Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for Pediatric Depression

Zachary Adams, Ph.D., HSPP
Empirically Supported Psychotherapies for Pediatric Depression

Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1: Well-established</th>
<th>Level 2: Probably efficacious</th>
<th>Level 3: Possibly efficacious</th>
<th>Level 4: Experimental</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall CBT</td>
<td>Individual CBT</td>
<td>Psychodynamic therapy</td>
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Adolescents

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Note: CBT = Cognitive Behavioral Therapy; IPT = Interpersonal Psychotherapy.
STATEMENT OF ENDORSEMENT

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

Guidelines for Adolescent Depression in Primary Care (GLAD-PC): Part II. Treatment and Ongoing Management

Amy H. Cheung, MD, Rachel A. Zuckerbrot, MD, Peter S. Jensen, MD, Danielle Laraque, MD, Ruth E.K. Stein, MD, GLAD-PC STEERING GROUP
Empirical Support

1. **Reliable positive effects relative to TAU, waitlist, inactive control**
   - Stronger effects in adolescents than younger children
     - But still effective in children; e.g., weighted effect $d=1.02$ across 10 RCTs in 8-12 year olds

2. **Combination therapy generally supported**
   - TADS - initial: flx+CBT > flx > CBT = placebo; but catch-up at 36 wks
   - TORDIA – yes ; ADAPT – no (but attendance was an issue)

3. **Can be effectively delivered within or in partnership with primary care**
   - Including among youth who decline pharmacotherapy
What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

- Focus on connections between **thoughts**, **emotions**, and **behaviors**
- “Short-term” (6-20 sessions)
- Skills training and practice (in-session, home)
- Goal-oriented, progress monitoring
- Empowering, emphasizes choice
What do patients learn in CBT?

• Build self-awareness of thoughts, feelings, behaviors
• Identify, label, rate, and accept feelings
• How thoughts (beliefs, interpretations) influence feelings
• Develop skills to notice, interrupt, evaluate, and correct biased (unhelpful, inaccurate) thoughts
• Practice new coping skills in session and day-to-day life
• Social problem solving and effectiveness skills
• Engage in enjoyable and important activities to improve mood
Cognitive Triangle

- Situation
- Thoughts
- Behavior
- Feelings

Arrows indicate the interconnections between these components.
Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

• Automatic thoughts, core beliefs

• Negative views on a) **Self**, b) **World**, c) **Other people**

• Biases, patterns

• Helpful or unhelpful? Accurate or inaccurate? What would you tell a friend?
### Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

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<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>Blaming others</th>
<th>“If she would just mind her business then none of this would have happened.”</th>
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<td>L</td>
<td>Looking for bad news</td>
<td>“So what if I got an A in math? I got a C in English.”</td>
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| U | Unhappy guessing | “There’s no way I would ever make the team.”  
“ They think I’m an idiot.” |
| E | Exaggerating | “I’ll never have any friends.”  
“ You can’t trust anyone.”  
“I never get to do anything I want.” |
Unhelpful Thinking Patterns

- Black-and-white / either-or
- Emotional reasoning
- Catastrophizing
- Jumping to conclusions
- Missing the positive
- My fault
- Magnifying / minimizing
- Fortune telling
- Shoulds
- Mind-reading
- Labeling
- Perfectionism
Situation (Triggering Event)

Julianne didn’t return my text.

Thoughts

She doesn’t want to be my friend. I’m a loser.

Feelings

Sad 8
Hopeless 5

Behavior

Stop texting anyone
Stay home

Consequences

More isolated
Miss out on fun
Feel worse

She was busy & forgot. She lost her phone. I’m not a loser.

Sad 3
Hopeless 1
Calm 5

Try texting again / ask her
Talk to other friends
Normal routine

Less isolation
Connect with friends
Feel better
Behavioral Activation

1. Lack of positive reinforcement; avoidance behaviors
2. Functional analysis of depressive behaviors / coping strategies
3. Identify values – importance, mastery
4. Pleasant activity scheduling
5. Self-monitoring
6. Problem solving
Other considerations

1. Individual or group
2. In person, telehealth, online (self-paced / therapist guided)
3. Linear vs. modular
4. Caregiver involvement
Zachary W. Adams, Ph.D., HSPP
Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychology
Adolescent Behavioral Health Research Program
Department of Psychiatry
Indiana University School of Medicine
zwadams@iu.edu | @DrZacharyAdams