COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY: SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL REGULATION WITH CHILDREN AND TEENS

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INTRODUCTIONS

• My work with children and teens: inpatient, outpatient, schools, and clinics
• Trained in Cognitive-behavioral therapy, as well as behavioral, biofeedback, and solution focused modalities

• What contexts do you work in?

• Who uses Cognitive-behavioral therapy?

• Disclosures: No financial connections to any of the apps/ resources mentioned in this presentation
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

• Define Cognitive-behavioral therapy
• How Cognitive-behavioral therapy supports emotional regulation
  • emotional regulation skills: individual
  • emotional regulation skills: caregivers
    • Practice & generalization
COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

- “CBT”
- Evidence based therapy for anxiety, depression, ptsd, behavior (APA, AAP)
- Goal driven: target behavior
- Time limited: monitoring/ evaluating progress
  - Skills can be taught in 4-6 sessions
- Investigations/ discoveries/ projects…..“Homework”
  - Generalization (typically takes more than 4-6 session)
- Collaborative with parents/ children
- Developmentally modifiable
CBT TRIANGLE

Situation: Test

Feeling: Anxiety

Cognition / Thought: I’m going to fail

Behavior: Stomach ache, not studying, rushing through test
CBT SKILLS: FEELINGS
• Feelings are reflexive
  • Quick; can’t always anticipate / little control
  • Balloon

• Individual differences
  • Emotional responses post TBI (fear, guilt, insecurity, adjustment, anger, ptsd….).
  • Don’t assume….ask.

• General acceptance of all feelings
  • Have to stay safe and respectful

• Validate
  • “there’s no need to worry”…. don’t sweep aside or tell them not to worry
FEELINGS: MIND-BODY CONNECTION

• Minds and bodies are connected
  • Feelings can create physical responses
  • Create language for feeling sensations

• Diagram/draw the connection of mind-gut/ mind- head
  • Discuss locations of feeling locations

• Creates awareness of triggers
• common language for abstract feeling

• check in with child: “what’s your anxiety like today?”

• Validates the emotion
  • I see your anger is really hot today

• Tool to recheck emotion after coping skills
KID HOMEWORK

Thermometer

Race Car/ Check your engine

Mind-Body
CAREGIVER HOMEWORK

Keys to Generalization

• **Label:** when you see big emotions
  • “I can see your anger is really hot right now”
  • Create awareness/ language/ check in

• **Validate**
  • “I feel angry too when something doesn’t go my way”

• **Empathize**
  • I understand this makes you feel anxious.

**Be aware of avoidance/ issues pertaining to functioning: accommodate, but emotions don’t rule functioning**

• **Reinforce/ Praise:**
  • Kids use of labeling; rating; mind-body awareness
CAREGIVER HOMEWORK

- **Collaborative problem solving**
  - After a big feeling takes control, when everyone is calm, revisit situation.
  - No shame, discipline or anger
  - Opportunity to learn from the big emotion….tell me what happened? Help me understand?
    - Did they recognize big emotion?
    - Can they label/ quantify big emotion?
    - Did their body tell them anything?
    - Do they see any triggers?
CBT SKILLS TAKE-HOME

Feeling: quantify, locate, validate

Cognition: Thought

Behavior
CBT SKILLS: BEHAVIOR

Feeling

Cognition: Thought

Behavior
Does your action make you feeling better or worse? Keep you out of trouble?

Self efficacy: who’s in charge of your behavior?
  - Don’t let emotions drive the bus

Inventory current coping skills. What works/what doesn’t

Have them show you.
  - “They told me to take deep breaths, that doesn’t work”.
BEHAVIOR

• Teach range of coping skills.....
  • No right was to relax or regulate the body in time of stress
• Transportable: anywhere coping without props or others noticing
• Ask about creativity:
  • Imaginative
  • Physical and active
• Joys, hobbies
• Cultural, spiritual tools
BEHAVIOR - YOUNGER

• **Breath:**
  • Finger breathing
  • Bunny
  • Snake
  • 7/11 breathing
  • Sesame Street Breath (app)
BEHAVIOR - YOUNGER

• Progressive Muscle Relaxation (describe sensation of muscles/ body in hold and after hold)
  • Turtle
  • Hand press
• Progressive Muscle Relaxation
  • Safe hands
  • Super hero
BEHAVIOR - YOUNGER

- Visual distractions (tool to interrupt big emotion; move from emotions to body)
- Samurai eyes
- Rainbow room
BEHAVIOR- OLDER

- Visualization story (grounding with 5 senses)
- Favorite place activity: see, hear, taste, touch, smell
- Body scans: in relaxed position, looking for tension
- PMR head to toe: create tension/relaxation
CBT Apps:

