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Penn Memory Center welcomes you to
Caring for the Caregiver:
people caring for so

Questions? Contact:

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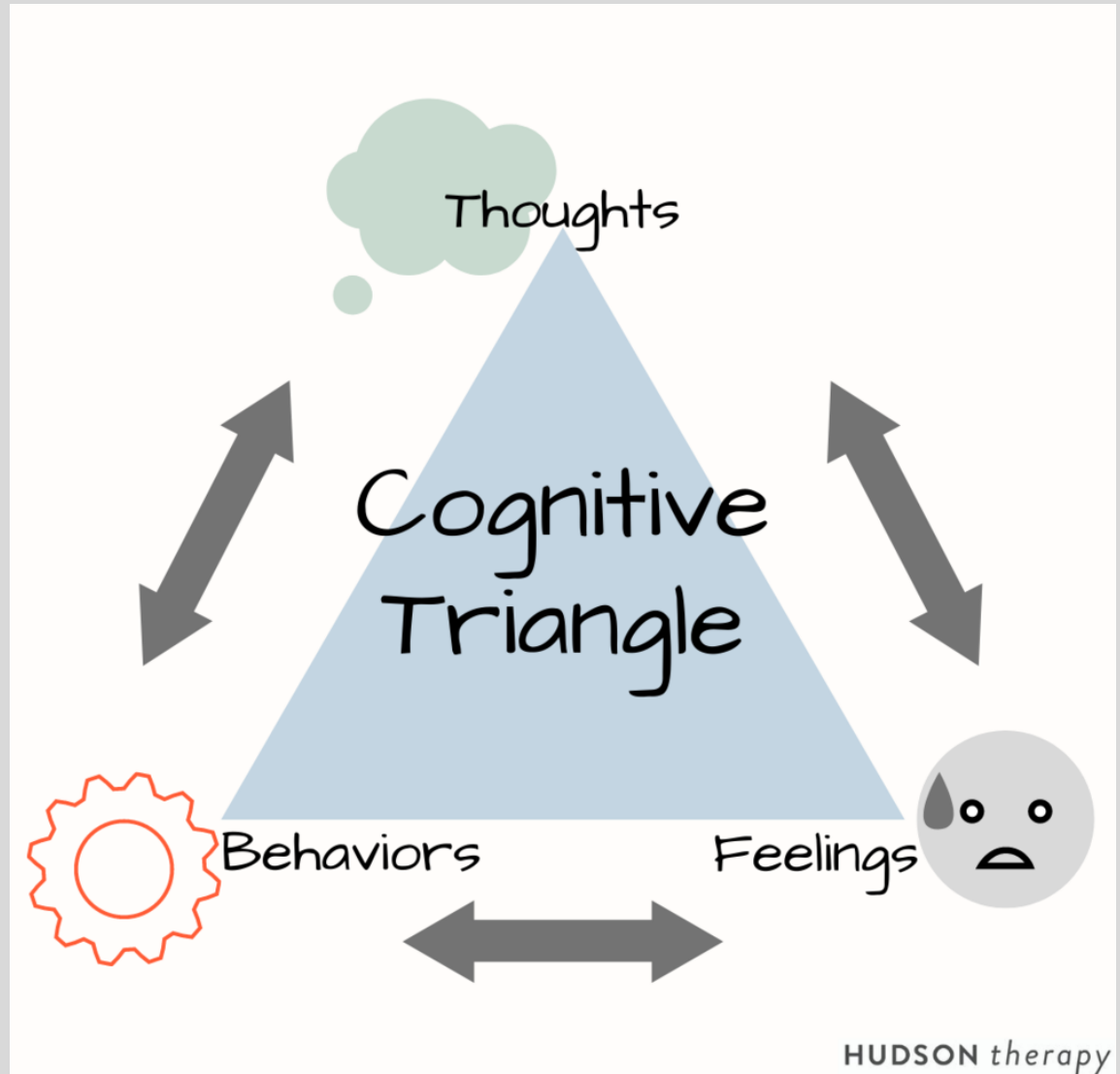
Caring for the Caregiver: Week 2

Becoming Aware of Your Thoughts:

Learning and harnessing the link between thoughts, feelings, and behavior

Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

- Thoughts, feelings and behaviors directly affect each other;
- We may not notice negative or unhelpful thoughts, which make us feel worse;
- Learning how to catch automatic thoughts and replace them with helpful thoughts can improve mood and behavior.

