If there is no new participant in the group, you can skip slides 1-13 (start at slide 14)!

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Metacognitive Training (MCT)

???
meta

derived from Greek, means “about”
Metacognitive Training (MCT)

meta →
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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., only paying attention to the negative).
One event – many possible emotions…
What leads to the different reactions?

Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

What are possible thoughts that can come up as a reaction?
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

Possible thoughts

response / thoughts?
response / thoughts?
response / thoughts?
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

Possible thoughts

- “How dare this guy expose me in front of everyone?! I’m not going to put up with this!”
- “Well, he probably has to do this 20 times a day. Let’s find a compromise. I did not do this on purpose.”
- “How embarrassing! Now everyone will think that I don’t have any money and tried to dodge the fare.”
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

**Possible thoughts**

- "How dare this guy expose me in front of everyone?! I'm not going to put up with this!"
- "Well, he probably has to do this 20 times a day. Let's find a compromise. I did not do this on purpose."
- "How embarrassing! Now everyone will think that I don't have any money and tried to dodge the fare."

What are possible emotions that come up with these thoughts?
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

**Possible thoughts**

- "How dare this guy expose me in front of everyone?! I’m not going to put up with this!"
- "Well, he probably has to do this 20 times a day. Let’s find a compromise. I did not do this on purpose."
- "How embarrassing! Now everyone will think that I don’t have any money and tried to dodge the fare."

**Possible emotions**

- angry
- relaxed
- sad
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

Possible thoughts

- “How dare this guy expose me in front of everyone?! I’m not going to put up with this!”
- “Well, he probably has to do this 20 times a day. Let’s find a compromise. I did not do this on purpose.”
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Possible emotions

- angry
- relaxed
- sad

What possible behavioral reactions could result from each case?
Your bus pass expired, and the regular driver on that route made a fuss about it.

**Possible thoughts**

- **“How dare this guy expose me in front of everyone?! I’m not going to put up with this!”**
- **“Well, he probably has to do this 20 times a day. Let’s find a compromise. I did not do this on purpose.”**
- **“How embarrassing! Now everyone will think that I don’t have any money and tried to dodge the fare.”**

**Possible emotions**

- **angry**
  - argue, complain and insult
- **relaxed**
  - stay calm, walk to front
- **sad**
  - ruminate
Welcome to

Training module: Mood

The use of the pictures in this module has been kindly permitted by artists and copyright holders, respectively. For details (artist, title), please refer to the end of this presentation.
Symptoms of depression?
1. Sadness, melancholy
2. Poor drive and motivation
3. Low self-esteem, fear of being rejected
4. Fears (e.g., regarding the future)
5. Disrupted sleep, pain
6. Cognitive impairments (poor concentration and memory)

...
Was I born like that... 
... did I get like that?

Is whether I am a happy or a sad person predetermined?
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“Nature”: There is evidence for a partly genetic predisposition to depressive thoughts and low self-esteem.
Is whether I am a happy or a sad person predetermined?

“Nature”: There is evidence for a partly genetic predisposition to depressive thoughts and low self-esteem.

“Nurture”: Strict/unloving parents and negative life events can promote a negative self-image.
Was I born like that... 
... did I get like that?

Is whether I am a happy or a sad person predetermined?

“Nature”: There is evidence for a partly genetic predisposition to depressive thoughts and low self-esteem.

“Nurture”: Strict/unloving parents and negative life events can promote a negative self-image.

**BUT:** Depressive thinking structures can be changed. Depression is not an irreversible fate!
What are treatment options for depression?
What are treatment options for depression?

- **Psychotherapy**: e.g., cognitive behavior therapy, has a **long-term** impact.
What are treatment options for depression?

- **Psychotherapy:** e.g., cognitive behavior therapy, has a long-term impact.

- **Medication (antidepressants):** especially useful for treating severe depression and to support psychotherapeutic intervention; however they only help as long as they are taken regularly.
Many people with mental health problems show thinking distortions that could lead to depression.

