

# Communication Techniques in Psychological and Pedagogical Counseling in the Context of the Cognitive-Behavioral Approach

**Yuliia CHYSTOVSKA<sup>1</sup>**

**Andrey KERNAS<sup>2</sup>**

**Myroslava KULESHA-LIUBINETS<sup>3</sup>**

**Natalia KOVALENKO<sup>4</sup>**

**Maryna FEDORENKO<sup>5</sup>**

**Olena MEDIANOVA<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Doctor of Science of Psychology, Professor, Head of the Psychology Department, Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, [j.chystovska@ukr.net](mailto:j.chystovska@ukr.net)

<sup>2</sup> Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of Practical Psychology, Odessa National Maritime University, [kernas1979@gmail.com](mailto:kernas1979@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> PhD (Psychology), Associate Professor of the Department of Clinical and Rehabilitation Psychology, Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, [myroslava.kulesha@pnu.edu.ua](mailto:myroslava.kulesha@pnu.edu.ua)

<sup>4</sup> Doctor of Pedagogical Science, Professor, Professor of Psychology Department, Sumy Makarenko State Pedagogical University, Sumy, Ukraine, [NatalyaKovalenko@i.ua](mailto:NatalyaKovalenko@i.ua), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2854-2461>

<sup>5</sup> PhD of Psychology, Associate Professor at the Department of special psychology and medicine, Faculty of Special and Inclusive Education, Dragomanov Ukrainian State University, [m.v.fedorenko@npu.edu.ua](mailto:m.v.fedorenko@npu.edu.ua)

<sup>6</sup> Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Social Psychology, Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University, [Al.medyanova@gmail.com](mailto:Al.medyanova@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *The article reveals the importance of psychological counseling - competent assistance of a psychologist to one or more clients in finding solutions to problems, taking into account the peculiarities of the psyche and ways of professional or personal improvement. Important in counseling behavioral and cognitive approaches. In the early stages of development, human and cognitive approaches develop separately from each other, but already in the first theories of human knowledge it is possible to explore motives for organizing knowledge: indeed, the use of cognitive processes is necessary to change behavior - this view is already heard in Tolman's concept of "cognitive maps". Note that psychologists also focus on the need for action at a higher level. Today's theories deal with cognitive and behavioral processes, so they often emphasize a unified cognitive-behavioral approach rather than on two separate parts. The article provides concepts and describes the principles of the cognitive-behavioral approach; defines the tasks of psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach; presents categories of irrationality of opinions in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach of counseling; offers communication techniques in psychological and pedagogical counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach.*

**Keywords:** *Cognitive psychology, life skills counseling, methodological behaviorism, cognitive behavioral psychologists, categories of irrationality of opinions.*

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## Introduction

In recent years, cognitive psychology has had a significant influence on the behavioral paradigm of counseling and psychotherapy. The result of this influence has been the emergence of a cognitive direction in psychotherapy and counseling: rational-emotional therapy, cognitive psychotherapy, reality therapy, life skills counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, etc. The article combines both the fundamentals of methodological behaviorism and our own developments. For example, the importance for behaviorism of a person's ability to minimize the negative impact of factors on his life and activity, taken up by proponents of the cognitive school and supplemented by the definition that this ability is based on his ability to think rationally. This skill is proclaimed as the most important way to control the influence of the environment and the basis for positive choice of means of protection, goal achievement, support and prediction of behavior. The importance of "self-control techniques" in this line of psychotherapy is especially emphasized. The functional analysis of behavioral connections between cause and effect plays an extremely important role. Domestic and foreign scientists have investigated this problem.

Rogers (1995) proves that the process of positive behavior change is influenced by: genetic conditionality of human sensitivity to reinforcement - the presence of individual differences in ease or difficulty, conditionality of certain specific behavior; system of positive reinforcement of "correct" behavior; quality of verbal environment, which the person gets in one way or another, the form of feedback in response to his or her behavior (approval - rejection); ability to discriminate between stimuli and patterns; individual control over behavior seen as changing undesirable behavior rather than suppressing it.

Reeder (1999), Christopher (1996), Seligman (1997) prove that as a result of this understanding of the change process, the main things of the mechanism of cognitive-behavioral therapy and counseling emerged and developed - using the principles of learning to solve behavioral problems in clients: replacing one undesirable type of behavior with another, more acceptable and normal. The main values of the cognitive-behavioral approach are: learning - responsive, operant, cognitive - through observation; self-arming; demand potential; behavioral potential; activity freedom; challenge; verbal coding; model; change of control; pictorial representation; environmental planning.

The purpose of the article is to give the concept and describe the principles of the cognitive-behavioral approach; define the tasks of

psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach; present the categories of irrationality of opinions in the context of the cognitive-behavioral counseling approach; offer communication techniques in psychological and educational counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach.