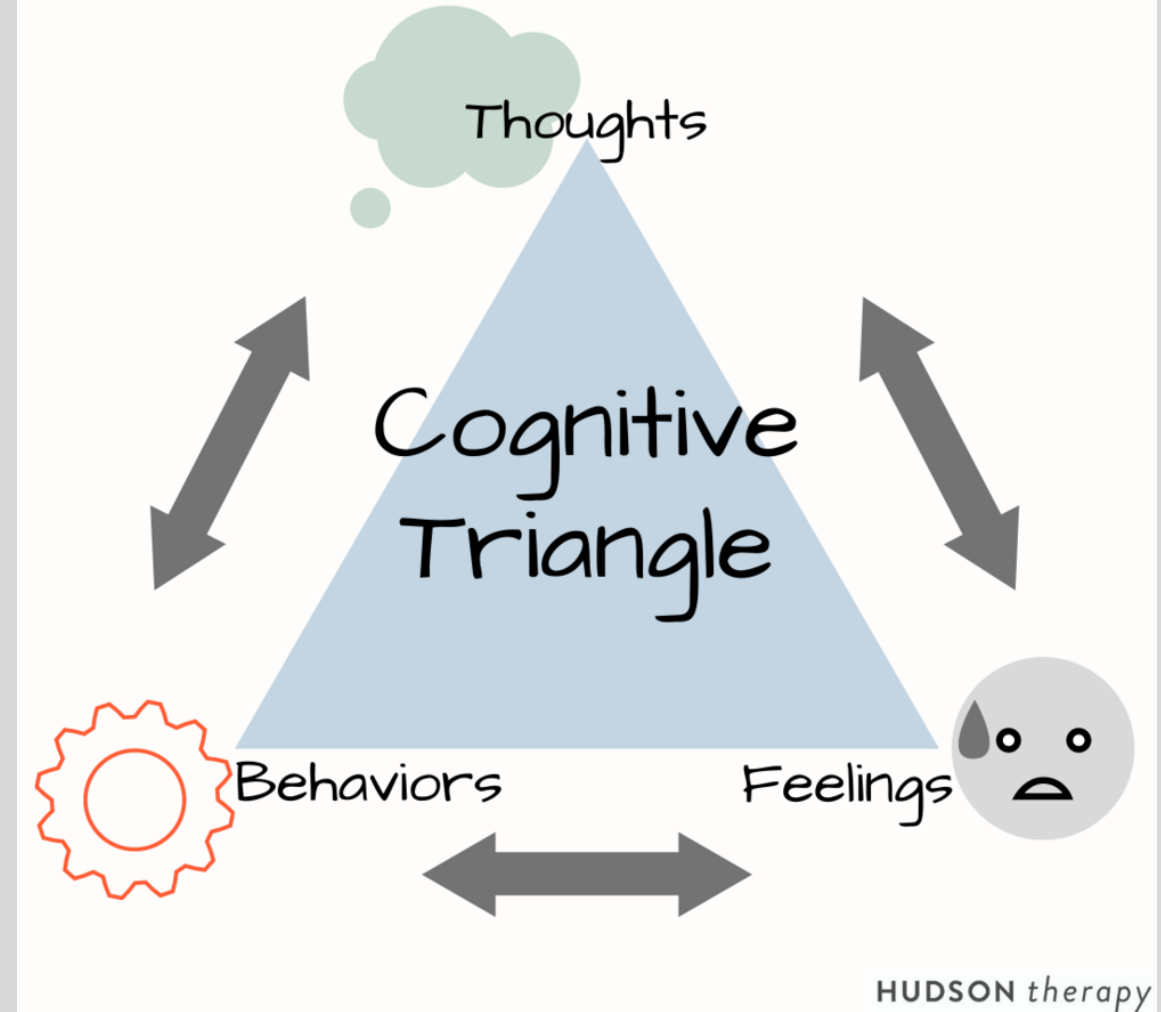


Thought or Feeling?

I am a bad caregiver. (T F)

I don't know what I'm doing. (T F)

I feel so guilty. (T F)





Interpreting Thoughts

Consider what happens when you're listening to music with headphones.

- If the headphones themselves are clear, positioned securely on your head, and plugged in correctly, the music will come through clearly.
- If the headphones are broken or not being used properly, you may mishear or misinterpret the music.

Styles of Thinking

Name calling

Tyranny of the Shoulds

This or That

Personalization

Generalization

If only...

What's the use?

Emotional Reasoning

Fallacy of change

An example:

David is caring for his wife, Molly, who has Alzheimer's Disease. He recently retired and is now a full-time caregiver. One day, David needs to go to the mall to run an errand and decides to take Molly with him. However, once he gets there, he realizes he needs to use the bathroom. He sits Molly down on a bench outside the bathroom door and says "please sit here for just a few minutes – I'll be right back out." When he returns, Molly is missing. David is anxious and scared and runs up and down the length of the mall looking for her. After a few minutes, he finds her in a shoe store chatting with a salesperson and trying on shoes. After his initial relief, David thinks, "why won't Molly listen to me? I'm trying the best I can and she won't even acknowledge how hard this is for me. In fact, she's actively working against me. Now everyone in the mall knows I'm not a dependable caregiver. I guess this is the end of our public outings together." David then feels angry, frustrated, embarrassed, and trapped.

Taking Stock of Unhelpful Thoughts

The first three steps to changing your unhelpful thoughts are:

- **Step A:** Take note of the situation and what happened prior to the thought.
- **Step B:** Identify the automatic thoughts in the situation.
- **Step C:** Identify the feelings you had in the moment.
 - Note **A, B, and C** without assigning judgment to them, or trying to change them (yet).
 - Consider them to simply be data – you cannot make changes in your mood without correctly identifying what you want to change.
 - We will then organize these three items into a chart, called a thought record. Here is an example of David's thought record:

David's Thought Record

Situation (A)

Molly got lost in the mall after David told her to stay put.

