

Emotional Regulation Training



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BRAIN INJURY + STROKE + NEURO

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Chapter 1

What is Emotional
Regulation?

What is Emotional Regulation?

Definition: The ability to identify and influence an emotion.

Emotions are complex personal experiences with both physical and mental aspects.

- Identifying an emotion means being aware of the presence and the type of emotion (awareness).
- Influencing an emotion means being able to change the emotion or to change the effects of the emotion (control).



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What is Emotional Regulation?



- Emotion Regulation allows us to
 - Be aware and describe our moment to moment experience
 - Understand the relationship between emotions and behaviors
 - Influence our emotions and behaviors by using strategies

What is Emotional Regulation?

Emotion Regulation helps us answer 2 questions.

1. What is going on?
2. What can I do about it?



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What Emotional Regulation is NOT



Acting up/out



Repressing/suppressing emotions



Talking about feelings



Getting rid of emotions all together



Why is Emotional Regulation important?



Life problems lead to intense emotions



Intense emotions interfere with good decision making



Intense emotions can lead to actions that create more problems



Intense emotions can lead to inaction that doesn't solve problems



Pleasant emotions are beneficial



Emotional Regulation leads to actions that are:

- Deliberate – goal oriented
- Purposeful – well thought out
- Productive – good results for you and others



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What are the goals of Emotional Regulation?

1	Increase awareness of all the components of an emotional experience
2	Understand how emotions can lead to desirable and undesirable behaviors
3	Learn emotional regulation strategies



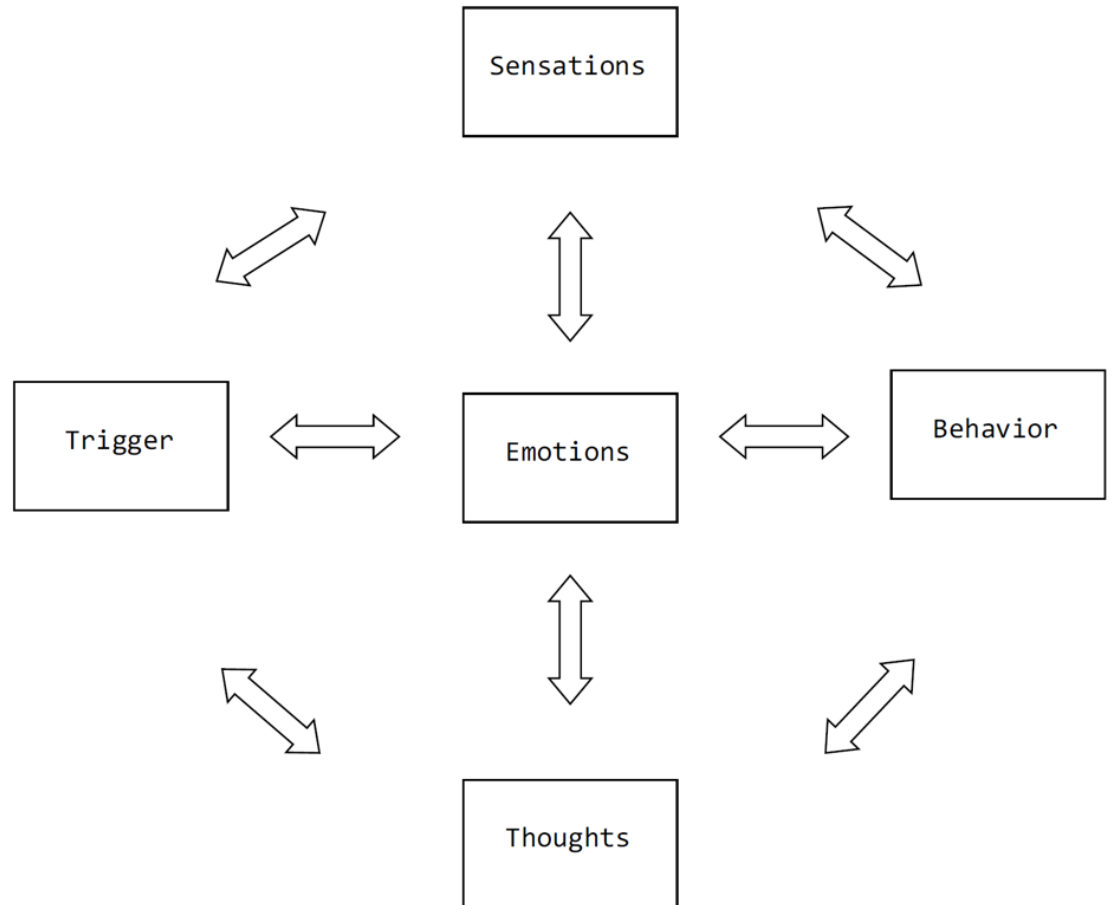


Chapter 2

The Emotional Cycle

Emotional Cycle components

- Emotion
- Trigger
- Sensation
- Thought
- Behavior



6 Properties of the Emotional Cycle

Emotional experiences are UNIVERSAL. Everyone experiences emotions

We are not always aware of all the five components of the emotional cycle

The components of the emotional cycle are interrelated

The components of the emotional cycle are related to each other logically, not randomly

Changing one component of the emotional cycle causes changes in the other components

On person's emotional cycle affects another person's emotional cycle



Using the Emotional Cycle

There are 2 steps in completing an Emotional Cycle

Identification



Intervention



When should I do an emotional cycle?

