

Welcome to

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)!*

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10/13

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Metacognitive Training (MCT)

???

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meta →

derived from Greek, means “about”

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metacognition →

“thinking about thinking”

B-MCT

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., catastrophizing).

**One event – many possible emotions...
What leads to the different reactions?**

Your barber doesn't listen and cuts your hair much shorter than you'd like.

What are possible thoughts that can come up as a reaction?

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

Your barber doesn't listen and cuts your hair much shorter than you'd like.

Possible thoughts

response /
thoughts?

response /
thoughts?

response /
thoughts?

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

Your barber doesn't listen and cuts your hair much shorter than you'd like.

Possible thoughts

"I don't believe it! What an arrogant jerk. He did that deliberately and I'm not paying one cent for it!"

"Maybe there was a misunderstanding; things like that happen. Still, I am not okay with this."

"I look terrible. How am I supposed to go to work like this tomorrow? Everyone's going to laugh at me!"

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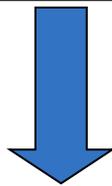
What possible emotions come up with these thoughts?

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Possible thoughts

"I don't believe it! What an arrogant jerk. He did that deliberately and I'm not paying one cent for it!"



angry

"Maybe there was a misunderstanding; things like that happen. Still, I am not okay with this."

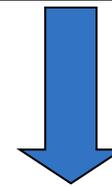


possible emotions



relaxed

"I look terrible. How am I supposed to go to work like this tomorrow? Everyone's going to laugh at me!"



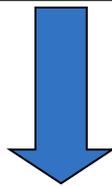
sad

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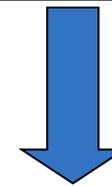


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sad

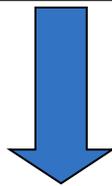
What possible behavioral reactions could result from each case?

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

Your barber doesn't listen and cuts your hair much shorter than you'd like.

Possible thoughts

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angry

yell, insult and start an argument

"Maybe there was a misunderstanding; things like that happen. Still, I am not okay with this."



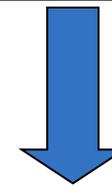
possible emotions



relaxed

calmly express disapproval, bargain down the price

"I look terrible. How am I supposed to go to work like this tomorrow? Everyone's going to laugh at me!"



sad

worry about it, not be able to sleep

Welcome to

Training Module

Rumination and Catastrophizing

What is rumination?

???



Rumination

= **rumination** → **thoughts on a treadmill** (Eichstaedt, 1998)



Rumination

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➤ Thoughts that turn over in the mind, like the cud of a cow.



Rumination

- = **rumination** → **thoughts on a treadmill** (Eichstaedt, 1998)
- Thoughts that turn over in the mind, like the cud of a cow.
 - A way of thinking in which thoughts often revolve around one problem without coming to a solution.



Rumination

= **rumination** → **thoughts on a treadmill** (Eichstaedt, 1998)

- Thoughts that turn over in the mind, like the cud of a cow.
- A way of thinking in which thoughts often revolve around one problem without coming to a solution.
- We can ruminate about things in the past (e.g., how could I have behaved differently), but also in the future.

preferred themes: conflicts, assumed judgment by others, own performance, decisions...



Rumination

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An evident solution is doubted...
... or a decision is seen as too difficult.



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An evident solution is doubted...
... or a decision is seen as too difficult.

→ The desperate search for the *ideal* solution **prevents** us from actually solving the problem!

Emotions → ???



