Cognitive therapy for depression: insights from 30 years of clinical practice, supervision, and research

This workshop is suitable for clinicians who wish to enhance their clinical or supervisory skills in regard to patients who have problems with depression.

Cognitive therapy for depression has been the subject of more extensive empirical testing than any other psychotherapy. Cognitive therapy is effective at reducing symptoms of depression and preventing relapse, even when clients are severely depressed and have co-morbid conditions. This workshop will include an overview of the core principles of cognitive therapy and up-to-date knowledge of the evidence base about the efficacy and effectiveness of CT for depression.

Cognitive therapy is a rigorous but highly flexible treatment approach. Effective treatment involves adapting cognitive therapy to the individual client and to their specific circumstances and problems. This can be challenging and therapists often have difficulties when they learn and practice cognitive therapy for depression.

Professor De Rubeis will show how the tension between rigour and flexibility can be used to create change. Using case examples, videotape vignettes and role plays in the workshop he will show how to overcome clinical difficulties with cognitive therapy and how to get the most out of each session and each course of therapy. Examples will include, along with those raised by participants:

- Using “behavioural” techniques in the context of the cognitive model.
- Dealing with patients’ beliefs about the depression being caused by biology rather than thinking, and the related belief in the power of medical rather than psychological intervention.

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How to maximize the interaction between anti-depressant medication and cognitive therapy and minimise interference between treatments.

Using Socratic questioning and guided discovery to enhance the clients’ learning and increase the likelihood that the effects of therapy will endure.

How to individualise therapy and intervene flexibly while maintaining fidelity to the principles of CT.

About the presenter
Professor Robert DeRubeis received his doctorate in 1983 from the University of Minnesota, working with his long-time collaborator Steven Hollon. Since that time he has been teaching, practicing, and conducting research on CT while on the faculty in Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. He has published over 100 articles on the treatment of depression, including the role of adherence and alliance in the process of change and the relative efficacy of CT and medication. He has written and lectured internationally on the mechanisms of change in CT, the role of “sudden gains” in treatment outcome, the measurement of patients’ CT skills and their relation to short- and long-term outcome, and methods and findings that can guide the selection of the treatment that is most likely to help each individual depressed patient. He has received several awards for his contributions to research on CT, including, in 2004, the Academy of Cognitive Therapy’s Aaron T. Beck Award and, in 2013, the Senior Distinguished Career Award from the Society for Psychotherapy Research.

Recommended Reading


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