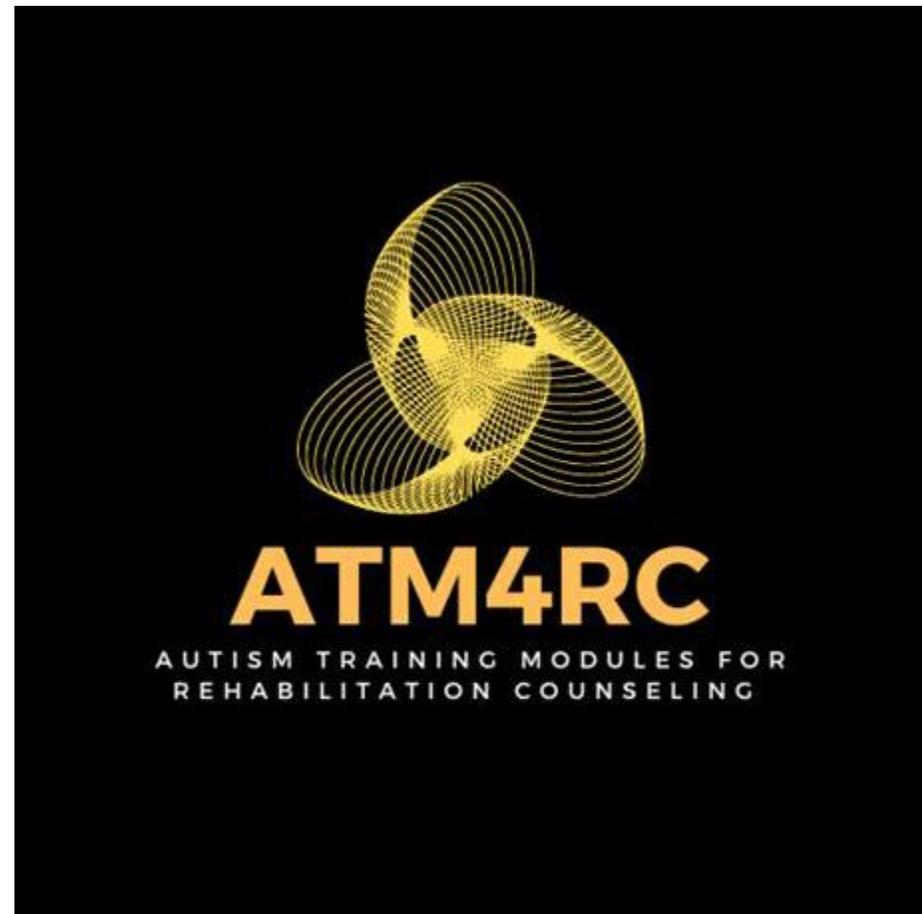


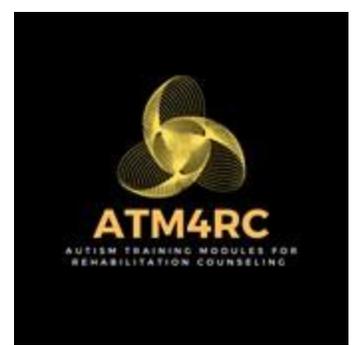
Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

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ATR-BC, LIMHP, LMHC



Module Objectives



By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Define Cognitive Behavioral Interventions and how it is applicable in your work
2. Identify which other Evidence Based Practices may be used with Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
3. Engage in practice of Cognitive Behavioral Intervention

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions

Introduction



- Approaches behavior change through encouraging self-awareness of thoughts and emotions and how they influence actions.
- Encourages use of coping and distress tolerance skills (behaviors) to deal with emotional dysregulation.
- Done in conjunction with other evidence-based practices (EBP) such as visual supports, self-management, prompting, and others.

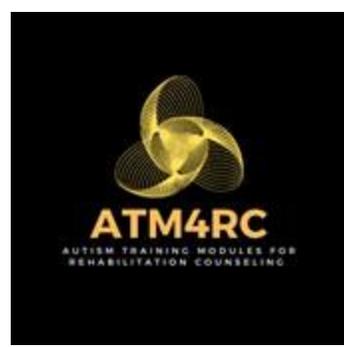
(Mussey, Dawkins and AFIRM, 2017a/b; Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, 2023)

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: An Evidence Based Practice for Persons with Autism



