



# Intro to Psychotherapy

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# What is psychotherapy?

Treating mental health disorders through psychological rather than medical means

Sometimes called “talk therapy”



Aimed at helping individuals understand, process, and/or change thought patterns, emotional experiences, behaviors



# Who can deliver psychotherapy?

- Psychiatrists (MD, DO)
- Psychologists (PhD, PsyD)
- Licensed professional counselors (LPC)
- Licensed clinical social workers (LCSW)
- Marriage and family therapists (MFT)
- Licensed mental health counselors (LMHC)
- Psychiatric mental health nurse (PMH-APRN)

# Therapeutic Orientations

Psychodynamic

Cognitive-  
behavioral

Humanistic

Mindfulness-  
based

Eclectic

Etc.

# Early Psychodynamic Theory (i.e., Psychoanalysis)

- Earliest organized therapy for mental disorders, made famous by **Sigmund Freud** in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Topographic model
  - Mind can be divided into three regions: preconscious, conscious, unconscious
  - “Unconscious mind” contains repressed impulses and urges
- Psychosexual stage model
- Structural model
  - Posits existence of three interacting mental structures: id, ego, superego
  - Personality reflects interplay and relative strength of these three structures

# Contemporary Psychodynamic Approaches

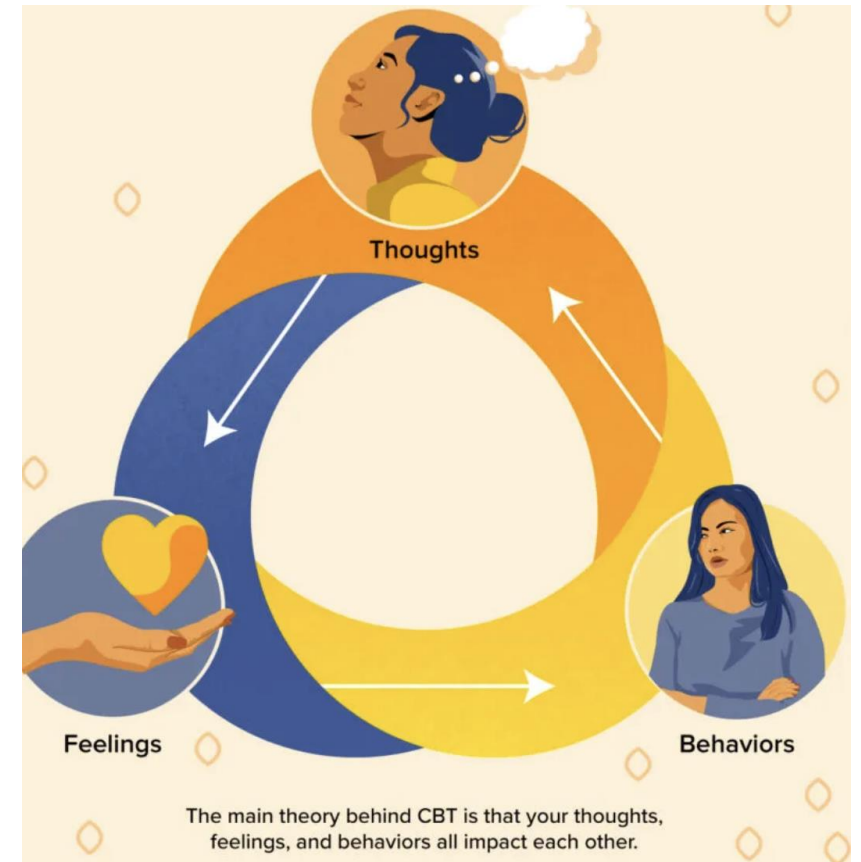
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- Core principles
  - Majority of psychological processes take place outside conscious awareness
  - Heavy emphasis on early childhood experiences
  - Nothing in mental life happens by chance (“psychic causality”)
- Characteristics
  - Exploratory (i.e., open-ended), interpretive, supportive
  - Focus on therapeutic relationship (transference and countertransference)
  - Goal is to enhance self-awareness in relation to past experiences, bring unconscious into conscious awareness

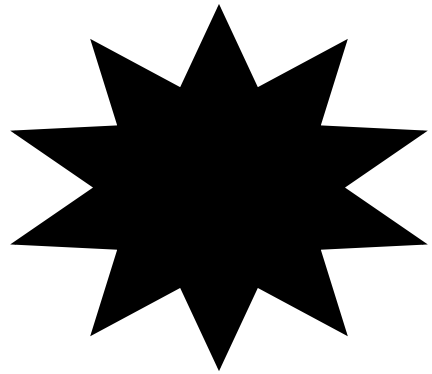
# Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

