

Identifying Core Beliefs

Videos available until 08.06.2020.

- The video materials you need for this class can be found at:
- <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1aQyL--F4e8GTwh9APDyBpUuPc3rbIGwd>
- There are three films:
 - Identifying core beliefs (15)
 - Evaluating core beliefs (16)
 - Modifying core beliefs (17)
- For the credit I will send you a brief quizz on CBT to be completed by 08.06. 2020. More information later.

Watch the video

- ◎ [How to identify a negative core belief](#)
- ◎ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoUa3AQO_Xc

Identifying Core Beliefs

- ⦿ In general, identifying and modifying core beliefs is more challenging than automatic thoughts due to their ingrained, pervasive, and global nature
 - However, degree of difficulty will be different for each patient
- ⦿ Many of the techniques used for identifying automatic thoughts can also be used to uncover core beliefs
 - There are also additional techniques specific to core beliefs

Identifying Core Beliefs

- **Guided Discovery**
 - From emotions to automatic thoughts to core beliefs
- **Core Beliefs Expressed as Automatic Thoughts**
- **Core Beliefs Embedded in Patterns of Automatic Thoughts**
- **Be Direct: Ask Client for the Core Belief**
- **Downward-Arrow Technique**
 - Digging deeper for core beliefs
- **Formal Core Belief Assessments**
- **Core Belief Flowchart – Part A**
 - Historical events and present patterns
- **Tracking Core Beliefs**

Guided Discovery

(From Emotions to Automatic Thoughts to Core Beliefs)

- ◎ *If there are thoughts when there are emotions, then there can also be core beliefs underneath these emotionally filled thoughts*
- ◎ For core beliefs, the same approach is used as for automatic thoughts:
 - Eliciting strong emotions
 - Identifying the triggering event
 - Recognizing relationship between thoughts, emotions, physiological arousal, and behaviours

Guided Discovery

- ◉ Instead of stopping at automatic thoughts, we go further by summarizing any possible themes that appear in the NATs and asking further follow-up questions:
 - **“Do you think you have a rule in your mind about...?”**
 - **“Do you find that these types of thoughts about... have a pattern that come from a deeper conviction?”**
 - **“I wonder if these thoughts about... come from a fundamental belief?”**
- ◉ Guided imagery can also be used

Core Beliefs Expressed as Automatic Thoughts

- ⦿ Patients might unknowingly actually state a core belief
- ⦿ It is then possible to draw attention to this core belief during the session or take note of it and return to it in a future session when more therapeutically appropriate
 - Provide supportive evidence by way of related negative automatic thoughts

