

Self-Evaluation Paper

I. Update from Previous Session

Me- Good afternoon Ashley, it's good to see you again. So, I know last time we talked about your anxieties, being a non-traditional student, and um, also being the caregiver for your grandchildren for your daughter who is also a single mom. And last week we talked about the automatic thought record, and I wanted to know how that went for you before we continue on with our session.

Comment- I could have specifically incorporated her thoughts of being a grandmother and a student from the previous session when referring back to her circumstances and then proceed to gently start the process of addressing cognitive distortions.

Correction- Previously, we discussed that you think thoughts of self-doubt as you attempt to juggle between multiple roles including being a grandmother and part-time caregiver and as a non-traditional student.

Client- Um, it went pretty good. I was able to kind of keep reminding myself of yea do-do- do that thought record. Um, and every time I did it was very helpful because you know, usually all these thoughts are in my head. And I don't normally sit down to actually evaluate or analyze the thoughts themselves, so I would say it went really good.

Me—I'm glad to hear that it went really well, um, so in regards to you feeling better about analyzing your thoughts and equating it to your emotions, is there any specific situation that you would like to talk about from last week that maybe was an aha moment or something to work on?

Comment- Although it was appropriate to commend the client for completing the homework, I needed to separate comparing her thoughts from her emotions and then proceed with an update from her week.

Correction- You mentioned you were able to evaluate or analyze your thoughts. Can we discuss how the process, using the thought record, helped you distinguish between those thoughts and the emotions that follow?

Client- Um, I guess when my daughter dropped off her daughter sorry. She dropped her off. And at that moment I was like, oh man, here we go again. I am going to have to give her as much attention make it seem like I'm in a good mood, even though I really wasn't because I, you know, I just felt incompetent. . . I was like, I'm not gonna be able to do any homework, I'm not going to be able to play with her directly. It just felt like I was doing everything wrong. And so, that's when I you know, I looked at the automatic thought record and did the evaluating automatic thoughts questions. . . I was like okay well I'm pretty sure that realistically I can care for her as well as completing my homework and do it and not and still be a great student, maybe not the best but student, and that was having me feel better.

Me- Yea, I'm glad to hear your mood was alleviated.

Comment- This comment was too general for the in depth explanation that the client was explaining here. I could have drawn out the specific thoughts using the If . . . then statement to gently separate the thought and emotion for the client to hear aloud for verification. I could then proceed do the mood check for the emotion client confirmed during the if . . . then verification.

Correction- It sounds like when you were caregiving your grandchildren earlier this week you had the thought "I feel incompetent" and "I am not going to be able to do any homework." Since

you had these thoughts, If you feel incompetent” and feel that you are “not going to be able to do any homework,” then what is the specific emotion that you were experiencing?

Client- Yea

Mood Check

Me- Okay, so, in regards to your anxiety today, from a scale of one to 10 one being none at all, And 10 being the most anxious you've been thus far. Where do you see your anxiety. Before we continue with our session at this moment.

Client- Um, Kind of like a 7 and a half almost 8.

Mood Check- I believe I did well in asking for a specific emotion state which was anxiety. This could have been improved if I used the emotion that the client would have used after the If . . . then statement to be more accurate. It felt a little rushed so I need to match the client’s pace.

Key Correction- I could have reframed from saying “before we continue with our session at this moment” and simply asked the mood check: Okay, so, in regards to your anxiety today, from a scale of one to 10 one being none at all, And 10 being the most anxious you've been thus far. Where do you see your anxiety at this moment.

Agenda

Me- Okay, Yea, still pretty anxious. Okay well um, I wanted to talk about the agenda for today. So, of course, we're going to be using more the CBT modality that I shared with you last session, we're going to talk about those thoughts that you have. And then the emotions that come with it and then your behaviors. So, with the agenda, we're going to prioritize some goals that we want to work on for today. And then we're going to introduce what's called cognitive distortions, and then, uh, we'll just talk about evaluating your thoughts and how to help empower you to use these tools to help alleviate your anxiety. Okay, so let's go ahead and review the homework that we discussed last time did you bring it with you today.

