the thoughts down on paper, so grab a pen and paper and write them down. This provides something concrete to refer back to, when the unpleasant feelings return.

The last step is to go back and evaluate how the feelings changed with the new thoughts. If the feelings did not change much, go back and try writing down other alternate thoughts that may work better.

Common Cognitive Distortions

<p>All or Nothing Thinking</p> <p>Viewing things in absolute terms, also called Black & White Thinking</p>	<p>Overgeneralization</p> <p>Making broad conclusions based on a single event</p>
<p>Mental Filter</p> <p>Only paying attention to certain types of evidence, often the negatives</p>	<p>Disqualifying the Positives</p> <p>Discounting the good things that have happened or your good qualities</p>
<p>Jumping to Conclusions (2 types)</p> <p>Predicting outcomes not warranted by the facts</p> <p>Mind reading - imagining you know what others are thinking</p> <p>Fortune telling - predicting the future</p>	<p>Magnification or Minimization (Catastrophizing)</p> <p>Blowing things out of proportion or inappropriately shrinking them to seem less important</p>
<p>Emotional Reasoning</p> <p>Assuming if you feel a certain way, what you think must be true</p>	<p>Should Statements</p> <p>Also “must” or “ought”, implying that you (or others) have failed</p>
<p>Labeling</p> <p>Assigning a label to yourself or others, instead of focusing on the facts</p>	<p>Personalization and Blame</p> <p>Finding fault or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault</p>

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

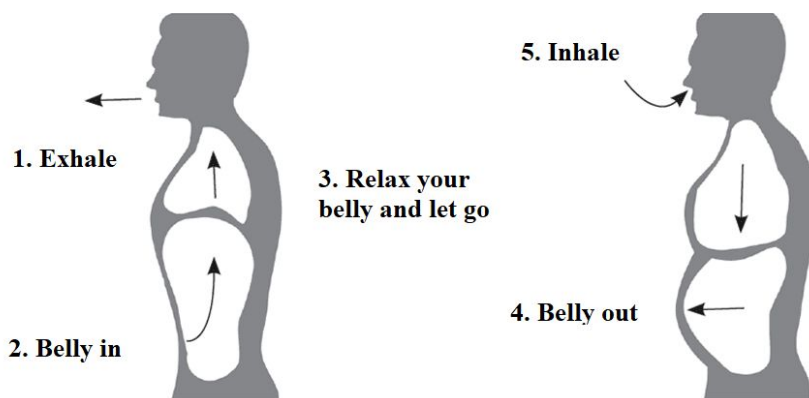
A. What is Diaphragmatic Breathing or belly breathing?

Using more of your abdomen during the breathing process than your chest muscles. Many adults, especially those with anxiety disorders, become “chest breathers”, where they use more of their chest muscles to breathe. This results in shallow and inefficient breathing patterns, leading to faster breathing. This can lead to muscle tension and lightheadedness.

What’s the point of diaphragmatic breathing or belly breathing? If we can use more of our abdomens during breathing, this will help slow down our breathing rates. This can help reduce muscular tension, improve blood flow to the brain, lower blood pressure, and ultimately lower stress levels.

B. Video of Diaphragmatic Breathing in a baby: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5q-wXIKSxD8>

C. Diagram of Steps of Diaphragmatic Breathing:



D. Step by Step Diaphragmatic Breathing:

1. Sit comfortably in a chair or sofa, with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and your shoulders, head and neck as relaxed as they can be.
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and the other on your abdomen.
3. We will start by slowly breathing out for a count of three. You will notice the hand on your abdomen move towards your spine.
4. You can close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so, otherwise keep them open.
5. Slowly breathe out your mouth counting 1...2...3, then relax your belly which will naturally allow air to fill your lungs.
6. Set a timer and repeat this process for 5 minutes.
7. Practice this in the morning, afternoon, and night even if you are not feeling stressed or anxious.

The more you practice, the better this will work!

LOVINGKINDNESS/METTA MEDITATION PRACTICE

A. WHAT IS LOVINGKINDNESS MEDITATION? An ancient form of “medicine” for the soul, coming from Buddhism. Referred to as “Metta” practice in Pali or “Maitri” practice in the Tibetan tradition. The offering here is not religious, and only intended to support your own personal belief system. Created in Buddhism as a way to provide a sense of safety for those traveling through dangerous terrain, both internally and externally. It has become a useful part of our modern-day mindfulness toolbox - a way to replenish your internal stores when you are overwhelmed by the world

