

Implementing the EASE Shift Perspective principle: CBT Techniques

EASE = Education, Awareness, Shift perspective, Empower

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy provides many techniques for helping people Shift perspective on stigma and mental illness so that they look at their own thoughts and can adjust their thinking to be more accurate and constructive rather than (self) stigmatizing.

A few of these include:

- Help people understand the CBT triangle (see slide). It shows that how we THINK about a situation impacts how we FEEL about it which impacts how we ACT. Therefore, thinking about a situation in a different way can change the whole experience, including of stigma. Discuss examples to illustrate.
- Help clients become aware of whether they hold negative beliefs about themselves that are due to societal stigma about mental health and mental illness. A sensitive discussion about whether someone ever feels ashamed to have a mental illness can uncover self-stigma, so it can be discussed as something that is not their fault, but is harmful and something they can have control over.
- If someone is aware of having habitual self-stigmatizing thoughts, you can help them think through whether those thoughts are helpful and valid, and decide whether they want to keep thinking them. If not you can encourage them to consciously decide to practice thinking more accurate and healthful substitutes each time the negative habitual ones creep in.
- Some clients may be familiar with the “3 C’s” which is a formalized process for doing both the above techniques (Catch it, Check it, Change it). If so, practice and encourage them to apply the 3 C’s to self-stigmatizing thoughts.
- Others may be familiar with “thought records” which is a related way of helping someone do similar things, from a different variation of CBT. Again, if this is something they already know, encourage and help them to apply it to self-stigmatizing thoughts.
- Teach the 3C’s or Thought Records techniques to clients (and staff) that don’t know them, and apply them to self-stigma.
- See the back of this page for one example of a worksheet you could use.



Event	Immediate Feeling	Catch it: What is the thought behind the feeling?	Check it: Is this accurate? Is this thought helpful to me?	Change it: What are more accurate, more helpful thoughts?	New feeling
<u>Example:</u> On my way to therapy	I feel shame. What is the thought that leads to this feeling?	"All I am is a mental patient."	This thought makes me feel bad and is not true. It is not a useful thought.	I am more than my diagnosis. Therapy helps me reach my goals.	Hopeful!