Feel something is
“off balance”

Have uncomfortable
emotions (e.g.,
upset, frustrated,
disappointed)

Act in ways that are
causing you
problems

Feel stuck

Anticipate a
challenge

Want to understand
your or someone
else’s reaction

Want to experience
positive emotions



When should I do an emotional cycle?

Past

Present

Future



Homework 1: Your Goals

List 3-5 goals you would like to accomplish using the Emotional Cycle.

For example:

I would like to get less upset when I use public transportation.

I would like to feel less lonely

I would like to not fly off the handle

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____



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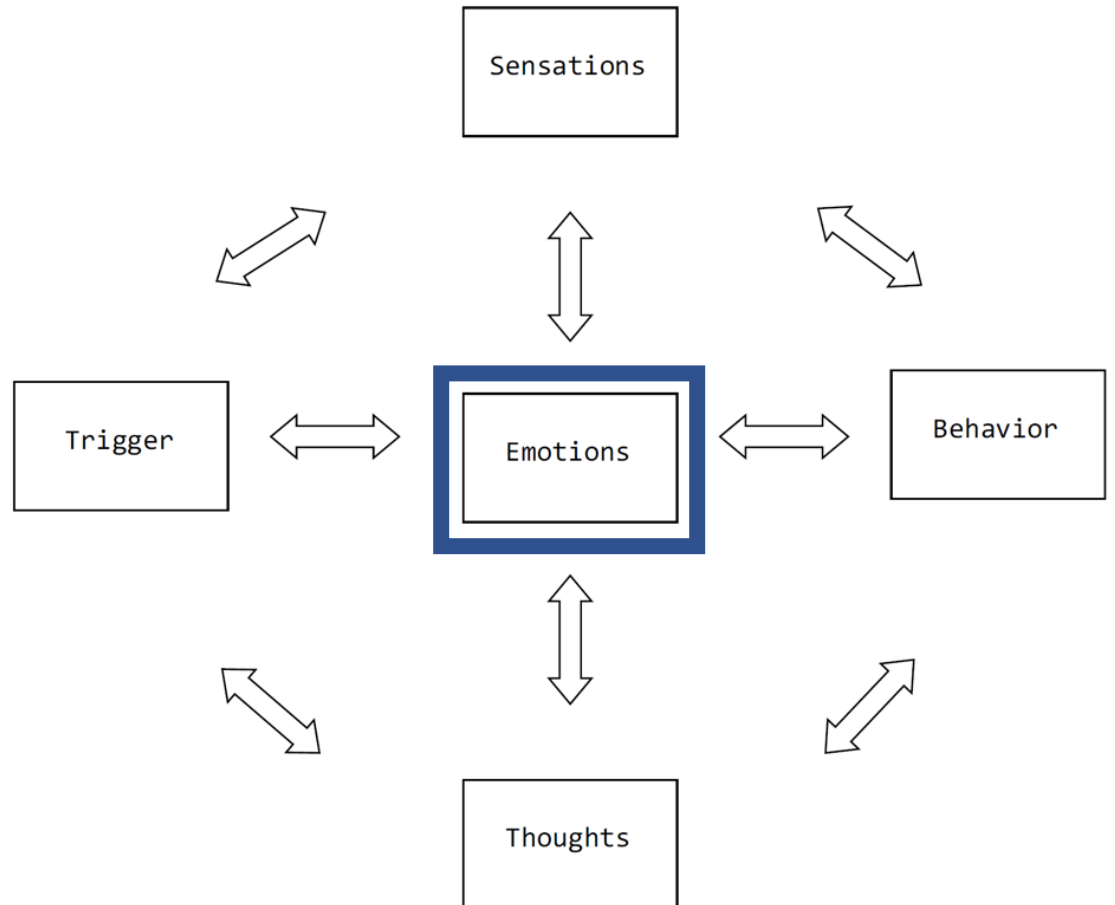


Chapter 3

Emotions

Emotional Cycle components

- Emotions



Part 1: Identification

What are emotions?

