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)

???

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meta →

derived from Greek, means "about"

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derived from Latin, means "thinking"

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derived from Greek, means "about"

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derived from Latin, means "thinking"

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., always blaming only oneself).

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

The neighbors in the apartment above are having a noisy party again.

What possible thoughts can arise in reaction?

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

The neighbors in the apartment above are having a noisy party **again**.

Possible thoughts

response / thoughts?

response / thoughts?

response / thoughts?

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

The neighbors in the apartment above are having a noisy party again.

Possible thoughts

"I've had it with them! I'm trying to get a good night's sleep! I bet they're doing this on purpose!"

"Well, it's the weekend and it's not like I've never partied. All right, I'll just stay up a bit longer."

"They don't give a damn about me. They didn't even invite me. Am I really that big a bore?"

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"They don't give a damn about me. They didn't even invite me. Am I really that big a bore?"

What possible emotions may arise along with these thoughts?

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

The neighbors in the apartment above are having a noisy party again.

Possible thoughts

| "I've had it with them! I'm trying to get a good night's sleep! I bet they're doing this on purpose!" | "Well, it's the weekend and it's not like I've never partied. All right, I'll just stay up a bit longer." | "They don't give a damn about me. They didn't even invite me. Am I really that big a bore?" |

Possible emotions

| angry | relaxed | sad |

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

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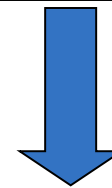"They don't give a damn about me. They didn't even invite me. Am I really that big a bore?"

Possible emotions

angry

relaxed

sad

What possible behavioral reactions could result in each case?

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

The neighbors in the apartment above are having a noisy party again.

Possible thoughts

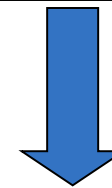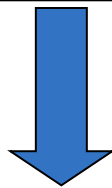| "I've had it with them! I'm trying to get a good night's sleep! I bet they're doing this on purpose!" | "Well, it's the weekend and it's not like I've never partied. All right, I'll just stay up a bit longer." | "They don't give a damn about me. They didn't even invite me. Am I really that big a bore?" |

Possible emotions

angry	relaxed	sad
knock at the door & threaten to call the police	**stay calm, sleep with earplugs**	**brood & therefore not find peace**
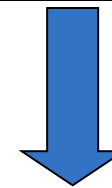
Welcome to

Training module:

Attributional Style

10/13

What is an attribution?

???

Attribution

= our own explanation of why a situation happens.

(e.g., *"My friend invited me to the movies because she likes me!"*)

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Attribution

= our own explanation of why a situation happens.
(e.g., *"My friend invited me to the movies because she likes me!"*)

→ *We often fail to see that the same event can have very different causes.*

What causes could have contributed to the following situation?

➤ *A friend is late for a meeting with you.*

Attribution

Why does your friend keep you waiting?

Possible types of attribution…

???

Attribution

Why does your friend keep you waiting?

Possible types of attribution...

- *"He doesn't care enough about me. He wouldn't have dared to do this with someone else."*

- *"He is forgetful – he got the time wrong."*

- *"His car broke down."*

Attribution

Why does your friend keep you waiting?

Possible types of attribution…

…to oneself	*"He doesn't care enough about me."*
…to others	*"He is forgetful."*
…to chance or the situation	*"His car broke down."*

Attribution

Events can have quite different causes.

In addition, several contributing factors are often involved at the same time.

However many people consider only one-sided explanations (e.g. only blaming others rather than oneself or vice versa).

"You're discharged from the hospital but don't feel any better."

Reasons…

… oneself

… others

… chance or the situation

"You're discharged from the hospital but don't feel any better."

Reasons…

… oneself:

(can be changed)

- I wasn't motivated enough to cooperate.
- I didn't believe in recovery.

(difficult to change)

- I am incurable.
- I just have bad genes.

… others:

- The doctors here have a bad reputation.
- The hospital staff should have made more effort and spent more time with me.

… chance or the situation:

- I would have recovered better if I hadn't shared a room with 6 other patients.
- If the hospital was better equipped, I would be recovered.
- Sometimes the recovery process takes time before you can see results.