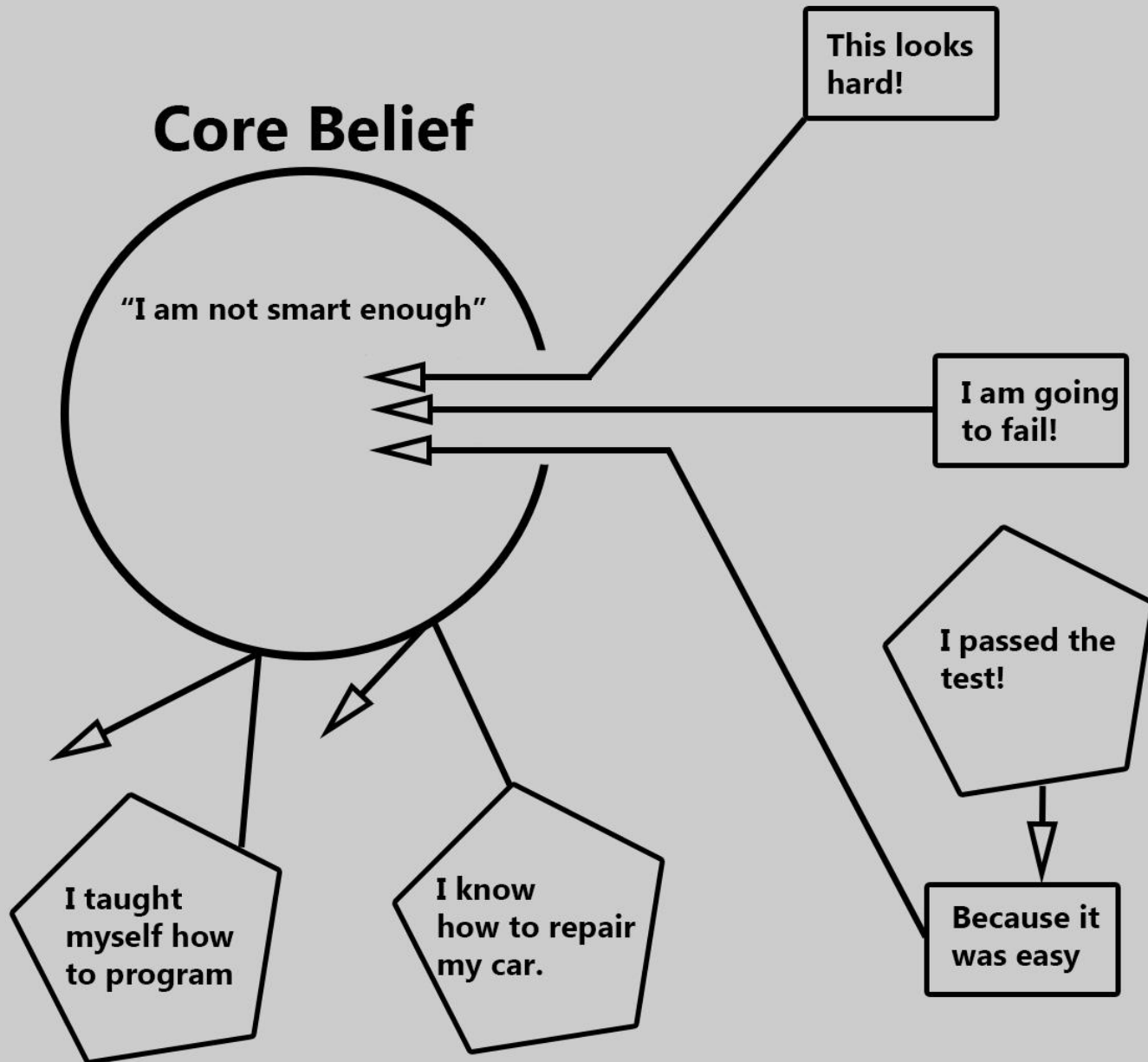
Core Beliefs Embedded in Patterns of Automatic Thoughts

- ◉ We look for patterns in the way patients perceive themselves, others, and the world
- ◉ If we are confident in our hypothesis about a particular core belief, we can share it with the patient and ask them for their perspective on its validity
- ◉ We ask our clients directly, if they can identify a recurrent theme if we believe they may have the insight

Be Direct: Ask Patient for the Core Belief

- We frame a question within a specific context and ask patients directly about their core belief:
 - **“We have been discussing your pattern of [negative automatic thoughts/cognitive distortions]. I wonder if you can think of a core belief that represents this particular style of thinking?”**

Core Belief



Downward-Arrow Technique (Digging Deeper for Core Beliefs)

- Even if we have a hypothesis about a possible negative core belief, rather than simply telling the patient directly, it can be more effective if they are able to “discover” it on their own
 - *“Showing” has more long-term therapeutic effectiveness than “telling”*
- It is important to have a good therapeutic relationship with the patient and to explain the rationale and process
 - Remind patients of the importance of collaborative empiricism

DOWNWARD ARROW

- Also known as **vertical descent** – used to identify core beliefs.
- Counsellor starts by examining thoughts close to the 'surface' and then moves downward to core beliefs.
- The counsellor will ask the client what a particular automatic thought means to the client, assuming it is true. This is repeated until the core belief is found.
- Judith Beck noted that asking the client what the thought means **to** the client leads to an intermediate belief, but asking what the thought means **about** the client leads to a core belief.

Downward-Arrow Technique

(1) – Identify a relevant negative automatic thought

- Select a negative automatic thought that elicits strong emotions and is believed to be true; and largely not valid
 - Relevant and distressing – have a hypothesis of possible core belief

(2) – Ask the patient the meaning of the negative automatic thought

- “If that’s true, so what?”
- “If what you say is true, what does that mean about you?”
- “What is so bad about...?”
- “If what you say is really bad, what is the worst part about it?”

