Class #4: ABC (STOP) D
Achieving Adaptive Thoughts and Behaviors

What We Will Cover in Class #4:

1. Review Homework From Class #3
   A. Relaxation Diary (5 min.)
   B. ABC(STOP): Diary of Thoughts (20 min.)
   Estimated Time: 25 mins.

2. Mini-Lecture and Discussion: How Changing Thoughts Can Lead To More Helpful Ways To Do Things
   Estimated Time: 5 mins.

   Estimated Time: 30 mins.

4. Refreshment Break
   Estimated Time: 10 mins.

   Estimated Time: 35 mins.

6. Relaxation Ratings and Practice
   Estimated Time: 5 mins.

7. Homework for the Next Class
   Estimated Time: 5 mins.

8. Summary of Class #4
   Estimated Time: 5 mins.

TOTAL TIME = 120 mins.
1. REVIEW HOMEWORK

A. Relaxation Diary. Let us go around the room and share our completed homework assignment.

STOP!
Leaders: Encourage continued practice of the relaxation exercise and daily ratings of tension. Praise all attempts.

B. ABC(STOP): Complete Diary of Thoughts. Let us go around the room again to share our completed assignments. We will ask for several volunteers to read theirs out loud and we will use them as examples for the rest of the group.

STOP!
Leaders: Record A-B-C columns on the board or on a flip chart and ask a volunteer permission to write out at least 1 complete example as it is given. Than gently “correct” any errors about how to separate thoughts and feelings. Ask the volunteer and/or the rest of the group to identify the unhelpful thinking patterns in the example. If there’s time, do a second example.
Please Use This Page For Taking Notes
2. MINI-LECTURE AND DISCUSSION: HOW CHANGING THOUGHTS CAN LEAD TO MORE HELPFUL WAYS TO DO THINGS:

A ——— B —— C ——— (STOP) → D
ACTION BELIEF CONSEQUENCES STOP DO

D = DO/WHAT DO I DO:

Once you have identified the thoughts behind your feelings of frustration and stopped them using your visual stop sign, take some time to think about how you can see things in more adaptive or helpful ways. This is the Do portion of the ABC Model.

Do consider other possibilities to explain why an angry or frustrated reaction may lead to more stress.

Do respond to stressful situations in a new, thoughtful, logical, way rather than emotionally reacting to them.

Do take advantage of your ability to reason things out.

STOP!

Leaders: You may need to start by reviewing the material from last week, particularly if homework compliance was low and you did not have a good example to review, to set the stage.
3. MINI-LECTURE; HOW TO ACHIEVE ADAPTIVE THOUGHTS

As we discussed in the last class, our thinking can strongly affect our emotions. We described different kinds of unhelpful thoughts. The first step in improving your mood is to recognize your unhelpful thoughts. You have been learning to do this now. The second step is to replace them with more positive and realistic thoughts. You can use the descriptions below to identify which adaptive thoughts may be most helpful in your situation. We have also provided some examples of more adaptive self-statements.

We will review them now and ask you if you think some of these will “fit” your situation and could be helpful to you.

- In order to achieve adaptive thoughts you have to evaluate the caregiving situation by:

  A. Asking Yourself Questions

The following are examples of questions that you may ask yourself when evaluating a situation that caused frustration. You can ask yourself out loud or in your mind (mentally).

  - DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN? OR IS THERE ONE DAY OR ONE SECOND IN WHICH THIS IS NOT TRUE?

  - WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THIS THOUGHT? 
    FOR EXAMPLE: Ask yourself about the evidence “for” the thought, as well as the evidence “against” the thought. In most cases, both sides will be represented, or the person wouldn’t have had the thought in the first place. Listen to hear whether the evidence (+ and -) is stated in all or nothing terms, etc., so that you can question the statement before you let it represent objective information.

  - IS THIS REALLY TRUE OR IS IT JUST A PERSISTENT BELIEF? 
    FOR EXAMPLE: Will the person actually lose his or her home, or dis from this or is this more of a fear of mine?
ARE THERE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS OR POSSIBILITIES TO CONSIDER? He may be doing this because of his dementia, not because he’s trying to frustrate me.

