Treating comorbid mental health and substance use disorders using tools from CBT

Presented by Joanne Cassar Faculty of Medicine, The Matilda Centre





We acknowledge the tradition of custodianship and law of the Country on which the University of Sydney campuses stand. We pay our respects to those who have cared and continue to care for Country.



Overview

- Comorbidity
- Assessment and functional analysis
- Cognitive tools
- Behavioural tools
- Distress tolerance techniques





Comorbidity- what is it?

In this context 'Comorbidity' is referring to the co-occurrence of mental health and substance use disorders at the same time in an individual

Rates of comorbidity are high amongst those experiencing a substance use disorder. Estimates from the National Survey of Health and Wellbeing indicate that 35% of individuals with a substance use disorder also have a co-occurring anxiety or affective disorder (Marel et al (2016)).



Harms associated with comorbidity

Those with co-occuring mental disorders and SUD have:

- Increased risk of suicide and self harm
- Increased homelessness
- Poorer social and occupational outcomes
- Poorer physical and mental health
- Greater drug use severity
- Increased relational stress



Marel et al. (2016) Guidelines on the management of co-occuring alcohol and other drug and alcohol and mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug treatment settings (2nd edition). Sydney, Australia: Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use, National Drug and Alocohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

Treating Comorbidity using CBT





Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for comorbid SUD and mental health disorders- overview



- CBT is structured, goal-oriented, and focused on immediate problems
- It is flexible, empathic, collaborative and tailored to the individual
- The therapist's role is to teach the client new skills for behavioural change, with the aim of self-control
- Specific techniques vary widely with the type of CBT used, but typically include focus on functional analysis and skills training

Important note about mental health assessment

Always ask about substance use





Time Line Follow Back

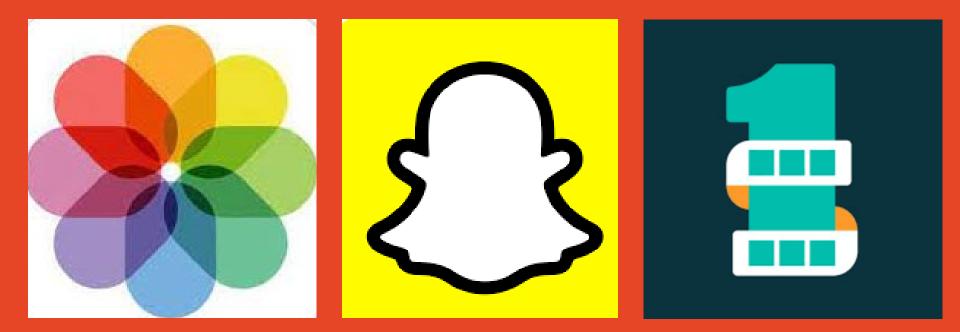
TLFB 2021 Name/ID#:

Date: ____

TIMELINE FOLLOWBACK CALENDAR: 2021

			1 Standard Drin	k is Equal to			
Å	One 12 oz can/bottle of beer	-	One 5 oz glass of regular (12%) wine	1 ½ oz ol (e.g. rum whiskey)		drini	xed or straight k with 1 ½ oz Hiquor
St	tart Date (Day 1)	c		ete the Follow End Date ()	ing vesterday):		
		MO	DY Y	2	MO	DY	YR
2021	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			•		-	1 ^{New Year's}	2
J	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
А	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
N	17	18 ^{M.LotherKing}	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

	A	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	N	17	18 ^{MLotherKing}	19	20	21	22	23
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30
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Γ	F	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	E	14 ^{Valuation's Day}	15 ^{Products Dep}	16	17	18	19	20
	В	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
_		28	1	2	3	4	5	6
	М	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	A	14	15	16	17 ^{R/backto Day}	18	19	20
	R	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
		28	29	30	31	1 ^{Passerer}	2 Good Friday	3
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	P	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	R	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
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	М	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	A	9 Mather's Day	10	11	12	13	14	15
L	Y	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
		23	24 ^{Memorial Day}	25	26	27	28	29
		30	31					



