



International Journal of Advanced Psychiatric Nursing

E-ISSN: 2664-1356
P-ISSN: 2664-1348
www.psychiatricjournal.net
IJAPN 2021; 3(1): 01-03
Received: 01-11-2020
Accepted: 09-12-2020

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Cognitive reframing-“*Mind trick*”-change your thoughts-change your world-to keep you going

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26641348.2021.v3.i1a.44>

Abstract

Cognitive reframing is a useful technique for understanding unhappy feelings and moods and for challenging the sometimes wrong. It is a psychological technique that allows you to actively reprogram your brain. In short, if you modify your beliefs, you create a real, change in your brain. With cognitive reframing, you can change the way you see at something and also experience the change. It enables you to implement the ancient knowledge that you can't always control what happens to you, but you can certainly control how you react to different situations-no matter how tough your situation might be.

Keywords: Cognitive reframing, psychological technique, negative thoughts, distorted thinking

Introduction

All situations that happen in life will have no inherent meaning. Most of the people who signs a meaning, seeing a situation through a certain time frame. When people face with a situation, they usually decide what meaning the situation has. This is called as 'frame'. However, it is not necessary to continue viewing it in that frame. Instead, people can change the way they think and feel by giving a different meaning to the frame.

Framing is a mental structure that is built upon one's trust about self, their roles, their situations and about other people.

Cognitive reframing is a useful technique for understanding unhappy feelings and moods and for challenging the sometimes wrong. It is a psychological technique that allows you to actively reprogram your brain. In short, if you modify your beliefs, you create a real, change in your brain.

When you think negative thoughts, you're strengthening the negative parts of your mind.

A negative thought → negative belief, a negative belief → negative emotion, a negative emotion → negative behavior.

No matter what you want to modify-something you do, something you experience, or something you trust, the change begins with your thoughts.

History

Cognitive reframing is a recommended method of looking at life situations in ways that create less stress and promote a greater sense of peace and control. Albert Ellis (1950), a renowned psychologist has developed this technique and forms a core component of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive reframing was first developed as a part of cognitive behavioral therapy and as a part of rational emotive behavioral therapy.

For managing thoughts and interpreting events cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) offers two very practical and easily applicable exercises:

- Transforming specific negative *thoughts* into positive ones is called Emotional accounting.
- Transforming specific negative *events* into more positive ones is called Cognitive reframing.

Definition of cognitive reframing

Cognitive reframing is a psychological, therapeutic and structured technique where people who are stressed learn how to identify, evaluate and change the stress-inducing thought patterns and automatic negative beliefs that are considered responsible for behavioral and psychological disturbance.

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Cognitive reframing vs. cognitive restructuring

Cognitive reframing is done often naturally and unconsciously. But Cognitive restructuring is done systematically and deliberately. When a psychologist guides this process to the client, it's called cognitive restructuring.

Objectives

- To enable distressed individuals to replace negative thought or habits with more positive (and therefore less stress-inducing) ones.
- It helps one modify the distorted thinking that often lies behind the unpleasant moods that we feel from time to time.
- It helps you approach life challenges in a more positive way.
- It helps to illuminate personal power
- Helps to describe the experience as accurately as possible
- Helps to brainstorm alternate views

Benefits of cognitive therapy

- Controlled thinking
- Helps build confidence
- You become more rational
- Better life outcomes

How to change your perception

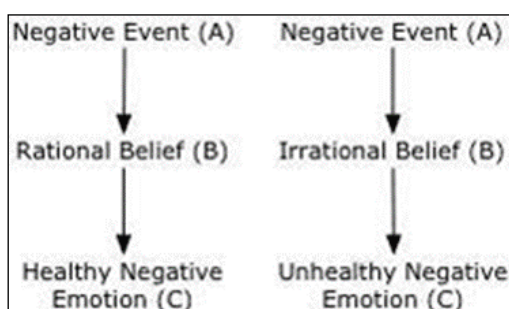
1. Learn More About Where Your Negative Thoughts Lie
2. Make an Effort to Increase Awareness and Decrease Volume-a key to change
3. Replace Your Negative Thoughts With Positive Ones
4. Get the Help of a Professional

Cognitive reframing in 5 easy steps

1. Learn About Basic Cognitive Errors
2. Develop Mental Awareness
3. Challenge Your Conclusions
4. Replace Faulty Beliefs
5. Practical Tips-E.g.: The Elastic Band Technique, Watch Your Words, Look For Positives

ABCDE-for doing cognitive reframing on your own

It is done easily done on your own but it is much useful if it is done by a professional therapist. Albert Ellis, one of the fathers of cognitive therapy constructed a Cognitive reframing based on the ABC model.



Writing down three things is the first step

- **Description of the event accurately:** The event that bothers you and leads to *automatic* dysfunctional thinking is called an activating event. Try to describe the event what had happened as accurately as possible.

- **Belief:** Describe how you see the situation as accurately as possible. Identify your main beliefs around the event that happened.
- **Consequence:** The consequence of what happened interpreted through your beliefs results in a certain way of thinking, feeling and acting.
- **Dispute:** Dispute is about challenging your thoughts and beliefs in order to see reality more accurately. It helps you to find a better frame that enables you to neutralize the emotions and act more rationally.
- **Effect:** Write down the final effect. The final effect should be a more accurate with a better narrative, disarmed negative thoughts and feelings, and an action plan for performing better in the given situation.

Two useful tips for performing cognitive reframing

Cognitive reframing is a very easy and useful exercise, but it does come with a few challenges. Unfortunately, the therapist can't just force a new frame of thinking on someone. They have to lead someone towards the new frame slowly.

That can be achieved in two ways:

Start asking yourself the right questions

You must start (if a therapist isn't leading you through the process) asking yourself the right questions, identifying new observations, systematically analyzing the accuracy of your thoughts and finding internal or external misunderstandings.

Neutralize the negative feelings

The best ways are:

- Surprise or shock-exercise, shouting into a pillow, cold shower etc.
- Curiosity over why something happened to you-curiously researching what lead to the situation and why
- *Practical demonstration* of improvement-exploring how others solved the same situation or getting a mentor
- Clear instructions for what to do next-getting madly educated about the situation
- Humor as the best coping mechanism-finding the funny side of a painful situation

Cognitive restructuring exercises

Here are several exercises to help tear down faulty cognitive distortions to be replaced with positive, balanced thoughts.

- Mindful meditation
- Increasing awareness of thoughts
- Socratic Questioning
- Guided imagery consists of three major elements:- Life event visualization, Image reinstatement, Feeling focusing
- De-catastrophizing or "what if?" exercise
- Self-compassion
- Wrapping up

Conclusion

Most of the time, cognitive restructuring is collaborative. A distressed people typically works with a therapist to identify faulty distorted thought patterns and replace them with healthier ways of looking at events and circumstances. Cognitive restructuring helps in reducing anxiety and depression symptoms, and it may also help with a range of other mental health issues.

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