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- Core principles
  - Thoughts, feelings, and behaviors influence each other
  - Maladaptive patterns of thinking and unhelpful learned behaviors contribute to psychological problems
- Characteristics
  - Structured, goal-oriented
  - Homework (e.g., worksheets, between-session practice)
  - Goal is to modify distorted thinking, change behaviors reinforcing the problem(s)



# The Cognitive Model



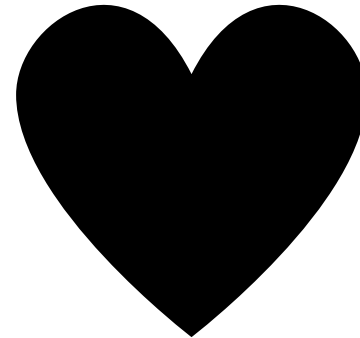
Situation

something happens



Thought

the situation is interpreted



Emotion

a feeling occurs as a  
result of the thought



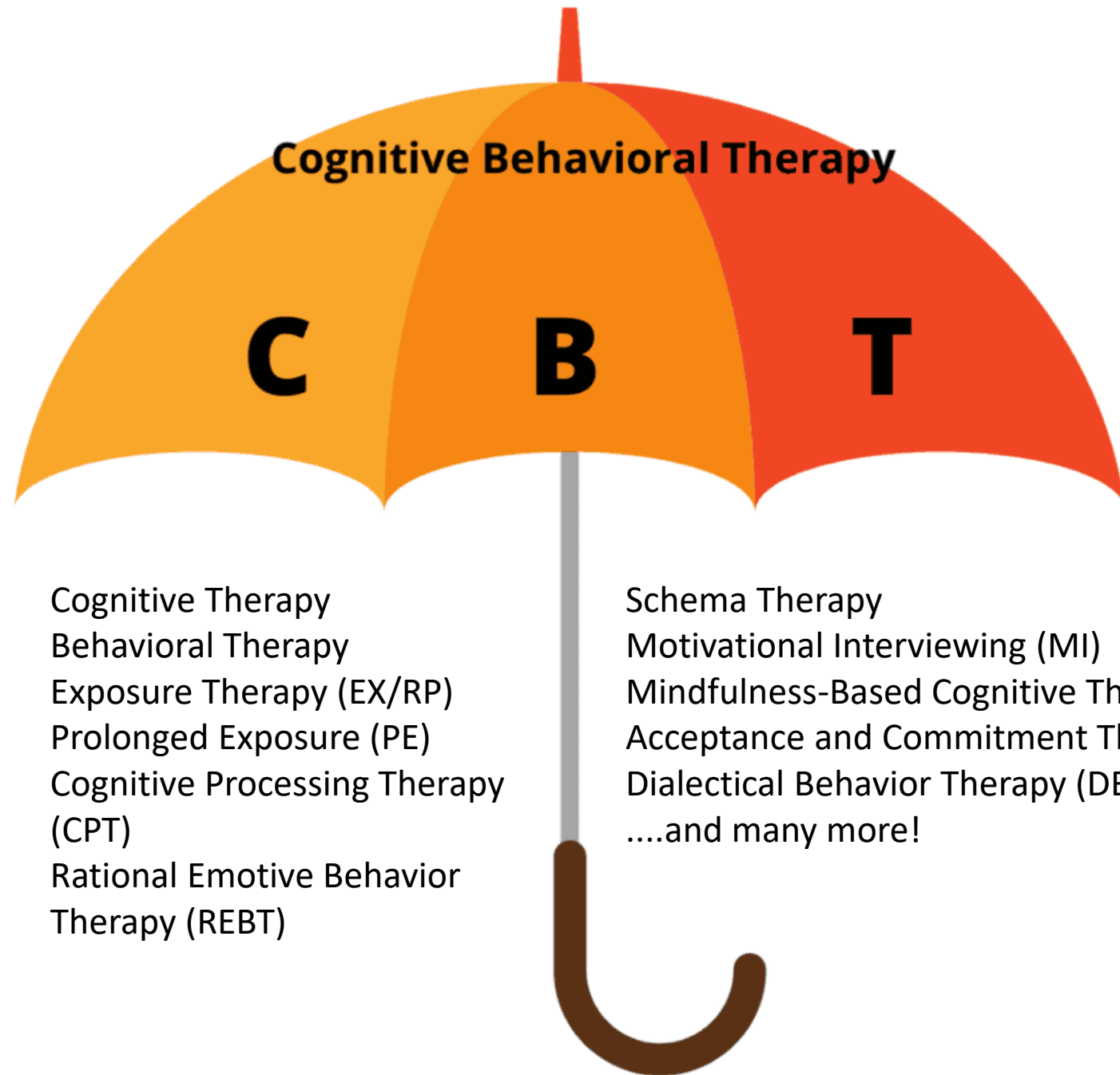
Behavior

an action occurs in  
response to the emotion



# CBT Example

Situation	Automatic Thoughts	Emotional Reaction	Behavioral Reaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You're walking down the street and see a friend. You wave to them, but they don't wave back.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>"They are mad at me."</li><li>"They don't like me"</li><li>"I must have done something wrong."</li><li>"I looked like a loser."</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sad, nervous, anxious, embarrassed</li><li>Heart racing, flushed, cold sweat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Worry, reach out to your friend, avoid your friend, isolate</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>"They are busy/distracted."</li><li>"They did not see me."</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Neutral</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Brush it off</li><li>Continue with day</li></ul>



## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

**C**

**B**

**T**

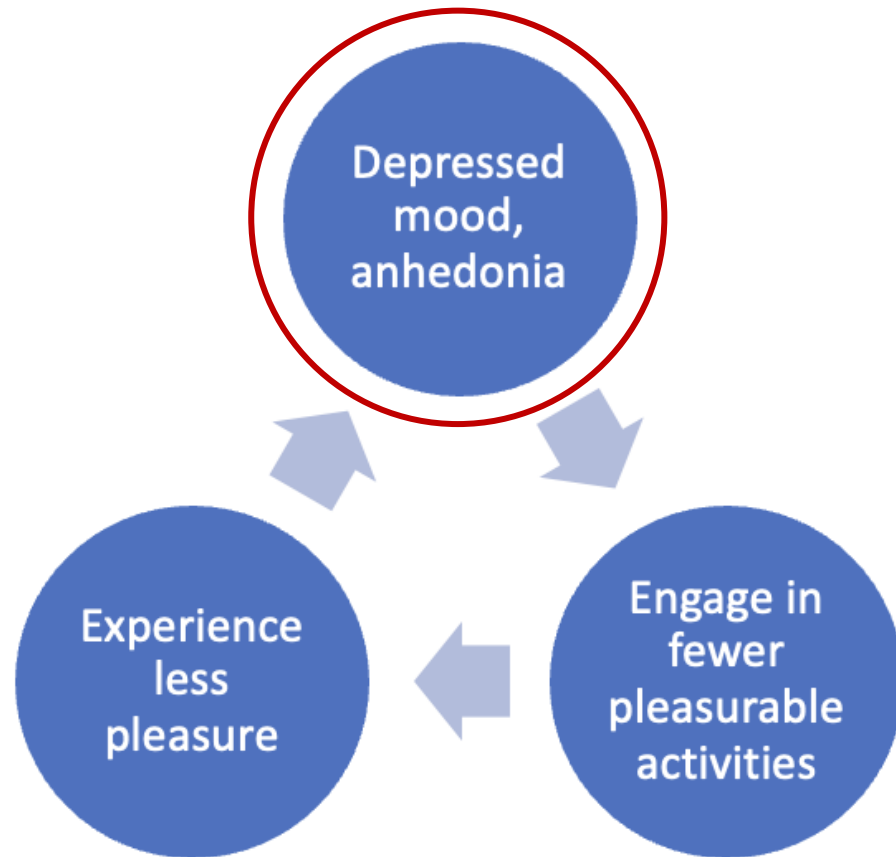
Cognitive Therapy  
Behavioral Therapy  
Exposure Therapy (EX/RP)  
Prolonged Exposure (PE)  
Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)  
Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)

Schema Therapy  
Motivational Interviewing (MI)  
Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)  
Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)  
Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)  
...and many more!

# “Heavy B” Interventions

- Exposure therapy
  - Most researched treatment for anxiety and fear-related disorders (e.g., generalized anxiety, social anxiety, PTSD, OCD)
  - Involves exposure to source of fear/anxiety (and response prevention)
  - Thought to work through habituation, corrective learning, and self-efficacy
- Behavioral activation
  - Using behaviors to “activate” pleasant emotions
  - Behavior → emotion, rather than emotion → behavior
  - Often used to treat depression (see next slide)

## Behavioral Model of Depression



## Behavioral Activation



# Humanistic (aka Person-Centered) Therapy

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- Core principles
  - Mental health problems result from discrepancy between individuals' "true self" and their behavior
  - Humans have an innate drive to realize/express their own capabilities and creativity (i.e., self-actualize), which motivates all behavior
- Characteristics
  - Largely unstructured, client-directed, present-focused, holistic
  - Goal is to create conditions under which patient can explore their identity and discover their self-worth

# Mindfulness-Based Approaches

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- “Pain is inevitable, suffering is optional”
- Goal is to cultivate nonjudgmental and present-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, and body sensations
- Examples
  - Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), cognitive therapy (MBCT)
  - Acceptance and commitment (ACT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)