



THE SOCRATIC METHOD

WHY SOCRATES?

Socratic method (SM) is a useful technique in many forms of therapy, and is especially influential on the cognitive therapies of Beck and Ellis

Viewed today as a form of cooperation and exploration that helps clients

Recognize knowledge deficits

Increase their desire to learn

Motivate clients to find answers to their problems

ELEMENTS OF THE SOCRATIC METHOD

I. Systematic Questioning

II. Inductive Reasoning

III. Universal Questioning

IV. Disavowal of Knowledge

V. Self-improvement

VI. Promoting Virtue in Everyday Life

SYSTEMATIC QUESTIONING

- Involves the use of graded questions to facilitate independent thinking
- Involve client and therapist actively collaborating
- Can be used to shape client's thought processes
- Can be described according to format, content, and process of questioning

QUESTION FORMAT

Seven primary types of questions
 Most likely to rely on analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

Memory

Recall or recognition of information
 "When did the problem first begin?"

Translation

Change information into a different but parallel format
 "What does it mean to you?" or "How can we make sense of this?"

QUESTION FORMAT

Interpretation

Discover relationships among things
 "How are these two situations similar / different?"

Application

Apply information or skills to specific problem situation
 "What have you tried to correct this problem?"

Analysis

Solve a problem by breaking it down
 "What do you think is causing the problem?" or "Are there things that make it worse / better?"

QUESTION FORMAT

Synthesis

Encourage use of creative/divergent thinking
"What other ways could you look at this situation?"

Evaluation

Make a value judgment according to specified standards
"What does it mean to you to be a success?"

QUESTION CONTENT

Designed to foster independent, rational problem-solving in clients

Integration with the *problem-solving approach* is useful and can help guide which format of question to use

QUESTION CONTENT

Question Content	Question Format				
	Memory	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
Problem definition	+		+++		++
Generate alternatives	+	++		+++	
Decision-making		+	++		+++
Verification					
Planning		+++	+	++	
Appraisal	+		+++		+++

+ = Minor role, ++ = Moderate role, +++ = Major role

QUESTIONING PROCESS

A series of questions, or temporal process, is involved in the Socratic method

Five elements

- Leading question
- Explication
- Defense
- Sequential progression
- Use of short sequences

LEADING QUESTIONS

Focus client's attention on specific area, but don't push them towards a specific answer

Provide structure, but don't bias response
"Is that a good sign or a bad sign?"

Force the client to think, rather than just answer a question

EXPLICATION

Occurs when client hasn't understood leading question

Makes all assumptions explicit in order to test them

"Could you have done anything else?" instead of "What else could you have done?"

Should not be used often, as it implies therapist does not understand the level of the client

DEFENSE

Follows explication, makes clients defend their view

May rephrase original question, or ask *why* questions

“Why do you think so?”

Helps client reason through a problem to its solution

SEQUENTIAL PROGRESSION

Second leading question helps to carry the discussion closer to its goal

Shaping process that is like helping someone with a puzzle

Use Socratic questioning when necessary, not exclusively!

INDUCTIVE REASONING

Helps client draw general inferences from specific events

Allows transcendence of personal experiences and broader view of reality

Helps clients distinguish between facts, beliefs, and opinions

ENUMERATIVE GENERALIZATIONS

Identifying a general category that applies to all members of a group based on experience with only some group members

Clients often do this inaccurately, especially in relation to themselves

Think Beck's negative cognitive triad

Have the client and therapist identify maladaptive patterns in their life and then use different coping strategies

ENUMERATIVE GENERALIZATIONS

Three step process where you:

1. Critically evaluate the client's generalization
2. Use pattern identification to revise the generalization
3. Test the new generalization

ANALOGICAL COMPARISONS

Build on enumerations, but infer from one sample to another sample

Compares two objects / events / people based on relevant (but not obvious) similarities

Indicates other similarities not yet identified

Purpose is to allow client to view new, novel situations in relation to familiar ones

ANALOGICAL COMPARISONS

In therapy, this translates as therapist having client draw parallels between current problem and past, solved problem

Focus is on transfer of knowledge / coping skills to new situations or events

ELIMINATIVE CAUSAL REASONING

Involves examining the occurrences of an effect under a variety of circumstances, or making proper attributions

Helps clients understand, predict, and control their behavior

Lays foundation for treatment planning, since if a cause is understood, it may be changed

ELIMINATIVE CAUSAL REASONING

Builds on enumeration's generalizations

In therapy, this involves the systematic observation of problems, hypothesis formation, and hypothesis testing

Basis for Beck's "collaborative empiricism" and Ellis' "logical thinking"

UNIVERSAL DEFINITIONS

Describe the properties that are sufficient to capture the essence of a concept

Helps clients evaluate the appropriateness of the terms they use and the generalizations they make

Important because language influences our thoughts, perceptions, descriptions, and understanding of the world

UNIVERSAL DEFINITIONS

Confronting and modifying the labels clients have for something can change their perception of that thing

What is a "horrible job" or a "good marriage"?

