Metacognitive Training for Borderline Personality Disorder (B-MCT)

If there is no new participant in the group, you can skip slides 1-13 (start at slide 14)!
Metacognitive Training (MCT)
Meta →
derived from Greek, means “about”
Metacognitive Training (MCT)

**meta**
- derived from Greek, means “about”

**cognition**
- derived from Latin, means “thinking”
**Metacognitive Training (MCT)**

**meta** →
derived from Greek, means “about”

**cognition** →
derived from Latin, means “thinking”

**metacognition** →
“thinking about thinking”
Metacognitive training for BPD (B-MCT) is a therapeutic approach that deals with thoughts and thought processes. The training is designed to …

- impart knowledge about your own thought processes and
- make you aware of typical thought distortions and how to change these

Thought distortion: unfavorable way of taking in and processing information from the environment that can lead to developing or maintaining mental problems (e.g., “all-or-nothing thinking”).
One event – many possible emotions... What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

What are possible thoughts that can come up as a reaction?
One event – many possible emotions…
What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

Possible thoughts

response / thoughts?

response / thoughts?

response / thoughts?
One event – many possible emotions... What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

Possible thoughts

“I'm not putting up with this! He's going to be in deep trouble!”

“Whatever. I'll sit somewhere else.”

“I just can't assert myself. Everyone thinks I'm a loser.”
One event – many possible emotions… What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

Possible thoughts

“I’m not putting up with this! He’s going to be in deep trouble!”

“Whatever. I’ll sit somewhere else.”

“I just can’t assert myself. Everyone thinks I’m a loser.”

What are possible emotions that come up with these thoughts?
One event – many possible emotions…
What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

**Possible thoughts**

- “I’m not putting up with this! He’s going to be in deep trouble!”
- “Whatever. I’ll sit somewhere else.”
- “I just can’t assert myself. Everyone thinks I’m a loser.”

**Possible emotions**

- angry
- relaxed
- sad
One event – many possible emotions…
What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

Possible thoughts

- “I’m not putting up with this! He’s going to be in deep trouble!”
- “Whatever. I’ll sit somewhere else.”
- “I just can’t assert myself. Everyone thinks I’m a loser.”

Possible emotions

- angry
- relaxed
- sad

What possible behavioral reactions could result from each case?
One event – many possible emotions…
What leads to the different reactions?

On the train, you politely ask someone to turn down the music and he turns it up even louder.

**Possible thoughts**

- “I’m not putting up with this! He’s going to be in deep trouble!”
- “Whatever. I’ll sit somewhere else.”
- “I just can’t assert myself. Everyone thinks I’m a loser.”

**Possible emotions**

- anger: yell at the guy and threaten him
- relaxation: stay calm and change seats
- sadness: ruminate, get off the train at the next stop
When you get to know someone new, what do you pay attention to first? How reliable are these cues?
When you get to know someone new, what do you pay attention to first? How reliable are these cues?

- eyes?
- body language/posture?
- language?
- clothes?
- hands?
- other?...
What other sources of information may be considered? How reliable are these?
What other sources of information may be considered? How reliable are these?

- **prior knowledge** of person (hearsay): for example, a remark by a friend
- “gut feeling”/intuition
- written evidence: for example, from e-mails or internet chats
- **prior knowledge of similar persons/groups**: e.g., *biker*
Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following feature for making a judgment about a person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gestures/posture/body language</th>
<th>Important clue?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person praying or just cold?</td>
<td><strong>Caution:</strong></td>
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**Important clue?**

???

**Caution:**

???
Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following feature for making a judgment about a person.

**Gestures/posture/body language**

**Example:**

Person praying or just cold?

**Important clue?**

- Gestures and posture can emphasize words, e.g., making a fist when threatening someone or waving when saying hello.
- Indirect signs are often meaningful: Wild gesticulation can suggest nervousness (*but: keep in mind cultural differences!*), slouching can be a sign of low self-confidence.

**Caution:**

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**Caution:**
- Body language can be misleading!
- Examples:
  - Someone who looks self-confident may be putting up a front.
  - Postural deformity can make a confident person seem insecure and self-conscious.
Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following feature for making a judgment about a person

**Written statements**

**Example:**

“Don’t work too hard!”