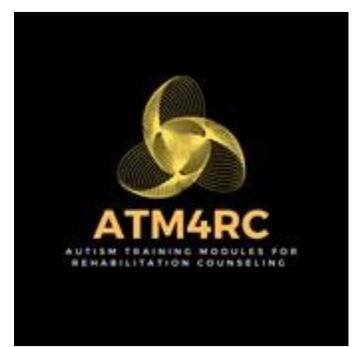
- Per Steinbrenner et al's (2020) review of EBPs for use with persons with autism, Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) is effective for behavior change with 15-22 year olds with Autism to encourage behavior change.
- “Cognitive behavioral intervention teaches learners to examine their own thoughts and emotions, recognize when negative thoughts and emotions are escalating in intensity, and then use strategies to change their thinking and behavior” (Mussey, Dawkins & AFIRM, 2017a, p. 3)

Ethical Considerations: A Note on Cognitive Behavioral Interventions



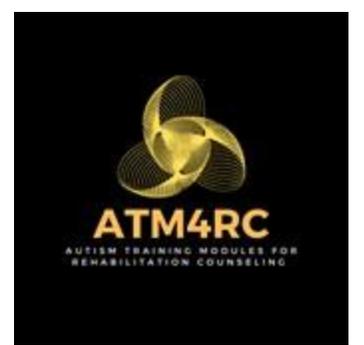
- Review the following video featuring autistic adult Paul Micallif creator of Autism from the inside:
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=YtalhGeKVNM>
- Although Micallif (2023) is talking about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, it is still worth noting that CBI based interventions aren't for everyone.
- If CBI is encouraging masking (pretending to be neurotypical) it is more harmful than helpful.
- Make sure you are selecting EBPs with your autistic clients whenever possible and seeking their input on apparent behavioral and emotional needs.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions



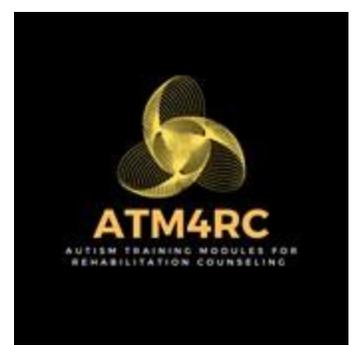
- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC, 2023) provides an overview of several types of CBI:
 - Emotional Awareness Strategies
 - Cognitive Self-Regulation Strategies
 - Behavioral Coping and Self-Regulations Strategies
 - Such as Mindfulness Based Interventions
 - Gradual Exposure
- CBI strategies may occur in one to one or group settings.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Emotional Awareness Strategies



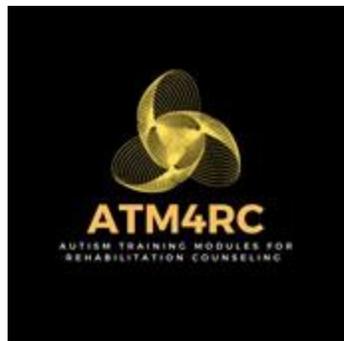
- Emotional Awareness strategies typically include a review of common emotions and identifying situations in which those emotions happen (VKC, 2023)
 - With a focus on self-identification of one's own emotions and the emotions of others
 - This is often accomplished through Social Emotional Learning (SEL) techniques. Read <https://autismawarenesscentre.com/social-emotional-learning-and-autism/> for more information.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Cognitive Self-Regulation Strategies



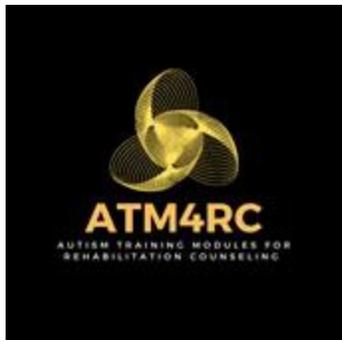
- Cognitive Self-Regulation strategies encourage examination of thoughts and how they connect to emotional and behavioral responses- if thoughts are identified as unhelpful and inaccurate they are challenged and revised
 - This is done through activities such as identifying whether thoughts are “fact or feeling” or engaging in “thought stopping” once thoughts are identified as problematic.
 - Review Sutton (2024) for more on Cognitive Self-Regulation techniques <https://positivepsychology.com/thought-stopping-techniques/>
- As Micallif (2023) noted, if an individual is already very aware and logical about their thoughts, then this may not be the right approach for them.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Behavioral Coping and Self-Regulations Strategies (1 of 2)



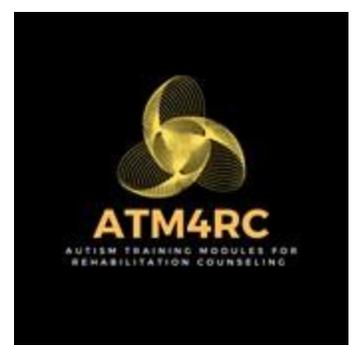
- Mussey, Dawkins and AFIRM (2017) reference a study of a specific type of CBI, mindfulness based intervention.
- Singh et al (2011) found success using “Meditation on the Soles of the Feet” to encourage participants to focus on their body, specifically the soles of their feet, as a way to counter physical aggression. A number of mindfulness meditation scripts can be found online.
- Note that adaptations such as fidgets may need to be added to increase ability to engage in mindfulness practices.

