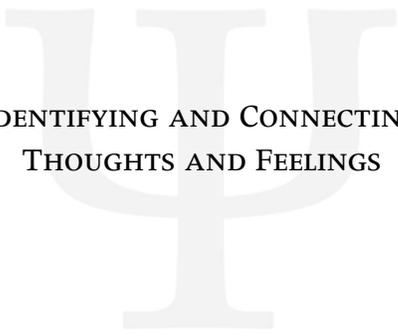


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## IDENTIFYING AND CONNECTING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

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### IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

First step in cognitive therapies, highly important in many forms of CBT

Treatment outcome is highly linked to client's ability to identify his/her feelings

Unless client is able to report on feelings, therapist will not know if interventions are effectively changing them

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### IDENTIFYING FEELINGS

Distressing feelings are often cues for using cognitive restructuring

You feel bad, then apply skills from therapy

Exposure exercises and other behavioral interventions require clients to reliably identify and endure certain types of emotions

An important, but often challenging, step in therapy

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### CHILDREN & FEELINGS

Teaching children to distinguish between mood states requires creativity

They often lack experiencing in any type of emotional articulation

Use the traditional mood states of mad, sad, glad, scared, and worried – don't worry about finer distinctions at this age

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### FEELING FACES CHART

Allows children to draw and label their own versions of the mood states



Alternatively, you can cut out pictures from magazines and paste them on the circles

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### CHILDREN & FEELINGS

Use of storybooks or movie clips may also be appropriate

An individualized Feeling Faces Chart allows children to personalize and normalize the process of having emotions

If reading or watching video, pause in appropriate places to discuss the emotions occurring

Focus on *how* you know what they are feeling

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### CHILDREN & FEELINGS

Tying physical sensations to emotions can be useful for many children

“How does your body feel when \_\_\_\_\_?”

Helps give a concrete reference for feelings

Asking what certain body parts would say if they could talk is often useful

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### RATING FEELINGS

Children often report dichotomous feelings – they have them or don't

Therapists have to help them recognize that feelings come in different intensities

Building on the Feeling Faces Chart can allow a child to begin differentiating between levels of moods, not just the types

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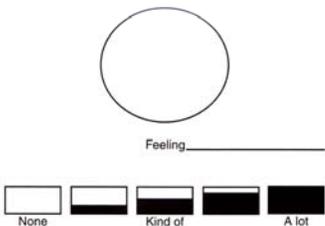
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### RATING FEELINGS

After drawing a Feeling Face, the client then rates how strong the emotion is



None      Kind of      A lot

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### RATING FEELINGS

Older children may be able to simply use a numerical scale (1-5)

Other useful techniques include Feeling Thermometers or Traffic Signals



"Where is your anger at right now?"



- Stopped
- Slowing down
- Fine

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### ADOLESCENTS & FEELINGS

For less mature adolescents, use of Feeling Faces may be appropriate

Self-report inventories are often useful to the therapist, but not as much for the client

Creating a brief story, poem, or song can assist in identifying moods

"Tell me about a time when you felt angry."

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### ADOLESCENTS & FEELINGS

Feeling Charades is one of the most fun and effective way to expand a client's feeling vocabulary

Use only facial expressions and actions to express a certain feeling

Making collages that show different types of facial expressions can help to personalize the types of feelings

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### ADULTS & FEELINGS

Many adults will be more sophisticated in distinguishing their feelings, but will often need some practice to become comfortable with doing so

Use of a more "adult" scale can be helpful in rating intensity

0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Not sad at all	Somewhat sad	Medium sad	Quite sad	Saddest I have ever been

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### IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS

*Thought Flower Gardens* can be a useful technique for those with low verbal expressiveness

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### IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS

Thought bubbles can also be useful

Even very young children recognize thought bubbles

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### IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS

Standard *Daily Thought Records* can be used with most adolescents, but break it down

<b>Trigger</b>
Dad yelled at me about my bad test grade

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### IDENTIFYING THOUGHTS

Incomplete sentence fragments can help capture thoughts in specific situations

"When my brother goes through my stuff, I get mad and \_\_\_\_\_ pops into my head."

"When mom and dad \_\_\_\_\_ I feel \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ goes through my mind."

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### DIGGING DEEPER

At first, DTRs may not be very detailed, or the thought may seem disconnected from the trigger and feeling

Use the cognitive triad to help guide questioning of thoughts

- "What does \_\_\_\_\_ mean about you?"
- "What will \_\_\_\_\_ think about you now?"
- "How will \_\_\_\_\_ affect you in the future?"

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### THOUGHTS V. FEELINGS

Thoughts are things that go through your mind and take shape as sentences / phrases  
 Subjective, can be challenged in therapy

Feelings are emotions that can be summed up in one word  
 Objective, not challenged, questioned or tested

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### COMPLETING A DTR

Clients need direct instruction when learning how to complete a thought record

Trigger – should be an *objective* description of what happened

Feeling – should contain both the specific feeling and the intensity of that feeling

Thoughts / Images – “What is going through your mind right now?”

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### COMPLETING A DTR

Bad record	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Thought</b>	<b>Emotion</b>
	My teacher is mean and thinks I'm dumb.	He doesn't like me.	Sad (4)

Good record	<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Thought</b>	<b>Emotion</b>
	My teacher told me I was not paying attention.	He doesn't like me. He made me feel dumb and I can't do my work and everyone will think I'm dumb.	Sad (4)

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