### **The concept and principles of the cognitive-behavioral approach**

Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy and psychoanalysis are the two main directions of current psychotherapy.

The basic principles of the cognitive-behavioral approach.

1. Cognitive-behavioral psychologists do not examine the causes of disorders and patients' pasts, but treat present-day disorders: therapists focus on behavioral activity, whereas cognitive therapists focus on what a person thinks about himself or herself now.

2. Therapy for both is a learning process and the therapist is like a teacher. Cognitive behavioral therapists teach new ways of behaving, while cognitive therapists teach new ways of thinking.

3. Both patients do their homework outside of the treatment they learned in class.

4. Both prefer a "hands-on" approach facilitated by multiple theories of client learning.

An insight into human nature and understanding of the existence of disorders in the cognitive-behavioral approach is related to the concept of knowledge: a person acquires all behaviors, even non-adaptive ones, through various forms of learning.

Behaviorists describe this process using the formula  $V - I$  (stimulus - response), where all behaviors have input stimuli. Psychologists' knowledge of the mind is designed to emphasize cognitive forms of knowledge. For their part, the influence of stimuli is mediated through cognitive processes - a person's thoughts and beliefs.

Behavioral therapy "behavior modification" first emerged in opposition to the psychoanalytic approach that dominated American therapeutic practice in the 1930s and finally formed into an independent approach in the 1950s.

There are three strands that can be seen as steps in the development of human therapy;

1) Classical writings based on the principles of classical conditioning and the doctrinal teachings of A. Ellis (Ellis, 1996);

2) Work on operant conditioning by J. Casey (Casey, 1996);

3) Essay on cognitive learning by J. Holland (1994).

According to the method of access any form of action is acquired through the process of learning. According to J. Holland's (1994) teaching, the newborn child is a "blank slate" on which adults "write" their work. The result as a form of adult personality depends on the impressions (stimuli) that this person received during life.

Neurotic behaviors (e.g., phobias) can be produced by learning. J. Holland (1994) demonstrated this process through experiments with the boy Albert, who was taught to be afraid of a white owl by associating its appearance with a terrible stimulus - a harsh sound. After several such combinations, the child developed a white fear with which he had previously behaved calmly. In addition, the child subsequently experienced a generalization - he or she began to be afraid not only of the accountant, but also of a white fur coat, Santa Claus's beard - all white and shaggy, like a rat. According to J. Watson and his followers, it is learning through a combination of unconditioned and conditioned stimuli that forms all of a person's psychological problems.

Relying on the theories of learning, behavioral therapists view neuroses and personality abnormalities as expressions of maladaptive behavior developed during ontogeny. Finding out the complex of causes of developmental abnormalities was considered superfluous.

### **Objectives of psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach**

The goal of psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach is modification of this behavior. In this case, the following options are possible;

a) acquisition by the client of patterns of behavior does not exist, but is necessary;

b) to reinforce (act) according to forms of necessary behavior, examples of which the client has, but for some reason is oppressed;

c) elimination of unnecessary, maladaptive behaviors.

Cognitive psychology emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as a reaction to the prevailing idea of behavior in the self about the objection of internal parts of the psychiatric institution. Cognitive psychology is based on the idea of "human cognition" and uses theoretical terms that are used to describe the cognitive environment (cognitive maps, diagrams, plans, etc.).

Therefore, the focus of the cognitive approach is on the analysis of knowledge. The main representatives of the cognitive approach in psychotherapy and psychological counseling are;

1) Mays & Franks (1980) - creator of cognitive therapy;

2) Ellis (1996) - developed the theory of treating the rational-motivated creator;

3) Thompson (1992) - developer of methods of stress inoculation and art therapy), etc.

The basic concepts of the cognitive approach are cognitive elements and structures. Cognitive elements are a person's knowledge about the world, himself, others, and the elements of information. Cognitive structures are an integral combination of cognitive elements.

Three main processes become interconnected in cognitive structures;

- differences;

- integration;

- correlation of parts.

If cognitive processes do not work properly, cognitive distortions occur.

There are the following types of cognitive distortions:

1) All-or-nothing type reflections. This is the order of inquiries through which any error leads to loss of self and soul. The main thing is that states are not dispirited, that they are incapable of expediency;

2) overgeneralization - every negative event is elevated to failure;

3) selective negative positioning;

4) description of a positive impression;

5) genuine acts of love are carefully done. One does not want to fixate on acts of kindness toward oneself that are not there, and not what is there;

6) "tyranny of obligation" (this is the term proposed by C. Horney): "I have to be happy in everything, I am loved by everyone. If I am wrong, I am a fool. If someone disagrees with me, he or she is not the one who doesn't love me."

7) labeling: "I am defeated."

