Harm Reduction Psychotherapy Toolkit

Evidence-Based Practices to Help People Change Their Relationship with Drugs

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Outline

1. Mindfulness
2. Acceptance & Commitment Therapy
3. Attachment theory
4. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
5. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

References and slides at https://jenniferfernandezphd.com/hrc2018
Mindfulness for Recovery

- Changes our relationship to thoughts \(^{48}\)
- Decreases depression, anxiety, and stress \(^{17}\)
- Increases quality of life and physical functioning \(^{17}\)
- Reduces drug cue reactivity and increases natural reward responses \(^{13}\)
- Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention reduced risk of relapse by 54% and risk of heavy drinking by 59% after 12 months \(^{3}\)
- Mindfulness Based Interventions reduce consumption of alcohol, cocaine, amphetamines, marijuana, cigarettes, and opiates \(^{5}\)
Self-compassion and Shame

- Self-compassion associated with increased life satisfaction and decreased depression, anxiety, stress and emotional avoidance \(^{34, 35}\)
- Those with higher self-compassion at lower risk for having a SUD \(^7\)
- Reduce daily cigarette smoking faster than self-monitoring alone \(^1\)
- Consists of three elements: Self-kindness, Common Humanity, and Mindfulness \(^36\)
Self-compassion and Shame

- Associated with significant levels of substance misuse, disordered eating, depression, social anxiety, psychosis, and PTSD.\textsuperscript{16, 18, 54}
- Traumatic shame memories that are central to personal identity/life story can result in SC and compassion from others being seen as frightening and aversive.\textsuperscript{32}
- Occurs at a greater rate among those with SUDs, can induce substance use, and can predict relapse of AA participants.\textsuperscript{6, 8, 33, 53}
- Linked to poorer social functioning and dropping out of and delays in seeking substance use treatment.\textsuperscript{23, 40, 45}
Self-compassion Tribe

10 Self-Compassion Affirmations

- I accept myself as I am.
- I am enough.
- I am worthy of compassion.
- I forgive myself and allow myself to feel inner peace.
- I allow myself to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes.
- I let go of the old and make room for the new.
- Today I will treat myself with kindness.
- Like any human being, I have strengths and weaknesses, and that’s OK.
- I’m healing through self-compassion.
- I give myself the gift of unconditional love.

daringtolivefully.com
Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

- Encourages noticing/experiencing challenging feelings more fully (instead of a focus on reducing/eliminating them), while decreasing learned connections to behaviors/actions (through Cognitive Defusion) \(^{30}\)
- Results in greater tx involvement/adherence, continuous tx gains, and better substance use outcomes \(^{30}\)
- Research analysis found small-medium favoring of ACT for treatment outcomes of SUDs, compared to TAU \(^{25}\)
- Shown to be effective SUD tx for variety of substances including opiates, cannabis, alcohol, and nicotine \(^{14, 15, 21, 41, 51}\)
Values Journaling Exercise

- Type of sibling/parent you want to be? How you want to interact with family?
- Type of friend you want to be? What it means to be a good friend? Why is friendship important to you?
- What your ideal relationship like? Kind of partner do you want to be?
- Type of activities you enjoy? Why you enjoy them?
- How you can make the world a better place? Which community activities (volunteering, voting, recycling) are important to you and why?
- Why is faith, spirituality, or meaning important to you?
- Why you take care of yourself? How you take care of yourself?
- Why is learning important to you? Skills you’d like to learn?
- What you value about your career? Type of work you like to do?
Attachment Theory & Addiction

- problems with self-regulation, interpersonal functioning\(^{39}\)
- relationship with drug becomes complex compensatory mechanism\(^{39}\)
- impaired white matter linked to negative affectivity and insecure attachment\(^{52}\)
- People with SUDs found to have insecure attachment styles\(^{43}\)
THE ORIGINAL PICKUP LINE

I'D TAKE YOU ORALLY

YOU GIVE ME PINS AND NEEDLES

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

YOU CRACK ME UP

I'D BE A METH WITHOUT YOU

LIFE WITH YOU IS ECSTASY

WEED GO WELL TOGETHER

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

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Evaluating Our Relationship to Drugs

What kind of partner is the drug to you?