Agenda- The agenda was done fairly well. I believe I could have more effectively worked with the client to set an appropriate agenda with target problems, suitable for the available time. I could establish priorities and then follow the agenda. Instead, I was a bit vague and did not quite hit the mark.

Key Correction- With the agenda, we're going to prioritize some goals that we want to work on for today. We discussed a little bit about your anxiety being a non-traditional student and caregiver to your grandchildren. What is a priority goal you would like to tackle today? Would you say it is the balancing of roles? . . .

II. Review Homework

Client- *A silent no*

Me- okay. It's okay. I have another copy, It’s Okay. So let’s just see, um we’ll take it out. I know you shared one instance where you were sharing that your grandchildren were going to be coming over. Because you were taking care of them for your daughter. And you were feeling, you know, maybe you won't be doing things as well that was the thought that came through your mind and maybe you were feeling more anxious because you had all the things to kind of deal with in terms of prioritizing today where would you like for us to kind of dive into, or is it the schooling or is it mainly being a grandmother for your, um, daughter's children.

Comment- I started off with trying to prioritize one issue from the previous homework to begin discussing behavioral assignments and adaptive statements. I needed to be more concise with

what the client's thoughts and the emotion that was felt. This would have been appropriate to distinguish to transition into prioritizing the agenda.

Correction- When you had your grandchildren over some automatic thoughts you found were causing you anxiety were related to completing homework assignments and caregiving effectively to bond with your grandchildren. Would you consider this a priority goal to address in session today?

Client- um, they're both pretty important to me. If I could choose one that I could focus on today, um, it would probably be schooling.

Prioritizing the Agenda

Me- okay, well focus on schooling then. Um, so I know we talked about the very first time when you get test you get really bad anxiety. You start feeling sad and anxious because you don't feel confident is the thought that comes to your mind. You want to share a little bit about maybe the last time you took a test or any upcoming tests and the anxieties that come with that.

Client- Well, I have online classes, and there's only one class that I have to go there. And so those are always of course Proctor tests where the professor's there. And I think the last one had, it was probably like three weeks ago, and I was just so, so stressed out and anxious to date for the night before studying. . . . It was just extremely, extremely hard to focus, . . . And of course day of the test it's so hard for me to stay focused because I people are clicking their pants. They're just like tapping their feet because of course, we're all, we're all nervous for the test. It was just like chairs moving people coughing, sneezing and the professor reading his book and it was just so hard to focus. I was just starting to get extremely anxious and I just wanted to like get off and just leave like quit. Of course I didn't. I can't do that, but I was the last test, and the next test is actually next week.

Me- Yeah, I just want to commend you on trying to balance you know being a grandmother and non-traditional student, that takes someone who's very hard working to try to juggle both. And it sounds like you're having overstimulation, um, people experiencing anxiety, and sometimes you know the pen clicking, the chairs moving, flipping of the book can kind of be more distracting. And you mentioned a thought that you had and you said that you were thinking you know how can you get through this when you get, all these distractions- paraphrasing, um I wanted to ask, um, so, during that thought you were thinking, you know, if all these things, distractions are happening, then maybe you won't do as well on the test. And I wanted to know from a scale of zero to 10, you know, zero being not at all, and 10 being very much so how much you believe that thought at that moment.

Client- Um, definitely like a 10. It was definitely like it was very distracting and hard to try to finish it and you know high anxiety, it's so so difficult. In my mind wanders and I try to shut myself from the sounds and start thinking about different thoughts and it's just very, I don't think I'll be able to finish this.

Me- Yeah a 10 on the scale is very high so you really believe that. And um, so, when you think about the situation. How do you feel. Um, I know we were saying, anxious, but we're going over feelings that came to mind.