Today’s goal is to become aware of depressive thinking traps, and to learn (or recall) some tips to counter depressive moods!
What are characteristic thoughts and thinking styles of people with depression?
1. Exaggerated generalization

What would be a more appropriate evaluation? *(not just talking things up)*

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**Allow some room for errors!** Nobody’s perfect. If you commit slips of the tongue from time to time, it doesn’t mean you can’t express yourself at all.
Instead: Do not generalize from one imperfection to everything!

Every human being is complex and – like a mosaic – is made up of many small parts. We all have our bright and our dark parts!

Moreover, there are very different ways to define human characteristics:

What is attractiveness?

What is success?
Instead: Do not generalize from one imperfection to everything!

Every human being is complex and – like a mosaic – is made up of many small parts. We all have our bright and our dark parts!

Moreover, there are very different ways to define human characteristics:

What is attractiveness? Inner or outer beauty, a perfect body?

What is success? Career, many friends, being content with oneself and one’s life?
2. Selective perception

(seeking for a fly in the ointment)
# 2. Selective perception

*(searching for a fly in the ointment)*

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**Caution!**: Avoid over-interpreting other people’s behavior. There can be many explanations for a situation.
3. Reading negative thoughts
Situation: While you present your ideas at a team conference, two colleagues keep whispering to each other.

Reading negative thoughts:

???
3. Reading negative thoughts

**Situation:** While you present your ideas at a team conference, two colleagues keep whispering to each other.

**Reading negative thoughts:**

“They’re talking about me – my ideas are bad!”
Situation: While you present your ideas at a team conference, two colleagues keep whispering to each other.

Reading negative thoughts:
“They’re talking about me – my ideas are bad!”

You feel very uncomfortable and allow the colleagues to make you feel insecure; your confidence fades. You probably don’t want to present ideas at the next conference.
**Situation:** While you present your ideas at a team conference, two colleagues keep whispering to each other.

**Reading negative thoughts:**
“They’re talking about me – my ideas are bad!”

**Justified? NO!**

**Therefore: What can I think instead?**
3. Reading negative thoughts

What can I think instead?

???
3. Reading negative thoughts

What can I think instead?

“What everyone else listened, some even looked at me in a friendly way and nodded in agreement. These two colleagues talk to each other all the time. Besides, I can’t know what they were actually talking about. Maybe they were just happy that they weren’t presenting.”
3. Reading negative thoughts

What can I think instead?

“Everyone else listened, some even looked at me in a friendly way and nodded in agreement. These two colleagues talk to each other all the time. Besides, I can’t know what they were actually talking about. Maybe they were just happy that they weren’t presenting.”

What effects does this thought have?
3. Reading negative thoughts

What can I think instead?

“Everyone else listened, some even looked at me in a friendly way and nodded in agreement. These two colleagues talk to each other all the time. Besides, I can’t know what they were actually talking about. Maybe they were just happy that they weren’t presenting.”

What effects does this thought have?

My capabilities are not dependant on other people’s behavior. I am satisfied with my contribution and will again present something in the future.
3. Reading negative thoughts

Were there situations in which you read negative thoughts into others?

What are alternative ways of looking at it?
3. Reading negative thoughts

“Reading negative thoughts”: Don’t let yourself believe that your own negative self-image is automatically shared by others!

Although I consider myself worthless, ugly, etc., others do not necessarily think that as well.

Does trying to read other people’s thoughts help you in any way?  
Gain?  Danger?
“Reading negative thoughts”: Don’t let yourself believe that your own negative self-image is automatically shared by others!

Although I consider myself worthless, ugly, etc., others do not necessarily think that as well.

*Does trying to read other people’s thoughts help you in any way?*

**Gain? Danger?**

- If we were right we could adjust our behavior (e.g., stay away from “enemies”)...
- If we were wrong we would just unnecessarily distress ourselves...
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Although I consider myself worthless, ugly, etc., others do not necessarily think that as well.