Downward-Arrow Technique

(3) – Stop asking questions when you reach the core belief

- Negative shift in affect
- “Look of insight”
- Verbally confirm belief
- Restating belief in similar words

(4) – Process the patient’s response to the core belief

- Sometimes coming face-to-face with one’s negative core belief can provide such feelings as sadness, hurtfulness, and/or frustration
- At other times it can provide relief or satisfaction
- Any other thoughts or feelings about the process?

Downward-Arrow Technique

(5) – Consider options to modify the core belief

- Is this a core belief that is largely invalid?
- Is this core belief relevant/believed?
- Is this core belief causing significant distress?
- Are additional identification techniques necessary?
- Does the core belief warrant modification? If so, what techniques?

An example of the downward arrow technique



An example of the downward arrow technique

Example: Downward Arrow

Question

- If that were true, what would it mean about you?
- If that were true what would it mean to you?
- And, then what?



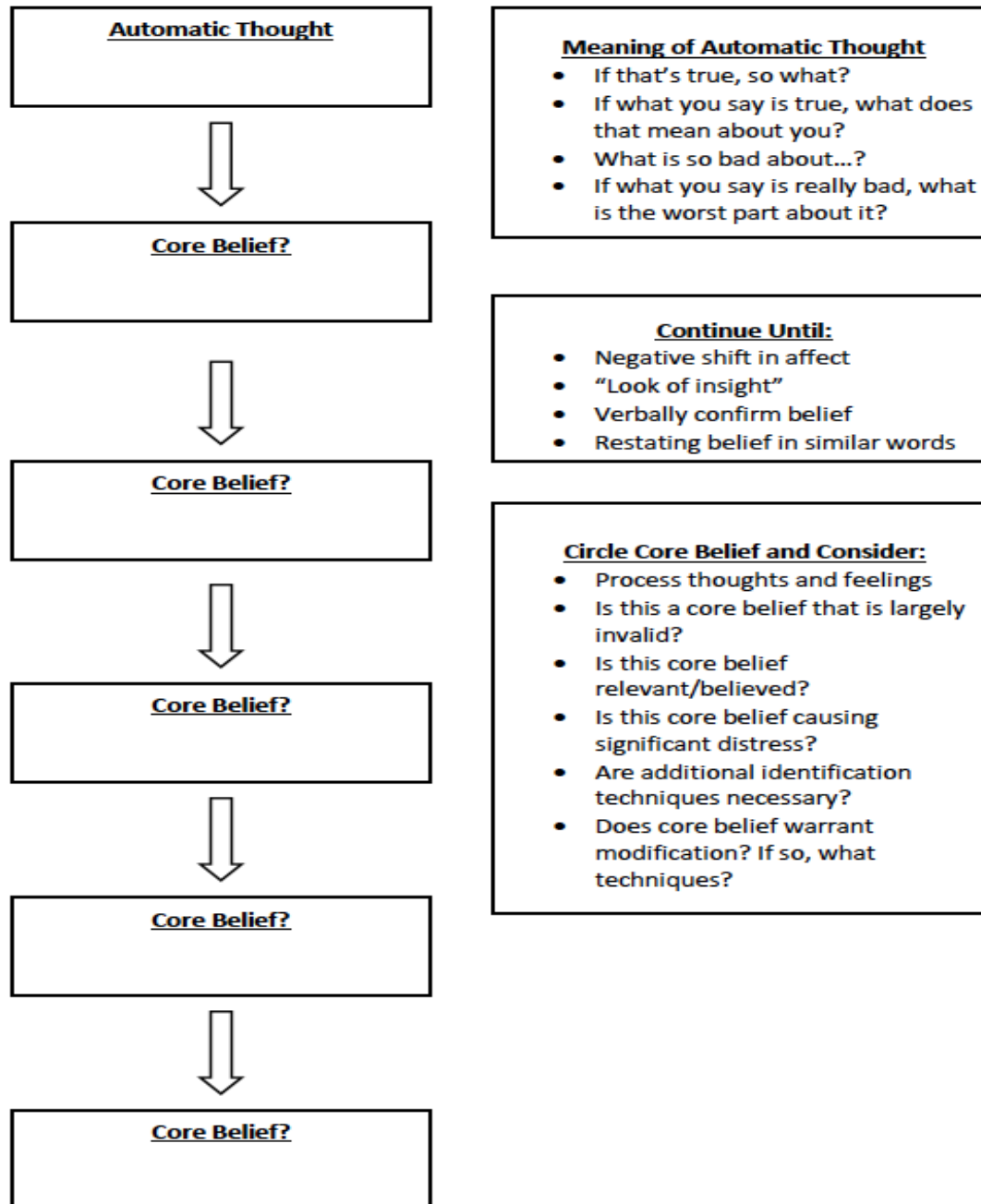
Response

- “That I had done a bad job.”
- “Sooner or later I would be found out.”
- “Everyone would know I was an imposter and incompetent.”

