Mindfulness-based Cognitive Behavioral Training
Tiered Approach to High School Stress Management

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Stress Among Students

• Stress is more and more common among students of all ages today
  - APA survey: 45% of teenagers

• Schools looking for effective ways of addressing stress
  - Often use non-evidence based programs
  - Lack tiered implementation to reach all students

• CBT for stress in schools offers an evidence-based approach to managing stress in schools

Cognitive Behavior Therapy

• The CBT approach is intended to provide participants with the skills they need to recognize, understand, and manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors for improved well-being

• Cognitive behavior therapy is one of the most well-established treatments for children and adults

• Not one treatment but a large group of treatments that incorporate components of cognitive and behavioral therapies

Research on CBT in Schools

• CBT can and has been successfully applied in school settings at all three tiers
  - Variety of settings (classroom, counseling room, school health clinics)
  - Various professionals (counselors and nurses)

• Effect size is typically lower in schools

  - Some review studies indicate a range from 0.11 to 1.37
  - Others indicate a range from 0.15 to 0.27.
Challenges of CBT in the classroom

- There are over 500 CBT manuals!
- Each targets a specific condition
- There is no overall agreement on essential components of CBT
- Some suggest there are 4, others 6 or 8.
- Not designed for comorbid concerns
- CBT is criticized for not incorporating enough emotional regulation training, which is core of many social emotional learning programs
- Finding the appropriate context and personnel to deliver high quality CBT services

Theoretical challenges of creating comprehensive CBT initiative for multiple needs

Potential Solutions

- Place within a tiered systems framework
  - Deliver in the classroom by teachers at universal level, with support from mental health professionals
  - Providing more intensive CBT supports by mental health professions with collaboration with teachers
- Third wave Integrated CBT Models
  - Mindfulness/acceptance strategies included for increased focus on emotional regulation
  - Targeting core processes (principles of change) to build general cognitive behavioral skills

Adapting CBT To fit in School Context:
Tiered Approach

Tier 3: Individual CBT
Tier 2: Group CBT
Targeted lessons: mentorship by teachers
Tier 1: General principles of CBT applied universally
Classroom Lessons for CBT

Who Should be Implementing: MH Professionals or Educators?

Tier 3: Individual CBT
Tier 2: Group CBT
Targeted lessons: mentorship by teachers
Tier 1: General principles of CBT applied universally
Classroom Lessons for CBT

Theory- Third Wave CBTs

- Third wave CBTs (ACT, DBT, BA, FAP, MI, Unified Model etc.)
  - Mindfulness/acceptance skills emphasized as part of third wave therapies
  - Transdiagnostic/evidence-based principles approach
    - Addresses issues of different concerns, comorbidity and challenges of training across so many different CBT approaches
  - Focus on key elements that can be adapted with flexibility (modular)

Essential components

Modular or principle based approach

- Psychoeducation
- Somatic management
- Cognitive restructuring
- Problem solving
- Exposure
- Relapse prevention
- Homework
- Parent involvement
- Emotional learning
- Relaxation training

Kendall et al., 2004; Gau et al., 2006; Velting et al., 2006
Barlow’s Unified Model

• David Barlow’s transdiagnostic approach to Emotional Disorders proposes four categories that incorporate essential components
  • Psychoeducation
  • Cognitive appraisal
  • Emotional acceptance
  • Behavior change (practice)

Barlow’s Unified Model of CBT + Mindfulness

• Psychoeducation
  • Normalize & understand emotional responses
  • Identify triggers
  • Understand the cognitive triangle

• Cognitive appraisal
  • Identify maladaptive/automatic thoughts
  • Develop strategies to develop flexibility with maladaptive thoughts

• Emotional acceptance
  • Develop acceptance and mindfulness strategies to manage negative emotions (psychological flexibility)

• Behavior change (practice)
  • Provide guided practice managing difficult situations

What is psychological Flexibility

Psychological flexibility is the ability to experience and notice uncomfortable internal content (thoughts, emotions, memories, etc...) and still persist in action towards what or who you value.