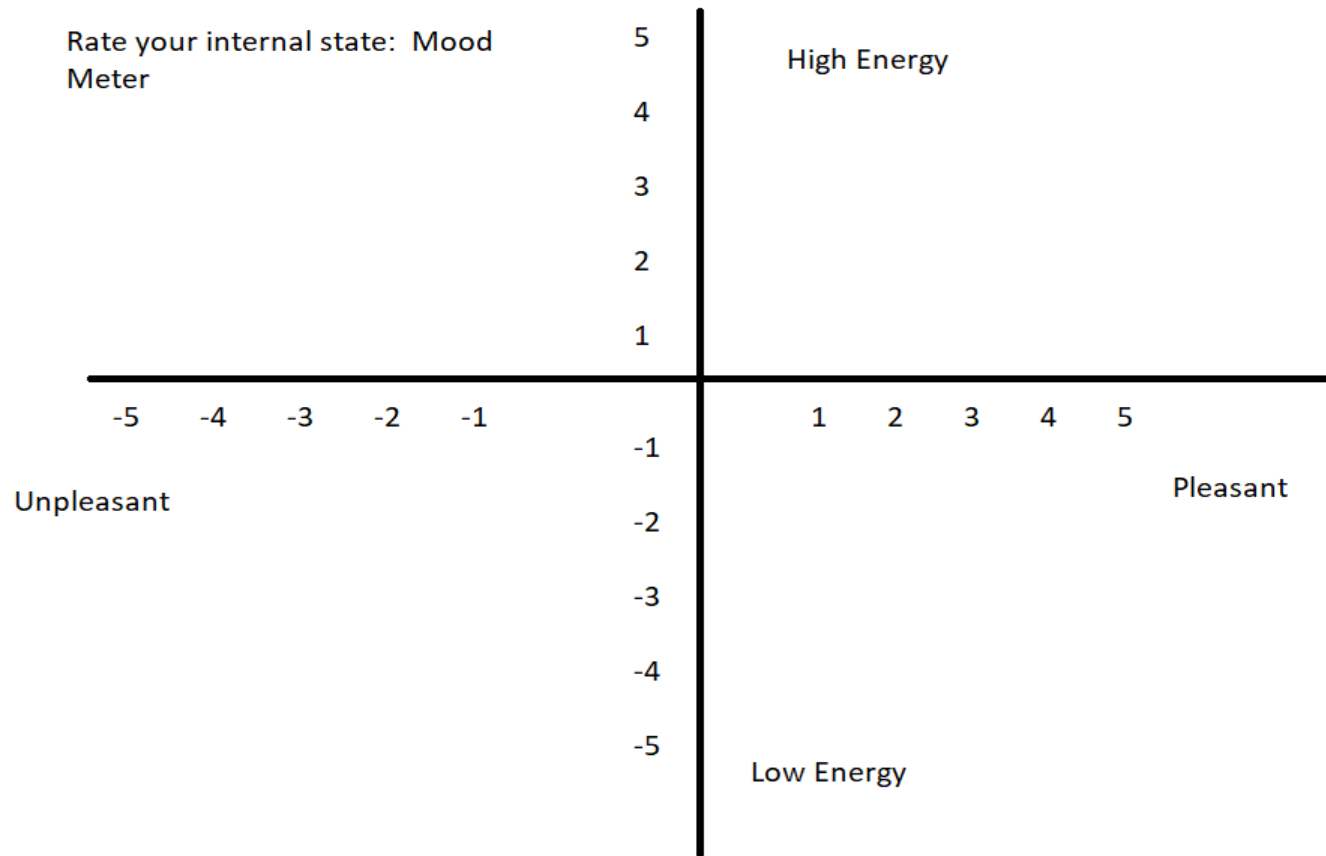
- How we feel
- Internal state - a subjective experience
- Emotions can fluctuate
 - Pleasant to unpleasant
 - Positive to negative
 - General to specific
 - High energy to low energy
- They are transient – they do not last forever!



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Mood Meter



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Emotions List

Afraid

Annoyed

Angry

Amazed

Anxious

Brave

Bitter

Calm

Confident

Defeated

Defensive

Depressed

Disappointed

Excited

Fearful

Guilty

Happy

Hopeful

Irritable

Isolated

Nervous

Optimistic

Proud

Sad

Stressed

Terrified

Worried



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Homework #2: Identify your Emotions

Goal: Identify emotions that you experience frequently AND those that are more difficult to handle.

Steps:

1. Go through and identify 3-5 emotions for each category
2. Highlight the emotions that are common in more than one column

Emotions I have a lot	Emotions I want less of	Emotions I want more of	Emotions that are difficult

Part 2: Intervention

How to change emotions

1. Hold the emotion

Tell yourself:

- I am feeling (angry, sad, afraid) right now
- It is ok to feel (angry, sad, afraid)!
- I will NOT do anything about it right now.
- Emotions are transient. This feeling will not last forever.