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... chan... situation:

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- If the hospital was better equipped, I would be recovered.
- Sometimes the recovery process takes time before you can see results.

Caution: one-sided explanations!

"You're discharged from the hospital but don't feel any better."

Now think of balanced responses that involve *several* causes (combination of *"others", "situation", and "self"*)

???

???

???

"You're discharged from the hospital but don't feel any better."

Now think of balanced responses that involve *several* causes (combination of *"others", "situation", and "self"*)

➢ "The staff didn't have much time, but I could have requested more support, and should have attended group sessions more frequently. That might be why my stay wasn't as successful as it could have been."

➢ "Maybe I should be more patient regarding my recovery. I'm confident that in the future I can be helped by competent staff."

Effects of certain attributional styles on positive events!

"That's a great dress you're wearing!"

" plaid dress " by dunikowski

Self Attribution: (e.g., "I can wear anything.")	**Disadvantage:** ??? **Advantage:** ???
Others/Situational Attribution (e.g., "He says that to everyone!")	**Disadvantage:** ??? **Advantage:** ???

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Others/Situational Attribution	**Disadvantage:** Self-confidence is not sustained
(e.g., "He says that to everyone!")	**Advantage:** You seem modest (But <u>always</u> rejecting compliments may make you seem depressed!)

"That's a great dress you're wearing!"

" plaid dress " by dunikowski

More balanced responses (i.e., combination of others, situation & self):

? ? ?

? ? ?

? ? ?

"That's a great dress you're wearing!"

" plaid dress" by dunikowski

More balanced responses (i.e., combination of others, situation & self):

"Actually, the dress does bring out my body pretty well and suits me. Besides, I was on vacation recently and certainly look relaxed. I know he's a nice person who honestly means it when he says such a thing."

Effects of certain attributional styles on negative events!

You spill a glass of wine while trying to avoid the waiter.

„Glass of wine" by Sh0dan

Self Attribution:	**Disadvantage:** ???
(e.g., "What a klutz! How come these things always happen to me?")	**Advantage:** ???
Others/Situational Attribution:	**Disadvantage:** ???
(e.g., " It wouldn't have happened if this idiot hadn't pushed past me!")	**Advantage:** ???

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Others/Situational Attribution: (e.g., " It wouldn't have happened if this idiot hadn't pushed past me!")	**Disadvantage:** You get angry and possibly start an argument. You remain less cautious of your surroundings. **Advantage:** Self-confidence not at risk

You spill a glass of wine while trying to avoid the waiter.

Balanced responses (i.e., combination of others, situation & self):

???

???

???

You spill a glass of wine while trying to avoid the waiter.

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Balanced responses (i.e., combination of others, situation & self):

➤ "Bummer! But it's not actually that bad. Luckily nothing got onto my clothes."

➤ "How annoying that the waiter pushed past me like that, but I could have paid a bit more attention myself. Obviously he didn't bump into me on purpose."

Why do we do this?

Studies show that many [but not all!] people with depression tend to…

　　… blame themselves for failures…

　　… attribute success to circumstances/chance.

→ This attributional style reduces self-esteem!

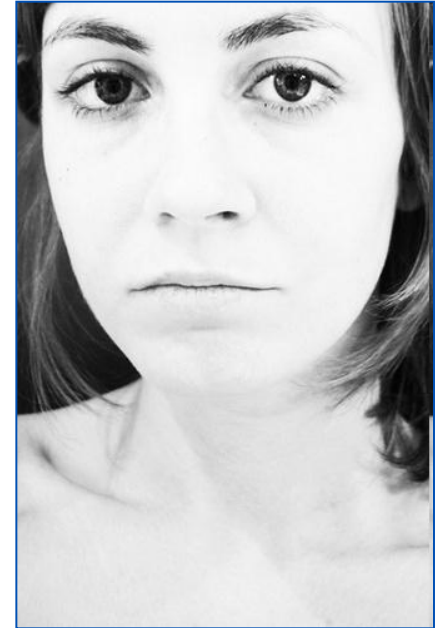# Why do we do this?