Does trying to read other people’s thoughts help you in any way?

- If we were right we could adjust our behavior (e.g., stay away from “enemies”)…
- If we were wrong we would just unnecessarily distress ourselves…

Unlikely!
4. Comparison with other people

We continually compare ourselves to others. However, the terms in which we compare ourselves and with whom we compare ourselves make all the difference!
4. Comparison with other people

We continually compare ourselves to others. However, *the terms in which* we compare ourselves and *with whom* we compare ourselves make all the difference!

If you always come-out badly in comparisons because the ideal is so out of reach or the comparison is so unfair, your self-esteem will suffer.

"Mini Me Barbie" by Valerie Everett
Examples of unfair comparisons?
A young girl compares her looks to supermodels in magazines (professional make-up, photo-editing, etc.).
Examples of unfair comparisons?

- A young girl compares her looks to supermodels in magazines (professional make-up, photo-editing, etc.).

**Video clip: „unfair comparison“**

[http://www.youtube.com/user/AGNeuropsychologie](http://www.youtube.com/user/AGNeuropsychologie)
Examples of unfair comparisons?

- A young girl compares her looks to supermodels in magazines (professional make-up, photo-editing, etc.).

- A young employee who compares his abilities with those of the company’s founder (more work experience, possibly dissimilar professional education, etc.).
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- A student who suffers as his best friend is doing very well in all scientific subjects, but overlooks or disregards that his own strengths just lie elsewhere (e.g., sports or English).
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Also!: For an evaluation of seemingly “perfect biographies”, include all areas of life!
“Perfect life”…?

Do you know these 5 people?
What do they have in common?
“Perfect life”…?

Do you know these 5 people?

What do they have in common?

Robbie Williams
Catherine Zeta-Jones
Jim Carrey
Robert de Niro
David Beckham

... famous, rich, good-looking, successful???
“Perfect life”…?

Do you know these 5 people?

What do they have in common?

...famous, rich, good-looking, successful???

Correct, but: All of them had/have psychiatric problems.
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<td>Robbie Williams</td>
<td>Became famous as a member of the band “Take That,” which he had to leave due to drug abuse. He then successfully started a career as a singer. In February 2007, he was admitted to a clinic because of depression and his addiction to pills.</td>
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<td>Catherine Zeta-Jones</td>
<td>The Oscar-winning actress sought treatment for bipolar disorder at a psychiatric clinic in 2011 after enduring several severe losses, both professional and personal.</td>
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<td>Jim Carrey</td>
<td>Suffered from severe depression for a long time. At first, antidepressants helped him overcome his personal low points. He has now discontinued them and successfully works with other strategies (e.g., balanced diet, psychotherapy) to counter depression.</td>
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<td>Robert De Niro</td>
<td>Early in life, the US-American actor was so shy that he could hardly be around people without having palpitations and clammy hands. Today he is considered one of the best actors of his time.</td>
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<td>David Beckham</td>
<td>Suffers from obsessive–compulsive disorder. He has great difficulties when objects in his environment are messy or not symmetrically ordered. In an interview he said that it seriously affects him as his condition is highly time-consuming and leads to interpersonal conflicts.</td>
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Unfair comparisons with allegedly “perfect” people decreases your self-esteem.

Critically question “appearances”.

e.g., What does this person do for his/her looks? What are things that might make this person envious of you?
What does perfection even mean?

• *Do you know a perfect person?*
What does perfection even mean?

• *Do you know a perfect person?*
  ➢ The pope, the president, a Nobel prize laureate, …?
What does perfection even mean?

- *Do you know a perfect person?*
  - The pope, the president, a Nobel prize laureate, …?
  - Every human being has rough edges and flaws.
  - People who look perfect or talk perfectly may seem boring or daunting – or even be hiding dark secrets.
What does perfection even mean?

**Do you know a perfect person?**
- The pope, the president, a Nobel prize laureate, …?
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**Do not place absolute demands on yourself such as:**
- “I must always look good!”
- “I must always appear smart!”
- “I must always get my work done perfectly!”