2. Distract yourself

- Do something physically active
- Do something mindless
- Do something non-emotional

3. Use the emotional cycle



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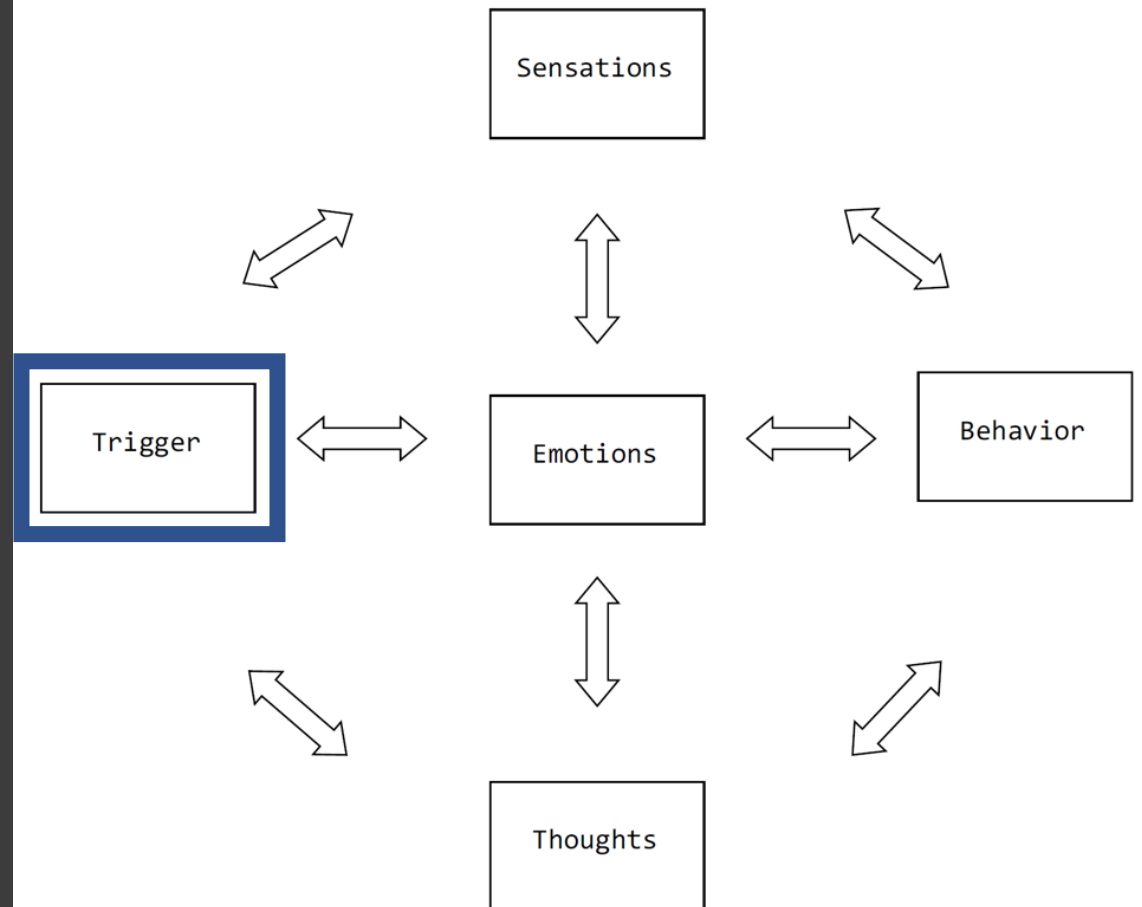


Chapter 4

Triggers

Emotional Cycle components

- Triggers



Part 1: Identification

What are triggers?

- External: happening outside of you
 - Events (going to a restaurant, seeing a friend, taking the bus, etc.)
 - Circumstances (elements of the environment – how hot it is, noisy, crowded, etc.)
- Internal: happening inside of you
 - Personal reactions (our thoughts, emotions, sensations, and behaviors)



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Part 2: Intervention

Strategies for triggers

1. Avoid the avoidable

- Prevent yourself from getting into a situation you know to be problematic
- Leave situations when possible
- Think about triggers that have caused problems in the past
- Learn from these past emotional cycles
- Apply the knowledge to the future

2. Be Prepared

- Take steps to deal effectively with an upcoming trigger
 - Emotionally
 - Physically
 - Mentally

3. Seek out the desirable

- Intentionally seek out triggers that provide pleasant emotions



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Homework 3: Knowing Your Triggers

Goal: Identify some common triggers and strategies to deal with those triggers

Steps:

1. Copy the most frequent and/or troubling emotions from homework 2 onto the “common triggers” table (next page)
2. For each emotion listed, ask yourself the following questions to help identify the trigger:
 - When was the last time I felt this way?
 - What happened right before I felt this way?
 - How have I reacted in the past when this has happened?
 - How would I feel if this happened again
3. List the strategies you think might be helpful with this kind of trigger and be prepared to discuss



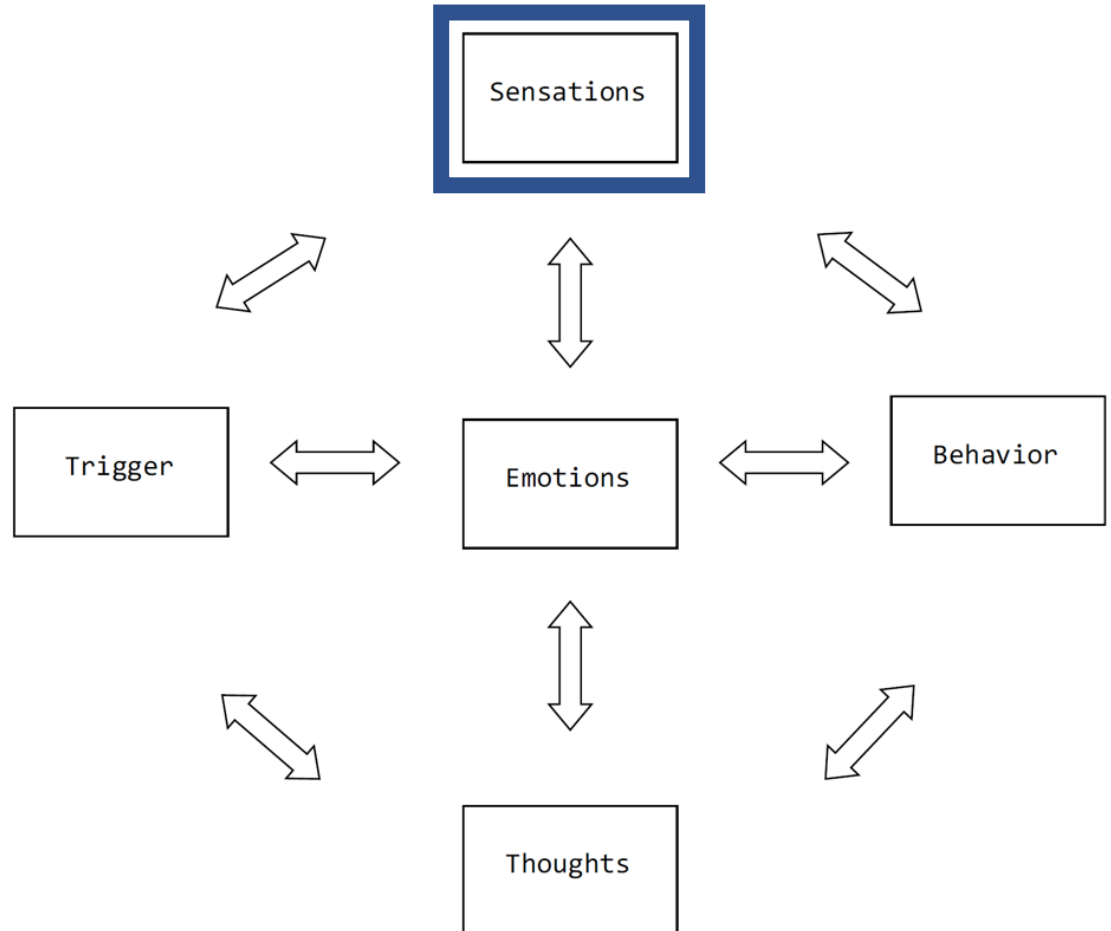


Chapter 5

Sensations

Emotional Cycle components

- Sensations



Part 1: Identification

What are sensations?

- Your body's reactions to something that happens internally or externally
- Refer to your physical state (health, energy state, stamina)
- Usually involuntary / not under your control
- E.g. sweating, fidgeting, shallow breathing



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Physical Sensations Table

Body Part	Typical Sensations
Head/face/neck	Chewing lip, clenching jaw, crying, headache, laughing, smiling
Breathing	Deeps breaths, shallow breaths, choking, sighing, voice trembling
Chest/heart	Heart palpitations, pounding, racing, tight
Abdomen	Stomachache, butterflies, knotted
Arms/legs	Clammy, fidgety, pacing, restless, stomping
Whole body	Relaxed, fatigued, heavy, hollow, tense, hot, twitching



Homework #4: Matching Emotions to Sensations

Goal: Identify sensations associated with specific emotions

Steps:

1. Look at the emotions in column 1 and identify common sensations that you might have with the listed emotions
2. Select 3 sensations that you experience often and write them in column 2. Write what emotion may be associated with it in column 1

(1) Emotion	(2) Sensations
Anger	
Anxiety	
Sadness	
Excitement	

Part 2: Intervention

How do we / can we change sensations?

