

**BASIC COUNSELLING SKILLS  
BUDDHIST COLLEGE OF SINGAPORE —  
ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021 SEMESTER 1**

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# LESSONS TOGETHER



| Week | Topic                                   | Sub-Topics  |
|------|---|---|
| 5    | Cognitive Behavioral (CBT) perspectives | Basic Tenets of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy i.e ABC model, REBT          |
| 6    | Cognitive Behavioral (CBT) perspectives | Dialectical behavior therapy<br>Mindfulness-based CBT<br>Criticism of CBT |
| 7    | Application - CBT                       | Case Study / Video  |
|      |   |   |
|      |   |   |

# COGNITIVE- BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH



Humans can think rationally and irrationally.



We have the biological and cultural tendency to think in ways that needlessly disturb ourselves.



However, people also have the tendency for growth and self-actualization.



People should accept themselves for the good and not-to-good parts.

# COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY - LEARNING

**❑ Learning is the relative permanent change in behaviour due to experience and training.**

For learning to occur, the person should act differently, speak differently more than just thinking differently.

**❑ Learning is a reaction to adapt to the environment.**

Counselees learn their unwanted/unhealthy behavior from their environments.

**❑ Counsellors can use learning theories to help in the 'unlearning' process of these unwanted behaviors and promote the learning of healthy behaviours**

For example, counselees who learned to cope with stress by drinking alcohol, behavioral counselling will work on

1. Unlearning the use alcohol as a coping method and
2. Learning a new coping methods to deal with stress.

# LEARNED BEHAVIOURS — WHO WE ARE

## Learned Behaviors

Behavior becomes a product of being in an environment and the person puts up a new behavior in order to adapt to this environment - this is learned behavior.



Personality - is gathered from what we have experienced from the environment. We learn our patterns of behaving from our experiences as a child and as an adult.

Abnormal Behaviors - These forms of behaviors are obviously not hard-wired in our systems and thus, phobias, obsessive rituals and irrational thoughts are all gathered from the environment. Abnormal behaviors are learned.

# CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

The background of the slide features a blurred image of several glass jars. On the left, a jar is filled with numerous light-colored wooden sticks, possibly cotton swabs or applicators. To its right, another jar contains white, round pills. The jars are arranged in a row, and the lighting is soft, creating a clean, clinical aesthetic.

Classical Conditioning is the most basic of learning theories. One does not have to pay attention or to use their thinking in order to learn.

Stimuli that are presented at the same time will be associated or paired with one another.

Conditioning occurs when we 'learn' to associate 2 stimuli together in such a way that the two stimuli produce the same behavioral response.

# CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

## Phobic Reactions

Phobias are irrational fear of objects or events. These phobic objects are usually associated with something that brings fear to the person suffering from phobia. So if you encounter someone who is intensely afraid of an object : this person was conditioned to fear that object by associating it with a past memory that generates fear.

## Superstitions

Superstitious ideas and beliefs spring forth from associated experiences. These experiences can be tagged in one's memory as being good or bad. Take for example the belief that Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> is a day of bad luck. This belief is simply learned from past experiences of people who experienced bad things on that day (Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>).

So, for some people who win the lottery after buying a ticket during a full moon will be conditioned to believe that buying lottery tickets during a full moon will increase one's chances of winning.

# OPERANT CONDITIONING

Instead of dealing with conditioned learning, Operant Conditioning focuses on rewards and punishments.

In operant conditioning, the consequences that follow a behavior are important in forming the bond between the stimulus and response. Generally, there are two types of consequences:

Rewards are any behavioral consequences that are pleasurable to the organism. Given this nature, organisms seek rewards in all their behaviors. A reward can be: food, cold drink, money, acknowledgement, etc.

Punishments are any behavioral consequences that are painful to the organism. Punishments are naturally avoided by organisms. These can take the form of: spanking, monetary fines, physical pain, etc.

# OPERANT CONDITIONING

**Operant Conditioning focuses on the strength of the bond between stimulus and response.**

A strong bond between stimulus and response shows that the connection is stable and the response is more likely to be elicited again. A weak bond will basically mean that extinction can readily happen.