Client- um, Disappointment sad nervous I didn't want to just let myself or my daughter and my grandchildren. I want to be the best for them. Even though you know being a non-traditional student, being a 50 year old lady, it's so hard and you know I just don't want to quit and so I kind of was disappointed at myself. I was like, how can I allow like little small things like that, distract me to me and of course nervous.

Me- Yeah, a lot kind of um thoughts going through your mind and shuffling through. Um, So, how strongly did you did you feel the disappointment and the anxiety from a scale of a zero to 10, same as the previous scale, 10 being the most, and then zero being um, none at all, how anxious or disappointed did you feel for all the responsibilities that you had and maybe put didn't have enough time or energy to accomplish.

Prioritizing the Agenda- I believe that I did not summarize the agenda in a manner that was collaboratively prioritizing. I was using evaluating automatic thoughts techniques prematurely. I started off solidifying what the client's issue was concerning test taking at school, without letting client determine which way to proceed. I needed to elaborate on her own thoughts and emotions with difficulties with schooling to gently address core beliefs.

Key Correction- From the very beginning I could have asked her an open ended question to focus on an issue of her choice concerning schooling like: I know we want to focus on schooling. As a non-traditional student what is the most difficult part of this role you are now in that you would like to prioritize for the agenda.

Client—uhh definitely a nine... um, I was really truly feeling those emotions

III. Working on One Problem and Teaching Cognitive Skills

Me- Okay very very high on the scale. Okay, um, I want to bring to your attention on what's called cognitive distortions, these are just patterns of thinking and as humans we all experience types of cognitive distortions. And, you know, even your therapist, I have them we usually have about two or three that we lean towards and we have, and these types of thinking, can be unhealthy in the sense that our perspective, um, it gets it gets limited and can cause us to have more feelings of doubt or anxiety or just more emotions, because we focus on that way of thinking our cognitions. And I have a list right here with me and wanted you to take a look at that. And maybe after our session, you could take a look at it and just think about which ones, maybe more apply to you. Um, and it's important for us to think about our cognitive distortions, and how they apply to what we're feeling so that we can maybe work on our behavior a little more and see what we can do to change our automatic thought. Um, and so, so when this thought came up to you, of not feeling you know adequate. Um, or you, feeling inadequate because you're a non-traditional student and you have all these things going on through tests. What are some other specific situations that you, you usually find yourself thinking these thoughts?

Comment- Although I was not on the correct topic of focus for client's issue, cognitive distortions needed to be clearly explained to make sense for the client. I also needed to clearly separate client's thought and feeling for cognitive distortion to make more sense.

Correction: . . . These types of thinking are patterns we use which prevent us from having more accurate perspectives. Working within these patterns of thinking can cause us to feel more anxiety because of the limited viewpoint we automatically engage with. . . It is important we address cognitive distortions in how they apply to our automatic thoughts because that will influence our emotions. We then can proceed challenging the accuracy of the automatic thought to feel less anxious. When the thought of being inadequate came to your mind during the test, what about being a non-traditional student mean to you. . . So **If** you are a nontraditional student **then** . . .

Client- Um, right before the new week is starting right in the week of homework is starting. Um, about how every week for the online and in class. That's when we have to like learn new stuff. And I had to like sit down, at least for like 30 minutes and write down on a piece of paper in my notebook, what assignments, I have to do that week, and when they're due do and then that's when I start getting anxious again and stressed out and just like ahh here are all the assignments I have to do that week. I have to take care of my grandchildren three times a week during that time it's normally for about six to eight hours, and it's kind of difficult for me to do homework right during the time. So, every Sunday is kind of what I dread because I have to look at what's due and you know... To look at to what to do and you know sometimes we have to meet up with different people to do assignments and compare answers . . . I think every Sunday is when I start feeling that disappointment like I am really stressed out but I do not want to disappoint myself, grandchildren, or daughter. I want to do better for everybody. And that's when I start feeling the different emotions.

