

Session Goals and Guidelines • Abbreviated



■ Session 1

Goals

- Establish trust and rapport.
- Briefly acquaint client with cognitive therapy.
- Educate client about depression, the cognitive model (including the cognitive triad) and the process of therapy.
- Discuss (and correct, if necessary) client's expectations for therapy.
- Gather information about client's difficulties.
- Use this information to develop goal list.

Other goals to consider

- Introduce concept of automatic thoughts (if client seems to rapidly understand cognitive model and there is opportunity to demonstrate a link between thoughts and emotions).
- Develop a behavioral activation assignment.

■ Sessions 2 and 3

Goals

- Solidify collaborative therapeutic relationship.
- Ensure understanding of basic cognitive model.
- Use basic cognitive model to help client cope with significant problem(s).
- Identify automatic thoughts.
- Initiate testing of automatic thoughts.
- Introduce thought recording.

Other goals to consider

- Use brief behavioral intervention (e.g., behavioral activation).
- Initiate brief problem-solving exercise.

Note

Therapist may elect to focus primarily on an extended

behavioral intervention and may delay work on automatic thoughts if a major behavioral problem (e.g., intense psychomotor retardation) appears to need immediate attention or improvement before cognitive interventions will be successful. In this case, work on automatic thoughts may be reduced or moved to next session.

■ Session 4 and 5

Goals

- Learn methods of changing automatic thoughts, and apply to specific situation.
- Recognize thinking errors.
- Use thought recording to change dysfunctional cognitions.
- Promote acting on a specific problem.

Other goals to consider

- Follow up on extended behavioral intervention if used in previous session(s).
- Use cognitive interventions from session 2 and 3 if extended behavioral intervention emphasized in session 2.
- Introduce behavioral activation, conduct brief problem-solving exercise or both.

■ Session 6 and 7

Goals

- Solidify ability to use cognitive techniques to change automatic thoughts by focusing on a specific problem(s).
- Help client learn to use behavioral methods (e.g., problem solving, mastery and pleasure, A list/B list, exposure, relaxation, daily goal setting).
- Review and refine goal list.



Session Goals and Guidelines • Abbreviated (continued)

Other goals to consider:

- Follow up on extended behavioral intervention from previous sessions.
- Cognitive interventions from session 4 and 5 if extended behavioral intervention emphasized in session 4 and 5.
- Behavioral activation.
- Conduct problem-solving exercise.

■ **Session 8 and 9**

Goals

- Solidify ability to use cognitive techniques to change automatic thoughts.
- Employ behavioral methods to effect change.

Other goals to consider

- Practice problem solving.

Note

If extended behavioral procedures are deemed to be of minimal value at this time, therapist may devote portion of session to introducing concept of schema or to testing schemas.

■ **Session 10 and 11**

Goals

- Solidify ability to use cognitive and behavioral change techniques.
- Introduce and teach client to recognize underlying schemas (attitudes, beliefs, assumptions).

Other goals to consider

- Begin testing schemas if ready.
- Practice problem solving.

Note

If client still has moderate to severe anhedonia, lack of energy or poor concentration, therapist may elect to delay work on schemas and continue to focus on behavioral interventions or automatic thoughts.

■ **Session 12 and 13**

Goals

- Solidify ability to use cognitive and behavioral change techniques.
- Utilize schema change procedures (if ready).
- Review and refine goal list.

Other goals to consider

- Begin discussion of termination (when approximately four sessions left).
- Follow up on behavioral interventions if used in previous session.
- Practice problem solving.
- Introduce concept of schemas (if not done previously).

Note: Each client should have a basic introduction to schemas by Session 14 at the latest.

■ **Session 14 and 15**

Goals

- Fully implement schema change procedures.
- Introduce relapse prevention techniques; recognizing and managing potential triggers for relapse.

Other goals to consider

- Follow up on behavioral interventions if used in previous session.
- Practice problem solving.
- Introduce concept of schemas (if not done previously).

Note: Each client should have a basic introduction to schemas by Session 14 at the latest.

■ **Session 16**

Goals

- Solidify gains from treatment and review course of therapy, checking for understanding of basic CBT concepts and procedures.
- Encourage continued use of self-help.

Session Goals and Guidelines • Abbreviated (continued)

- Review methods of changing automatic thoughts, behavioral techniques and methods of changing schemas.
- Develop methods for managing triggers for relapse (use cognitive behavioral rehearsal if indicated).
- Set goals.

Other goals to consider

- Use CBT procedures to focus on a specific problem(s) that is still unresolved or is creating significant distress.
- Help client examine alternatives for further treatment or access to community resources if indicated.