How powerful is the bond between enclosed places and panic attacks? This is a condition called claustrophobia (intense fear of enclosed places). For a behaviorist to understand this problem and help the counsellee, one needs to see how powerful the bond is between the stimulus (enclosed places) and the response (panic attack).

If the connection between the 2 elements are strong, because of the type of operant conditioning, then it will be a lot harder for the phobic to unlearn his/her panic reaction to enclosed places.

# LAWS OF EFFECTS

## **Behaviors that are rewarded will be repeated.**

An example of this is what trainers do to the animals during animal shows in zoos. After the animals obey the trainer and do the stunt, they always get the reward; and for these creatures it always takes the form of food. This is done so that the animals will know that what they did was correct and so will be repeated the next time the trainers give the same stimulus.

## **Behaviors that are punished will be extinct.**

If we do something that yields to unpleasant consequences, a healthy organism would know better than to do it again. Discipline follows the pattern of the second law of effect that states that if you punish someone for a particular behavior then the chances of the behavior being produced again will be reduced.

## **Behaviors that are not rewarded will be unlearned.**

If a person is giving all his effort to do something nice (and difficult) make sure he is rewarded for it. These are practices adopted by the industrial psychologists or the human resource specialists. Good managers know how to reward good staff. Why is this? Unlearning doesn't just occur after punishments (Law of Effect #2), unlearning can also occur for behaviors that are not rewarded enough.



# OPERANT CONDITIONING IN EXPLAINING BEHAVIOUR

Explaining the phenomenon of Depression using Operant Conditioning.

Why do they last for months and sometimes even years? How can we stop this energy consuming condition?

Going back to the strengths of connection between Stimulus and Response, people with depression has formed a strong bond between a stimulus (which is unique for them) and their low energy reaction towards it.

Depression lasts for a long time in our society today, simply because people around us reward depressives. It is during times of depression when people with depression get the attention of their friends and family.



# OPERANT CONDITIONING IN EXPLAINING BEHAVIOUR

Explaining Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder using Operant Conditioning.

The compulsive hand washer loves to wash their hands every time. This should give us a clue to the dynamics of obsessive-compulsive disorder. What makes the bond of stimulus and hand washing so strong? Answer: They receive certain rewards from it. What rewards you may ask? Now that's your job to find out as a counsellor!

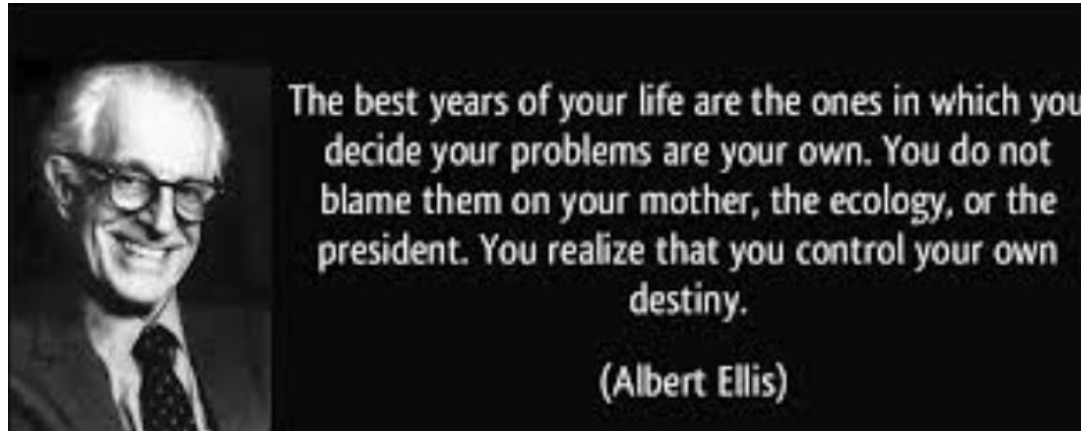
Explaining Addictions using Operant Conditioning.

Addictions occur over and over again simply because it is sensually rewarding for the addict. Substance addiction are not healthy for the person but the rewards of the object of addiction are immediate while the punishments, which will come at a longer time, are not powerful enough to convince the addict to let go of the behavior.



