CBT for Persons with Anxiety: “Old School” (1st & 2nd Wave)

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SCI Workshop Agenda

Day 1 : Old School CBT

• Power-point presentation
  – Conceptualization
  – Treatment
    • Cognitive restructuring
    • Coping scripts
    • Behavioral experiments
• Real play / role play
• Questions / discussion
Working Definitions

**Anxiety:** Tense emotional state associated with subjective experience of physical symptoms

**Fear:** Agitated foreboding associated with appraisal of actual or potential danger.
Old School CBT Conceptualization – Assumption of Normal Function of Constructs

Cognition

Affect  Behavior

Carter - SCI - Anxiety 2012
Old School CBT Conceptualization – ‘Cause’ of Anxiety

Predisposing Factors

+ Precipitating Factors =

Dysregulation in Anxiety Function
– Behavioral System
– Cognitive System
– Affective System
Lack of Behavioral Coping

Developmental Trauma(s)

Anxiogenic Cognitive Schemas

Genetic

Chronic Physical: Thyroid, MVP

Precipitating Factors

Predisposing Factors

Global External Stressors: Economy, Environment, Terrorism

Specific Stressors: Family, Roommates, Friends, Sig Other, Work

Physical: Acute Disease, Substances, Exercise
Old School CBT Conceptualization of Anxiety

Behavioral Dysregulation

– **Fight** (Activation, Sympathetic)
– **Flight** (Activation, Sympathetic)
– **Freeze** (Inhibition, Sympathetic)
– **Faint** (Demobilization, Parasympathetic)
Old School CBT Conceptualization of Anxiety

Cognitive Dysregulation

- Sensory / Perceptual
  - Hazy, Foggy, Unreal
  - Self-Conscious, Hypervigilant

- Thinking / Processing Difficulties
  - Confused, Blocking (recall), Poor Reasoning
  - Difficulty Concentrating, Distractability

- Conceptual
  - Cognitive Distortions, Irrational Fears
  - Frightening Images, Repetitive Fearful Ideation
## Old School CBT Conceptualization of Anxiety

### Anxiety Symptoms According to Physiological Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardiovascular</th>
<th>Respiratory</th>
<th>Neuromuscular</th>
<th>Gastrointestinal</th>
<th>Skin / UT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palpitations</td>
<td>Rapid Breathing</td>
<td>Increased Reflex</td>
<td>Loss of Appetite</td>
<td>Face flushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart racing</td>
<td>Difficulty Getting Air In</td>
<td>Insomnia</td>
<td>Food Revulsion</td>
<td>Face pale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑ BP</td>
<td>Shortness of Breath</td>
<td>Eyelid Twitching</td>
<td>Abdominal Discomfort</td>
<td>Localized Sweating - Palms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pressure on Chest</td>
<td>Spasm, Rigidity, Tremors</td>
<td>Abdominal Pain</td>
<td>Generalized Sweating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fainting</td>
<td>Shallow Breathing</td>
<td>Fidgeting, Pacing</td>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td>Hot and Cold Spells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lump in Throat</td>
<td>Startle Reaction</td>
<td>Heartburn</td>
<td>Itching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓ BP</td>
<td>Choking Sensation</td>
<td>Strained Face</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓ Pulse</td>
<td>Gasping</td>
<td>Unsteady, Wobbly Legs</td>
<td>Vomiting</td>
<td>Pressure to Urinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spasm of Bronchi</td>
<td>Generalized Weakness</td>
<td></td>
<td>↑ Frequency to Urinate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yellow font designates parasympathetic response
Old School CBT Conceptualization of Anxiety Process

Precipitating Events → Trigger

Trigger → Automatic Thoughts

Automatic Thoughts → Emotion

Emotion → Anxiety Symptoms

Anxiety Symptoms → Interpretation

Interpretation → Prediction

Prediction → of Symptoms

of Symptoms → Maladaptive Coping Strategies *

Maladaptive Coping Strategies * → Catastrophic Misinterpretation

Catastrophic Misinterpretation → ↑ of Symptoms

↑ of Symptoms → Automatic Thoughts

* These may include: substance use, avoidance, over-compensation, aggression, giving up
Old School CBT - Treatment of Anxiety

Cognitive Strategies

• Education / normalize anxiety responses
• Learn to id, evaluate, and respond differently to automatic thoughts

• Repeat and deepen the process
  AT > Underlying Assumptions > Core Schemas
• Develop cognitive scripts that facilitate learning more effective coping responses
Old School CBT Treatment of Anxiety

Behavioral Strategies

• Exposure and habituation to triggers and sensations
  – Function over form
  – Three necessary ingredients
    • Intensity
    • Duration
    • Frequency
  – Framed as ‘behavioral experiments’

• Skill building
Old School CBT Therapeutic Alliance

• Empathy / Understanding
• Collaboration
• Guided Discovery / Socratic Method
• Elicit Client Feedback
• Rapid Symptom Relief
Old School CBT Exercises

- Conceptualization exercise
- Cognitive restructuring
- Develop coping script
- Develop behavioral experiment
References


