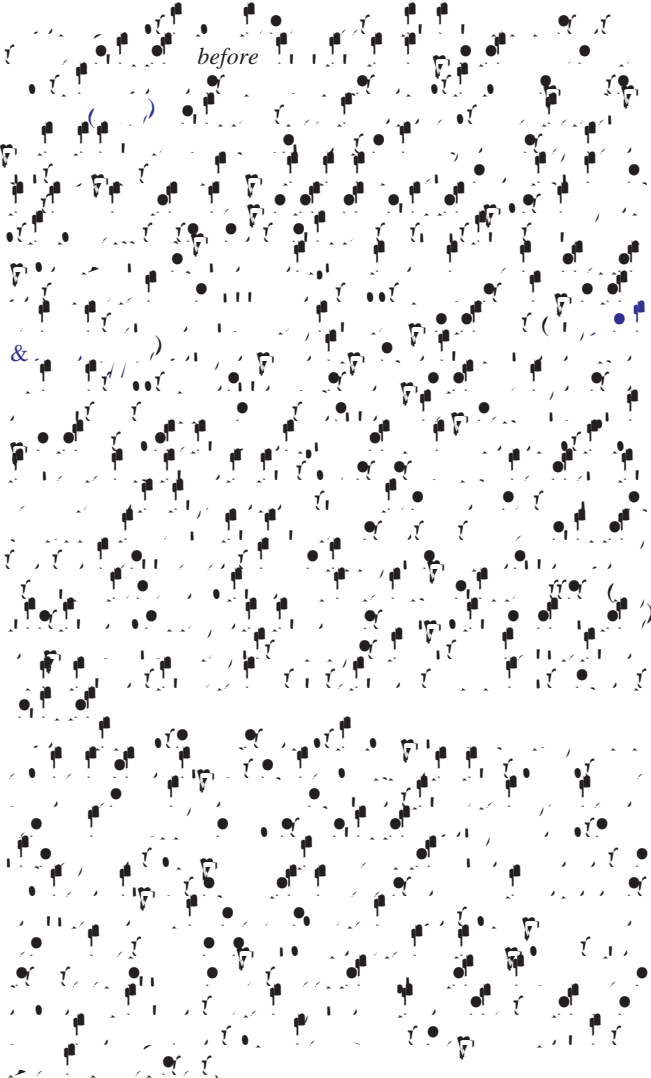


Unified Protocol for the Treatment of Emotional Disorders in Adolescents

Keywords:

Unified Protocol for the Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders

Principle One: Reappraising Antecedent Cognitions



T: One way to get out of “thinking traps” is to use detective thinking. So, what does a detective do?

C: Umm solves mysteries and finds out what happened in a situation.

T: Yeah, they solve mysteries. They gather evidence and look for clues. Sometimes we can think of our thinking traps as mysteries. We can use detective strategies like gathering evidence to work through that thinking trap.

C: Okay.

T: So, we will practice detective thinking in session and I’ll have you practice it for homework. But, it’s really important that we use detective thinking before you get in the situation when the emotion gets too big and before we get really into the thinking trap. Why do you think that is?

C: Because it might be harder to like, find reason if you are sucked into the trap. Once you are in the trap, I don’t want to say you are panicking, but you have all these negative thoughts and it’s hard to think positive or reasonably.

T: Right, when we are in the height of the emotion, we have automatic thinking and the emotion we are experiencing can color the way we think. If we can use detective thinking before the emotion, we will be better at applying the detective skills. I know emotional experiences will happen that you can’t predict and you will need to use it during or after. But let’s break it down now so that in the future, you are better prepared to get out of the thinking trap when it happens. Okay, so let’s give this a try. Let’s think of a thinking trap you’ve had this week.

C: Umm. (Pauses). Probably magical thinking.

T: So, what’s the thought?

C: Well, I guess my thought is that if I don’t text my mom, she can get hurt in a car accident.

T: Okay. So, now let’s try to gather some information, or clues, about how accurate this thought is. Do you know for 100% certainty that your mom will get in an accident if you don’t text her?

C: No.

T: Okay and what is the evidence you have for this fear?

C: Well, one in five people get into car accidents.

T: So, you have some statistics about the chance that car accidents can happen. All right, let’s try to get more information. Let’s look at the past. What has happened in the past? Have you ever wanted to text your mom but couldn’t?

C: Yeah.

T: And did she get in an accident? What happened in those situations?

C: Well actually my mom was completely fine. Nothing happened, no car accidents.

T: That’s good to know. There is some additional evidence. Well, how can you be sure you know the answer of what will happen to your mom?

C: Well, I mean no one can predict it.

T: And how much do you feel that your mom will get into an accident if you don’t text? What is the likelihood that this will happen?

C: I mean, it feels like it will definitely happen, but it’s actually not that much of a chance I guess it seems like a low percentage.

T: Well, you said earlier that one in every five people get in a car accident, but that is sometime in their life, right? That is not the statistic for every individual each time he or she goes driving.

C: Yeah, I guess you’re right. Otherwise, I would see every fifth car in an accident!

T: Right that would be scary! Driving would be very dangerous if that were true. Knowing that the true likelihood if you don’t call is very low, then what is the most realistic outcome?



C: I guess if I don't text her and don't hear from her, then I'll have to wait to see her at the end of the school day. I guess she will probably be okay.

T: All right. That seems like a more accurate thought than what we started with. But, we don't want to act like nothing bad ever

(pause) and then release it out. Any tension you feel, I imagine you are just breathing it out. (Therapist remains quiet for 3 min).

T: Whenever you are ready, open your eyes and bring your attention back to us.

C: Wow, oh gosh, I'm tired.

T: How was it? What was that like for you?

C: That was nice, it was very relaxing.

T: Did your attention wander at any point?

C: Yeah. I tried to focus on breathing but I did hear people talking and then I also had thoughts that my breathing feels weird.

T: That happens. Just notice that you are having a thought or hearing a conversation. It's okay to acknowledge that and then bring the attention back to the present breathing or whatever you have chosen to focus on. Remember you don't want to judge the thoughts. Fully experience what you think or feel in the moment. Okay, let's practice again.

T: Yeah. Sometimes when our emotion is at its highest, we feel the only way to make it go down is to get rid of what is scary or avoid it or even distract ourselves. But is that the only way to make it go down?

C: Uh no I guess not. I guess, become friends with the fear?

T: Yes, that's one way of saying it. Sometimes I call it riding the wave

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