Treatments designed to address psychological flexibility are known as Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT)

ACCEPT
  • Acceptance skill of difficult internal content
  • Define from thoughts
  • Be in the present moment/Mindful
  • Perspective taking (me and my thoughts)

COMMIT
  • Identify values (as opposed to goals)
  • Identity actions that will get you to move in direction of your values
  • Strategies for helping you succeed

CBT Tiered Framework in High School

Overview of Stress

• Defining and normalizing stress
• Help recognize bodily, mood and behavioral symptoms
• Explaining it’s psychological, biological and evolutionary origins
• Explaining that stress is not necessarily bad
  • In fact, thinking stress is bad is the best predictor for having negative outcomes as a result of stress

First Year- 5 Lessons in Health Class

• Session 1: Overview of stress
• Session 2: Awareness
• Session 3: Mindfulness
• Session 4: Relaxation
• Session 5: Taking action
4/6/18

In other words
Just thinking about something can create the same stress response of being chased by a lion.

You may be thinking
I have to give a big speech in class

Your body thinks
Increase blood flow to legs
Increase heart rate
Shut down digestion

Good versus Bad Stress

• Distress vs Eustress (good stress)

• Context is important - when stress is useful versus harmful
Awareness, Thought Traps, and Mindfulness

• Increasing moment by moment awareness of stress and thoughts accompanying the stress

• Thought traps
  • Perfectionism
  • Catastrophizing
  • Fortune telling

• Mindfulness practice
  • Prac,ce “no,cing” thoughts, feelings and bodily responses without trying to change them
  • Berer table to stop and recognize a thought trap

Stress in Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressful Situation</th>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the situation that causes/triggers the stressful response?</td>
<td>What thoughts or self-statements come up?</td>
<td>What are you feeling in the moment?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Directions

• Your task is to be in the moment and notice your thoughts or “mind chatter” without trying to change, resist or pursue it.

If your thoughts are about the present moment, keep your finger straight
If your thoughts are about the past, move your finger to the left
If your thoughts are about the future, move your finger to the right

“This is a weird exercise”
“My back hurts”
“When I get home, I should start working immediately”

Relaxation Exercises

• Deep breathing
• Progressive Muscle Relaxation
• Other strategies (asking students what works for them)
  • Social supports
  • Exercising
  • Listening to music
  • Etc.

Orienting Towards Valued Action

• Shifting focus away from what we are afraid of, want to avoid or get away from
  To

• What are our values and goals?
  • Develop a willingness to try, fail and keep going

• Planning and organizing
• Creating step by step guide to succeed
1. Assess
   a. What is my stress level?
      i. Too low?
      ii. Too high?
      iii. Way too high?
   b. What are my values that are relevant to this situation?
   c. What is the goal?

2. Identify Solutions
   a. What actions can I take to address this situation?
   b. Alternatives to taking action:
      i. Do I need to engage in a relaxation strategies?
      ii. Do I need to remove myself from the situation?

3. Modify the Situation
   a. What solution would work best?
   b. How will I use this strategy (describe step by step)?

4. Monitor/Evaluate
   a. How will I know if the solution was successful?
   b. Was the strategy successful?
      c. Yes - Great!!! Celebrate.
      d. No - re-assess the situation.
         i. Why was it not successful?

Cautions

- Not all stress can be “managed”
- Normal life events, such as death in a family, are stressors that follow a course for recovery
- For more extreme stress related concerns, professional help maybe required (panic/anxiety disorder)

So how did we do?

Results
Participants and Measures

- **Students**
  - N = 166
  - 9th graders
  - 80 Female, 86 Male
  - Mean age = 14.3

- **Measures**
  - General Stress
  - Perceived Stress Scale
  - Educational Stress
  - Educational Stress Scale for Adolescents
  - Psychological Flexibility
  - Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-2
  - Quality of life
  - Brief Multidimensional Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)

**Did you practice Mindfulness?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where did you practice?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Morning</th>
<th>Evening</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity: This is with only approximately 2.5 hours of instruction!

**Age and Gender**

- Age was not found to be significantly related to either pre or post test (expected as they are all ninth graders)

- Gender, however was significant both in pre and post test
  - This was also true for all four scales for both pre and post test

**Tiered Framework**
Second Year

- Teaching this curriculum again
- Reinforce in all classrooms
- Embed other activities into curriculum/school
  - Add for project completion
- Counselors: targeted practice and supports
  - Groups
  - Individuals
- Peer supports

Menu

- Expectations Modeling
- Classroom routine and practices
- Teacher-student Relationship
- Integrating into classroom instruction
- Full matrix activity