Rumination

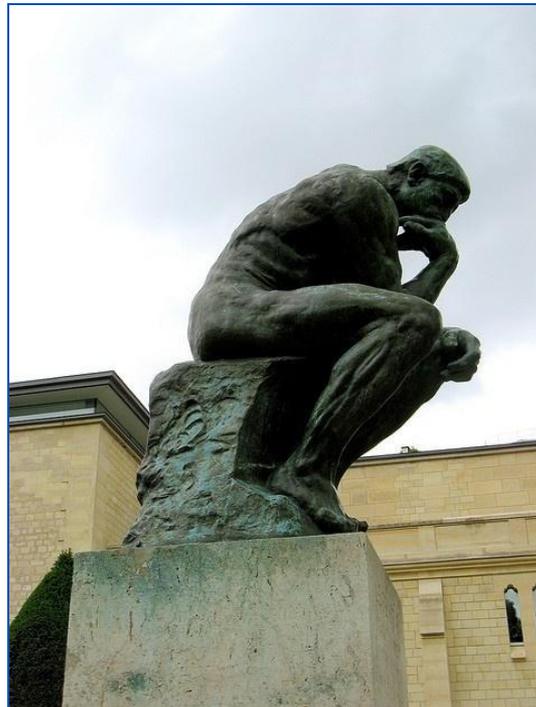
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An evident solution is doubted...
... or a decision is seen as too difficult.

→ The desperate search for the *ideal* solution **prevents** us from actually solving the problem!

Emotions → mostly accompanied by negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness)!

Rumination vs. reflection?



Characteristics of rumination

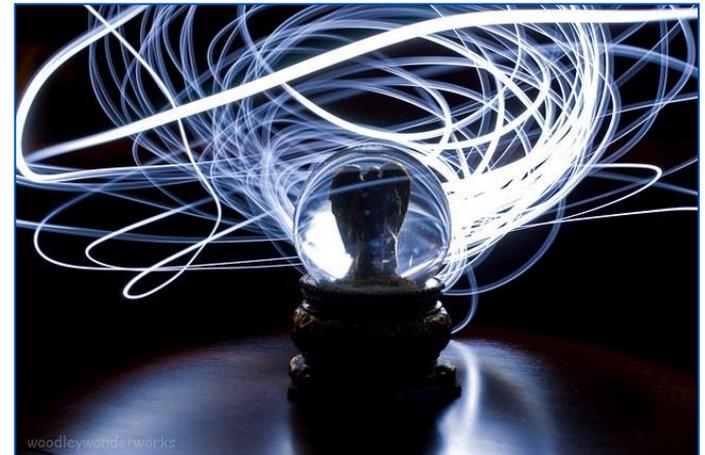
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Characteristics of rumination

The commonality among all ruminations is that we *don't* think about what we could do *concretely* to solve the problem.

→ We *don't* focus on the “here and now”!



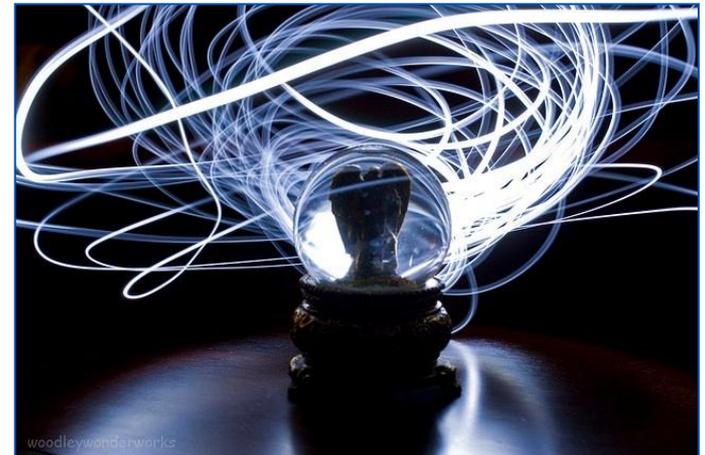
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Rumination...

- ... seldom deals with an action
(*difference from making plans*)
- ... seldom has a solution as a result
(*difference from problem solving*)
- ... often consists of general and ambiguous thoughts
- ... usually asks “why” instead of “how” or “what”



Does rumination help to solve problems?

???

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- Thinking about your past, your weaknesses, and your worries can in fact be sensible!