When and how is this partner there for you?

Which relationships from the past or present are similar?

Attachment Style

Needs

Values Honored or Violated
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

- Most empirically sound and utilized Borderline Personality Disorder/BPD tx \(^{47}\)
- Successfully modified for SUDs, disordered eating, PTSD, and depression \(^{2, 10, 19, 20, 22, 26, 27, 31, 42, 46, 49}\)
- Structure utilizes four major concepts: Skills Training Group, Individual Psychotherapy, Telephone Coaching, and Consultation Team \(^{12}\)
- Modifications for SUDs include: “dialectical moderation or abstinence,” encouraging change, if relapse occurs change is still possible and progress was still made, non-judgmental mindfulness, distress tolerance, and emotion regulation skills that help develop/maintain long term goals \(^{50}\)
- Can be used with other compulsive behaviors (porn, sex, gambling, etc) \(^{50}\)
Distress Tolerance Skills

- Radical acceptance, curiosity
- Self-soothe with senses
- TIPP: Temperature, Intense exercise, Paced breathing, and Paired muscle relaxation
- Distract with intense sensations (hold ice cubes, snap rubber band, polar plunge)
- Pro/Con List (Decisional Balance)
- Have clients keep pain/anger/stress log

sunrisertc.com/distress-tolerance-skills/
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

- Lessens abstinence violation effect \(^{24}\)
- More effective than TAU when combined \(^{4}\)
- Increases impulse control and improves attention and motivation \(^{9}\)
- Key to alternatives in high risk situations \(^{38}\)
Thoughts ↔ Feelings

Thoughts
- "Nobody likes me"
- "I always mess things up"

Behaviour
- "Withdraw from others"
- "Stop doing the things you enjoy"

Body
- "Tense"
- "Palpitations"
- "No energy"

Feelings
- "Sad"
- "Self-Conscious"
- "Anxious"
Don't Believe Everything You Think

**Magnification**
“Making a mountain out of a molehill” - blowing things out of proportion.

**Arbitrary inference**
Drawing conclusions when there is little or no evidence.

**Minimisation**
Downplaying the importance of a positive thought, emotion or event.

**Overgeneralisation**
Making sweeping conclusions based on a single event.

**Personalisation**
“Attributing personal responsibility for events which aren't under a person's control.”

**Selective abstraction**
Drawing conclusions on the basis of just one of many elements of a situation.

Image credit: LoudLizard (2017)
# Distorted Thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Distorted Thoughts about My Relationship with Drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/1</td>
<td>My relationship to drugs isn’t harmful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>My addiction only affects me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>I’ll never be able to change my relationship with drugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/4</td>
<td>I should be able to change my behavior on my own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>If I don’t use, I won’t be able to shake this awful feeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/6</td>
<td>If I stop using, I won’t be able to access my creativity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>I won’t have any fun if I don’t take a little K before clubbing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reality Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distorted Thought</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My relationship to drugs isn't harmful.</td>
<td>When I drink too much I feel hungover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My addiction only affects me.</td>
<td>My partner says I get verbally abusive when I drink too much.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll never be able to change my relationship with drugs.</td>
<td>I don't blackout from drinking as often.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I should be able to change my behavior on my own.</td>
<td>Talking to friends about my addiction helps me feel less alone with it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I don't use, I won't be able to shake this uncomfortable feeling.</td>
<td>I can surf the emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I stop using, I won't be able to access my creativity.</td>
<td>I can sign up for a class to enhance my skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I won't have any fun if I don't take a little K before clubbing.</td>
<td>Dancing, flirting, and sharing the experience with my friends feels good.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Look for themes about self, others, the world, & the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Maladaptive Core Beliefs</th>
<th>Healthy Core Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm unlovable.</td>
<td>I'm just as worthy as others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others can't be trusted.</td>
<td>I'm a good person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must be perfect to be accepted.</td>
<td>The world is a complicated place. I trust myself to navigate it wisely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm a failure.</td>
<td>I'm enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'll always be broken.</td>
<td>I strive to do my best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My needs are too much.</td>
<td>Mistakes are human.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Closing

- What will you take with you?
- What will you leave behind?