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Behavioral Coping and Self-Regulations Strategies (2 of 2)



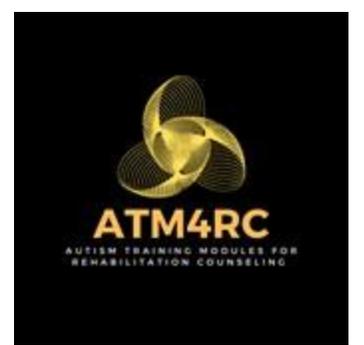
- Note that adaptations such as fidgets may need to be added to increase ability to engage in mindfulness practices.
- See Hutton (2020) for suggestions on other strategies for adapting mindfulness for neurodivergent populations
<https://www.mindful.org/3-mindfulness-practices-for-neurodiverse-meditators/>

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions: Gradual Exposure



- Gradual Exposure (also called graded exposure) includes
 - Creating a fear hierarchy, which is a list in rank order of fears from mild to extreme.
 - The individual is then gradually exposed to these fears while practicing relaxation techniques to decrease the fear response.
 - Read <https://www.apa.org/ptsd-guideline/patients-and-families/exposure-therapy.pdf>
- We do not recommend doing this without assistance of a psychology or counseling professional.

Vocational Rehabilitation Specific Use of CBIs



- In Kulzer et al (2023) they implemented the Cognitive Skills Enhancement Program (CSEP) which applies CBIs to vocational related skills.
 - This program puts particular focus on emotional regulation, work readiness, social skills and community participation.
 - Read <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10202007/> to learn more

Visit the following links for examples and implementation tools for Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBIs)



Mussey, J., Dawkins, T., & AFIRM Team. (2017).

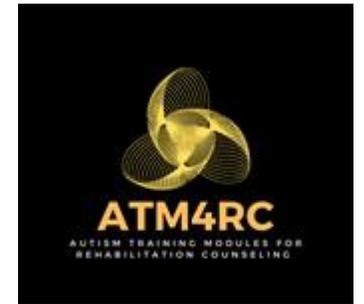
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583672.pdf>

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (2023).

<https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/triad/tips/CBIS.pdf> and

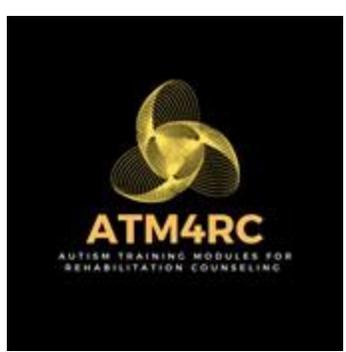
<https://vkc.vumc.org/vkc/triad/autismtrainings/>

Cognitive Behavioral Interventions Practice



- Identify an area of growth for yourself that falls within the domains identified in the CBIs.
 - Practice the associated intervention
 - For instance if you have challenges with identifying your emotional responses select Emotional Awareness Strategies
 - If you have distressing thoughts you'd like to change focus on Cognitive Self-Regulation Strategies
 - If you need assistance with self-regulating when upset chose Behavioral Coping and Self-Regulations Strategies
 - Such as Mindfulness Based Interventions
 - Assess what is an isn't successful for you in your chosen CBI.

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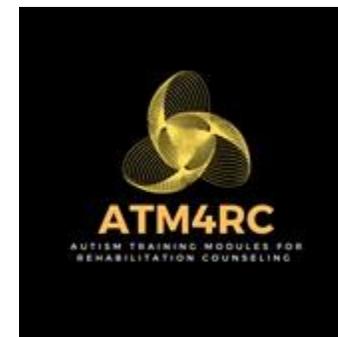
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- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (2024). Overview of cognitive behavioral intervention strategies (CBIs). <https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/triad/tips/CBIS.pdf>
- Wilkinson (2024). <https://livingautism.com/self-management-evidenced-based-intervention-autism-spectrum-disorders-asd/>

Additional Resources



Autism Focused Intervention Resources & Modules (AFIRM). Cognitive Behavioral Intervention.

<http://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/cognitive-behavioral-intervention>