- Deep breathing
 - Helps reduce anxiety, frustration, anger
- Relaxation
 - Helps with tension, worry, anxiety
- Exercise / activity
 - Helps with tension, anxiety, sadness, boredom, fatigue
- Nutrition
 - Eating well and staying hydrated helps with fatigue and anxiety
- Rest / sleep
 - Helps with irritability, jitteriness, confusion
- Medications
 - Helps with medical/emotional conditions



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Deep Breathing Exercise

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position with your arms and legs uncrossed and spine straight
2. Scan your body for tension
3. Place one hand on your abdomen and one hand on your chest
4. Inhale slowly and deeply for 4 counts through your nose into your abdomen to push your hands out as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little.
5. Exhale through your mouth making a soft whooshing sound as you blow out. Take long deep breaths that raise and lower your abdomen. Focus on the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more relaxed.
6. Continue deep breathing for about 5 – 10 minutes. Rescan your body for tension comparing the “before” tension with the “after” tension.
7. Continue these sessions once or twice a day for a couple of weeks. Extend the periods by a few minutes each week until you have reached 20 minutes per session.



Progressive Muscle Relaxation Techniques

Progressive muscle relaxation videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nZEdqcGVzo>
- https://youtu.be/8pT_gHcgPd8



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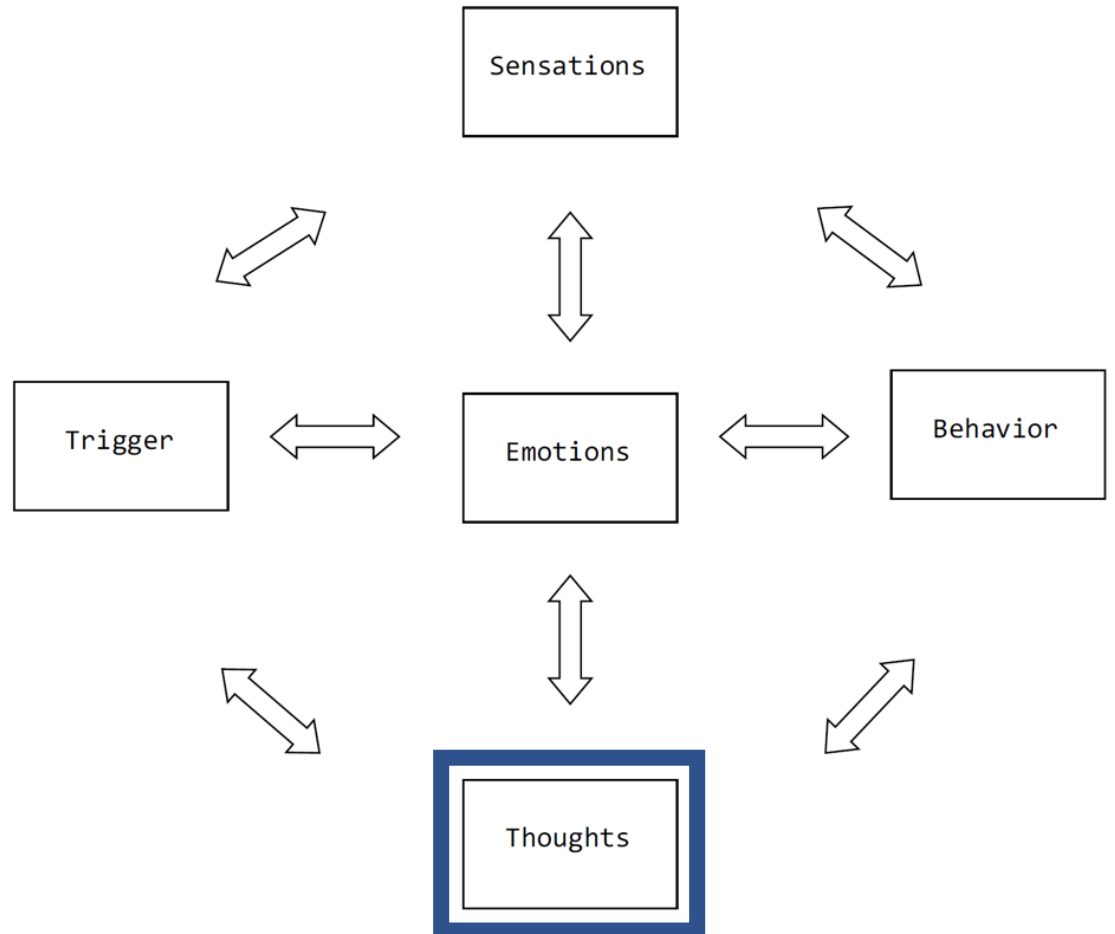


Chapter 6

Thoughts

Emotional Cycle components

- Thoughts



Part 1: Identification

What are our thoughts?

