Psychiatric Care Made Easy and Understandable
- Using the biopsychosocial model in everyday practice -

Tom Hastings MD, FRCPC
Staff Psychiatrist, Halton Healthcare Services
Associate Clinical Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry, McMaster University
Lecturer, Dept. of Psychiatry, University of Toronto
The Human Experience

- Exists on a continuum which includes “normal” mental states and mental “disorders.”
- Can be understood by considering 5 key concepts.
The Human Experience

Level of Distress / Symptoms

1. Mild: “I can handle it”
2. Moderate: “I don’t know if I can take it”
3. SEVERE: “Breaking point” “I can’t take it anymore!”
4. “Make it stop, now!” – Impulsive Behaviour

Time

The Problem Zone!
Mental “Disorders”

• Are largely defined by the frequency, duration and degree of signs and symptoms and/or distress experienced

• Can occur when:
  ➢ One or more of these 5 points are disrupted …
  AND
  ➢ The person enters the “problem zone”
Mental “Disorders”
Comprehensive Treatment

Should Involve …

• consideration of specific and individualized interventions at all relevant points

Because …

• The impact of these 5 points differs among individuals and specific “disorders”
5 Therapeutic Interventions:
1) Coping Strategies    4) Identify and Reduce Triggers
2) Crisis Plan          5) Reduce Baseline Stress
3) Comparing Symptoms  

Level of Distress / Symptoms

Time

5 Intervention Points
1. **Coping Strategies** - to help cope with stress
2. Crisis Plan - to help prevent impulsive acts
3. Comparing Symptoms - to increase awareness
4. Identify and Reduce Triggers
5. Reduce Baseline Stress
Coping strategies should be used when you have a thought or feeling you want to change.
Coping Strategies – philosophical underpinnings

At any given point in time one’s attention span is limited.
Coping Strategies

1. Physical:  
e.g. walk, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, Tai-chi

2. Intellectual:  
e.g. thought records, journaling positives, reading, sudoku

3. Meditative/Spiritual/Vegetative:  
e.g. meditation, prayer, TV, video games
Guidelines:

• Variety … 1 from each category
• Rehearsal … practice them
• Consistency … in the same order
• Monitor, Evaluate, Adapt
## Coping Strategies – data collection & evaluation

**My Coping Strategies:**

1. Walk  
2. Read  
3. Music  
4. TV  
5. Yoga

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/time</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mood Before</th>
<th>Mood After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td>Depressed 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td>Depressed 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mood Score:**
0 = “not at all a problem”
100 = “the worst imaginable”

**Learning Points:**
Walking …

*Frequency:* worked 2 out of 3 times

*Effectiveness:* average improvement 20 points (i.e. \(0+20+40=60 \div 3 = 20\))
Therapeutic Interventions

1. Coping Strategies - *to help cope with stress*

2. **Crisis Plan** - *to help prevent impulsive acts*

3. Comparing Symptoms - *to increase awareness*

4. Identify and Reduce Triggers

5. Reduce Baseline Stress
A Crisis plan should be used to prevent impulsive behaviour; preferably after you have tried coping strategies.
Impulsive acts may be prevented by the exercise or application of control.

Optimizing self-control is a treatment goal.

Any unnecessary application of external control may prevent the development of self-control and should therefore be avoided.

Safety is an important treatment goal but not if it is at the expense of recovery.

Recovery = “having a life worth living”
Crisis Plan

What to do when Coping Strategies fail:

1. +/- Take “as needed” medication
2. Talk to someone … *just to talk, not about how you are feeling*
   1)  
   2)  
   3)  
3. Be around people … *just for their presence, not to talk about how you are feeling*
   1)  
   2)  
   3)  
4. Access a mental health crisis support (i.e. anyone who is willing, available & helpful) … *now, tell them how you are feeling*
   1)  
   2)  
   3)  
5. Go to the emergency room
Therapeutic Interventions

1. Coping Strategies - *to help cope with stress*
2. Crisis Plan - *to help prevent impulsive acts*
3. **Comparing Symptoms** - *to increase awareness*
4. Identify and Reduce Triggers
5. Reduce Baseline Stress
Comparing Symptoms

Level of Distress / Symptoms

Time

Problem Zone
A Focus on Emotions:

• Emotional awareness can be learned.

• Paying attention to emotions can improve emotional awareness.

• Being aware of emotions can help you better anticipate and address problems.
Comparing Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Craving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Depressed 90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Depressed 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which day was the worst? Why?

- Compare “identical” symptoms, evaluating for differences
- Scoring should take into account **feelings, thoughts** and **behaviours**
Therapeutic Interventions

1. Coping Strategies - *to help cope with stress*
2. Crisis Plan - *to help prevent impulsive acts*
3. Comparing Symptoms - *to increase awareness*
4. **Identify and Reduce Triggers**
5. Reduce Baseline Stress
Identify and Reduce Triggers

Level of Distress / Symptoms

1. Problem Zone

Time

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Identify and Reduce Triggers

Identifying Triggers:

• Self-reflection (i.e. look for recurring patterns in mood data)
• Therapy (i.e. obtain the perspective of others)

Reduce Triggers:

• Problem solving
Therapeutic Interventions

1. Coping Strategies - *to help cope with stress*

2. Crisis Plan - *to help prevent impulsive acts*

3. Comparing Symptoms - *to increase awareness*

4. Identify and Reduce Triggers

5. Reduce Baseline Stress
Reduce Baseline Stress

Biopsychosocial Factors

Level of Distress / Symptoms

Problem Zone

Time
Reduce Baseline Stress

**Biological Factors**

Modifying Brain Chemistry:

- Add Biological Stabilizers *(e.g. medication, ECT)*
- Remove Biological De-stabilizers *(e.g. ETOH/drugs, some medications, medical problems)*
- Adherence monitoring/enhancement
Reduce Baseline Stress

Psychological Factors

“Events from the past affecting one’s present experience.”

Therapy:

- Common Themes … self-esteem, trust, emotional control
- Reduce Cognitive Distortions
- Behaviour Change
Environmental Factors

- Address basic needs (e.g. $, housing)
- Change or limit exposure to toxic environments (e.g. interpersonal problems)
- Add/strengthen supports
- Reduce social isolation

May involve … skills training, education, problem solving, behavioural activation
ABC Psychiatry

Level of Distress / Symptoms

Time

1. Coping Strategies

2. Crisis Plan

3. Awareness (↑)

4. Buttons / Triggers (↓)

5. Baseline (↓)
Rx. of mental disorders ... beyond biology
Psychiatric Care Made Easy and Understandable - ABC Psychiatry -

Is part of the

NUTS & BOLTS of PSYCHIATRY
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Case #1

• Depression
Case #2

- Anxiety
Case #3

• Schizophrenia
Case #4

- Borderline Personality Disorder