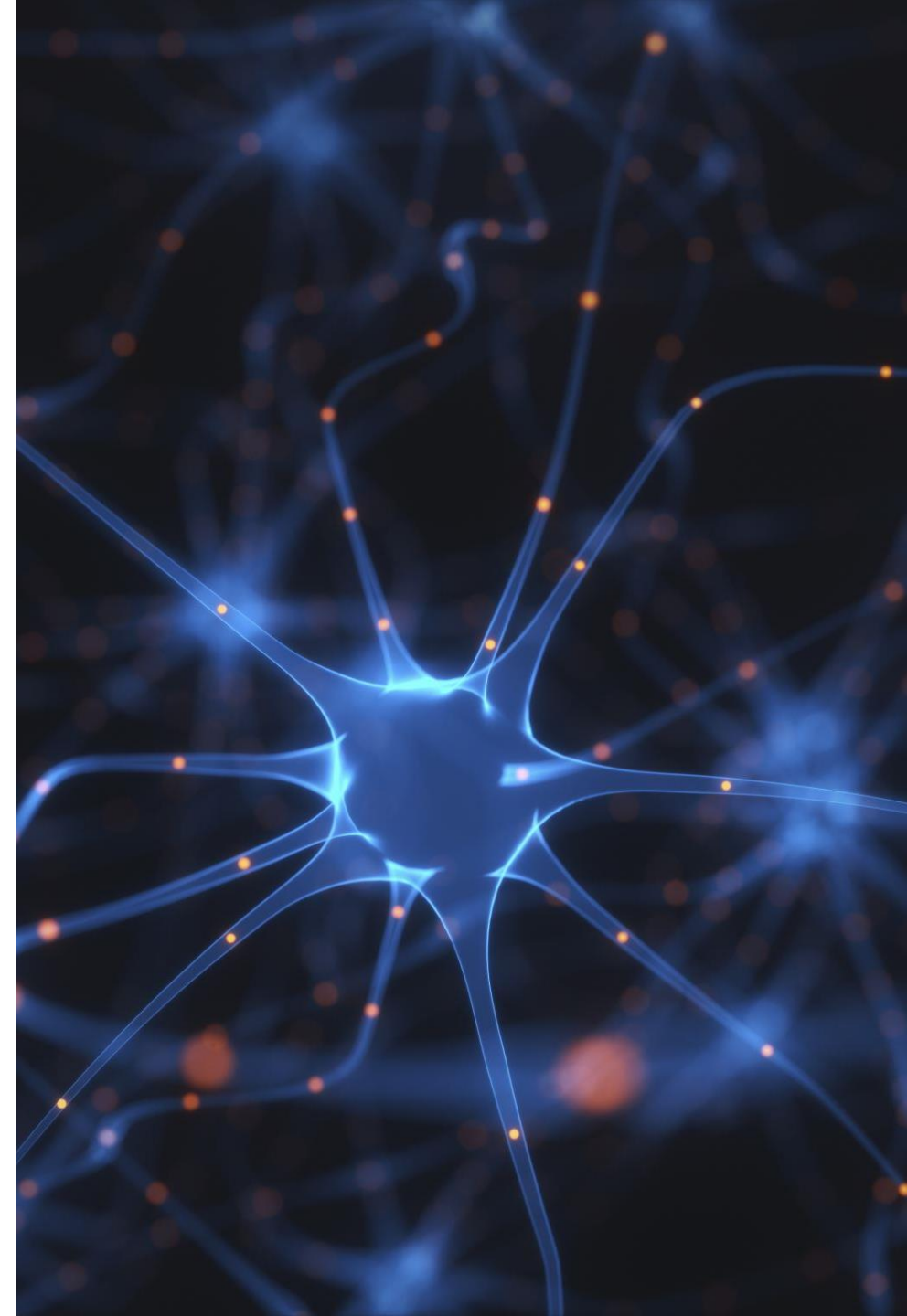
# RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

- Albert Ellis (1913-2007) - Founder of Rational Emotive Behavioural Theory (REBT); 'grandfather' of Cognitive Behavioural Theory (CBT).



# RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

- Negative thinking reinforces early disturbing experiences.
- Negative thinking is often the result of information conveyed to client / counsellee at an early stage by parents or other important people.
- People frequently demand perfection from themselves and others and become 'illogically upset' over the frustrations of their life.
- People become disturbed, not by events themselves but by their own interpretations of those events.
- Therapy that focuses on changing cognitions in order to produce the desired changes in affect and behavior.



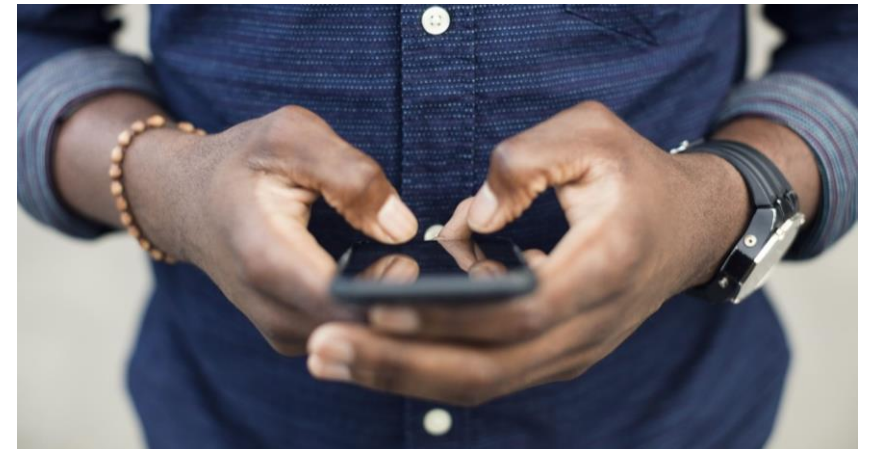
# RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

**Irrational thinking often produces dysfunctional emotional states.**

Going back to the theory that thinking precedes behavior, dysfunctional emotional states such as depression, melancholy, and even anger are all produced by errors in one's thinking. If people only think logically, objectively, and rationally, dysfunctional emotional states would be reduced.

**People have a natural tendency to think irrationally which gets reinforced by the environment.**

The environment contributes to our irrational thinking which in turn directs our behaviors to unhealthy directions. Media, family structures, and culture itself today contribute to our irrationalities. Consider society's views on beauty, happiness, and perfection. All of them are dictated and proliferated by society, all of them are candidates to bringing irrationalities in our thinking.



# RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY - RATIONAL VS IRRATIONAL THINKING

People perpetuate their own emotional distress by re-propagandizing ourselves with our irrational beliefs.

The most effective way to reduce emotional distress is to change our thinking and our behavior.

Rational thinking leads to a reduction in the frequency, intensity, and duration of emotional disturbance.

The main goal of cognitive-behavioral therapy is to reorient the counselees to think logically and rationally. Once counsellors correct their counselees' irrational thinking (the root), their emotional disturbances disappear.



# 10 COMMON IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

1. It is a dire necessity for an adult to be loved or approved by almost everyone for virtually everything he or she does.
2. One should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects.
3. Certain people are bad, wicked, or villainous and they should be severely blamed and punished for their sins.
4. It is terrible, horrible, and catastrophic when things are not going the way one would like them to go.
5. Human happiness is externally caused and people have little or no ability to control their sorrows or rid themselves of their negative feelings.
6. If something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, one should be terribly occupied with it and upset about it.
7. It is easier to avoid facing many life difficulties and self-responsibilities than to undertake more rewarding forms of self-discipline.
8. The past is all-important and because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely do so.
9. People and things should be different from the way that they are, and it is catastrophic if perfect to the grim realities of life are not immediately found.
10. Maximum human happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction or by passively "enjoying oneself."

# RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY - “SHOULD” AND “MUSTS”

These misleading and disturbance-producing shoulds and musts are irrational.

Frequently used by people who seek to impose demands on themselves and others.

- ❑ I must do well and win the approval of others for my performances, or else I am no good.
- ❑ Other people must treat me considerately, fairly and kindly, and in exactly the way I want them to treat me. If they don't, they are no good and they deserve to be condemned and punished.
- ❑ I must get what I want, when I want it; and I must not get what I don't want. If I don't get what I want, it's terrible, and I can't stand it.





# THANK YOU

Please contact me if you have any questions:

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THANK YOU