- Our mental processes
 - Ideas
 - Opinions
 - Judgments
 - Interpretations
 - Beliefs
 - Memories
 - Expectations



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Part 1: Identification

What are our thoughts?

- We are usually aware of our thoughts through self-talk (internal dialog)
 - Sometimes our self-talk is not clear or logical
 - Automatic thoughts
 - Cognitive distortions
- Cognitive distortions are glitches or errors in our thinking that result in a “blurry” representation of reality.



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Cognitive Distortion	Definition	Example
All-or nothing Thinking	You look at things in black and white categories. You only see one option.	<i>I can't work anywhere else except my current job.</i>
Overgeneralization	You use words like "always," "never," "everyone," "nobody," to describe your experiences, without evidence.	<i>Everyone fights with their friends about these things.</i>
Mental Filter	You focus on the negatives and ignore the positives. OR you focus on the positives and ignore the negatives.	<i>I make so many errors whenever I do math. OR I've never served a bad meal.</i>
Discounting the Positives	You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities "don't count."	<i>Who cares that I made progress? Everyone makes progress.</i>
Jumping to Conclusions	You draw a conclusion with out much evidence or based on a hunch.	<i>On the first day of the group, you say "I am better off that the others here."</i>
Mind Reading	You assume you know what other people are thinking.	<i>You think I'm crazy, don't you?</i>
Fortune Telling	You make arbitrary predictions about how things will turn out in the future.	<i>I will not get anything out of this treatment.</i>
Should Statements	You state your expectations with "should," "must," "ought," or "have to." You assume there is a rule.	<i>I should be recovering a lot faster.</i>
Labeling	You identify yourself or others by a one-word label that often is simply name-calling.	<i>After making a mistake you think "I am such a fool."</i>
Magnification/Minimization	You exaggerate OR minimize the importance of something.	<i>I will lose my benefits if I keep missing appointments</i>
Personalization/Blame	You blame yourself even when not entirely responsible OR you blame other people and over-look ways in which your own attitudes/behaviors contribute to a problem.	<i>I am not doing enough; that's why I'm not getting better. OR It's my therapist's fault that I'm not getting better.</i>
Emotional Reasoning	You think something is true because you feel a certain way.	<i>I feel that you do not care about</i>

Homework 5: Cognitive Distortions Exercise

- **Goal:** Practice recognizing cognitive distortions
- **Steps:**
 1. In the table on the next page there are 5 statements. Read each one and determine which cognitive distortion(s) are present.

Statement	Distortions	Reframe
<p>Brent had an argument with his wife about not doing the laundry. He thought, "My wife is a dictator. She is always telling me what to do."</p>		
<p>Jim did not have plans with his friends this weekend. He felt lonely and inferior. He thought, "No one likes me. I have a terrible personality."</p>		
<p>"It's not like him to keep me waiting. He must have gotten into a car accident."</p>		
<p>"I'm always forgetting my keys, I'm such an idiot."</p>		
<p>Kelly finished taking an important test. She immediately predicted that she had failed. "I'll never get into college, because I blew it here."</p>		

Part 2:

Intervention

What strategies do we have for our thoughts?

1. Examine your self-talk

- Be clear about what you mean

2. Examine the evidence

- Identify cognitive distortions
- Fact or fiction? Look at the evidence for and against.
- Test assumptions

3. Reframe your thoughts

- Change the outlook of the statement
- Think in shades of gray
- Re-attribute



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Homework 6: Reframing Exercise

Goal: Practice reframing thoughts and statements that lead to unpleasant emotions and distorted conclusions

Steps:

1. Locate the table with 5 statements (homework 5)
2. Review the statements and cognitive distortions
3. For each statement, write an alternative way to phrase it. Try not to lose the meaning, but write it with out the cognitive distortion.



