
Cognitive Processing in an Imperfect World

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Goals/Objectives

- Identify common challenges and life experiences that influence cognitive processing
- Explore theoretical frameworks for addressing those challenges during processing
- Practice preparing for a cognitive processing session
- Discuss emotional and cognitive impacts on providers

Cognitive Processing in TF-CBT

Traditionally, focuses on challenging trauma impacted beliefs across the following domains:

- Safety
- Trust
- Esteem
- Control
- Intimacy

Cognitive Processing in TF-CBT

	Helpful	Not Helpful
True/Accurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The trauma is never a kids fault● I was treated badly by some people, but I know [insert names] care about me.● I sometimes make mistakes or bad choices, but I try hard to be good and am a good kid.	
Untrue/Inaccurate		<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The trauma was my fault● No one cares about me● Bad things will always happen to me.● I'm a bad kid

Processing in an Imperfect World

	Helpful	Not Helpful
True/Accurate	**Our focus is to help move clients to this space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bad things are still happening to me● My family doesn't want to adopt me● I don't know if my perpetrator is going to be punished
Untrue/Inaccurate		

“Imperfect World” Processing

Relates to actual ongoing negative and/or harmful experiences that are happening and the impact of those experiences on client’s.

- Ongoing trauma to client or to client’s family
- Placement instability
- Discrimination/Minority Stress
- Lack of justice towards their perpetrator
- Deportation risk or concerns
- Continued high risk behaviors (NSSI, suicidal ideation, risky sexual behaviors, etc.)



- (1) What other imperfect world scenarios have impacted TF-CBT your clients?
- (2) Rate your reactions to the work.
- (3) What other thoughts/feelings/reactions arise?

Cognitive Processing Skills and Approach

Processing Goals

- Help client gain the SKILLS to use throughout their life.
 - Test of Two
 - Challenging/Questioning their own thoughts
 - Recognizing false implications
 - Identification of balanced thinking
 - Accept realities of challenging experiences AND remind self of additional truths and skills they have to handle those realities
 - Example: “My life has changed forever because of my abuse.” versus “My life changed forever because of my abuse, and I have learned how strong I am. I can handle anything in the future if I can handle this”

Example Approach: Racial Socialization

The process of transmitting culture, attitudes, and values with prepare youth to cope with stressors and oppression associated with racial minorities status (Hughes, et.al., 2006).

“Teaching children about Black heritage, history, and culture to promote group unity and combat negative experiences”- Isha Metzger, 2021

Cognitive Processing Skills

Client Identifies Thought

Clinician Validates

Process Thought/Challenge Thought

- Acknowledging accuracies
- Investigate whether invalid conclusions have been drawn
- Shift attributions from internal to external
- Identification of protective factors

Synthesize alternative thought

- Ideally this should accurate aspects of the original thought, in addition to strength based message

How does Racial Socialization Impact Cognitive-Behavioral Responses to Interpersonal and Racial Trauma?

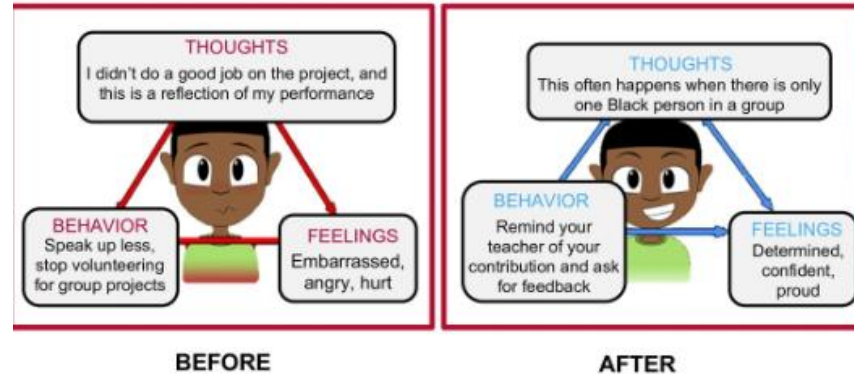
Racial socialization is a cognitive behavioral strategy to address the needs of youth with PTSD, racial trauma and other difficulties related to stressful life experiences.



Before Racial Socialization	After Racial Socialization
Inaccurate/unhelpful thoughts	Realistic and helpful thoughts
Distressing feelings	Positive and calm feelings
Harmful behaviors	Healthy behaviors

How can Racial Socialization Help in Response to Racial Stressors at School?

Triggering Event: You finish a group project and your teacher acknowledges everyone on your team but you



What questions could you ask yourself, or what could you say to yourself to get the grade and acknowledgement you deserve for your work?

If you already tried speaking up for yourself before and were ignored or disciplined unfairly, now that you're ready to remind your teacher of your contribution, who in your class might you talk to who could advocate on your behalf?

Generalizing this Concept

We all have strengths and capacities to handle challenging moments

Clinicians can help clients identify internal and external protective factors in their life that can help them handle future or on-going stressors

- Personal skills and knowledge
- Trusted adults
- Ethnic, cultural, religious, etc., community

Example

Situation: My abuser didn't get convicted despite testifying in court and/or a forensic interview.

Thoughts: People don't believe me. I didn't do enough to put him away.

Validate: It's really confusing and unfair when people who harm don't get consequences.

Alternative Thoughts: The court system doesn't always get it right, but I know the truth about what happened. My closest family and friends do believe me. He will have to live with this the rest of his life. I can move forward and leave this in the past even if he doesn't get punished. When I'm older I can move away and not have to worry about seeing him. There is a whole community of SA survivors who haven't gotten justice I can lean on.

Group Activity

Exploring Questions

- Did you tell the truth and face your fears to testify/be open about what happened?
- How have you been living your life in the interim waiting for trial? How have you been able to be ok and/or manage?
 - How does the trial ending change how YOU have chosen to handle things the last few months?
- Who does believe you?
- What all goes into a trial beyond just what one person says vs another person? Does this mean it's all your responsibility if your words weren't enough? (And, validating that that maybe SHOULD be enough - and that it doesn't feel fair when the truth isn't enough)

Breakout Practice

Each breakout room will be assigned one cognition/situation.

Your job will be to identify a way to validate that thought and/or experience, discuss possible alternative thoughts, and develop questions to help elicit those alternative thoughts.

Breakout Room Debrief

Discussion: How do YOU Manage the Realities of Your Client's Experience?