B. Instructions:

1. Find a comfortable setting and clear your mind. It is ok to be in a difficult setting as well.
2. This meditation makes use of a series of specific phrases, and you can do so out loud or internally. Repeat the phrases as a kind of chant that allows your mind to release other thoughts.
3. Feel free to visualize sending lovingkindness to yourself or others, as long as you can do so in a way that acknowledges your true feelings.
4. Send Metta to yourself. Notice if you have trouble sending Lovingkindness to yourself, and send yourself Lovingkindness for feeling that way. You will add others (loved one, stranger, difficult people, world) if you have the time. ALWAYS PUT THE OXYGEN MASK ON YOURSELF FIRST.
5. After a period of time, hold a loved one or loved ones in your mind, bathing in the good feelings of Lovingkindness as you send Lovingkindness towards others.
6. After a period of time, send Metta to a neutral person who might be a stranger out somewhere in the world, perhaps a person you see crossing the street, or someone on the other side of the globe. Bathe in sending that person or these people Lovingkindness.
7. Choose to send Metta to a difficult person, or difficult people. Try not to judge yourself if it's hard to feel Lovingkindness for them. Allow the phrases to do the work for you. Rest in the relief that something positive is happening even if you do not feel it. Allow the good feelings of the phrases to wash over the discomfort you feel when thinking about your difficult person or people.
8. After a period of time, shift your focus onto the larger world. Some choose to find opposing opposites as a way to capture how much everyone deserves lovingkindness. For example, women and men, children and adults, dogs and cats, beings and non-beings. The quick and simple version is to extend Lovingkindness to the world, and you can enjoy an extended session by playing with these opposites. Part of a meditation practice is working with the ways we accidentally cling onto ideas and feelings that cause us to suffer, including seeing differences where they might not actually be as important as we think.

C. PHRASES FOR LOVING KINDNESS (METTA) PRACTICE*:

TO SELF:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I be at ease

TO LOVED ONE(S):

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you be at ease

TO STANGER(S):

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you be at ease

TO DIFFICULT ONE(S):

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you be at ease

BONUS ROUND: EXTENDING LOVINGKINDNESS OUT INTO THE WORLD

May all beings be safe
May all beings be happy
May all beings be healthy
May all beings be at ease

May the world be safe
May the world be happy
May the world be healthy
May the world be at ease

**Spanish versions:*

<https://www.upaya.org/uploads/pdfs/MeditacinenlaBondadAmorosa.pdf>

<https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/workfiles/Meditacion-de-bondad-amorosa.pdf>

Efforts underway to translate the practice into other languages.

GRATITUDE PRACTICES

A. WHAT IS A GRATITUDE PRACTICE:

A gratitude practice is a way of bringing into our lives some moments of thought about those things for which we are grateful. This might mean taking a few moments every few days, or even everyday, to do one of these activities that encourage us to express our gratitude to others, to ourselves, to a higher power, or even to “the universe” itself.

B. Benefits of Gratitude Practices:

- a. Enhances long term happiness by 10%
- b. Increase psychological well-being
- c. Protective factor in reducing suicidal ideation in stressed/depressed individuals
- d. Reduces depressive symptoms
- e. Improves sleep quality
- f. Increases likelihood of exercise

C. Type of Gratitude Practices:

- **Journal**---daily, weekly, whatever works for you without feeling pressured, or like you're failing
- **Shared Gratitudes**---with a partner---tell one another 3 things you're grateful for daily---saying it out loud helps
- **Gratitude Jar**---decorated with stickers, glitter & glue, paint, tied with a ribbon or a simple glass---keep slips of paper by the jar---write 3 things daily---put slips in the jar
- **Gratitude Walk**---- take a walk and observe the things you see around you---take it all in---be aware of nature, the colors, the sounds, and the smells---notice how your feet feel when you step onto the ground
- **Gratitude Reflection**---(example 1 below)
- **Gratitude Worksheet**---(see example 2 below)

D. Gratitude Reflection (*Still Mind, 2014*)

1. Settle yourself in a relaxed posture. Take a few deep, calming breaths to relax and center. Let your awareness move to your immediate environment: all the things you can smell, taste, touch, see, hear. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”
2. Next, bring to mind those people in your life to whom you are close: your friends, family, partner.... Say to yourself, “For this, I am grateful.”
3. Next, turn your attention onto yourself: you are a unique individual, blessed with imagination, the ability to communicate, to learn from the past and plan for the future, to overcome any pain you may be experiencing. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”
4. Finally, rest in the realization that life is a precious gift. Note to yourself that you have been born into a period of immense prosperity and freedom, and that you have the gift of health. Say to yourself: “For this, I am grateful.”

E. Gratitude Worksheet

Why I'm Grateful



I am grateful for my family because... _____



Something good that happened this week... _____



I am grateful for my friendship with... _____ because... _____



I am grateful for who I am because... _____



Something silly that I am grateful for... _____



Something else I am grateful for... _____
