

COGNITIVE AND OTHER PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES



STRUCTURED PROBLEM SOLVING (SPS)

When people become depressed or anxious problems may seem overwhelming. Developing new ways to deal with problems is often helpful.

If you answered 'YES' to one or more of the boxes below, you may find 'SPS' helpful.

1. Relationship problems with spouse or partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	7. Medical problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
2. Family problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	8. Sexual problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
3. Problems with children?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	9. Isolated from friends?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
4. Unemployment?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	10. Drug and alcohol problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
5. Financial problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	11. Problems studying?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
6. Housing problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	12. Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES

What is SPS?

- SPS is a method designed to work logically through life problems.
- SPS aims to:
 - Help you recognise the difficulties that have contributed to you feeling overwhelmed;
 - Make you aware of the support you have, your personal strengths, and how you coped with similar problems in the past;
 - Teach you an approach to help deal with current difficulties;
 - Help you to feel in control of your problems; and,
 - Help you to be able to deal more effectively with problems in the future.

SPS involves the following steps:

- Step 1:** Identify the problems that are worrying or distressing you and write them down;
- Step 2:** Work out what options are available to deal with the problem and write them down;
- Step 3:** List the advantages and disadvantages of each option, taking into account what resources are available to you (see below);
- Step 4:** Identify the best option(s) to deal with the problem (see below);
- Step 5:** List the steps required for this option(s) to be carried out (see below); and,
- Step 6:** Carry out the best option and then check it's effectiveness.

Problem	Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
1.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
2.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		

Best option = _____

What steps are required to do this?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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COGNITIVE THERAPIES

- When people get depressed or anxious, they think negatively about themselves (eg. "I'm a failure", "No-one loves me"), the world (eg. "There is nothing good out there") and the future (eg. "Things will never improve").
- Negative thinking interferes with your recovery and makes you more vulnerable to depression in the future.
- It is important to learn to recognise unhelpful thoughts and challenge them with more realistic thoughts.
- Cognitive therapy is a structured, 'here and now' psychological treatment that is based on the idea that the way we think affects the way we feel.
- Everyone experiences problems and stressful situations. Cognitive therapy teaches people to think rationally about common life difficulties.

If you answered 'YES' to one or more of the thinking styles below, you may find a 'COGNITIVE THERAPY PROGRAM' helpful.

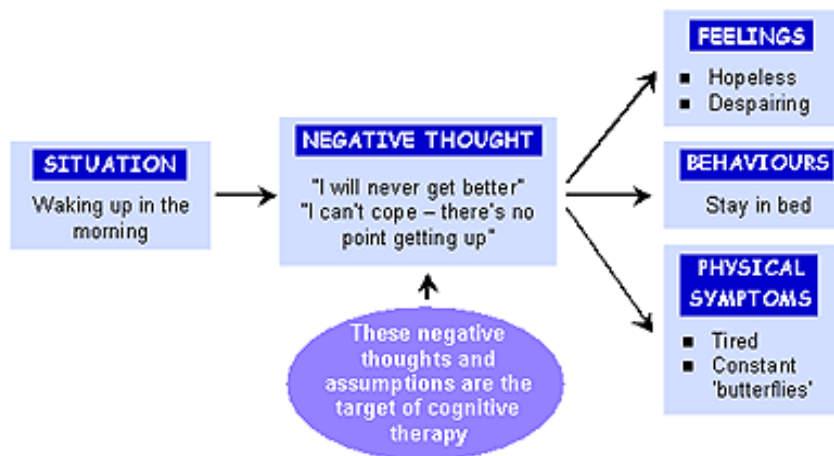
1. Do you criticise yourself a lot?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
2. Do you tend to think negatively more often than not?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
3. Do you have thoughts such as		
• "I'm a failure"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "No-one loves me"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm incompetent"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm no good at anything"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm not intelligent"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "Things will never change"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm worthless"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm hopeless"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "No-one can help me"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I'm no good to anyone"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I've disappointed people"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "Everyone is better than me"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "People hate me"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "My life is awful"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
• "I can't do anything to change"	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES

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- Cognitive therapy is often used in association with medication or following treatment of the acute episode of depression.
- Monitoring of self-thoughts is the basis of 'cognitive' or 'thinking' therapy for depression.
- Some people have had negative thoughts all their life and require more extensive cognitive treatment by their doctor or another mental health professional.