When is something a "catastrophe" versus a "problem"?

UNIVERSAL DEFINITIONS

When clients use a new term, make them define it for you, then critically evaluate it

Work together to find limits or confusion to the client's definition

Build a new, shared definition that is more appropriate and logical

Helps make communication more clear, as well as challenge irrational beliefs and thoughts

DISAVOWAL OF KNOWLEDGE

General attitude in, rather than a specific method of, the Socratic method

The tendency to remain skeptical of what knowledge should be viewed as objective

Views cognitive processes as based on tentative beliefs and opinions

DISAVOWAL OF KNOWLEDGE

For the client, this reduces faith in unsupported beliefs, stimulates a desire to learn, and enhances critical thinking skills

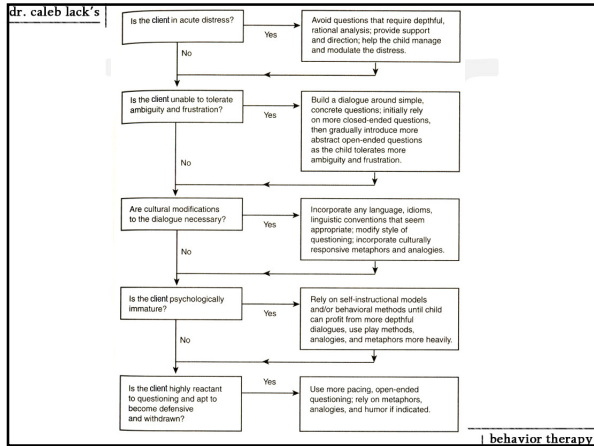
For therapists, this means viewing their own beliefs as hypotheses, not assuming that they know all the answers or solutions

Involves intellectual modesty, desire for knowledge, and collaborative empiricism

OTHER ELEMENTS

Self-improvement is the key outcome of the Socratic method, whether in teaching or therapy

Different specific virtues (e.g., wisdom, courage) are also encouraged by this method



- dr. caleb lack's
- ## THERAPEUTIC SOCRATIC OUTLINE
1. Elicit and identify automatic thoughts
 2. Tie the thought to feelings and behavior
 3. Link the T-F-B sequence together
 4. Obtain collaboration on steps 1-3
 5. Socratically test the belief using the described methods
- behavior therapy

dr. caleb lack's

HOMEWORK IN CBT

behavior therapy

WHY?

Between-session activities cause both consolidation and generalization of skills learned in session

Allows a continuation of therapy outside of the treatment setting

Assists clients in eventually becoming their own therapist

How?

1. Create a meaningful homework assignment
2. Set up the assignment and secure compliance with it
3. Review the assignment

CREATING HOMEWORK

Meaningful assignments help communicate that the therapist understands the client

Clients learn to trust therapists and gain confidence in the treatment

Following certain guidelines ensures the creation of meaningful homework

GUIDELINES

1. Provide clear rationales linked to client's treatment goals
 - If a client understands the reason for homework, they are more likely to do it
 - Refer back to what the client hopes to achieve when assigning homework
 - Encourage the client to offer a rationale for homework
 - Use analogies to make homework more concrete

GUIDELINES

2. Make homework relevant to the focus of the therapy session
 - Summarize the session focus
 - Link session focus to previous sessions
 - Link session focus to homework
 - Link homework to treatment goals

GUIDELINES

3. Make homework acceptable to both client and therapist
 - Improves therapeutic alliance
 - Increases odds of client completing homework
 - Always check if homework is acceptable to client and others involved in the homework

GUIDELINES

4. Make homework socially and culturally appropriate
 - Keep in mind a person's ethnic background, financial situations, social skills, spirituality, and any other factors that might impact homework completion

SETTING UP HOMEWORK

Properly setting up assignments will help get homework off to a good start *and* prevent many typical problems

Working collaboratively in making the assignment can prevent noncompliance
Allow them to know they can veto an assignment

Set up assignments as a "no-lose proposition"

SETTING UP HOMEWORK

Be as specific and concrete with assignments as possible – have client write them down

Review the homework after assigning it, making the client tell it back to you *including* why the rationale for doing it

Solicit the client's commitment to the assignment – have them say they will do it

SUCCESSFUL HOMEWORK

At the start of therapy, start with small, easily doable assignments

This builds confidence, both in therapy and within the client

Agree on how assignments will be recorded

Again, be specific and concrete

Monitoring the quality of homework can be useful in gradually building compliance

SUCCESSFUL HOMEWORK

If possible, use or develop forms to help clients record homework outcomes

Worry logs, activity schedules, thought records

Anticipate possible problems that could occur, and develop backup assignments or plans

Linking homework to potential reinforcers can greatly increase compliance

REVIEWING HOMEWORK

Follow these guidelines:

- Be consistent
- Be curious
- Be complimentary
- Be careful
- Consider reassignment after troubleshooting