8) personalizing: "Everyone thinks for themselves how to finish me off".

These facts manifest themselves in what is known as broad thinking, or in irrational beliefs that arise involuntarily in the mind when certain things are interpreted. Opinions, not things themselves, evoke certain emotions-so different individuals have different emotions in the same situation. Identifying an automatic thought (or irrational belief) and changing it to a rational system that portrays reality means changing a person's emotional state. Therefore, the main goal of treatment and counseling is to identify and change irrational beliefs into rational ones.

Remen et al. (1985) expressed this opinion in the formula LBS (where L - action, B - spontaneous decision, C - reaction). Ellis (1996) independently developed a similar formula - , where. B - beliefs (can be rational or irrational); C - emotional reactions (adequate if thoughts are rational, and inadequate if thoughts are irrational); o - discussion (soft or hard; only hard, i.e., emotional; discussion can lead to result - change of thinking); This is an effective philosophy, involving the client in the discussion.

### **Categories of irrationality of opinions in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach**

Ellis (1996) distinguished four main categories of irrational opinions;

1) Irrational thinking is a fundamental obligation, which is the source of all other cognitive formations; expressed in the speech of the latter by the words "should", in the effective philosophy change these words to "want", "better for me";

2) Catastrophe - from "I take off" to the tragic perception of things, expressed by the words "terrible," "so", they should be changed to "yes, unpleasant, but I survived," etc.;

3) Condemnation, ascribing blame - manifested in speech by the words "myself", "she", "them", i.e. ascribing to what happens to others;

4) Generalization - generalization of singular phenomena, with the words "always", "never", "all", "no one", etc. (Storr, 1980).

The basic strategy for defining the plan is organized as follows:

1) identifying common (irrational) thoughts that elicit inappropriate emotions and behaviors in the client;

2) turning these thoughts into rational ones using a large number of specialized techniques.

The basic techniques of the cognitive-behavioral approach. Cognitive-behavioral approaches differ in technique and each technique is optimized for a particular type of situation.

All techniques can be divided into three parts (Halaidiuk et al., 2018; Maksymchuk et al., 2018):

1) they are aimed at correcting behavior;

2) attempts to correct thinking;

3) are related to the emotional impact.

Techniques are focused on the correction of behavior.

1. Systematic technique of desensitization.

This technique is used when deviations in behavior are caused by fear, anxiety, horror. The theory of correction is over-the-top, implemented by the principle of inverse suppression. This technique was developed by Hall.

It contains three steps: relaxation training, construction of a hierarchy of anxious stimuli and desensitization proper (Sitovsky et al., 2019; Maksymchuk et al., 2020).

The first step in desensitization is autogenic training. The use of relaxation is based on the fact that there is anxiety that the discomfort is due to muscle tension. Anxiety is the opposite of relaxation. Thus, the client learns to relax completely.

The second level of desensitization involves a difficult situation, which can be very different (fear of flying in an airplane, fear of rats, etc.). The conditions are rated from least traumatic to traumatic (from 0 to 100 points), thus creating a hierarchy of stimuli. Such a situation was clearly developed in the client interview.

The third step is desensitization proper. After relaxation, the psychologist starts to immerse the client into an uncomfortable situation - real or because of his or her imagination. The conditions are presented as the level of traumatic influence grows. Dreaming about the slightest disturbing event, visualization stops and the version of the disturbing element is weakened.

Psychologists report whether the client remains restless when presented with the situation. If he or she remains relaxed, the psychologist presents the following situation.

2. The method of paradoxical intension (proposed by the existential psychologist V. Frankl, but actively used in the humane approach). By means of this technique, the patient is asked to stop struggling with fear, but instead deliberately evokes and even tries to intensify it. It includes the use of jokes.

3. Token programs (a system developed by Skinner). It includes techniques for developing desired behaviors and implementing standards, as well as developing a reward system. For each manifestation of the desired behavior, the client receives a token, and after collecting a certain number of tokens, the desired reward.

4. Behavior Modeling. The basic model is a technique based on the example of social science by A. Bandura. The model consists in that the client is given a model of behavior that he or she does not master, which is modeled by the psychologist, other participants of the training group or by video. It works with the client's procedures and automation models. Modeling is the basis of the most effective methods of training.

5. Disgust inducing technique (aversive therapy), which uses the principles of classical conditioning. It consists of combining a negative stimulus (e.g., an electric shock) with an undesirable behavior. It is used to

treat, for example, alcoholism, neurotic stuttering, sexual perversions, etc. This technique is not used in counseling.

6. Punishment. Punishment is used to prevent undesirable behavior and agrees to present undesirable stimuli even after the client demonstrates undesirable behavior. An example of punishment is the system of many. Punishment follows unwanted behavior - for example, in the treatment of hand tremor (a pen with an electric circuit is used as a punishment).