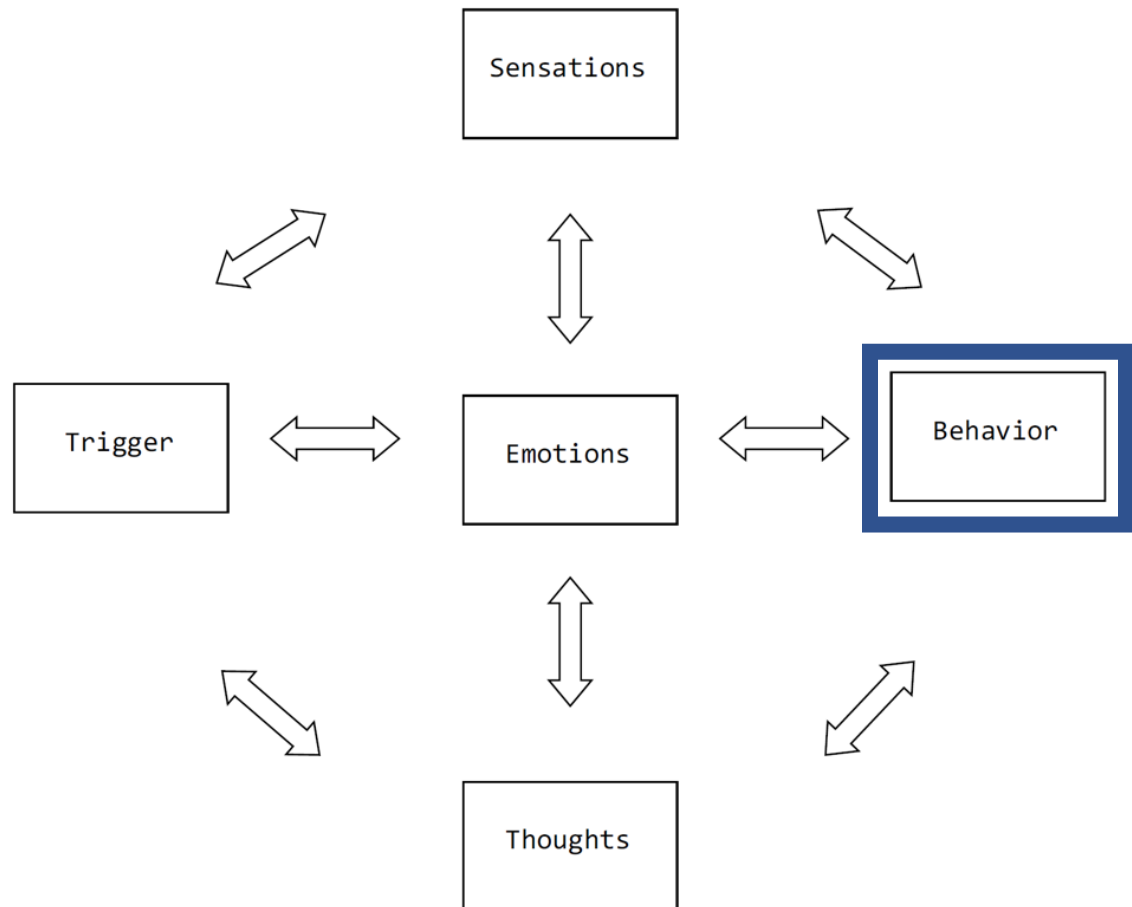


Chapter 7

Behaviors

Emotional Cycle components

- Behaviors



Part 1: Identification

What are behaviors?

- Any observable action we may take (not doing something is also a behavior)
- Constructive
 - Deliberate (well thought out – NOT impulsive)
 - Purposeful (actions with an expected goal)
 - Productive (actions with positive effects)
- Non-constructive
 - Behaviors that may have negative consequences for you and for others
 - Examples:
 - Withdrawal (staying at home, not talking, being inactive)
 - Avoidance (procrastinating, not engaging, leaving a situation)
 - Attack (arguing with others, provoking others, destroying things)
 - Trying to do things perfectly
 - Self-destructive (alcohol, drugs, overeating)
 - Passive-aggressive (being late, unavailable, improper etiquette)



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Homework 7: Identifying your Behaviors

Goal: To become aware of behaviors that result from your emotions

Steps:

1. Answer the following questions
 2. Go over your answers and identify constructive and non-constructive behaviors
- What do you do when you feel sad?
 - What do you do when you feel angry?
 - What do you tend to do when you feel anxious?
 - What do you tend to do when you feel excited?



Part 2: Intervention

What strategies do we have for our behaviors?

- Use the emotional cycle!
 - Evaluate my behavior
 - Decide what to change in the emotional cycle
 - Choose a strategy
 - Make action constructive



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Time to
practice
!

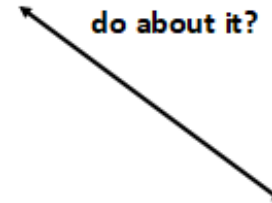
Identify: What is going on?



SENSATIONS

Breathing/relaxation Nutrition
Exercise Hydration
Sleep/Rest Medication

Influence: What can I do about it?



TRIGGERS

Avoid
Be prepared
Seek the desirable



EMOTIONS

Hold the emotion
Distract yourself
Do an emotional cycle



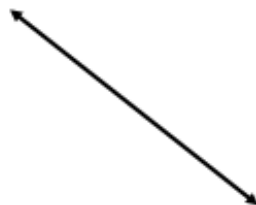
BEHAVIORS

Apply a strategy
Make your action constructive



THOUGHTS

Examine self talk
Examine the evidence
Reframe your thoughts



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