Expectations and Modeling

- Classroom expectations and culture
  - Set the tone: stress is normal and part of growing as a learner is learning to manage stress
- Mention your own stress
  - “How you manage it well”
  - And sometimes don’t manage it
- Remind students to practice (like a muscle, need to engage in it regularly)
- Practice yourself in class if possible

Classroom Routines and Practices

- Routines
  - Create structure
  - Help predict and reduce anxiety
  - Daily and marking period schedule
- Have opening and/or closing activity for students to practice stress management (5 minutes)
  - Mindfulness meditation
  - Relaxation activity
  - A-MMing (planning)

Teacher-Student Relationships and Interactions

- Positive interactions
- Provide statements of encouragement
  - “Try harder next time.”
  - “Struggling is part of the process, let’s look to see how we can improve.”
- Communicate/set a culture of “positive risk” in learning, normalize constructive feedback
- Avoid statements of static trait (you are smart)

Banking!

- Number of positive to negative statements impact how strongly students relate to teachers
- Recommended 4 to 1 ratio for positive to negative statements
- Feedback, especially when difficult, “Costs” more
Integrate into classroom instruction

- Use AIMM towards better academic planning
  - Prompt students to use it (have printed copies ready or embedded into assignments)
- Confidence/thoughts scale on questions/quizzes
  - What are my thoughts telling me how I did on this question?
    - 0 = I don’t know this at all
    - 1 = I may know this, not sure
    - 2 = I’m 100% sure
- Ask students what suggestions they have

Full Matrix Activity

- ACT Matrix - can be used to cover most elements on the menu
  - Serves as opening activity
  - Teacher can share their own experience along with students
  - Can be used to remind students of all components of stress management curriculum
  - Offer concrete path towards strategies
Towards
Away

Mind

What do you value?
What is important to you?

Inside stuff that moves you away from what you value:
Thoughts
Feelings
Memories

Behaviors you engage in that take you away from your values

Behaviors you engage in that move you towards your values

Avoiding social events
Fear
Anxiety

Coping Triangle

Patterns of Action

CBT

stuck

Moving towards values

Thoughts
Feelings
Behaviors
Relief

Mindful Action
Toward Values and Goals

Satisfaction/Content

1. Values

3. What away moves do I do?

4. What toward moves do I do?

5. How often do I notice this?

Mindful Notice

2. What shows up inside

Soft Skills for ACT Matrix

• Sorting
  • What’s important, what shows up, away moves, toward moves

• Yes, and?
  • If people get stuck in telling their story, gently guide them back to sorting
  • “Yes, and where would you sort that last bit you were talking about?”

• Noticing
  • The difference [sense experience vs mind, away vs towards]
  • The hooks (lions!)

Thoughts/Emotions Journal

I was nervous, couldn’t sleep thinking about the test.
I thought I would do good anyways.

My Values

Friendship
Being generous

Thoughts
Emotions

1. What happened? What was the situation?

2. What shows up inside? Emotions

3. What away moves do I do? (away moves)

4. What toward moves do I do? (toward moves)

5. What could I have done? (toward moves)

6. What will I do next time?

Thoughts

1. Contacting to Stress Management

- Specify observable/measurable goals
- Take Action Strategies
  - Create a time line
  - Breaks
  - Advanced rehearsal
  - Plus to take breaks
- Fun activities

- Stress Journal

2. Identify Values

- Differentiate from goals

3. Mindfulness exercises related to stress

- Identify and notice thought traps
- Mindfulness exercises to notice and not react (try to change inner content)

4. List of away moves for me (noticing worksheet)

- Do relaxation exercises if need arise
- Temporary away move or remove yourself from a situation

- Stress Journal

- See your counselor

- Managing Mindfulness

- Identify and notice thought traps

- Mindfulness exercises to notice and not react (try to change inner content)
What’s important to you in this class?

What shows up inside that gets in the way?

Thought traps
Feelings

What are some actions we can take to be successful?

• Goal setting
• Breaking tasks into small steps
• Planning (breaks)
• Using time management strategies
• If other strategies are not working, seek help

Thought traps
Feelings

Actions that take you away from moving towards what you value in this class

What is our classroom values?

Individual Counseling

Group Supports

Tiered Framework

Universal

Targeted

Health & Well Being Program

All classrooms

Mindfully Notice

What shows up inside that gets in the way?

Thought traps
Feelings

Questions, Thoughts, Ideas or Comments

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THANK YOU