B. Learning to Replace Negative Thoughts With More Positive Ones

FOR EXAMPLE: Given the evidence that my own thoughts are unlikely to be true, I will come up with a new way to look at this. I will tell myself that it is the disease that is making my mother so difficult – it’s not her personality or her wish to get on my nerves.

Other examples are:

❖ I would like my spouse to (specific behavior), but I now how to (handle, cope with) it if he/she doesn’t

❖ It isn’t always true that he does x, sometimes the opposite is true

❖ I may have made a mistake in (specific situation), but a mistake does not mean I’m a bad (wife, person, housekeeper). I often do not make mistakes as a caregiver.

❖ It makes sense that I feel trapped and angry, but it doesn’t help me to dwell on it. It will be more helpful to think of solutions to my problem, and spend less time on my feelings.

STOP!

Leaders: Read aloud the material on the next 2 pages which illustrate how to challenge unhelpful thoughts that could be used in that situation. Clearly, caregivers may want to develop their own alternative thoughts. These are provided as examples only. After you and the group have read over this material take a short break. Indicate that after the break, you will help them personalize this information and apply it to their situation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unhelpful Thought patterns</th>
<th>Ways to Handle Them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Thinking “All or Nothing”</strong>&lt;br&gt;“I can’t do anything right.” “I can’t satisfy anyone.” “Nobody appreciates what I’m doing.”</td>
<td>➡️ <strong>KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.</strong> NOTHING IS ALL BAD OR GOOD “If I look hard enough, I can find something positive in every situation.” <strong>WHEN WE GET IN A TOUGH SITUATION, WE OFTEN WORRY THAT NOTHING WILL EVER IMPROVE. THE FACT IS THAT THINGS CHANGE.</strong> “What happens today will not happen forever. I can make it through today.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Mental Filter</strong>&lt;br&gt;“My mom’s accusing me of stealing from her. She’s never trusted me, or anybody.”&lt;br&gt;“We had a good morning, but it’ll never happen again.” “How can I ever take care of the household finances when I can’t even balance my own checkbook?”</td>
<td>➡️ <strong>ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEGATIVE BUT FOCUS MORE ON THE POSITIVE.</strong> “Sure, there are negative things, but there are positive things, too. It’s up to me to decide which to focus on.” <strong>ACCEPT AND AFFIRM THE POSITIVE.</strong> “The positive things people say about me care true.” <strong>TREAT YOURSELF IN THE SAME, GENTLE, ACCEPTING WAY THAT YOU TREAT THOSE YOU LOVE.</strong> “I have my flaws, but I also have my strengths. I’m not going to beat myself up about this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Jumping to Conclusions</strong>&lt;br&gt;“David said he would care for Dad today. I wonder what he really wants.” “If I give him a bath, he’ll just fall down and hurt himself”</td>
<td>➡️ <strong>DON’T TAKE THINGS PERSONALLY OR TRY TO PREDICT THE FUTURE.</strong> “I can ask questions instead of taking this personally. There’s probably a good explanation.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Thinking “I Should”

“I should not even consider putting Mom in a nursing home. I must carry on.”

5. Labeling

“I’m a bad daughter because I’m selfish. I want to go out and have a good time, but I have to stay at home.”

6. Personalizing

“If I hadn’t left town for two days, he wouldn’t have gotten sick.”

DON’T TAKE THE BLAME FOR OTHERS BEHAVIOR.

“Although I care about them, I’m not responsible for their decisions or actions.”

WE ARE MORE THAN OUR MISTAKES, OR IMPERFECTIONS.

“I may do something foolish, but that doesn’t make me a fool.”

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT WAY TO DO THINGS.

