

CBT Cheat Sheet

Client Name:		Age:	
Gender:	Male	Female	Other:
Date of Session:			

I. Psychoeducation

The Cognitive Model

Explain how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are interconnected, highlighting that negative thought patterns can trigger distressing emotions and maladaptive behaviors. For example, if a client thinks "I'm a failure" (Thought) after making a minor mistake at work, they might feel worthless (Emotion) and subsequently avoid taking on new tasks (Behavior), reinforcing the negative self-view.

Core Concepts

- **Automatic Thoughts:**

These are spontaneous, often fleeting thoughts that arise in response to stimuli. For instance, passing a test might trigger the thought, "I am smart," affecting feelings and actions positively.

- **Beliefs:**

These are the deeper convictions that shape how we interpret our experiences. Believing "I must be perfect" can lead to anxiety in various situations.

- **Behaviors:**

Our actions can both influence and be influenced by our thoughts and emotions. Avoiding social situations due to fear of judgment can increase feelings of loneliness and reinforce beliefs of unworthiness.

Common Cognitive Distortions

- **All-or-Nothing Thinking**

"If my presentation isn't perfect, I've completely failed."

- **Catastrophizing:**

Missing a bus and thinking, "Now the whole day is ruined and everything will go wrong."

- **Mental Filtering:**

Focusing only on the few negative comments received among many positive ones.

- **Disqualifying the Positive**

Acknowledging compliments on work performance, but thinking they're just being polite.

- **Overgeneralization:**

Having one bad date and concluding, "I'll always be alone."

- **Jumping to Conclusions:**

Assuming a friend didn't return a text because they're angry with you without concrete evidence.

- **Should Statements:**

Constantly thinking "I should be doing better," which can lead to feelings of guilt or inadequacy.

II. Techniques and Tools

Cognitive Techniques

- **Thought Records**

Challenge cognitive distortions by recording events, associated automatic thoughts, emotions, evidence for and against the thoughts, and more balanced thoughts. For example, if a client is upset about not being invited to a meeting, they might list evidence showing it may not have been a deliberate exclusion.

- **Cognitive Defusion**

Help the client to observe their thoughts without reacting to them. Activities might include visualizing thoughts like leaves flowing down a stream or clouds in the sky, which come and go naturally.

- **Positive Affirmation**

Use positive statements to challenge and overcome self-sabotaging, negative thoughts. The client could regularly speak affirmations like, "I'm capable of success" or "I attract positive experiences."

- **Categorizing Thoughts**

Assist the client to categorize their thoughts into different types - useful, unhelpful, fact, opinion. Recognizing the type can help in responding appropriately.

Emotional Techniques

- **Emotion Awareness Training**

Practice recognizing and naming emotions as they arise. If feeling anxious, name it and note its intensity, which can help in reducing its power and beginning cognitive restructuring.

- **Emotional Role-play**

Practice expressing and responding to emotions in different scenarios. This activity allows clients to develop emotional understanding.

- **Emotional Drawing**

Guide the client to express their emotions visually. This non-verbal approach can reveal deeply held feelings and emotions.

- **Emotional Self-Soothing**

Teach clients techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery to self-soothe during emotionally charged moments.

Behavioral Techniques

- **Behavioral Activation**

Mapping out a weekly schedule that balances work and leisure to combat depression, including time for social activities, exercise, and hobbies.

- **Graded Exposure**

Designing a step-by-step approach to confront fears, like slowly working up to social interactions for someone with social anxiety by starting with saying hello to a neighbor.

- **Assertiveness Training**

Help clients express themselves effectively and stand up for their point of view while also respecting others' rights, typically associated with social skills training.

- **Mindful Movement**

Incorporate physical activities like yoga or Tai Chi, which focus on being aware of sensations during movement. This practice can help combat feelings of depression or anxiety.

- **Goal Setting and Progress Tracking**

Assist clients in setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals, and track their progress over time to maintain motivation and focus.

Additional Techniques to be Suggested:

III. Homework Assignments

- **Thought Diary**

Let clients record negative automatic thoughts, the situation in which they occurred, the emotions they felt, and then challenge these thoughts. E.g., "Thought: I'm terrible at my job. Situation: Made a minor mistake. Emotions: Shame, anxiety. Rational Response: Everyone makes mistakes, and I can learn from this."

- **Behavioral Experiment**

Encourage the client to test the validity of their negative beliefs in a controlled way. If a client is afraid of being criticized for speaking up in meetings, they might commit to making at least one comment in the next meeting and observe the reactions.

- **Relaxation Techniques Practice**

Assign daily practice of relaxation techniques learned in session, such as deep breathing or PMR, and note their effects on mood and anxiety levels.

Additional Homework Assigned: