
Transform That Thought

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Purpose:

To express negative thoughts\feelings (e.g. depression, anxiety, body dissatisfaction) and re-interpret by reframing using expressive art and the CBT approach.

Materials Needed:

- Paper, pens, markers, colored pencils, crayons

Procedures:

1. The counselor asks the client(s) to think about a thought or emotion that he\she\they have experienced and found difficult to express.
2. The counselor says, “Have you heard of the saying, ‘A picture is worth a thousand words?’”
3. The counselor explains that the exercise is to express feelings of a negative situation (e.g. stress provoking) and to explore how negative thoughts and feelings can be seen from an alternative or positive perspective.
4. Client(s) are asked to think of situations that causes(d) them to feel negative. They are then asked to represent the thought\feeling in a “cartoon bubble” and to express his\her\their associated feelings in words and or images.
5. Once the client(s) have finished, give the client(s) the opportunity to process and share his\her\their thoughts and feelings with the counselor\group.
6. The client then educates the client(s) about the Cognitive Model and gives examples of reframing.
7. The counselor encourages the client(s) to reframe his\her\their thoughts and feelings and share them with the counselor\group. The counselor requests the client(s) to express the re-framed thoughts and subsequent feelings in another “cartoon bubble” and share this experience.
9. The counselor asks the client(s) to toss the piece of paper which represented the negative thought expressed in the first bubble into a trash can (optional) as a symbolic “letting go” process.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

If you feel comfortable, please share your feelings and thoughts as you expressed your "negative" feelings\thoughts in the thought bubble. Now that you have expressed your re-framed thoughts, how do you feel? How did the symbolic "letting go" of your negative thoughts\emotions affect you? What about this exercise was helpful or not helpful for you?

Theoretical Rationale and/or Research Base:

CBT to reframe thought process, leading to behavior change.

Limitations:

Describe any limitations or contraindications for implementing this activity or intervention.

Practice Settings:

College Counseling
Counselor Education and Supervision
Mental Health Agency/Private Practice Counseling
Rehabilitation Counseling
School Counseling