

MODULE 71 BEHAVIOR, COGNITIVE, AND GROUP THERAPIES

BEHAVIOR THERAPIES

- Proponents of BEHAVIOR THERAPY, however, doubt the healing power of self-awareness. They assume that problem behaviors are the problems, and the application of learning principles can eliminate them. Rather than delving deeply below the surface looking for inner causes, therapies using behavioral techniques view maladaptive symptoms – such as phobias or sexual dysfunctions – as learned behaviors that can be replaced by constructive behaviors.
- COUNTERCONDITIONING pairs the trigger stimulus (in this case, the enclosed space of the elevator) with a new response (relaxation) that is incompatible with fear. Indeed, behavior therapists have successfully counter conditioned people with such fears. Two specific techniques are exposure therapy and aversive conditioning.
- EXPOSURE THERAPIES, which expose people to what they normally avoid or escape (behaviors that get reinforced by reduced anxiety). Exposure therapies have them face their fear, and thus overcome their fear of the fear response itself. One widely used exposure therapy is SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION. This is exposure therapy that associates a pleasant, relaxed state with gradually increasing anxiety-triggering stimuli. Commonly used to treat phobias.
- When an anxiety-arousing situation is too expensive, difficult, or embarrassing to recreate, VIRTUAL REALITY EXPOSURE THERAPY offers an efficient middle-ground. Wearing a head-mounted display unit that projects a three-dimensional virtual world, you would view a lifelike series of scenes that would be tailored to your particular fear and shift as your head turned.
- In AVERSIVE CONDITIONING, the goal is substituting a negative (aversive) response for a positive response to a harmful stimulus (such as alcohol). Thus, aversive conditioning is the reverse of systematic desensitization – it seeks to condition an aversion to something the person should avoid.
- Problem with aversive conditioning is that cognition influences conditioning. People know that outside the therapist's office they can drink without fear of nausea.
- TOKEN ECONOMY is an operant conditioning procedure in which people earn a token of some sort for exhibiting a desired behavior and can later exchange the tokens for various privileges or treats.
- Critics of behavior modification express two concerns: how durable are the behaviors? And is it right for one human to control another's behavior?

COGNITIVE THERAPIES

- COGNITIVE THERAPIES is therapy that teaches people new, more adaptive ways of thinking; based on the assumption that thoughts intervene between events and our emotional reactions.
- RATIONAL-EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY (REBT) is a confrontational cognitive therapy, developed by Albert Ellis, that vigorously challenges people's illogical, self-defeating attitudes and assumptions.

- After being trained to dispute their negative thoughts, depression-prone children, teens, and college students exhibit a greatly reduced rate of future depression.

Selected Cognitive Therapy Techniques

Aim of technique	Technique	Therapist Directives
Reveal beliefs	Question your interpretations	Explore your beliefs, revealing faulty assumptions such as "I must be liked by everyone."
	Rank thoughts and emotions	Gain perspective by ranking your thoughts and emotions from mildly to extremely upsetting.
Test beliefs	Examine consequences	Explore difficult situations, assessing possible consequences and challenging faulty reasoning.
	De-catastrophize thinking	Work through the actual worst-case consequences of the situation you face (it is often not as bad as imagined). Then determine how to cope with the real situation you face.
Change beliefs	Take appropriate responsibility	Challenge total self-blame and negative thinking, noting aspects for which you may be truly responsible, as well as aspects that aren't your responsibility.
	Resist extremes	Develop new ways of thinking and feeling to replace habits that are not adaptive. For example, change from thinking "I am a total failure" to "I got a failing grade on that paper, and I can make these changes to succeed next time."

- **COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)** is a widely practiced integrative therapy, aims not only to alter the way people think (cognitive therapy), but also to alter the way they act (behavior therapy). It seeks to make people aware of their irrational negative thinking, to replace it with new ways of thinking, and to practice the more positive approach in everyday settings.

GROUP AND FAMILY THERAPIES

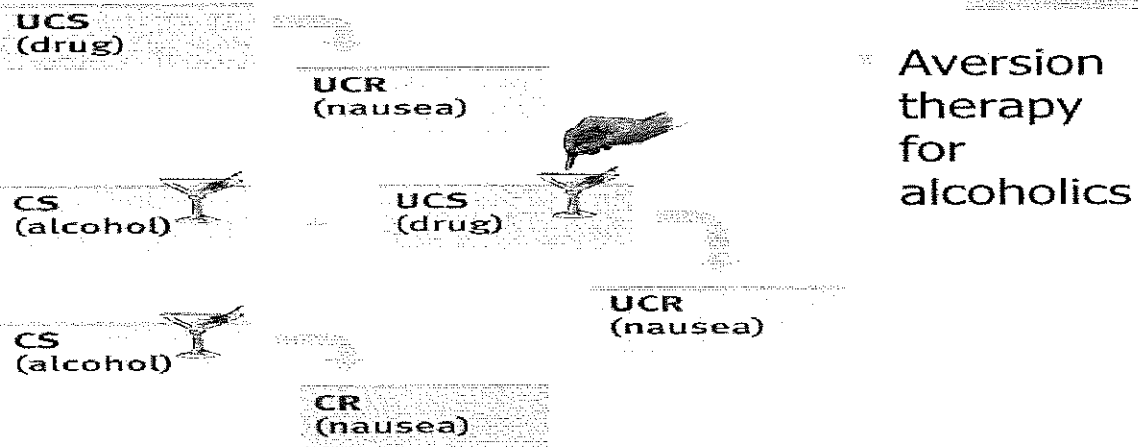
- **GROUP THERAPY** is therapy conducted with groups rather than individuals, permitting therapeutic benefits from group interaction.
- **FAMILY THERAPY** is the therapy that treats the family as a system. Views an individual's unwanted behaviors as influenced by, or directed at, other family members.

Comparing Modern Psychotherapies

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Therapy	Presumed Problem	Therapy Aim	Therapy Technique
<i>Psychodynamic</i>	Unconscious conflicts from childhood experiences	Reduce anxiety through self-insight.	Interpret patients' memories and feelings.
<i>Client-centered</i>	Barriers to self-understanding and self-acceptance	Enable growth via unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy.	Listen actively and reflect clients' feelings.
<i>Behavior</i>	Dysfunctional behaviors	Relearn adaptive behaviors; extinguish problem ones.	Use classical conditioning (via exposure or aversion therapy) or operant conditioning (as in token economies).
<i>Cognitive</i>	Negative, self-defeating thinking	Promote healthier thinking and self-talk.	Train people to dispute negative thoughts and attributions.
<i>Cognitive-behavioral</i>	Self-harmful thoughts and behaviors	Promote healthier thinking and adaptive behaviors.	Train people to counter self-harmful thoughts and to act out their new ways of thinking.
<i>Group and family</i>	Stressful relationships	Heal relationships.	Develop an understanding of family and other social systems, explore roles, and improve communication.

Behavior Therapy



BE ABLE TO ANSWER: What is the major distinction between the underlying assumptions in insight therapies and in behavior therapies?

PRACTICE FRQ: Name and describe two specific types of group therapy.