Watch these videos

- ◎ [Examples of the downward arrow technique in therapy](#)
- ◎ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx8F9uwQTnY>
- ◎ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3hMmZQAdhw>

Figure 8.2
Downward-Arrow Worksheet



Identifying Core Beliefs

- Watch the video in the link given at the start of the presentation.

„Identifying core beliefs” (15)

Formal Core Belief Assessments

- ⦿ There may be occasions when using the previously mentioned techniques does not provide enough clarity in identifying specific core beliefs
- ⦿ Sometimes seeing a list of core beliefs can stimulate patients into recognizing particular maladaptive thinking patterns
- ⦿ These assessments can also aid in tracking core belief patterns over time

Formal Core Belief Assessments

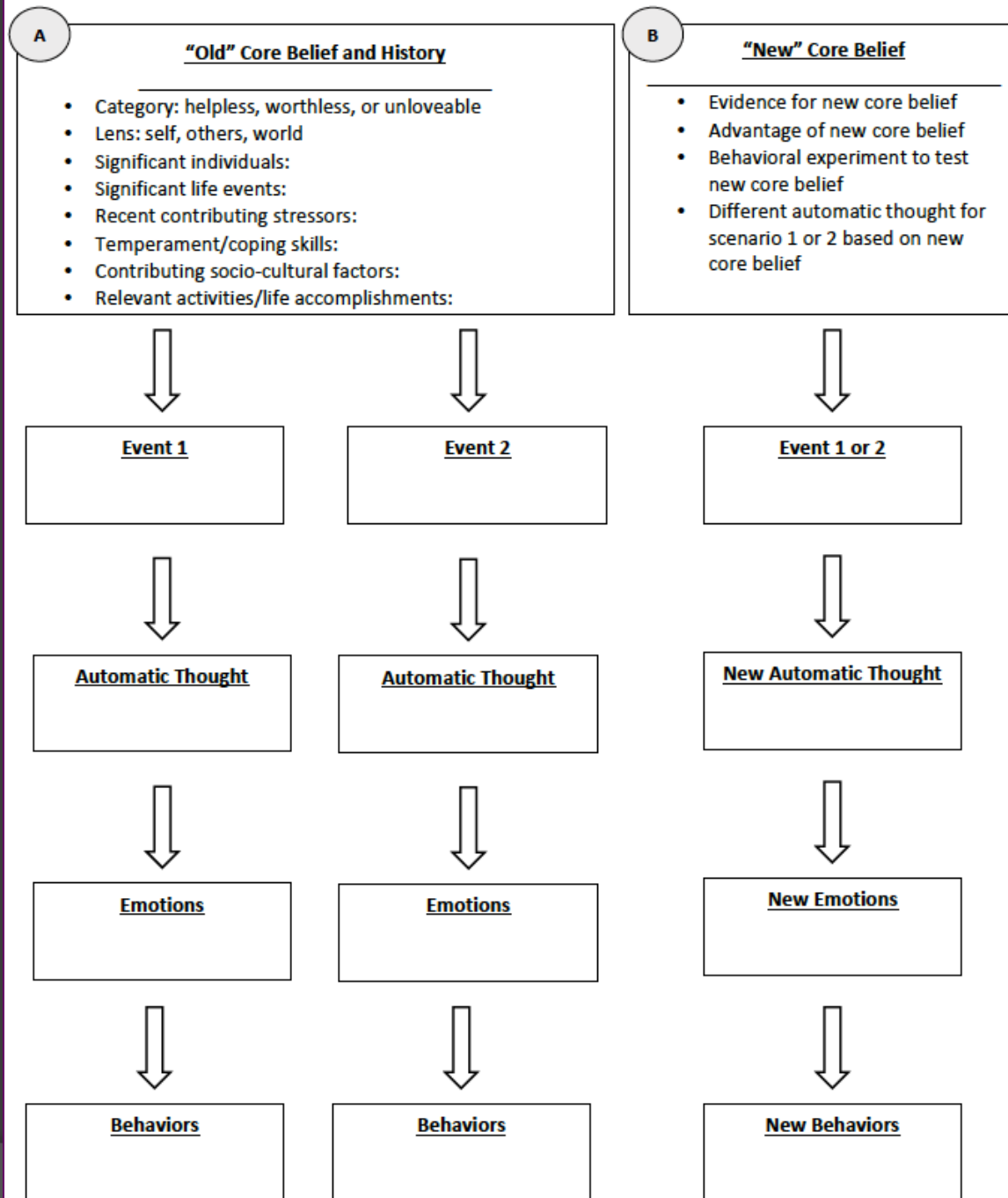
- ⦿ Assessments specifically designed to identify core beliefs:
 - Dysfunctional Attitude Scale (Weissman & Beck, 1978)
 - The Personality Belief Questionnaire (Beck & Beck, 1991)
 - Young Schema Questionnaire – Short Form (Young, 2005)
 - Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (Hollon & Kendall, 1980)
- ⦿ These assessments are rarely used on their own
 - Used for monitoring overall therapeutic progress