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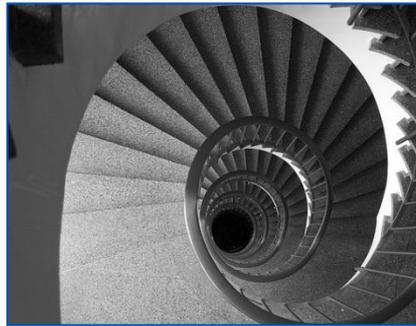
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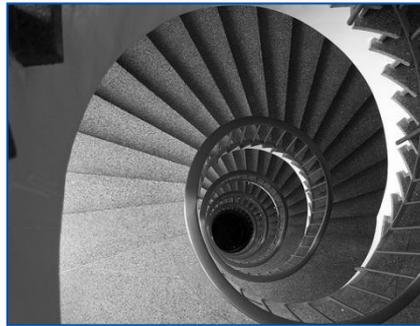


- You continually get stuck on or obsess over the same thoughts, and you find no way forward.

Does rumination help to solve problems?

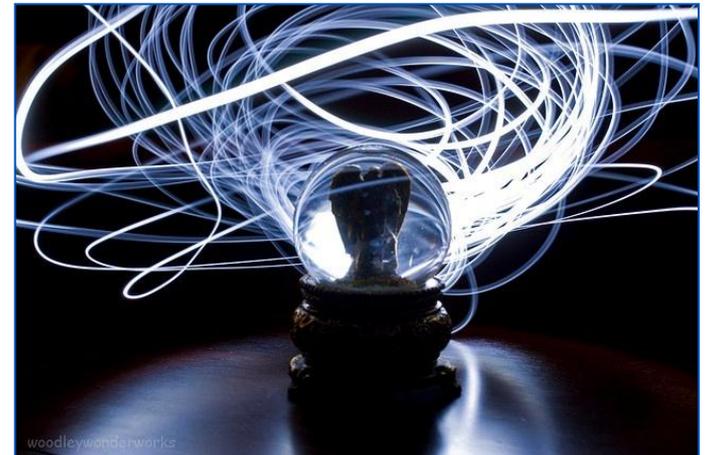
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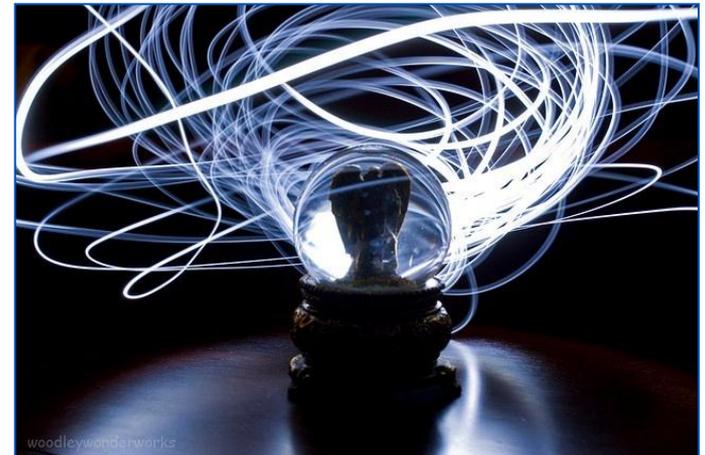
- You continually get stuck on or obsess over the same thoughts, and you find no way forward.
- **Important:** Exchange ideas with others (friends, therapist, people you meet) → Be open to new perspectives or get help to escape the vicious circle of rumination!

Why do we ruminate?



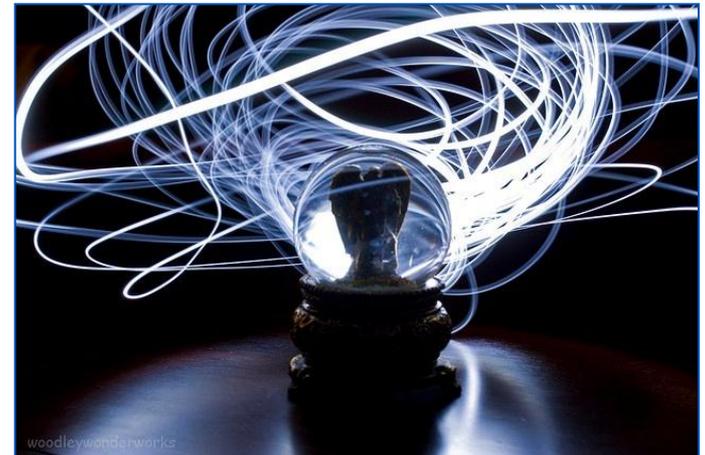
Why do we ruminate?