Me- Mhm, and what do is happening to your body when you have those thoughts when you're thinking about all the responsibilities you have on Sunday and the comparing of the assignments learning new skills for your classes, beginning sensations in your body. Because of those thoughts.

Comment- I was falling the evaluating automatic thoughts questions and I was doing just that. However, perhaps selecting only one thought to focus on. I have an idea that the client feels incompetent, but need to build it off the original thought we are assessing.

Correction- When you are juggling both roles of caregiving and preparing for your classes, what do you notice happening to your body?

Client- um, I kind of start feeling like my body go like, Oh, like it drains. I'm sometimes getting headaches because of all the thinking and when I try to sit down it's hard for me to have a good appetite and usually like I don't eat lunch or dinner. Um, and I kind of just start feeling it like my body is shutting down in a way. . . when I start when I start writing stuff down. I feel like my hands shaking hands. . . .

Me- Yea- so it's going all down. So you know headache a loss appetite, your hands has to shake. Maybe you get sweaty palms, yes yeah so those are a lot of the physical symptoms that you're getting because of the thoughts that come into your mind because of all the stresses that you've been experiencing. Um I wanted to know, since you're saying, the thought of, you know, maybe not being the best that you could be, and not being competent. What evidence supports this idea, you're not good enough?

Comment- I tend to get vague with the client's situation instead of clearly stating what she just expressed in detail. I need to work on the transitions of the questions.

Correction- . . . because of the thought: "I am going to disappoint my while family" you may begin questioning how well you can achieve the responsibilities of academics and caregiving. What evidence supports the idea that you are not good enough?

Client- Um, I guess if I were to let's see: Taking forever to do the assignments. Usually I'm trying to cram that Thursday, and then like I double shift my homework on Friday and Saturday . . . I am 50 plus a, and it's taking me this long complete like my college.

Me- okay. So you mentioned that the duration of time that it takes you to maybe get these things accomplished. And you mentioned your age you know being in your 50s. And although these can definitely contribute to how we go about accomplishing our goals when it comes to academics and having a family, extended family with your grandchildren. Um, there also can be

evidence against the idea. So what are some of the evidence against the idea that you are indeed competent and able.

Satisfaction- I actually think that I did well on this question. I am satisfied with this response as I incorporated the client's response into transitioning towards evidence against her idea that she is incompetent.

Client- um, well after all this time after like 30 years. I decided to take on the idea of finishing school. Um, there are some days that I'm be able to complete more than one assignment too during the 6-8 hours I'm taking care of the grandchildren. Um, just get up and go to class every, every-every Tuesday. I guess show that I'm competent and I'm able to be almost done with the semester.

Me- Yea, wow it really sounds like you are persevering and you've really taken it step by step and so I know I give you a list of cognitive distortions, but maybe another few points to consider um, if you'd like to take a look at it. This discounting positives is a pattern of thinking and so sometimes we overlook the positive attributes that we have and that we've um done. And even though you are feel as though you're not competent, you feel anxious when you think about that thought. Um, It sounds like you really have been accomplishing and step by step learning. And you mentioned your age, um, you know, for a 50 year old woman nontraditional. It sounds like you're doing really well balancing everything and we just want to help you think about maybe other thoughts that can help you alleviate your anxiety when you get to a point when you're over stimulated or um have a lot of responsibilities on your plate. So I wanted to know. So what would you tell a friend that's in your current situation with your thought, what would you tell them if they were in the same situation.

Satisfaction- Just a couple stumbled words, I need to pace myself. Other than that I believe I delivered the question with summarizing what the client shared well into another evaluative question.

Client- I guess I think about my, one of my dear friends. If she were in this situation I would be like, Hey, you're old but you can do it. Like age doesn't matter at this point. And for over 30 years you were able to balance work and raising your own daughter. What's this not to be able, ... it's just all about perspective and just trying to do things differently and just believing in yourself.

