

ACBS
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Cognitive Change:
A Contextual Behavioral Approach
Jennifer and Matthieu Villatte

Traditional CBT approach to cognitive change


Contextual behavioral approach to cognitive change

3 waves, 3 ways of thinking about thinking

1st wave:
Behavior change happens through contingency learning.

2nd wave:
Behavior change happens through cognitive change.

3rd wave:
Thoughts play a role in psychological problems but solution is to change relationship to thoughts.



But let's think about it...

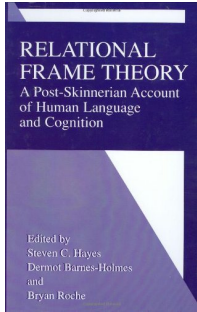


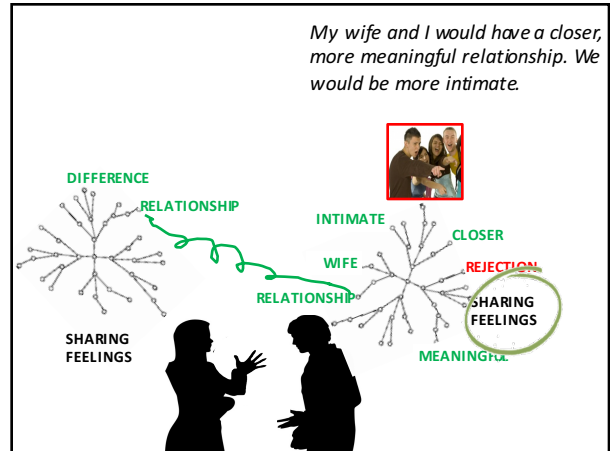
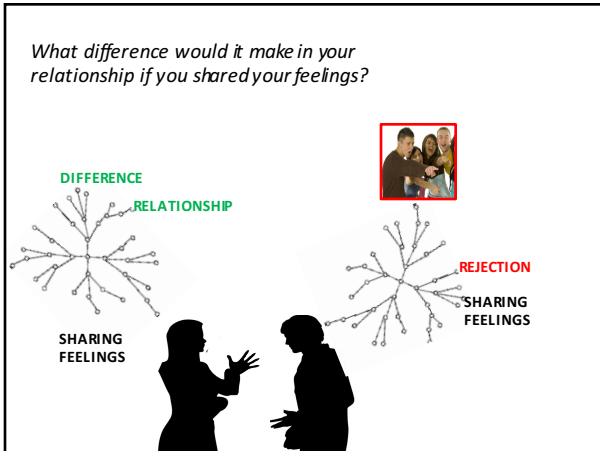
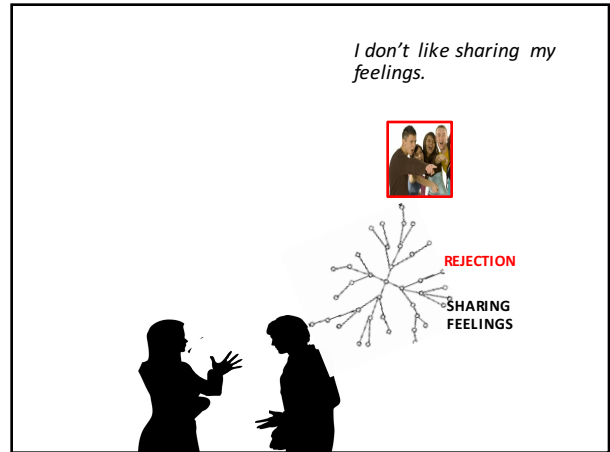
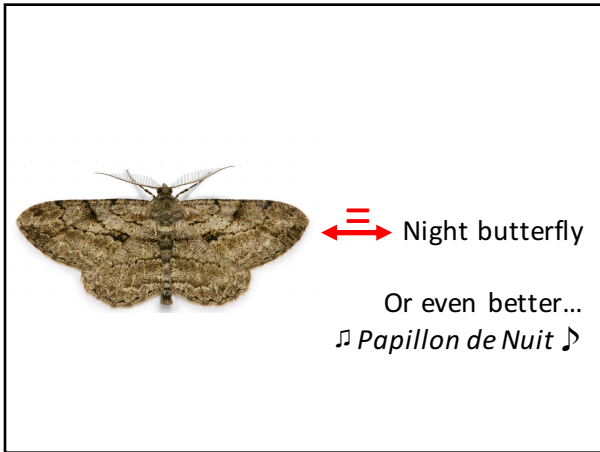
- ✓ What is a "relationship" to a thought?
- ✓ Do we really *not* change thoughts in 3rd wave therapy?
- ✓ And is it really a bad idea, anyway?