Identifying problem situations, thoughts, feelings and behaviours (eg. relationship dispute):

Situations	Thoughts	Feelings	Behaviours
Male example: <i>Argument with my wife</i>	<i>'I'm no good at anything' 'I always mess it up'</i>	<i>Felt hopeless, inadequate, depressed</i>	<i>Drank some alcohol and went to bed</i>
Female example: <i>Argument with my husband</i>	<i>'It's all my fault' 'Nothing good ever happens to me'</i>	<i>Felt guilty, sad, frustrated</i>	<i>I used sedatives to calm down</i>

MORE INFORMATION

MoodGYM [<http://moodgym.anu.edu.au>]

MoodGYM is an interactive web-based program designed to prevent depression and anxiety in young people. It delivers cognitive behaviour therapy, a type of therapy which has been shown to be effective in the treatment and prevention of depression and anxiety. MoodGYM was developed by The Centre for Mental Health Research at The Australian National University.

'Cognitive behavioural strategies for general practice' - Australian Family Physician (2003) [<http://www.racgp.org.au/document.asp?id=11074>]

Blashki and colleagues discuss a practical approach to cognitive behavioral strategies using patient handouts and worksheets. To learn more download this article.

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RELATIONSHIP-BASED THERAPIES

Interpersonal therapy:

- People with depression are more easily upset by the comments of others. You may feel criticised when no criticism was intended.
- Consequently, you may feel that others are against you and so stop joining in normal social activities.
- Without appropriate help you may reject the assistance of others and damage lifelong friendships and family relationships.

Family therapy:

- Family and close friends need to know about your depression because their support and understanding is very important.
- People are often reluctant to discuss their psychological problems, but family and friends can play a major role by being more caring or less critical. They can also relieve you of some of your daily responsibilities.
- Close family and friends can help to identify stressful situations at home or work, and assist you to identify alternative ways of solving practical and emotional problems. They can also monitor changes in your symptoms.
- Your partner or family can also be a major source of ongoing stress, so involving them sooner rather than later in finding solutions can be in everyone's interest.
- More difficult family or relationship problems may require specific family or relationship counselling.

OTHER PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES

Dynamic psychotherapy:

- Dynamic psychotherapy is the type of treatment that people often think psychiatrists and psychologists use all the time, and is often shown in the movies as 'therapy'.

- It emphasises the way in which childhood and earlier life experiences may be affecting the way that we think and act now.
- Most people with depression do not need this kind of in-depth and prolonged re-evaluation of their life.
- Dynamic psychotherapy may be useful in people with very disturbed personal relationships and patterns of repeated self-destructive behaviour.
- Much shorter 'here and now' treatments are preferred for most patients with depression or anxiety.

Assertiveness training:

- When people are depressed and anxious, they tend to have more trouble being assertive.
- Being assertive means standing up for your rights and needs without denying the rights of others.
- Your partner, family, friends and colleagues all have the same set of rights as you. These rights include, but are not limited to:
 - The right to express your feelings, including anger;
 - The right to say "No";
 - The right to say "Yes";
 - The right to say "I don't understand" or "I will think about it";
 - The right to make your own decisions;
 - The right to change your mind if you want to; and,
 - The right to hold your own opinions or beliefs.
- Sometimes when you assert your rights, other people get upset. This does not mean you have done anything wrong.

MORE INFORMATION

Learn about other treatments for depression and anxiety:

Coping strategies [http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=1.14]

beyondblue fact sheet - Why do I need to take antidepressant drugs?

beyondblue fact sheet - Alternative treatments

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