



## Unified Protocol for Transdiagnostic Treatment of Emotional Disorders: Therapist Guide (2 edn)

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Publisher: Oxford University Press  
Print ISBN-13: 9780190685973  
DOI: 10.1093/med-psych/  
9780190685973.001.0001

Print Publication Date: Nov 2017  
Published online: Jan 2018

## Overview of General Treatment Format and Procedures

**Chapter:** (p. 31) Overview of General Treatment Format and Procedures

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**DOI:** 10.1093/med-psych/9780190685973.003.0004



## Session Structure

Consistent with most cognitive-behavioral treatment protocols, sessions typically begin with a review of the homework assigned in the previous session. This provides you with an opportunity to briefly review the previous session's content and link that content to what the patient experienced during the week since your last meeting. You should also use the homework review to assess your patient's progress and to inform the material covered in session. Following the homework review, you will present key concepts and conduct in-session exercises to assist your patient with understanding the treatment skills. This didactic instruction and interactive skill-building forms the main work for the session. At the end of each treatment session, you will help your patient consolidate what he or she has learned. Ask your patients to summarize the main take-home points or messages from the session, and ask if they had a negative reaction to anything about the session. Finally, you will negotiate the specific homework to be completed before the next session.

## The Therapist's Role



Ideally, your role should be one of a collaborator rather than an "authority." We often reflect to patients that we are experts in cognitive-behavioral therapy, they are experts in their own experience, and treatment is a matter of combining the expertise of both parties. Both you and your patient must work together throughout treatment to design (p. 32) the most effective treatment plan possible. Changing patterns of behavior is difficult and patients will need to give feedback regarding what is helpful and what is not, so that the most effective treatment plan possible can be devised and implemented. It probably goes without saying, but it is important to gain a thorough understanding of the issues the patient brings to treatment and work to establish good rapport; these are both crucial parts of providing a strong foundation from which to introduce treatment concepts and successfully carry out some of the more challenging treatment exercises in future sessions.

## Homework and Out of Session Practice



Homework and practice assignments will be assigned each week to reinforce the concepts learned from that session and to practice new skills. Research has found that completion of homework facilitates the practicing of skills learned in treatment and is necessary in order to maximize the benefits of treatment. Thus, it is important to convey to patients the following:

1. Attending sessions and listening to the concepts sets the stage for change.
2. Application and practice of the concepts in "real life" are what will lead to noticeable, lasting changes.
3. Every week, patients will be given papers from the UP workbook to record assignments, and these should be brought to the following session to facilitate discussion about problems, setbacks, or obstacles.
4. Monitoring patient progress by charting changes in anxiety and depression (and other emotions) on the **Progress Record** from the UP workbook will help patients gauge their progress through treatment. Monitoring records can serve as both a powerful motivator and an important source of discussion during sessions, such as normalizing a patient's feeling that they have "backtracked" by reminding them that progress does not occur in a linear fashion.

At the end of each session, we recommend to patients that they read the UP workbook chapters relevant to the material that was just discussed (p. 33) in session in order to reinforce

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concepts. Further, as you work through the treatment modules, you can have patients continue with homework from previous modules, if the additional practice is warranted. For instance, once your patient is introduced to the concept of mindful emotion awareness in Module 3, he or she can continue to practice these skills for the remainder of the treatment, if clinically indicated.

## Homework Review



Beginning with the second session (or following the initial assignment of monitoring homework), it is a good idea to begin each session with a review of your patient's homework. Beginning each session this way serves three important functions:

1. Routinely starting the session with homework review reinforces the important role homework plays in the ultimate success of this program. If your patient is having difficulty complying with homework, address the issue right away, helping them identify obstacles to homework compliance and designing a plan they can stick to.
2. Reviewing homework allows you to correct any misconceptions or misunderstandings about the previous session's concepts, and provides an opportunity for your patient to ask any questions or voice any concerns.
3. Reviewing homework provides you with a rich source of information about your patient's ongoing experiences, which can be drawn upon when illustrating subsequent concepts.

## Patient Commitment



In order for this treatment to be effective, it is expected that patients will commit to and make time for the sessions each week. Urge patients to make the treatment sessions and homework a high priority. Remind them that treatment lasts for a relatively short period of time, and making it a priority will allow them to reap the full benefits of the program and give them the opportunity to successfully achieve their treatment goals.

## (p. 34) Dealing with Patient Ambivalence and Resistance



Maximizing patient motivation and engagement throughout treatment is essential for promoting meaningful, lasting change. Homework compliance and engagement in treatment are consistently associated with treatment response and improved treatment outcomes. However, one of the most common difficulties that arises when working with patients is ambivalence about engaging in treatment procedures, including the completion of homework assignments. This can be challenging. When patients do not readily comply with treatment procedures, therapists may assume that the patient lacks motivation for change. However, it is important to appreciate that in treatment we are asking patients to engage in the very tasks that they have had difficulty with in the past, and to confront physical sensations and other situations that are likely to produce intense, uncomfortable emotions. Module 1 was specifically designed to help patients resolve ambivalence about change and ultimately foster motivation to engage in treatment. It includes two exercises, adapted from Miller and Rollnick (2002), for enhancing motivation at the beginning of treatment (see Chapter 6).

## Additional Reading on Motivation Enhancement

Arkowitz, H., Westra, H. A., Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2017). *Motivational interviewing in the treatment of psychological problems, second edition*. New York: Guilford Press.

Miller, W. R., & Rollnick, S. (2012). *Motivational interviewing: Helping people change*. Guilford Press.

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Rosengren, D. B. (2009). *Building motivational interviewing skills: A practitioner workbook*. New York: Guilford Press.