“My way isn’t necessarily the best way for others. I have the right to make my own decisions just as they have the right to make theirs.”
In today’s class so far, you have learned about several ways to question your thinking habits, and you’ve seen several new ways of thinking that you could use to take the place of your old unhelpful thoughts. Now, we want you to see how changing thoughts actually results in different behaviors (or actions) in your caregiving situations. For example, once you can see or think about the situation (and your relative) differently, you will be able to think more clearly and decide what to do with less stress.

Case Study:

Maria’s mother-in-law is very difficult to get along with. She criticizes Maria frequently and is very suspicious of her. Maria’s most common unhelpful thinking pattern was “labeling”. She thought she was a bad daughter-in-law because she lost her temper and tried to defend herself by reasoning with her mother-in-law. She learned that when she was upset, she had knots in her stomach and had trouble breathing (these were her “danger signals”). She used the red road sign that says Stop (in her mind) to slow down her thoughts and learned to tell herself (quietly) that her mother-in-law could not help it. Maria learned to understand her mother-in-law’s behavior by blaming the disease and not her mother-in-law who was not responsible for most of what she said. This led Maria to be more patient with her mother-in-law and to learn ways to distract her. For example, Maria would distract her with tasks like giving her mother-in-law laundry to fold or a headset to listen to music so she would be less verbally abusive.

STOP!

Leaders: Go around the room and have everyone take a turn to explain how changing their negative thoughts might lead to different behavior or actions towards their relative. Please try to focus on their situation and how this method can be used to help cope better and be less stressed in caring for their loved one.

Leaders: Next you will ask everyone to turn to the next 2 pages where you can see that the diary of thoughts has been expanded to include a final “D” column for doing things differently. Direct each participant to complete the entire 2 page form now. Go around and assist as needed. This form will be part of next week’s assignment so be sure everyone gets through all the columns.
ABC(STOP): DIARY OF THOUGHTS  
(in class use)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = ACTION</th>
<th>B = BELIEF</th>
<th>C = CONSEQUENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A situation that causes me frustration.</td>
<td>My thoughts/beliefs about the situation that are making me upset.</td>
<td>My feelings about the situation that are making me upset.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IDENTIFYING THE UNHELPFUL THINKING PATTERN
### ABC(STOP)D: COMPLETE DIARY OF THOUGHTS  
(in class use)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danger Signals</th>
<th>D - (Do)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I notice about myself that tells me I am upset and I need to stop.</td>
<td>What I think about and do now after using my stop signs. How I will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Physical Symptoms)</td>
<td>handle this differently in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW THOUGHTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My STOP SIGNS that I can use in this situation to interrupt my train of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unhelpful thoughts or to stop myself. (Visual image)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ACTIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. RELAXATION EXERCISE

Make yourself as comfortable as possible. First, I’d like you to remove any objects from your lap and place your feet on the floor. Place your hands on your thighs. Don’t cross your legs or your arms. Close your eyes so you can’t see the light or other people and so you won’t be distracted by what’s going on around you.

Now breathe deeply, and imagine that you are in an empty vase that you have to fill up to the rim with air. Inhale deeply again, and exhale ... while you’re exhaling say the word “Amen” or “calm” silently to yourself ... continue breathing as deeply as possible ... always filling up the bottom of your lungs and then exhaling ...

Right now, notice where your body is most tense. Make yourself as comfortable as possible. Relax the tension in your neck, shoulders, arms, back, legs and feet ... Keep breathing deeply and exhale, saying to yourself the work that you’ve chosen.

Now imagine that you’re searching for the most safe and peaceful place that you know ... Are you searching for it indoors or outdoors? When you find it, look at it closely. What is it like? Use all of your senses to enjoy it as much as possible.

What’s around you? What colors do you see? What smells do you notice? What sounds do you hear? Do you hear the chirping of birds? Or are you on the beach and hear the calls of the seagulls and the crashing of the waves? Or maybe you’re listening to the pleasant sound of a river’s current.

Can you make out the breeze moving through the branches of the trees? ... Perhaps you’re listening to the silence of a mountain peak. Pay attention to the colors. Are they bright? ... The sounds, are they loud or soft? ... What sensations do you feel? Is it warm out or do you feel cold? ... Do you like being here alone? Look closely at your place, enjoy it, you are in peace.