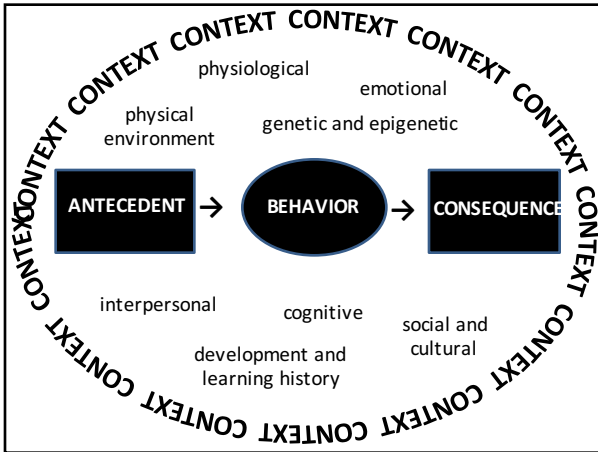
Back to the roots... What is thinking, from a CBS perspective?

Thinking =
Language /Cognition =
Learned behavior

→ Building and responding to symbolic relations







So, in the end, it's always a matter of context

The Behavior Analyst 1986, 9, 175-190 No. 2 (Fall)

Mentalism, Behavior-Behavior Relations, and a Behavior-Analytic View of the Purposes of Science

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In a behavioral view, the purposes of science are primarily prediction and control. To the extent that a scientist embraces both of these as a unified and generally applicable criterion for science, certain philosophical and theoretical practices are counterproductive, including mentalism in both its metaphysical and metatheoretical forms. It is possible and often worthwhile to recast some mentalistic talk into an issue of behavior-behavior relations. When behavior-behavior relations are approached non-mechanistically, however, analysis cannot stop at the level of the relations themselves. Several analytic concepts common in the behavioral community share some of the dangers of mentalism if not employed properly, including such concepts as self-reinforcement, response-produced stimulation, and self-rules.

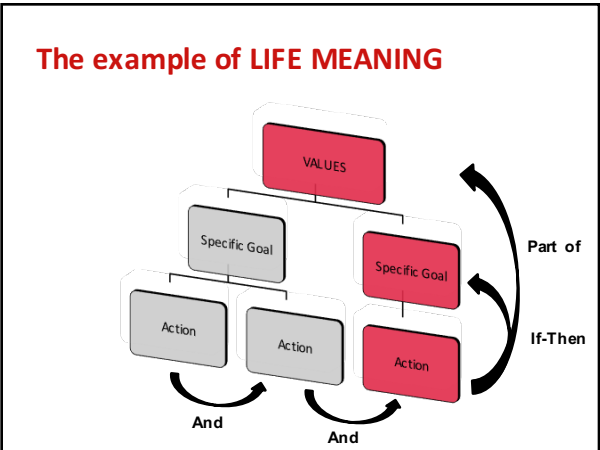
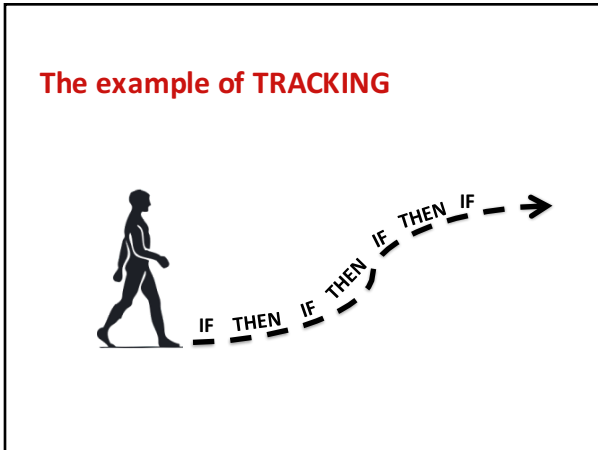
Therefore...

- ✓ Thoughts don't cause behaviors
- ✓ We don't change thoughts but relationships to thoughts...

Or... how about a slightly different conclusion?