Thoughts (B)

- Molly refuses to listen to me even though she can
- Molly doesn't appreciate all that I'm doing for her and has no idea how hard this is on me
- I am not a dependable caregiver and everyone at the mall knows it
- I can never take her anywhere again

Feelings (C)

- Angry
- Frustrated
- Scared
- Embarrassed
- Stuck

Your Thought Record

Situation (A)

Thoughts (B)

Feelings (C)

Techniques for Challenging and Replacing Unhelpful Thoughts

1. Look at it from a different point of view.
2. Take action/ask others.
3. Change your self-talk.
4. Don't jump to conclusions.
5. Consider Alternatives/in-betweens.
6. Scale Technique.
7. Credit positives.
8. Thought stopping/substitution.
9. Worry time.

Challenging and Replacing Thoughts

- 3 column thought record becomes a 6 column thought record. The additional steps we're adding are:
 - **Step D:** Challenge and replace your unhelpful thoughts with more helpful thoughts.
 - **Step E:** Describe the new feelings you have as a result of thinking about the situation differently.
 - **Step F:** Describe how your behavior may be different now that your thoughts and feelings have changed.

David's Thought Record, Con't.

Debate (D)

- I've never done this before – how could I have anticipated this? Next time I'll be more prepared.
- This has happened to most caregivers at one point or another. It doesn't make me a bad caregiver.
- Molly is not actively working against me – she couldn't remember that I asked her to stay put. It's not her fault
- Onlookers at the mall were probably just concerned for me – not judging

Emotion Change (E)

- Less frustrated
- Less angry at Molly, but angry at the disease
- More hopeful
- Proud of myself
- Sad

Functional Change (F)

- Next time I'll find a family restroom where I can keep an eye on Molly, or maybe I'll bring a third person with us to the mall
- Maybe the mall is not the best outing for Molly. I'll think of something else.
- I'll try to think of an activity that involves shoes. I always forget that Molly loves her shoe collection.

Your 6-Column Thought Record

Situation (A)	Thoughts (B)	Feelings (C)	Debate (D)	Emotional Change (E)	Functional Change (F)
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How Life Activities Affect Mood

- We have pleasant and unpleasant activities in our lives; these contribute to how we feel.
- Many aspects of caregiving are unpleasant and not within our control.
- While we can't change that, we can choose to incorporate more enjoyable activities and reintroduce a sense of control and mastery.

Barriers for caregivers include lack of:

- Time
- Money
- Respite care
- Emotional support
- Control over PWD's symptoms/progression

What counts as a pleasant activity?

- Anything you like to do is a pleasant activity if it is ***consciously chosen*** and ***deliberately done***.
- Even activities such as chores can be turned into pleasant activities if you take to the task with a calm attitude and look for enjoyable features of them (ie: listening to a favorite podcast while you do the dishes)
- Taking the time to enjoy yourself will help you feel less stressed, and be a better caregiver
- **4 pleasant activities a day keep the doctor away.**

Identifying Pleasant Activities

- **Start small and be simple:** Choose activities that you can do every day, or a few times per week.
- **Choose activities that you can do anywhere, and that don't require a lot of planning:** You can listen to music or call a friend from most places.
- **Adapt activities that are too involved:** You may enjoy traveling, but realistically you can't take a trip every day. Instead, could you walk around a new neighborhood, or plan a future day trip?
- **Choose activities you can increase:** It feels good to track progress.



Examples:

- Take a long bath or shower
- Set a timer and put your phone away while you read a book, the newspaper, or a magazine
- Go to an exercise class or do a video at home
- Take a “mindful walk”
- Visit a museum
- Stretch
- Meditate
- Treat yourself to a cup of coffee or meal out of the house
- Garden
- Watch your favorite TV show or movie

My Pleasant Activities List

1.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Relaxation Exercise

“The awareness that emerges when you are paying attention, on purpose, to the present moment, without judgment.” (Jon Kabat-Zinn)

“Your mind is like a kindergarten class, and meditating is like trying to get your thoughts to take a nap. If one wakes up, tell them gently to go back to sleep. If your mind thinks, ‘but you have a to-do list!’ just say, ‘shhhh.’ (Cup of Jo)

Relaxation Exercise: The 20 Breaths

- The 20 Breaths practice helps you to create a powerful moment of stillness and silence in the middle of activity and stress. The 20 Breaths exercise requires practice and rewards persistence. If you stay with it, and especially when you practice even if you think you are too busy or distracted, you are guaranteed to learn from it. You will discover for yourself that your own natural resources are never farther away than your next breath.

Homework

Homework trackers can be found in the website under Week 2. If you need help locating them, email me at felicia.greenfield@pennteam.upenn.edu

- + ● 1. Complete Weekly Mood Tracker – record daily mood for each day this week
- 2. Practice your signal breath and rate stress level before and after your practice once a day.
- 3. Practice the 20 Breaths exercise once a day.
- 4. Complete four different 6-Column Thought Records this week.