Enjoy for a few moments the experience of being in your peaceful place.

Soon I am going to ask you to come back from your peaceful place, knowing that you can always go back to this place just by closing your eyes ... and by breathing deeply three times ...

Slowly leave your place and focus all of you attention on your breathing.

Little by little you will leave your place, and tell yourself that you can always return to this place just by closing your eyes and breathing deeply three times. I’m, going to count from 5 to 1, and when I reach 1, I’ll ask you to come back to the classroom ....

5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... and 1. Open your eyes and come back to the classroom.
RELAXATION DIARY: TENSION EVALUATION

Use This Scale to Rate Your Level of Tension

1 = Not at all tense  
2 = Slightly tense  
3 = Moderately tense  
4 = Really tense  
5 = Terribly tense

In-Class Practice Rating:

1. First, write the number that represents your current tension level.

Before the relaxation exercise, I feel  
_____________ (rate your tension from 1 to 5)

2. Now, we will conduct a brief relaxation technique that will last about 5 minutes.

3. Finally, evaluate your tension level after you have practiced the relaxation technique.

After the relaxation exercise, I feel  
_____________ (rate your tension from 1 to 5)
7. HOMEWORK TO DO BEFORE CLASS #5

1. Relaxation Diary. Use the daily relaxation practice and ratings.

2. Diary of Thoughts: ABC(STOP)D. Please complete all sections of both pages at least once during the week. Remember, the more you practice these methods, the more you will change your ways of thinking and thus handle caregiving with less stress. If you would like to practice more, an additional copy of the two page form “Complete Diary of Thoughts” is included in Appendix D.
**RELAXATION DIARY: TENSION EVALUATION**

Use This Scale to Rate Your Level of Tension

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<table>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TENSION</th>
<th>COMMENTS (why I felt this way, etc.)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Before relaxing: _____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>After relaxing: _____</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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16
## ABC(STOP)D: COMPLETE DIARY OF THOUGHTS

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**IDENTIFY THE UNHELPFUL THINKING PATTERNS**
## El Modelo SPS: Diario de Pensamientos Completo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEÑALES DE PELIGRO</th>
<th>SEÑALES DE ALTO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Los síntomas físicos que noté cuando estaba enojado(a) o frustrado(a)</td>
<td>Mi “señal de alto” que puedo usar en una situación para combatir los pensamientos negativos o para detenerme. (visuales)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PENSAMIENTOS NUEVOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMPORTAMIENTOS NUEVOS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. SUMMARY OF CLASS #4

In this session we reviewed a list of unhelpful thought patterns that people engage in and how to counteract or challenge them. Negative ways of thinking are typically automatic and always lead to feelings of distress. Some patterns we have identified are:

- All or none thinking (also known as black-or-white thinking)
- Mental filter (or focusing on the negative)
- Jumping to conclusions
- Thinking “I should”
- Labeling
- Personalizing

Once we have identified which negative patterns we are using, it is relatively easy to counteract them and come up with a more healthy and positive alternative that will reduce our distress. For example:

“All or none” thinking can be counteracted by noting the “gray” areas and not generalizing.

Mental filtering can be challenged by noting positive aspects or different perspectives and not screening those out.

Jumping to conclusions can be prevented by taking time and really evaluating the situation in order to not pre-determine an outcome.

Thinking “I should” creates unrealistic expectations for yourself. Instead, try saying, “I want to” or “I may be better off if…”

Labeling is a way of discounting something by categorizing it in a negative way. Instead of dismissing something as “useless” or “stupid”, try describing what about the situation is not helpful or “useless” to you, and what is useful. You will find that things rarely fit into one category.

Personalizing and self-blame can be challenged by eliminating the use of “I” statements.

We then showed how changing thoughts (to be more helpful and less negative) causes you to behave or do things differently next time. This is why it is so important to slow down your thinking and to challenge your thoughts. By getting in this new habit, you will find that you will treat your relative differently and you will have less stress in your daily life.