7. The self-monitoring procedure. The mode of action uses the client's principle, that is, the client must use his or her own methods of action. Thus, he can reward or punish himself by controlling his behavior (e.g., struggling with an overweight problem).

8. Experimenting with behavior - trying to do what the client fears.

### **Communication techniques in psychological and pedagogical counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach**

The majority of techniques and strategies of dialogue in psychological and pedagogical consultation in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach were developed by Ellis (1996).

There are the following general strategies of communication:

1. empiricism of cooperation. Clients are supporters in researching facts that confirm or refute the client's knowledge. Interpretations or assumptions discussed for hypotheses requiring testing.

2. Socratic dialogue. Its essence is that the client comes to logical conclusions based on questions the therapist asks.

3. The therapist-led discovery helps the client change maladaptive beliefs. The therapist identifies behavioral problems and logical fallacies, creating new experiences through behavioral experiments. These experiences lead to the acquisition of new skills and attitudes. The patient learns to correct faulty processing so that he finally becomes independent of the clinician. The clinician does not encourage the patient to accept new opinions, but encourages the patient to use information, events, and opportunities to become realistic.

Specific cognitive communication skills should be used in psycho-educational counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach.

1. The technique of filling the void consists in asking you to "fill the void" between the event and the movement toward it - to become aware of the thoughts arising from the event and to identify the emotion.

2. Direct proof, or logical analysis - the client is logically proved inconsistent with his irrational perceptions.



3. Decatastrophizing (the "what if" or "falling arrow" technique). When the client has anxieties (usually interpersonal fears, such as fear of speaking), he is asked, "What would happen if you did this?" He answers both and asks again: what will happen until the client voices the "fundamental fear" or realizes that nothing scary will happen.

4. Reattribution-this technique looks at alternative causes of events. It changes the view of the case.

5. Reformulation - used to move a person who believes that matter is not contained. The problem is reformulated according to the patient's behavior, e.g., instead of "No one is paying attention to me," "I need to reach out to other people."

6. Decentralization is the use where the object is personified. The client is offered behavioral experiments to observe others.

Exposure at the emotional level:

1) ways of dramatizing benefits and obligations (the difference between "would rather" and "should"). And so they are said to be playful, sculptural, humorous, irrational thoughts that lead to ridicule;

2) the use of unconditional acceptance, demonstrating to the client that the counselor agrees to use it despite the presence of negative characteristics, which gives the client the impulse to accept it;

3) emotionally saturated persuasion (the so-called Ellis hot discussions, the "verses of the mind" that Ellis (1996) specifically composes for each of his clients under a specific irrational idea);

4) encouragement of risky behavior (for example, one of Ellis's exercises is wearing a muse outside of intercourse; such exercises are used to release the client, relieve shame and fear of inadequacy);

5) pleasure skills (desired by the psychologist);

6) the method of rational-emotional images (REI), a kind of "mental training" of appropriate emotions - a psychotraumatic situation (for example, a public speaking), to feel the emotion that usually arises at this (horror), and then to match this effort of will, they change the passion (Maksymchuk et al., 2018).

The techniques of the cognitive-behavioral approach can be used in psychological counseling since many of them do not require extensive study. The consultant can teach the client a certain technique, such as cognitive retrieval, and then the client can use it independently. Cognitive-behavioral activities allow for the formulation of counseling hypotheses both at the behavioral level (lack of behavioral patterns; most transparent to work in a counseling environment) and at the cognitive level (distorted thinking, presence of irrational thoughts; responsibilities, etc.).

## Conclusions

The article gives the concept and describes the principles of the cognitive-behavioral approach and concludes that in recent years cognitive psychology has had a significant influence on the behavioral paradigm of counseling and psychotherapy, and the result of this influence is the appearance of a cognitive direction in psychotherapy and counseling, psychotherapy, real therapy, life skills counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, etc. Cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy and psychoanalysis are the two main directions of current psychotherapy. The objectives of psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach are defined and the goals of psychotherapy and counseling according to the humanistic approach are modification of this behavior. In this case, the following options are possible for the client to acquire behavioral patterns that do not exist, but are necessary; to reinforce (act) according to forms of necessary behavior, examples of which the client has, but for some reason is oppressed; elimination of unnecessary, non-adaptive behavioral forms. The article presents categories of irrational thoughts in the context of the cognitive-behavioral counseling approach and identifies four main categories of irrational thoughts: irrational thinking, catastrophizing, judging, attributing blame; generalizing. Techniques of communication in psychological and pedagogical counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach of counseling are also proposed.

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*The Authors 5, 6* proposed communication techniques in psychological and pedagogical counseling in the context of the cognitive-behavioral approach.

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