- Ruminating about plans and solutions replaces real action! It prevents you from “giving something a try” and possibly failing. Still, you feel that at least you’re doing something!



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- Often you don’t know until afterward whether you have been ruminating or thinking intensely and methodically.

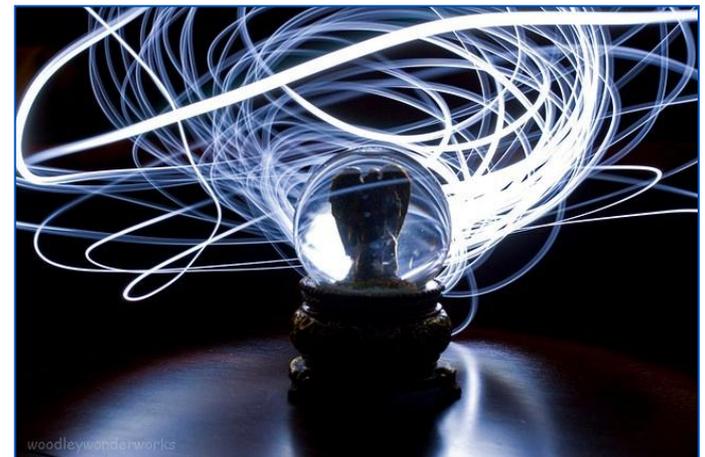


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Rule of thumb:

If thoughts *always circle around the same contents*, no solution appears, and *negative feelings become stronger*, the infinite loop of rumination needs to be broken.



Why do we do this?

Many [but not all!] people with psychiatric problems (e.g., borderline personality disorder) tend to ruminate.

- Rumination can lead to further worsening of the condition.
- In addition, “catastrophizing” can reinforce anxiety.



Exercises for rumination

???



Exercises for rumination

➤ **Exercise 1: send a stop signal**

- Tell yourself out loud or in your head “**stop**”!
- Support yourself with inner images (e.g., picturing a stop sign) or clench your fist.

But! This exercise does not work for everyone. Only continue using it if you experience positive results!



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➤ **Exercise 2:**

- Flex and relax one muscle after the other. Or: Go for a walk around the block!
- Count down by 7s! Start at 1084!

The infinite loop of rumination breaks, because your mind focuses on something else.



Exercises for rumination

Body exercise:

1. Stand up.
2. Circle left arm to the right.
3. Circle right arm to the left.
4. Lift one leg.
5. Circle leg.



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Can you keep ruminating while doing that???



Escape the treadmill of rumination!



Rumination: Freeing the thoughts

➤ **Exercise 3: Making an appointment!**

- Instead of instantly giving in to rumination, make an appointment with yourself to ruminate later (e.g., at 8 in the evening).
- Write down your ruminations (for later).



Rumination: Freeing the thoughts

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What is this supposed to do?!? Putting something off doesn't mean it's solved!



Rumination: Freeing the thoughts

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- Write down your ruminations (for later).

What is this supposed to do?!? Putting something off doesn't mean it's solved!

1. It shows that thoughts are not almighty. You are not the victim of your thoughts anymore.
 2. Often the “appointment” gets forgotten because an acute urge to ruminate is mostly caused by situational influences (e.g., headaches or stress).
- ➔ If those (situational) factors stop later, the urge will not be as strong and can be overcome more easily.

Catastrophizing

???

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- Especially when facing a difficult or new problem.
- Typical thoughts might include: “*I’m sure something bad is going to happen to me!*” or “*My partner is going to leave me!*”

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But!: The likelihood or the significance of negative events is strongly exaggerated!

- e.g.: Something will happen to my girlfriend on her ride home out in the pouring rain, and she will die!

Catastrophizing

Example: How great is the probability that you left your apartment unlocked today, someone noticed, and he's taking everything you've got?

... 20%?

Catastrophizing

Example: How great is the probability that you left your apartment unlocked today, someone noticed, and he's taking everything you've got?