→ sarcasm, sympathy or empty phrase?

**Important clue?**

???

**Caution:**

???
Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following feature for making a judgment about a person

**Written statements**

**Example:**

“Don’t work too hard!”

→ sarcasm, sympathy or empty phrase?

**Important clue?**

- We often brood more about what is written than about what is said!

**Caution:**

???
Written statements

Example:

“Don’t work too hard!”

→ sarcasm, sympathy or empty phrase?

Important clue?

• We often brood more about what is written than about what is said!

Caution:

• Sometimes you have to read between the lines, which can lead to incorrect conclusions!

• A study has shown that e-mail writers and e-mail readers are both sure that they are correctly understanding the tone of an e-mail. In reality, there is a congruency of only about 56% - hardly above chance!
Please discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the following feature for making a judgment about a person:

<table>
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<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Turkish" /></td>
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### Important clue?

- Knowledge of a culture or ethnic group makes it easier to understand its members. Every culture has its own values and ethics.

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<td>[Image of a Turkish person and a German flag]</td>
<td>People often differ from group stereotypes! People who share a certain faith or people from certain countries are sometimes confronted with prejudices (e.g., Muslims are fanatic; US-Americans are arrogant and only eat junk-food).</td>
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What prejudices do or did you have against others?

Are you affected by prejudices?

How do you deal with that?
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**Caution:**

**Content:**
There is often a difference between what people say and what they actually think (due to propriety, misunderstandings, etc.).

Often people talk quickly without thinking, and what they say differs from what they really mean.

**Tone:**

Example: “Good to see you making an appearance.”

Some people convey little emotion when talking – still they can be emotional underneath (e.g., “deadpan humor”; facial immobility due to Parkinson’s disease).
Impact of words

???
Loftus study, 1970s:

Test persons were shown simulations of road accidents. Afterwards, they were questioned about the course of the accident.
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Test persons were shown simulations of road accidents. Afterwards, they were questioned about the course of the accident.

**Tricky questions:**

“How fast were the cars going when they *crashed into each other*?” or:

“How fast were the cars going when they *hit each other*?”
Loftus study, 1970s:

Test persons were shown simulations of road accidents. Afterwards, they were questioned about the course of the accident.

**Tricky questions:**

“How fast were the cars going when they *crashed into each other*?” or:

“How fast were the cars going when they *hit each other*?”

- The speed of the cars was estimated to be a lot higher when asked how fast they were going when they crashed into each other.

- When asked the first question, the participants often “remembered” seeing pieces of glass from smashed windows that hadn’t even been in the simulation.
Impact of words

Bertolino, Kiener & Patterson, 2010

Please go through these words in your head slowly:

Sad, weak, helpless, disordered, lonely, tired, insecure.

Now please read the following statements:

Life is hard and pointless. Nothing works out the way I want it to. No one is there for me. There is no hope.
Impact of words

Please go through these words in your head slowly:

Fun, laughing, happiness, attractive, chance, love, security.

Now please read the following statements:

Life is fascinating. I am full of energy and excited about the future. I can achieve so much and there is so much yet to be discovered.
Impact of words

Please go through these words in your head slowly:

Fun, laughing, happiness, attractive, chance, love, security.

Now please read the following statements:

Life is fascinating. I am full of energy and excited about the future. I can achieve so much and there is so much yet to be discovered.

How do you feel?

What inner reactions do you perceive?
Consciously observe the impact of your own words as well!

**Example:**

“You are so obstinate and stubborn, you never give in!”

*vs.*

“You really have a strong will”
Consciously observe the impact of your own words as well!

Example:

“You are so obstinate and stubborn, you never give in!”

vs.

“You really have a strong will”

What reactions do you imagine these statements may trigger in the other person…?
… *none* of the discussed aspects (language, body language, written statements etc.) are in and of themselves sufficient for a final evaluation!

*Thus, try to consider all aspects!*
Studies show that many [but not all!] people with mental health problems (e.g., borderline personality disorder)…

...sometimes have difficulties seeing something from another person’s point of view (especially when there are strong emotions involved).
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<td>Holly doesn’t feel offended by others as often. She gets along with people more easily and is less tense and stressed.</td>
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Many things are in the eye of the beholder. When we are stressed or under pressure we are especially apt to see our environment through the lens of our feelings (e.g., hostility when scared; feeling of being loved when euphoric).
Example: Miriam comes home late at night after a fight with her boyfriend and is upset. Her mother is waiting for her at the door and gives her a hard time for getting in so late.