Many [but not all!] people with BPD tend to…

… reduce situations to single causes and…

… hardly give any regard to circumstances/chance.

→ They primarily blame only themselves for the occurrence of events.

???

„long face" by paramitta

Taking things (too) personally

= Events or the behavior of others are often thought to have something to do with oneself, even if they don't.

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Typical thoughts: ???

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Typical thoughts: *"Of course this happens to me of all people!"*

"He doesn't like me. It must be me."

→ You have a distorted perception of events, feel responsible for everything and everyone, and take things too much to heart.

Taking things (too) personally

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Typical thoughts: *"Of course this happens to me of all people!"*

"He doesn't like me. It must be me."

→   You have a distorted perception of events, feel responsible for everything and everyone, and take things too much to heart.

→   It is a human tendency to feel involved somehow (e.g., children feel guilty when their parents fight)

"long face" by paramitta

Effect on behavior

Event	One-sided attribution	Behavior	Long-term consequences
A colleague doesn't say hello in passing.	???	???	???

Event	Alternate Attribution	Behavior	Long-term consequences
A colleague doesn't say hello in passing.	???	???	???

Effect on behavior

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"no, I'm not sad. just tired" by erix

Effect on behavior

Event	One-sided attribution	Behavior	Long-term consequences
A colleague doesn't say hello in passing.	"He doesn't like me."	Looking away, not saying hello either.	Assumption of being rejected gets stronger; difficulties in associating with others/ increasing withdrawal

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A colleague doesn't say hello in passing.	"Maybe he didn't see me. He's got other things on his mind and doesn't take notice of anything around him."	???	???

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Event	Alternate Attribution	Behavior	Long-term consequences
A colleague doesn't say hello in passing.	"Maybe he didn't see me. He's got other things on his mind and doesn't take notice of anything around him."	Taking the initiative and saying hello to the colleague.	No dramatization of the incident, instead of waiting and seeing if it happens repeatedly Seeking contact; testing possible assumptions by making conversation

Don't take everything too personally!

- Try to consciously register when you make a very personal attribution!

  → *Could there be other explanations?*

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  And: If a snub really is meant personally, that reveals something about the other person as well.

- Put yourself in someone else's shoes (e.g., a good friend)!

  → *What would you think, if something similar happened to someone else?*

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- Put yourself in someone else's shoes (e.g., a good friend)!

  → *What would you think, if something similar happened to someone else?*

- Think of different possible causes of a situation.

  → *With negative events, start with "circumstances"!*

Exercise: drawing pie charts

- **What happened?**

  Here's an example of a negative event that happened last week:

  "A friend cancelled a lunch with you that you were looking forward to a lot."

- **What is the main aspect you explained the event by?**
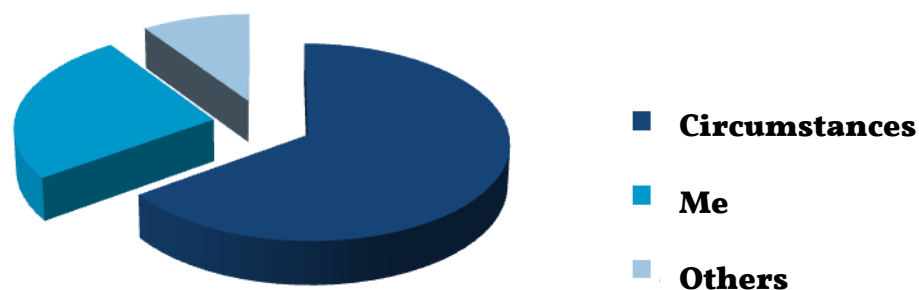
  "She thinks I'm boring."

- **What effects does your explanation have?**

  "I am sad and feel unwanted."

Exercise: drawing pie charts

What are other and more balanced ways of responding to the event? What percentage of the event could you estimate as being attributable to other causes?

- ■ Circumstances
- ■ Me
- ■ Others

Try to split the pie fairly and not always take the biggest piece yourself.

Instead: look at the situation clearly

The fundamental attribution error

= People in Western countries are generally more apt to blame someone's personal characteristics rather than situational influences for their behavior.

