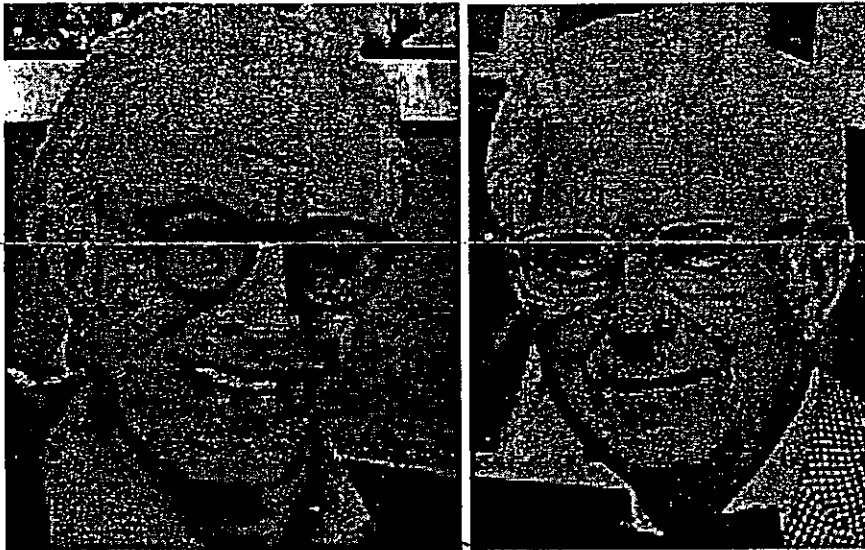


Cognitive-Behavior Therapy



Key Figure: Dr. Albert Ellis and Dr. Aaron T. Beck

Key Concepts:

Ellis' REBT assumes that individuals are born with the potential for rational thinking but tend to fall victim to the uncritical acceptance of irrational beliefs. The assumption is that thinking, evaluating, analyzing, questioning, doing, practicing, and redeciding are at the base of behavior change. REBT is a didactic and directive model. Therapy is a process of reeducation. The cognitive-behavioral approaches are based on the assumption that a reorganization of one's self-statements will result in a corresponding reorganization of one's behavior.

Like REBT, Beck's cognitive therapy (CT) rests on the premise that cognitions are the major determinants of how we feel and act. CT assumes that the internal dialogue of clients plays a major role in their behavior. The ways in which individuals monitor and instruct themselves and interpret events shed light on the dynamics of disorders such as depression and anxiety.

Applications of this Approach:

Applications of REBT include individual therapy, ongoing group therapy, marathon encounter groups, brief therapy, marriage and family therapy, sex therapy, and classroom situations. REBT is applicable to clients with moderate anxiety, neurotic disorders, character disorders, psychosomatic problems, eating disorders, poor interpersonal skills, marital problems, parenting skills, addictions, and sexual dysfunctions. It is most effective with those who can reason well and who are not seriously disturbed.

The most common application of cognitive therapy is in the treatment of depression and anxiety. CT has been applied successfully in treating a broad range of problems with children, adolescents, and adults. cognitive methods have also been very useful in managing stress, in parent training, and in treating various clinical disorders.

Techniques of Therapy:

Rational emotive behavior therapists are eclectic in that they use a variety of cognitive, affective,

and behavioral techniques, tailoring them to individual clients. The approach borrows many methods from behavioral therapy. Cognitive techniques include disputing irrational beliefs, cognitive homework, changing one's language, and the use of humor. Emotive techniques include rational-emotive imagery, role playing, and shame-attacking exercises. Behavioral techniques include operant conditioning, self-management strategies, and modeling. Techniques are designed to induce clients to critically examine their present beliefs and behavior.

Contributions of this approach:

Cognitive-behavior therapy has wide applicability. Counseling is brief and places value on active practice in experimenting with new behavior so that insight is carried into doing. It discourages dependence on the therapist and stresses the client's capacity to control his or her own destiny. REBT is a comprehensive, integrative approach to therapy that uses cognitive, emotive, and behavioral methods to try to change disturbances in thinking, feeling and behaving. REBT has shed much light on how people can change their emotions by changing the content of their thinking. It is in many ways the forerunner of other increasingly popular cognitive-behavioral approaches. With respect to cognitive therapy, Beck has made pioneering efforts in the treatment of anxiety, phobias, and depression, and this approach has received a great deal of attention by clinical researchers. He developed specific cognitive procedures that are useful in challenging a depressive client's assumptions and beliefs and in teaching clients how to change their thinking. The constructivist perspective is a new trend in cognitive therapy that helps clients make distinctions between what is factual and their values and choices. Constructivism has the potential to represent an inclusive model of therapy. Although it is technically diverse, it is theoretically consistent.

Limitations of this approach:

REBT does not provide a rationale for or clear explanation of why one tends to reindoctrinate oneself with irrational beliefs or why one clings to those beliefs. It does not apply to persons with limited intelligence. Possible dangers are the imposition of the therapist's own philosophy on the client and the psychological harm done to the client by the therapist who is overly confrontive or persuasive. In general, the cognitive-behavioral approaches have the limitation of not emphasizing the exploration of emotional issues. Their focus on the role of thinking can lead to an intellectualized approach to therapy.

Glossary of Cognitive Behavior Terms

Source: G. Corey. (1996). Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy, 5th Ed. Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Rare Photos with Albert Ellis

◦ Links: ◦

Albert Ellis Institute

What is REBT?

Using REBT to Control Anger

Cognitive Therapy FAQ