A Parents' Guide to Tackling Stress, Anxiety, and Mood: Using CBT Skills to Support Your Children and Yourself

The webinar will begin shortly

Upcoming webinars

Mar 11 - Autism and PTSD: Overlapping, Overwhelming and Under-Recognized
Mar 16 - Respect2Connect Part 1 (Part 2 Mar 23)
Mar 18 - Navigating Technology with our Youth

Mar 10 2021

Territorial Acknowledgement

Community Education Service acknowledges that the land on which we virtually gather today is the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

2021

Mental Health Online Resources for Educators
M⬤RE

MORE provides Alberta educators free, online, multimedia courses on mental health and substance use topics with applicable classroom strategies. MORE courses range from 5-minute quick starts to hour long deep dives and are available 24/7, 365 days a year – there are no limits to how many courses you can take or when you take them. Simply register as a user on the website and then you can enroll in any course.
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What Is Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Cognitive Triad
- Physiological Responses
- Behaviours
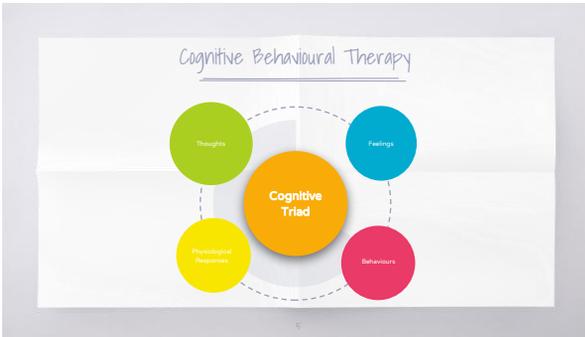
Automatic Thoughts v. Core Beliefs

- Automatic thoughts: instantaneous, habitual, nonconscious, reactive.
- Core beliefs: enduring patterns of thinking about yourself, the world and others.
- Central areas of change in CBT.
- Focus on automatic thoughts.

What Can CBT Be Used to Treat

- The way we interpret situations, event, experiences, impacts the way be feel and behave.

What Can CBT Be Used to Treat

- Wide-range of disorders.
- Lots of evidence for effectiveness.
- Anxiety, depression, stress.
- Adults, adolescents, and children.
- Can be effective when used in a "self-guided" fashion (Vernmark et al., 2011)

What are you feeling ?

- You can't solve a problem if you can't name it.
- Start by being curious.
- Questions to help kids name feelings:
  - What are you feeling right now?
  - What are you feeling in your body?
  - You seem upset, can you tell me what's going on?

What are you feeling ?

- Lots of kids are reluctant to say or have a hard time naming their feelings.
- Lots of tools to help name feelings.
- Listen for "clues":
  - "I'm bored"
  - "I'm tired"
  - "I don't feel like doing anything"
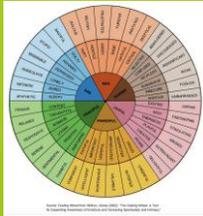
What Are You Feeling?

Body Scans

- Can help kids become aware of the sensations that accompany feelings.
- Examples: stomach aches, headaches, sweaty palms.

What are you Feeling?

Body Scans
- Link between emotions and physical sensations.
- Sensations can act as "clues" when they can identify the feeling.
- Consider hunger, sleep, exercise.

Body Scan Script

Body Scans
- Sit comfortably with your child.
- Start at your toes and slowly work up.
- What can you feel in your toes? Your calves, etc.
- Lots of scripts online.
- Go Noodle has lots of options.

Let's Give the Problem a Name

- If it's a recurring problem giving it a "name" can help with quick recognition of the emotion.
- Examples: the storm cloud, the guard dog, the worry bug.
- Can help you support you child in coping: "Is the worry bug back?"

Let's Give the Problem a Name

- When does the worry bug visit?
- What does he say to you?
- When he's here, what do you feel in your body?
- Adults can use this strategy too.

CBT Model

From Bunge et al., (2017). CBT Strategies for Anxious and Depressed Children and Adolescents: A Clinician's Toolkit. The Guilford Press.
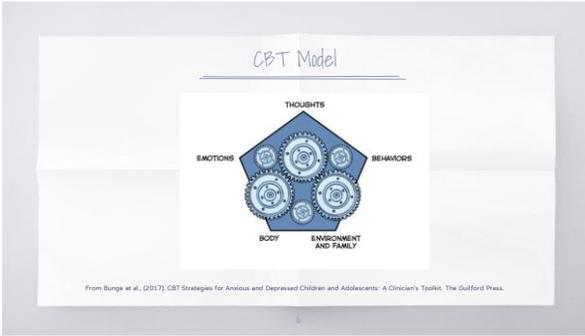
Thinking About Thinking

- Thinking might seem to be the easiest might be the easiest thing to change.
- Parents can do a lot to help their children "edit" their thinking.
- Automatic thoughts happen quickly!

Thinking About Thinking

- Purpose of editing thoughts is to gain a more **realistic, constructive,** or **balanced** view on things.
- Start with supporting your child's meta-cognition skills - thinking about your thoughts.

Helping Kids Evaluate Their Thoughts

- Does the situation require some problem solving?
- Is this a crummy situation that needs some self-soothing and comfort?
- Are they falling into a **thinking trap**?
- Not just positive thinking!

Thinking Traps

Black and White Thinking
"Anything under a 100% is a failure."

Catastrophizing
"I'm going to embarrass myself at this party and then no one will like me and I'll lose all my friends."

