Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD
Mental Health Training Initiative

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Cognitive Processing Therapy

A short-term empirically supported treatment for PTSD

Specific Protocol that is a form of cognitive behavioral treatment

12 sessions

Group or Individual or Combined format
Treatment Rationale

- PTSD symptoms are attributed to a "stalling out" in the natural process of recovery.
- Avoidance of the trauma memory keeps the patient stuck which prevents them from completely working through problematic, trauma-related thoughts.
- Cognitive-focused techniques are used to help patients move past "stuck points" and progress toward recovery.
So how does CPT work?

• Education about PTSD, thoughts, and emotions

• Trauma processing for the purposes of:
  • dissipating natural emotions related to the trauma and
  • Exploring “meaning making” of the event

• Event-specific cognitive techniques to achieve more balanced thinking self, trauma, others, and the world ("stuck points")
How well does CPT work?

CAPS SEVERITY

CAPS SEVERITY PRE- AND POST-TREATMENT (INTENT-TO-TREAT)
When to Implement and Pre-Treatment Issues to Consider

- **Recommended for clients with:**
  - PTSD and comorbid diagnoses (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance use)

- **Not Recommended for clients with:**
  - Active suicidal behavior
  - Current Psychosis
Phase 1: Pre-Treatment (if needed)

- Assess for PTSD
- Description of the therapy and how it might differ from other former treatment
- Motivational Enhancement
- Therapist contract
Phase 2: Education on PTSD, thoughts, and emotions

Sessions 1, 2, & 3

- Education on PTSD and the treatment
- Introduce events-thoughts-feelings relationship via the ABC worksheet
- Practice Assignments
  - Session 1: Assign Impact Statement
  - Session 2: Assign Daily ABC sheet practice
  - Session 3: Assign Trauma Account
Phase 3: Processing the trauma

Sessions 4 & 5

- Read and Process Trauma Accounts
- Challenge stuck points with a focus on self-blame or undoing
- Practice Assignments
  - Session 4: Assign Second Account
  - Session 5: Assign Daily Challenging Questions Worksheets
Phase 4: Learning to challenge

Sessions 6 & 7

- Use Challenging Questions Worksheets to challenge stuck points
- Introduce Patterns of Problematic Thinking Sheet to identify typical patterns of thinking
- Introduce Challenging Beliefs Worksheets (CBW)
- Practice Assignments
  - Session 6: Assign Patterns of Problem Thinking
  - Session: 7: Assign Daily CBWs
Phase 5: Trauma Themes

Sessions 8-12

- Use the Challenging Beliefs Worksheets (CBW) to address themes of safety, trust, power/control, esteem and intimacy, as well as other stuck points.
- Challenging should help clients move from extreme statements to balanced statements.
- Practice Assignments
  - Assign Daily CBWs, including one on session theme.
  - Other specific behavioral assignments for sessions 11 & 12.
Phase 6: Facing the Future

Session 12

- Review Final CBWs
- Process Final Impact Statement (compare with first statement)
- Review the Course of Treatment
- Identify New Goals and Issues to be Addressed
VA CPT Training Program

- CPT National Training Program
  - Attend 3-day workshop
    - Workshops consist of didactics, video case examples, role play of CPT skills
  - Participate in CPT Case Consultation
    - Minimum participation in 6 months of consultation calls
      - Must attend 75% of calls (total of 20 calls)
      - More calls may be required depending on training needs
  - Complete CPT cases according to the model
    - 2 Individual cases -OR-
    - 1 Group
  - Submit Case Notes to the CPT Program
Implementation Requirements

- Schedule weekly sessions
  - 50 min individual
  - 90-120 min group
- Regular consultation calls with CPT consultants
- Complete required cases and submit documentation to CPT Program