Cognition is a clinically relevant behavior

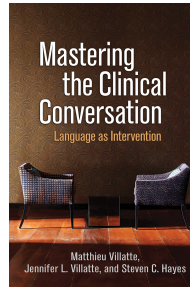
- ✓ Relational framing plays a critical role in human life
- ✓ Relational framing is a shapeable behavior



The example of SELF



Cognition is a clinically relevant behavior



- ✓ Relational framing plays a critical role in human life
- ✓ Relational framing is a shapeable behavior
- ✓ Shaping relational framing requires specific strategies based on CBS principles

Contextual Behavioral Principles and Cognitive Change Strategies

Principle #1: Cognition is a behavior influenced by the context



Strategy #1: Change cognition by altering the context



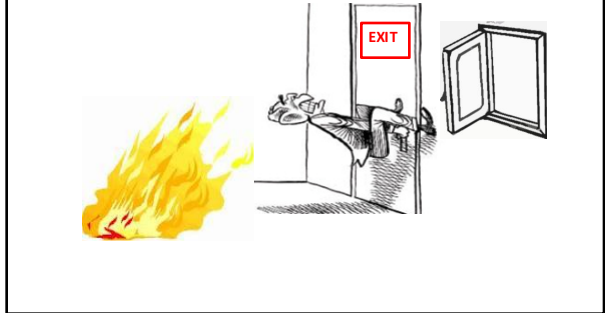
Principle #2: Cognitions are learned and learning can't be undone



Strategy #2: Change cognition by addition and integration, not subtraction



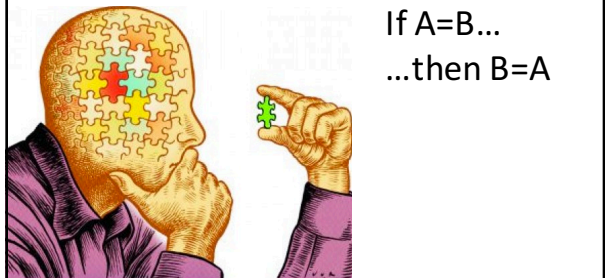
Principle #3: Cognition powerfully impacts context insensitivity



Strategy #3: Improve context sensitivity by grounding cognition in experience



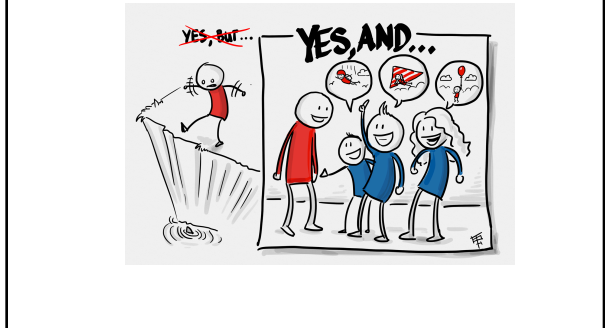
Principle #4: Cognition requires coherence



Strategy #4: Ground coherence in pragmatism



Skills Building Warm-up: Change cognition by addition



practice is NOT performance



play at your edge hit sour notes try, taste, tweak

Skill Building Practice

Case Presenter:

- share a struggle for the skills builder to work with
- respond naturally, authentically to skills builder

Skills Builder:

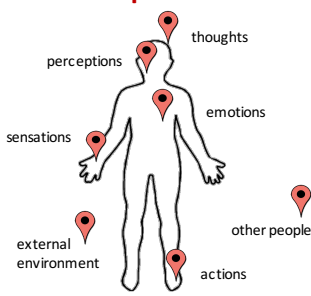
- practice specific skills and receive feedback from team

Skills Consultant:

- provides feedback and suggestions during practice if requested by skills builder
- takes notes and provides specific feedback after practice

Skills Building: Improve context sensitivity by grounding cognition in experience

- Evoke observation and description of experience
- Evoke observation and description of contingencies
- Don't forget what's happening here and now




Skill Building Feedback:

Skills Consultant	{	Specific instances of what worked ONE suggestion for further improvement
Case Presenter	{	ONE element of your experience you that will help the skill builder grow
Skills Builder	{	Questions for your team? Stuck points- ideas for further practice?

Skills Building: Resolve problems linked to coherence by normalizing and orienting to what works

- Normalize experiences and behaviors
- Orient to what matters and what works



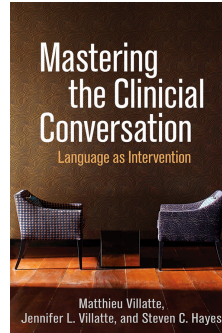
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Deliberate Practice Plan

- One thing you have learned about yourself as a therapist
- One thing you have learned about your client(s)
 - One skill you would like to build
 - When will you do it? How often?
 - How will you know if you did it?
 - How will you know it is working?

Want more?



Free practice resources at languageasintervention.com

Slides will be posted to contextualscience.org

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Need credit for this session?

Please don't forget to scan out.



What did you think?...

complete the 3 question quickeval for this session at

<https://contextualscience.org/quickeval>

This was presentation was session # 115