

Chapter 11

EXPOSURE AND COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

PART 1: FIRST EXPOSURE

Timeline: Should be 1 session

Reading: Chapter 7 in client workbook

Photocopies needed from Client Workbook:

Figure 6.1 List of Thinking Errors

Figure 6.2 Disputing Questions

Figure 7.1 Be Your Own Cognitive Coach (BYOCC) Worksheet (make about 20 copies for the duration of treatment)

Note: It is likely that the session in which the first exposure is conducted will run over one hour. It is important to explain the rationale for exposure and then to carefully go through the whole process of doing an exposure: plan, pre-process, do, and post-process. Also, you will need to plan the first out-of-session exposure and the next in-session exposure. Therefore, it is a good idea to set aside 1.5 hours for this session.

Session Outline for Chapter 7 in Client Workbook

- I. Review homework
 - A. Review self-monitoring homework
 - B. Review cognitive restructuring practice using worksheet in Figure 6.4 in Client Workbook
- II. Review rationale for systematic graduated exposure
 - A. Review definition of systematic graduated exposure

1. Facing situations that make one anxious
2. Graduated – easier to harder
3. Start with role plays first, then do real life situations

B. Review how therapeutic exposure is helpful

1. Habituation: If one stays in the situation, anxiety eventually levels off and then decreases
 - a) Anxiety will decrease with repeated exposure
 - (1) Not get as high next time situation occurs
 - (2) Decline more rapidly within a situation
2. Practice: Rehearsing what to say and how to act in the situations that make you anxious
3. Identification of ATs: Most powerful ATs may only be accessible when in the middle of an anxiety-provoking situation
4. Testing out ATs: Going through situations to see if ATs are accurate

C. Exposures allow us to simultaneously attend to the cognitive, behavioral and physiological components of social anxiety

III. Complete first in-session exposure

A. Give overview of what will be done

1. Pick a situation to role play in the session
 - a) Situation should be selected from the 40-50 SUDS range if it were to occur in real life
 - b) Situation should be relevant to client's goals in therapy

- c) Situation should be relatively easy to set up in the therapy setting
 2. Use cognitive restructuring to help manage anxiety
 3. Do role play
 4. Debrief the experience
- B. Briefly outline role play situation with client and have him/her imagine it briefly
- C. Cognitive restructuring
1. Identify 5-6 ATs client is having about the situation and emotions they are causing
 2. Select 1-2 ATs for further analysis
 3. Help client identify Thinking Errors in the selected AT(s)
 4. Help client challenge selected AT(s) using Disputing Questions
 5. Help client develop a Rational Response and record on board or paper where client will be able to see it during the role play
- D. Work out the details of the exposure situation
1. Setting
 2. Roles for various people
 3. Any props needed
- E. Set an Achievable Behavioral Goal
1. Characteristics of an Achievable Behavioral Goal
 - a) Do-able
 - b) Observable and objective

c) Focused on behavior, not feelings of anxiety (or their absence)

2. Important to set a goal because it helps prevent clients from discounting what was accomplished in the exposure (Disqualifying the Positive)

F. Just before beginning exposure

1. Inform client that therapist will be asking for SUDS ratings and briefly remind him/her of SUDS scale

2. Inform client that he/she will be asked to repeat the selected Rational Response (and to focus briefly on the significance of its content) each time he/she is prompted for SUDS rating

3. Brief any role players as necessary

G. Exposure

1. Complete role played exposure

2. Take SUDS at 1-minute intervals, trying to minimize disruption

3. Criteria for stopping role play

a) Typically continue role play for at least 5-10 minutes

b) SUDS have leveled off or started to decrease

c) Achievable Behavioral Goal has been met

IV. After the Exposure - Debriefing the Experience

A. Review Achievable Behavioral Goal

1. Ask client how he/she believes he/she did, pointing out Disqualifying the Positive if it occurs

2. Remind client of goal if necessary

B. Review ATs

1. Did the expected ATs occur?
2. Evaluate how well the Rational Response worked to combat these ATs. Adapt as needed.
3. Did unexpected ATs occur?
 - a) Challenge these ATs as time permits
 - b) Catalog unexpected ATs for challenging in future exposures

C. Review pattern of SUDS

1. Identify habituation patterns
2. Link increase in SUDS to ATs
3. Link decreases in SUDS to adaptive thinking

D. Help client identify what he/she can take from the experience to use in the future

E. Celebrate completion of first exposure

1. Acknowledge it is difficult
2. Provide positive reinforcement for client's efforts

V. Assign Homework:

A. Continue self-monitoring of daily mood and two situations

B. Assign exposure homework

1. Negotiate a do-able exposure for homework

- a) Usually pick something related to in-session role play but less anxiety-provoking
 - b) Assure that client agrees to do it
2. Explain that BYOCC Worksheet will guide exposure outside of session
- a) Explain what goes in each section of the BYOCC form
 - b) Explain that client should complete front of form prior to exposure, back after exposure
 - c) Emphasize the importance of the cognitive restructuring preparation for *in vivo* exposures
 - d) Point out how the BYOCC Worksheet form parallels what was done in session
3. Emphasize that client should call if there is difficulty completing the exposure homework
4. Emphasize that success is defined by doing the assignment, regardless of the level of anxiety experienced or the outcome of the specific situation
5. Remind client of rationale for homework — need to transfer in-session work to daily life
- C. Read Chapter 8 from the Client Workbook. One of Chapters 9, 10, or 11 may also be assigned if topic is relevant to the needs of the individual client (see chapters to follow devoted to each of these chapters in the Client Workbook).