

Major Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Strategies

1. Distraction Techniques

- a. **Focus on an Object:** Patients are taught to focus attention on an object, describing it to themselves in as much detail as possible.
Cue questions include: “Where exactly is it?”
“How big is it?”
“What is it made of?”
“Exactly how many of them are there?”
“What is it for?”

- b. **Sensory Awareness:** The patient is taught to focus on their surroundings as a whole, using sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.
Cue questions: “What exactly can you see if you look around you ?”
“And what else? And what else?”
“What can you hear?” “Inside your body?” “Inside the room?”
“Outside the room?” “Outside the building?”
“What can you taste?”
“What are you touching?”
“Can you feel your body in the chair?”
“Can you feel your clothes on your body? Your Hair? Your Glasses? Your shoes?”
“What can you smell?”

- c. **Mental Exercise:** This includes counting back from 1000 in 7s, thinking of animals beginning with each letter of the alphabet in turn, and remembering a favourite walk in detail.

- d. **Pleasant memories and fantasies:** Vivid, concrete memories of past pleasure and fantasies can be used as distractors. The disadvantages of these are that access to pleasant memories may be difficult and that positive cognition are only too readily overwhelmed by negative ones.

- e. **Absorbing activities:** It is important to select activities which occupy mind and body alike e.g. crossword and puzzles, or playing tennis. Those which do not require much thought can be made absorbing by combining them with others, for example listening to the radio while doing ironing. To begin with, poor concentration often makes it difficult to use these techniques successfully for more than very brief periods. With practice, however, they will block out ruminations more and more effectively.

2. Behavioural strategies

- a. Monitoring activities: Activity scheduling
- b. Graded Task assessment

***For learning more about Cognitive Behaviour Therapy for Depression mail us for a workshop and one-on-one learning session.**



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