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- Mathematically, the probability can be estimated.
- To do so, the necessary conditions for the event to happen have to be connected, that is, multiplied:
 - risk that attempted robbery *ever* hits your apartment... maybe 10%.
 - that you left your door open *today*... maybe 20%.
 - that a burglar was in the neighborhood *on this day*... maybe 20% as well.

Catastrophizing

Therefore, the probability of the event is **0.4%** at most!

$$(0.1 [10\%] \times 0.2 [20\%] \times 0.2 [20\%])$$



Catastrophizing feeds on **false** probability estimates.

Catastrophizing

Hautzinger, 2006

Predicting the future:

Expecting things to turn out badly – making “gloomy” predictions or foretelling catastrophes





Catastrophizing

Hautzinger, 2006

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Own examples...?



Catastrophizing

Situation: You want to cook a nice dinner for your boyfriend. You are haunted by the thought that, “It’ll taste lousy.”



Catastrophizing

Situation: You want to cook a nice dinner for your boyfriend. You are haunted by the thought that, “It’ll taste lousy.”

Catastrophic prediction:

- “I’ll probably dump way too much salt in the sauce.”
- “I couldn’t possibly make a new sauce in time.”
- “My boyfriend will grimace with every bite.”
- “He’ll leave me because I’m a terrible cook.”

Alternate prediction?



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- “I’ll get some sauce from the store instead.”
- “I’ve still got dessert.”
- “We’ll laugh about the incident and have a fun night anyway.”



Possible effects

???



Possible effects

- You could get caught up in those thoughts to such an extent that your negative expectations actually come true.
→ *self-fulfilling prophecy*
- e.g.: When there is work to be completed and you keep telling yourself again and again that you won't get it done in time.



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- e.g.: When there is work to be completed and you keep telling yourself again and again that you won't get it done in time.
- With hindsight, you then say that you knew all along that you weren't going to make it.
→ so-called "*hindsight bias*"

Exercise: The three images below are examples of one generic term. Which one?



Suggest further objects to test your assumption.

The trainer will answer “yes” and “no”.

When you are sure about the generic term, propose a solution.

Generic term: bad weather? No: nature!

more possibilities:



- We only look for the kind of information that bolsters our own assumptions (here: right-seeming solution “*natural disasters*”).
- Information that could be evidence against it, however, is disregarded (“confirmation bias”).
- e.g.: When people are in a bad mood, they tend to look for clues and evidence that others reject them (e.g., a critical facial expression).
- What you’re looking for is what you’ll find!

Catastrophizing

- Collect evidence for and against your apprehension.
- Quit the catastrophic thinking (→ think of alternate predictions).
- The exercises for rumination can be effective too!



**- Rumination and Catastrophizing Module -
Transfer to every day life**

Learning objectives:

- **Rumination and Catastrophizing Module** -
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Learning objectives:

- Rumination does not help you to solve problems.

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Learning objectives:

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- Try to break the vicious circle of rumination using the described exercises.

- **Rumination and Catastrophizing Module** -
Transfer to every day life

Learning objectives:

- Rumination does not help you to solve problems.
- Try to break the vicious circle of rumination using the described exercises.
- Pay attention to your thoughts and ask yourself whether you are in the habit of “catastrophizing”. Try to find realistic evidence for and against your assumptions.

Further questions?

???

Thank you for your attention!

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woodleywonderworks	flickr	proof	cc	Snowglobe with abstract lines / Schneekugeln mit wirbelnden Linien
Kt Ann	flickr	Stop Sign	cc	Stop Sign / Stop-Schild
aizaZ12	flickr	Hamster come out from the forced field	cc	Hamster coming out of his ball / aus seinem Ball kommender Hamster
jakeandlindsay	flickr	calculator	cc	Calculator / Taschenrechner
Fimb	flickr	Fortune teller	cc	crystal ball and cards / Kristallkugel and Karten
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fmc.nikon.d40	flickr	Flower	cc	Flower / Blume
<i>Leshaines123</i>	flickr	<i>Lake Vyrnwy Welshpool Wales ~Dailyshoot2011 High Contrast</i>	cc	Canoes while sunset / Kanus bei Sonnenuntergang