Negative Filter
Ignoring the good and focusing on the bad. Focusing on the allergic reactions to COVID vaccine and ignoring all the good news about it.

Fortune Telling
"I know I'll never get another boyfriend"

Overgeneralizing
"I'm such a screw up"

Mind Reading
"They probably think I'm really annoying"

"Editing" Thinking

Situation	**Thought**	**Emotion**
Jamie got a bad grade on her math test.	"I'm stupid and will never do well in math!"	Anxious, sad, frustrated, etc.
Jamie got a bad grade on her math test.	This is just one test, I'll do better next time"	A little disappointed but motivated.
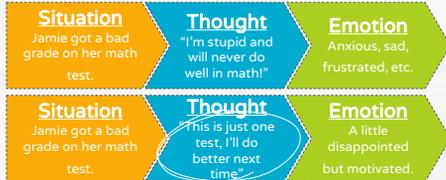
Helping Younger Kids with Thinking

- Naming the problem - what is the worry bug saying to you?
- Let's draw it.
- When does he visit?
- How can you tell he's here?

Helping Younger Kids with Thinking

Red Thoughts
- Thoughts that are unhelpful, self-critical, or that make you feel *worse*.

Green Thoughts
- Thoughts that are constructive, helpful, or make you feel *better*.

Helping Younger Kids with Thinking

Red Thoughts	Green Thoughts
"I'm stupid."	*"This is only one test, I'm good at a lot of things."*
"The pandemic will last forever."	*"This pandemic won't last forever. Good things are happening."*
"My life is ruined."	*"One bad thing doesn't make me a bad person."*

Inner Coach and Inner Critic

Inner Coach
- Supportive.
- Helpful.
- <u>REALISTIC!</u>
- Get's the job done!

Inner Critic
- Not helpful.
- Critical.
- Overly negative, unrealistic, etc.
- Doesn't help you accomplish your goals.

Questions that Can Support Thought "Editing"

- What's another way to look at this?
- What would you say to a friend in this situation?
- Tell me some evidence against this "fact".
- Is this the "worry bug" talking?
- Is this a red thought or a green thought?
- What would your inner coach say?

Notes on Thinking

- Children internalize how their parents think about things.
- Be mindful of how you speak about things in front of your children and teens.
- Watch for your own thinking traps – how do they come out when you speak?

ALERT: EMPATHY NEEDED!

Lots of kids aren't going to engage if they don't feel you've validate the way they feel first.
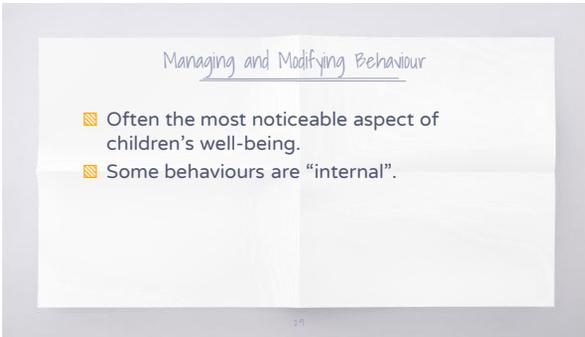
Managing and Modifying Behaviour

- Often the most noticeable aspect of children's well-being.
- Some behaviours are "internal".
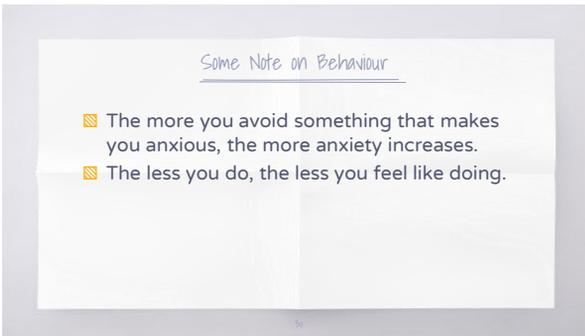
Some Note on Behaviour

- The more you avoid something that makes you anxious, the more anxiety increases.
- The less you do, the less you feel like doing.

Behavioural Activation

- Good behavioural strategy for kids, teens, and parents with low mood and mild/moderate depression (Soucy Chartier & Provencher, 2013).
- Especially important as we have less going on right now.

Behavioural Activation

- Reengage in potential sources of positive reinforcement, reduce avoidance, setting goals.
- Positive impact of exercise on mood is well documented.

Managing and Modifying Behaviour

- Creating a coping plan.
- Written out steps yourself and your child can follow.

Example Coping Plan

1. Identify the problem:
   - What are you feeling in your body?
   - What emotion are you feeling?
   - What are you thinking?
2. Edit the thinking:
3. What I feel X, doing Y makes be feel better.

Example Coping Plan

- Have a list of soothing or coping strategies handy – have you child select which one to try to feel better.
- Something you can create together.

Example Coping Plan

Anxiety:
Go for a run
Talk it out
Text a friend
Make a plan
Take a shower
Guided Imagery

Stressed
Take a break from homework
Do my homework
Do some yoga
FaceTime a friend
Take a nap

Sad:
Get a hug from dad
Call my grandma
Go for a walk
Watch some TV
Snuggle my pet

What About Parents

- The same strategies can be applied for parent stress management.
- "Would I say this to my kid?"
- Takes practice!

Editing Thoughts Adults and Teens

What is the evidence for this red thought?	What is the evidence against this thought?	Alternative Thought?