Me- Yeah. Awesome. And it sounds like you have some good insight on how you would maybe affirm your friend and encourage them to continue doing what you're doing. You mentioned change your perspective. That's really helpful. Especially when we go through bumps in the world, even kind of get stuck with our way of thinking. I wanted to do another mood check before we continue on talking about homework. So if you rate your anxiety from zero to 10, zero being not at all and 10 very anxious, can you tell me where's your current anxieties right now?

Satisfaction—Again, I could pace myself. But I am satisfied with the affirmation and rating her anxiety before going into Homework.

Client- That's more of a four right now.

IV. Collaboratively Setting Homework

Me- Oh great. It went down from eight to a four or a seven. But either way you went down a couple of points. That's very good to hear and we'll now talk about some homework. I know that you have a lot of responsibilities on your plate being a student and preparing for your tests, preparing to learn new homework and new skills for your classes on top of delegating time to take care of your grandchildren. And there's a lot of your plate. And I wanted to, can we think of some homework together that we could implement. I gave you the cognitive distortions. So

maybe whenever you get to stressful situations, when you notice your anxieties peaking, take time to use the thought record that you can that I gave you an extra copy of. And think about when you have those thoughts where your cognitive distortion. You can read it through after the session and see which one applies. And then start thinking and challenging your thought by asking, here's some questions that you can start asking yourself, they're right here and that way you can in essence learn these skills that we're learning in CBT to help empower yourself throughout this week. Do you have any questions about the homework? Anything that you'd like to add or want me to clarify on?

Comment- I gave her the homework and then asked if she wanted to add anything or clarify when it should be done collaboratively.

Correction- I gave you a list of cognitive distortions, on a scale of 1 to 10, one being very unlikely, and 10 being very likely how likely are you to read through the cognitive distortions list and select 2-3 you find yourself using?

Client- No I think it's pretty clear. And since doing the homework last week I find it easier.

Providing a Summary and eliciting feedback

Me- Okay glad to hear. So before we get to the end of our session, I wanted to summarize what you've learned to this point. So we discussed in the very beginning you were at an eight on the anxiety scale and you shared with me some situations this past week of delegating your responsibilities with being a student as well as a grandmother and feeling like you're not competent. And then in this session we talked about how the automatic thought record helps you maybe had a different perspective on things. And we talked about cognitive distortions, which is patterns of thinking that we all have. And then we talked about the homework that we will work on for next week, which is trying to help you challenge those thoughts so we can alleviate your anxiety. So before we end the session, I wanted to ask for some feedback. Is there anything that I could have done better or something that would be resonating with you today?

Client- Well, everything went pretty good. The whole cognitive distortions. I'm really excited to kind of read through it and see which one do I see myself always applying or you know, close to. Then I think that everything went really, really well today.

Me- All right. Well no problem. This is your time. So I have you scheduled for next week. Same day, same time. Does that work for you? Okay, we'll, I'll see you then. Thank you for your time.

Providing a Summary and eliciting feedback- I gave a concise summary of the session. There were main points that we attempted to tackle. I should have emphasized evaluating thoughts versus emotions. But I explained how the cognitive distortions are useful for the client to witness patterns of thinking.

Key Correction- I would have added: using the thought record can be useful to distinguish our automatic thoughts and our emotions during times we begin to feel anxious. We can then follow the thought record questions to challenge our cognitive distortion we may be using during analysis. What could I have done better today? What resonated with you today?

Reflection Section

Judging off this entire experience including the readings, practices, in class learning. I know that it will take time and diligent practice for me to work with evaluating the automatic thoughts and helping clients understand their core beliefs. I need to focus on one prioritized goal of the client's choosing and with practice can gain confidence as a CBT therapist. I think that I did fairly well considering I just learned the CBT modality in 4 months. I will definitely be reading more literature on CBT modality and take the techniques into my interpersonal relationships as it is very practical. If I can use it in everyday life then as a therapist, I could familiarize myself with CBT more keenly.