- Adjustable pace of breath, tone and visual to follow:
  - My Calm Beat
  - Breathe Deep
- Guided breath with combo cbt skills
  - MindShift
  - Companion
KID HOMEWORK

• “can’t just show up for the game/ recital/ test”: skills won’t work well for big emotions if you don’t practice when calm
• Set a mutually agreed upon goal for the week
• Child teaches parent skills/ goals in session
• Set expectation that homework will be reviewed next session (reinforcement)
HOMEWORK EXAMPLES

Stress/stomach aches

Big emotions

[Image of homework examples for stress/stomach aches and big emotions]
CAREGIVER HOMEWORK

Keys to Generalization

- Label, Validate, Empathize
- **Model:**
  - “I got really anxious today at work, so I did some finger breathing”
  - Forced choice: “I see you’re getting upset, would you like to x or y strategy?”
  - Parent choice in big emotional moment
- **Practice**
  - Visual cards/ chart
  - Practice when calm, ordinary moments (car, walks); create “muscle memory”
  - Increase awareness after positive coping: how does your body feel? How does your anxiety feel?
- **Reinforce any signs of effort!!!!**
- **Re-rate emotion:**
  - Goal to inch down, vs up
CAREGIVER HOMEWORK

- Collaborative problem solving
  - After a big behavior, when calm revisit situation
  - No shame, discipline or anger
  - Opportunity to learn from the big emotion….
    - What could they do differently the next time?
    - How can you help them remember a positive coping skill?
    - How can you support them using the positive coping skill?
    - Can you have a cue/visual reminder their emotion is getting big, time for a positive coping skill
CBT SKILLS TAKE-HOME

Feeling: quantify, locate, validate

Cognition:

Behavior: DO → interrupt feeling
Re-Rate

Thought
CBT SKILLS: THOUGHTS
THOUGHTS

• What’s in that thought bubble at the exact moment of a high emotion or big behavior
  • Thinking about thoughts is not innate or always developmentally easy

• Homework exercises can identify patterns in thought, situations
  • look for negative/ untrue thinking patterns
THOUGHTS - YOUNGER

• Is my thought **kind**?
• is my thought **true**?
• is my thought **helpful**?
• does my thought help my anger…?
• Does my thought keep me out of trouble?
• **All or nothing thinking:** looking at things in absolute, black and white categories

• **Overgeneralization:** viewing a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat

• **Discounting the positive:** insisting that positive/ accomplishments don’t count

• **Catastrophizing:** predicting the future negatively without considering other more likely outcomes
Thoughts - Older

- **Labeling**: placing a fixed, global label on yourself or others without considering the evidence

- **“Should” and “must” statements**: fixed ideas of how others should behave

- **Magnification or minimization**: blowing things out of proportion; shrinking their importance

- **Blame**: blame yourself for something you weren’t entirely responsible for, or blame other people and overlook ways that you contributed
• Mind reading: believing you know what others are thinking, failing to consider other, more likely possibilities.

• Personalization: believing others are behaving negatively because of you, without considering more plausible explanations for their behaviors.

• Tunnel Vision: seeing the negative aspects of the situation.

• Emotional Reasoning: thinking something must be true because you “feel” it strongly, discounting evidence to the contrary.
KIDS HOMEWORK

Thought Worksheet

Learning how to calm down my big feelings.

Feelings:
- Angry
- Sad
- Embarrassed

Thoughts: What am I thinking? (Self/Situations)
- Is my thought real?
- Is my thought helpful?
- Does my thought make me feel better?

Replacing a bad thought:
- Relaxation techniques
- Deep breathing
- Positive self-talk

Action: what am I doing in the moment?
PARENTS HOMEWORK

**Keys to Generalization:**

- **Label:** when you see negative/untrue thinking
- **Validate:** “I understand this is really challenging”
- **Model:** “I felt critical of myself yesterday too, so I ….”
- **Connect to F-B**
  - Is this thought helping your feeling/ re-rate feelings
  - Does this thought help your actions
- **Practice**
  - Visual cards/ signs
  - Apps: Companion, MindShift (coping screen shots)
- **Reinforce** any signs of positive self-talk effort!!!!
CBT SKILLS TAKE-HOME

Feeling: quantify, locate, validate

Cognition: Thought
Evaluate for truth/kindness/helpfulness

Behavior: DO -> interrupt feeling
Re-Rate


• Stallard, P. (2002). *Think good- feel good: A cognitive behavior therapy workbook for children and young people.* T. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Websites:


• [http://www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

• [http://drchristopherwillard.com](http://drchristopherwillard.com) (mindfulness strategies)
QUESTIONS

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