

## Recommended Skills for CBT for Anxiety Disorders

### An CBT therapist will demonstrate the ability to skillfully:

- Work collaboratively with clients
- Be Socratic
- Provide psychoeducation about anxiety, its causes, and its treatment
- Present a cognitive-behavioral formulation of anxiety to emphasize the misappraisals of threat and avoidance in maintaining fears
- Develop a client-specific cognitive-behavioral case-conceptualization and present the formulation to the particular client.
- Teach Cognitive Restructuring for evaluating problematic thoughts
  - Assist client in identifying automatic thoughts related to specific fears
  - Use socratic questioning to help client highlight logical errors in automatic thoughts, particularly “over-estimating likelihood of threat” and “catastrophizing the potential impact of the threat”
- Develop a Fear Hierarchy rank ordering specific feared stimuli or situations and identify strategies (avoidance, rituals, etc.) the client uses to control anxiety or minimize perceived threat
- Identify optimal format for exposures depending on the feared stimuli or situations (*in vivo* for external stimuli or situations, interoceptive for bodily sensations, imaginal for worries, intrusive thoughts, or traumatic memories).
- Work collaboratively with clients to develop specific exposures that will likely induce moderately high levels of activation (e.g., 7 out of 10)
- Identify expected automatic thoughts, and use cognitive restructuring to generate alternate possible outcomes
- Work with client to minimize or eliminate the use of safety behaviors during exposures
- Maintain exposure until anxiety begins to decrease (or plateau, if necessary)
- Debrief after the exposure to compare the expected outcomes (automatic thoughts), alternative possibilities (from the Cognitive Restructuring), and actual outcomes from the exposure
- Develop and reinforce a schedule of “homework” exposures to help generalize the treatment effects
- Develop strategies with the client to minimize relapse or return-of-fear