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Substance use tracking apps

	Drink(Control	Cancel	Cancel Add Drin				
			uso /					
1d	2.7 of 2		10.40	wine				
7d	12.7 of 14		82.80					
30d	32.7 of 60		165.40	galaxies (clicked)	12.514			
Tenero	n en		Med	glass (5oz)	13.0%			
men	it's drinking? A e pause from		Std	Std glass (6oz)				
	king! Ind Byron	-	Half	Half bottle (13oz)				
			~	atter (Pficer)	1.1.10.00			
			Date		Te			
	Add	drink	Price	Co	st of sing			
	Last drink : today wine: 13.5%, 6oz	Another win	1.3 units	Tap to fill	with last p			
		Ö	0	Save drink				
Tod	-	ns Settings	About					

	Edit		c				
	<		Oct	ober 2	014		>
>	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wied	Thu	Fri	Set
	28	29	30	1	2	3	4
3.0%	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
3.5% 1x	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1.0% 2x	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
5.55 .54	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Today >	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
single drink	4		boz for \$.2 units,	114 kcal	0
last price \$5.20	Ŧ	cogna 40.0%, 2		\$24.00	(3.3 unit	a, 327 ko	al)
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Functional analysis

How does substance use fit into your life?

The 5 Ws of a person's substance use:

- When?
- Where?
- Why?
- With / from whom?
- What happened?

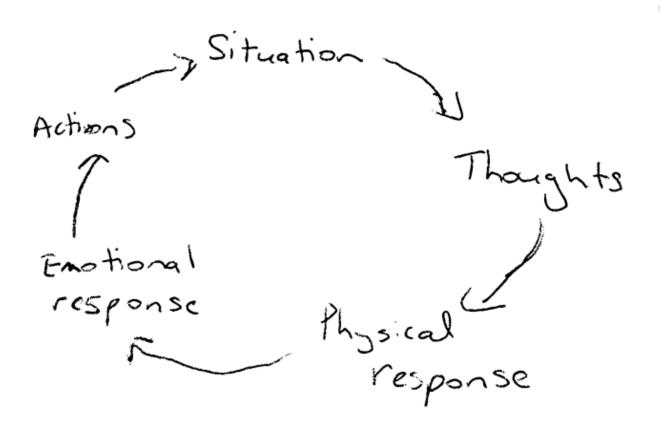
Useful questions:

What was going on before you used? Where were you when you began to think about using? How were you feeling before you used?

How / where did you obtain and use substances? With whom did you use substances?

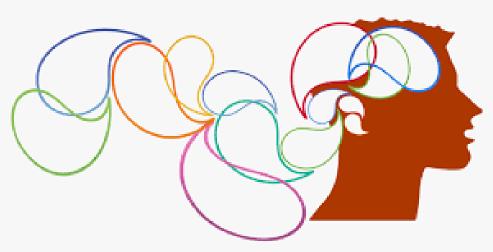
What happened after you used?

Cognitive tools

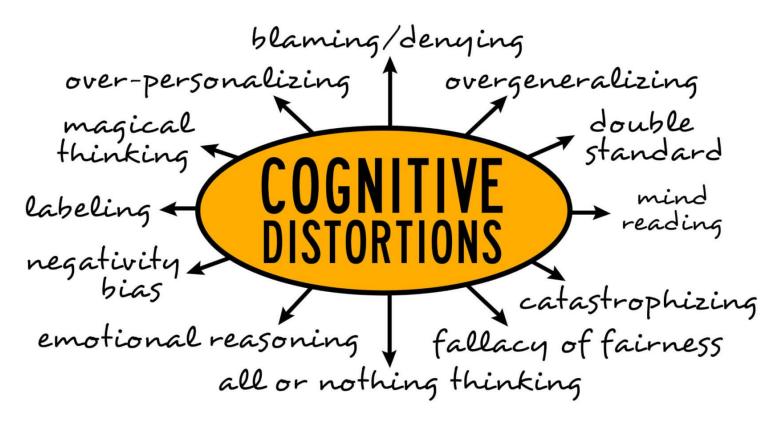


Cognitive tools

- Recognising unhelpful thoughts related to either mood/ anxiety or substance use
- Thought monitoring
- Cognitive restructuring
- Imagery