Background: ???
Perspective taking

Example:
Miriam comes home late at night after a fight with her boyfriend and is upset. Her mother is waiting for her at the door and gives her a hard time for getting in so late.

Background:
Neither (!) one put herself in the other’s place. Miriam’s mother was very worried and couldn’t have known that Miriam had had a fight. Miriam, on the other hand, hoped to be comforted by her mom.
**Example:** Miriam comes home late at night after a fight with her boyfriend and is upset. Her mother is waiting for her at the door and gives her a hard time for getting in so late.

**Background:** Neither (!) one put herself in the other’s place. Miriam’s mother was very worried and couldn’t have known that Miriam had had a fight. Miriam, on the other hand, hoped to be comforted by her mom.

*Try to bear in mind other perspectives!*

*Think about what you would feel in the other person’s place.*
Exercises (2)

In the following, cartoon strips will be presented to you.

- Please discuss what the characters in the story might think about each other.
Exercises (2)

In the following, cartoon strips will be presented to you.

- Please discuss what the characters in the story might think about each other.
- **Important:** You have to *distinguish* between information available to you and information the characters have about one another!
Exercises (2)

In the following, cartoon strips will be presented to you.

- Please discuss what the characters in the story might think about each other.
- Important: You have to distinguish between information available to you and information the characters have about one another!

→ Also think about what additional information is needed to provide a definite answer!
Example: An overweight man falls off a chair

What are most people going to think? Are they correct?
Example: An overweight man falls off a chair
What are most people going to think?

- **Likely:** Man is too heavy for chair
- **Less likely:** The man tilted in the chair; chair is too fragile
- **Very unlikely assumption:** Chair had been cut with a saw - but **TRUE!**: *No one observed the boy in the first picture sawing the leg of the chair!*
How might the woman feel in the situation?
What might the police officer be thinking? Is he correct?
What might the police officer be thinking? Is he correct?
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What might the police officer be thinking? Is he correct?
Is the boss cold-hearted? Do we need additional information to decide?
Is the boss cold-hearted? Do we need additional information to decide?

This is unacceptable!
Is the boss cold-hearted? Do we need additional information to decide?
What is the park ranger probably thinking? Is he correct?
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What is the mother probably thinking? Is she correct?
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What is the mother probably thinking? Is she correct?
What is the mother probably thinking? Is she correct?
What might the man be thinking?

- Could you please tell me when this book is due?
- I don't answer such stupid questions!
What might the man be thinking?
What is the mother thinking?
Do we need additional information to decide?
What is the mother thinking?
Do we need additional information to decide?
Learning objectives:
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- You were given these tasks as examples:

  Different people never have the exact same information in a given situation → *misunderstandings and even conflicts can be the consequence!*
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Different people never have the exact same information in a given situation → misunderstandings and even conflicts can be the consequence!

Example: If I expect something from others, I have to communicate this expectation to them because no one can read my mind!
Learning objectives:

- You were given these tasks as examples:
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  Example: If I expect something from others, I have to communicate this expectation to them because no one can read my mind!

- Social cues can be misleading, never rely only on a facial expression, for example
You were given these tasks as examples:

Different people never have the exact same information in a given situation → misunderstandings and even conflicts can be the consequence!

*Example:* If I expect something from others, I have to communicate this expectation to them because no one can read my mind!

Social cues can be misleading, never rely only on a facial expression, for example

In *complex situations* it is important to view the event from as many *different angles* as possible, and to use *various sources of information.*
Further questions?
Thank you for your attention!
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<th>Description/Kurzbeschreibung</th>
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<td>Produced for the MCT/Anfertigung für das MCT; © Arbeitsgruppe Neuropsychologie</td>
<td>Comic strip: overweight man, football, burglary, twins/Bildergeschichten: dicker Mann, Fußball, Einbruch, Zwillinge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friedrich Althausen</td>
<td><a href="http://friedrichalthausen.de/?page_id=411">http://friedrichalthausen.de/?page_id=411</a></td>
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