Example: When someone bumps into you on the bus, you may be more apt to think the person is rude than to see that the bus is packed tightly.

"Volle Bahn" by jorges

Study: staging of a quiz show.

The participants were <u>randomly</u> allocated one of three roles: quiz show host, candidate, or spectator.

The quiz show host's task was to think of difficult questions that "display his broad knowledge." He then had to ask the candidate these questions.

All of the participants knew that the quiz show host had been allowed to make up the questions himself.

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The quiz show host's task was to think of difficult questions that "display his broad knowledge." He then had to ask the candidate these questions.

All of the participants knew that the quiz show host had been allowed to make up the questions himself.

After the show, all participants were asked to judge who was smarter, the quiz show host or the candidate ???

Look at the situation clearly

Even though the quiz show host clearly had the advantage because he was allowed to make up the questions himself (situation!), both the spectators and the candidates themselves thought the host had more knowledge than the candidates.

Causes of the attribution error

- A "fundamental attribution error" is made unconsciously and automatically!

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- Our attention is limited, and we pay the most attention to fellow humans (because they stand out the most) rather than circumstances.

- It takes time and motivation to consciously control our thinking and question the attributions we make about a person or event.

Exercise

In the following, you will be presented with several events.

Please think of several possible causes of the occurrence of the particular situation.

With negative events, start with circumstances/chance!

→ Make yourself aware of the possible effects of different attributions – short-term as well as long-term ones!

Someone tells you that you look bad.

Why might the person have said this?

To what do you primarily attribute this event?

Yourself?

Another person/other people?

Circumstances/chance?

A friend invites you for dinner.

What made your friend invite you for dinner?

To what do you primarily attribute this event?

Yourself?

Another person/other people?

Circumstances/chance?

Why did the baby start crying?

To what do you primarily attribute this event?

Yourself?

Another person/other people?

Circumstances/chance?

Why does your colleague refuse to help you?

To what do you primarily attribute this event?

Yourself?

Another person/other people?

Circumstances/chance?

Learning objectives:

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➢ Always consider different possibilities. Because: Usually several factors contribute to the occurrence of an event (myself/others/circumstances)!

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➢ Tip: Practice "perspective-taking" (*What would you think if something similar happened to someone else?*)!

The bridge experiment (Dutton & Aron, 1974):

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The bridge experiment (Dutton & Aron, 1974):

Scientists had a young and pretty female student stand at the end of a shaky rope bridge and a regular bridge.

The student asked male passers-by who had already crossed the bridge to help her with her research work.

After having them answer a questionnaire, the student gave the participants her private phone number and asked them to call her if they had any questions about the study.

Number of calls: ? ? ?

Number of calls:

Rope bridge: 9 of 18 men called

Stable bridge: 2 of 16 men called

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Canadian scientists concluded that this is because the men's physical excitement (after crossing the rope bridge) due to the gaping abyss was falsely attributed to the woman's attractiveness, and the fear/excitement was interpreted as an affection.

Bridge / 橋(はし) by TANAKA Juuyoh (田中十洋)

For control purposes they also had a male student stand at the end of the two bridges.

Result: ???

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Result: Only one third each of all men were willing to accept his number at all!

Only 2 men (shaky bridge) and 1 man (stable bridge) actually called.

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Detect external influences that artificially "heat up" your feelings (e.g., coffee and nervousness); the feeling has lost some of its power because you recognize it was exaggerated.

Bridge / 橋(はし) by TANAKA Juuyoh (田中十洋)

Further questions?

???

Thank you for your attention!

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paramitta	flickr	long face	CC	Sad face – woman / Trauriges Gesicht - Frau
erix!	flickr	no, I'm not sad. just tired	CC	Sad face – man / Trauriges Gesicht - Mann
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valentinapowers	flickr	Cry Baby	CC	Crying baby/Schreiendes Baby
Katrin Ze.	fotocommunity	enttäuscht	PP	A friend refused to help you with your work/Eine Bekannte hat sich geweigert ihnen bei der Arbeit zu helfen
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