Thinking errors



Cognitive restructuring

 Activating event Work drinks

2. Dysfunctional thought I need to drink or I will look weird

3. Consequence Drinks alcohol and has an argument with colleague. Wakes up feeling anxious and unwell.

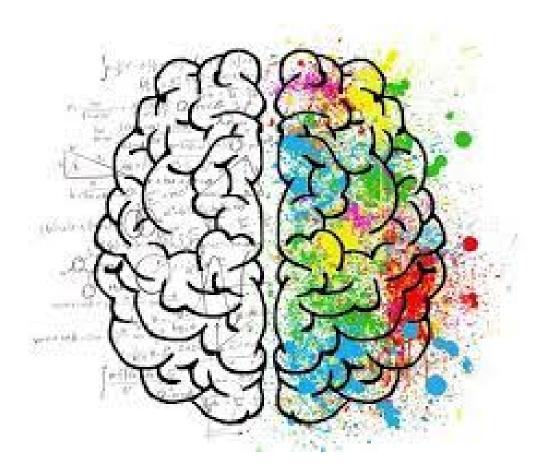
2. Functional thought

Not everyone is drinking and I don't think people are weird when they make their own choices

3. Consequence

Doesn't drink and wakes up feeling energetic with reduced anxiety

Imagery



Substance refusal skills

- Steps in substance refusal skills/assertiveness:
 - 1. Respond rapidly
 - 2. Have good eye contact
 - 3. Respond with a clear and firm "No" that does not leave the door open to future offers of substances
 - 4. Make the conversation brief
 - 5. Leave the situation if necessary

Coping with cravings

- Identify triggers
- What is happening how does their mood or anxiety impact and lead to craving
- Riding the wave of craving
- Delay and distract



Behavioural tools

Behavioural Activation

Life areas

- Relationships
- School/career
- Leisure
- Mind/body/ spirituality
- Daily responsibilities

Values

An ideal, quality or belief in a certain way of living your life eg honesty, compassion

Activities

Scheduling Monitoring Rating importance and enjoyment





Relationships

Therapist: Let's focus on the life area of relationships and explore what you value in this area

Value

Connection

Client: I guess I just want to feel heard and seen and I want to see others too.

Therapist: It sounds as though connection is important to you. Is that fair to say?

Client: Yeah it is

Activity

Send friend a text

Therapist: Ok, based on you identifying connection can you think of something you may be able to do to stay true to this values.

Client: I could text a Sam. I keep meaning to check in on them as I know they've been having a hard time too. The Matilda Centre



Monitoring

Date:	Activity	Mastery	Pleasure
	What did you do?	Accomplishment Rate 0-10	Enjoyment Rate 0-10
06:00 - 07:00			
07:00 - 08:00			
08:00 - 09:00			
09:00 - 10:00			
10:00 - 11:00			
11:00 - 12:00			
12:00 - 13:00			
13:00 - 14:00			
14:00 - 15:00			
15:00 - 16:00			
16:00 - 17:00			
17:00 - 18:00			
18:00 - 19:00			
19:00 - 20:00			
20:00 - 21:00			
21:00 - 22:00			
22:00 - 23:00			
23:00 - 00:00			
00:00 - 01:00			
01:00 - 02:00			
02:00 - 03:00			

Exposure Hierarchy

- 10. giving a speech at colleague's leaving party
- 9. Doing a presentation for work
- 8. Introducing self at a function
- 7. Asking a question during a work seminar
- 6. Making a phone call to enquire about something
- 5. Getting a waiter's attention in a restaurant
- 4. Calling the name of a friend in a public place
- 3. Asking a bus driver if they stop at a certain place
- 2. Ringing the bell on a bike when riding on a shared path
- 1. Saying "excuse me" when moving past someone on public transport



Distress tolerance tools

Skills for managing distress

Breathing techniques

Grounding

5 things you can see, hear, feel, taste, smell

notice all the blue things in the room



Relapse prevention- a note

- Focusing on both relapse prevention from substance use but also from mental health disorder
- 1. Identifying high risk substance use and mental health situations
- 2. Preparing for high risk situations
- 3. Planning for emergencies
- 4. Making a plan
- 5. Coping with a lapse



Thank you!

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