"Mini Me Barbie" by Valerie Everett
What does perfection even mean?

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- **Do not place absolute demands on yourself such as:**
  - “I must always look good!”
  - “I must always appear smart!”
  - “I must always get my work done perfectly!”

- **“I must not make mistakes!”**
  - An error rate of 5% is normal, even with monotonous tasks. To err is human!
What does perfection even mean?

- No reliable scientific study claims 100% certainty.
  - If a result is 95% certain, scientists say it has “significance” and, for the time being, it will be assumed to be correct – but in no case will it be considered a complete truth.
What does perfection even mean?

• **No reliable scientific study claims 100% certainty.**
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• **Striving for perfection can make one unhappy and fearful.**
  - As a result, many concert musicians, of whom perfection is expected, suffer from performance anxiety.
What to do?!
What to do? Change perspective!

• Try to reduce exaggerated demands on yourself and have fairer expectations.

• To do so, it can be helpful to observe yourself from someone else’s point of view. It will make it easier to realistically evaluate your own behavior.

Would you be as hard on someone else as you are on yourself?
Own examples???
Tips to improve depressed mood/low self-esteem I

- Every night, write down or think of a few positive things (up to 5) about your day. Then go through these things in your mind.
Every night, write down or think of a few positive things (up to 5) about your day. Then go through these things in your mind.

Accept compliments and write them down so you can use them as resources when times are tough.
Tips to improve depressed mood/low self-esteem I

- Every night, write down or think of a few positive things (up to 5) about your day. Then go through these things in your mind.

- Accept compliments and write them down so you can use them as resources when times are tough.

- Think of situations in which you felt really good and try to remember them with all your senses (seeing, feeling, smelling…), perhaps with the help of a photo album.
Do things you really enjoy – preferably together with others (e.g., going to the movies, going to a cafe).
Tips to improve depressed mood/low self-esteem II

- Do things you really enjoy – preferably together with others (e.g., going to the movies, going to a cafe).

- Work out (at least 20 minutes a day) – but don’t push yourself too hard – e.g., go for a vigorous walk or go jogging.
Tips to improve depressed mood/low self-esteem II

- Do things you really enjoy – preferably together with others (e.g., going to the movies, going to a cafe).

- Work out (at least 20 minutes a day) – but don’t push yourself too hard – e.g., go for a vigorous walk or go jogging.

- Listen to your favorite (happy) songs.

- ...
Learning objectives:
- Mood Module -

Transfer to everyday life

**Learning objectives:**

- Be aware of the typical depressive distortions and try to modify them (see leaflet).
Learning objectives:

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- Use at least some of the tips to improve and stabilize your mood. Give it a go, it won’t hurt you!
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- Be aware of the typical depressive distortions and try to modify them (see leaflet).
- Use at least some of the tips to improve and stabilize your mood. Give it a go, it won’t hurt you!
- In case of severe depressive symptoms, contact your general practitioner, psychologist, or psychiatrist.
Further questions?

???
The story of a count...

... who got to be very, very old because he was an connoisseur of life. The count never left his house without first sticking a handful of beans into his pocket. He didn’t do this because he wanted to chew them. No, he took them with him because he wanted to treasure and count the special moments of the day.

For each little positive thing he experienced during the course of the day – a chat with someone in the street, his wife’s laugh, a delicious meal, a fine cigar, a shady tree in the afternoon sun, a glass of good wine – for everything that pleased his senses, he took one bean out of his right jacket pocket and put it into the left pocket. Sometimes there were two or three.

In the evening he sat at home and counted the beans that were in his left pocket. He relished these moments. They brought to mind the wonderful things he had experienced during the day and made him happy. Even on the evenings when he only counted one bean, for him the day was a success – it made life worth living

original source unknown; http://www.herwig-lempp.de/daten/veroeffentlichungen/0202successJHL.pdf

„Coffee beans“ by Il conte de luna
Thank you for your attention!
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