Core Belief Flowchart – Part A

(Historical Events and Present Patterns)

- For some core beliefs it is helpful to explore key individuals, events, and contextual factors in the person's past, that may have lead to their development
- **Core Belief Flowchart (next slide)**
 - Focus on Part A – review the historical nature of relevant core beliefs and a visual depiction of common negative automatic thoughts (and emotions and behaviours) that result from the specific core belief
 - Later focus is on Part B – modifying the negative core belief (with a “new” core belief) after relevant historical information has been gathered and related thinking patterns have been identified

Figure 8.3
Core Belief Flowchart



Core Belief Flowchart – Part A (Historical Events and Present Patterns)

◎ **Core Belief Flowchart Domain Questions Worksheet (see next slide)**

- Provides a list of each domain to assess and associated questions, including space to record relevant patient information
 - 1. Category and lens
 - 2. Significant individuals
 - 3. Significant life events
 - 4. Recent contributing stressors
 - 5. Temperament and coping skills
 - 6. Contributing sociocultural factors
 - 7. Relevant activities or life accomplishments

Table 8.3
Core Belief Flowchart Domain Questions Worksheet

<u>Domain Questions</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<p align="center"><u>Category</u></p> <p>--Helpless, worthless, unloveable</p> <p align="center"><u>Lens</u></p> <p>--Self, others, world</p>	
<p align="center"><u>Significant Individuals</u></p> <p>--“Which people have influenced your life the most?”</p> <p>--“Which family members have influenced the way you think?”</p> <p>--“Besides family members, who has influenced the way you think?”</p> <p>--“Has anyone ever given you great support or inspiration?”</p> <p>--“Has anyone ever caused you harm or belittled you?”</p>	
<p align="center"><u>Significant Life Events</u></p> <p>--“Have you experienced any (positive or negative) life events that you believe shaped/influenced/transformed who you are today?”</p> <p>--“Did you learn anything about yourself during/after this experience?”</p> <p>--“Is it possible that you experienced an event that changed/transformed your view of how the world/others works?”</p> <p>--“What negative messages did you get about yourself from all of the arguments with your family?”</p> <p>--“Can you think of any attitudes or beliefs that you have that may be a result of that experience?”</p>	
<p align="center"><u>Recent Contributing Stressors</u></p> <p>--“Has anything recently happened in your life that has been especially stressful?”</p> <p>--“Has anything recently been on your mind that you can’t stop thinking about?”</p>	
<p align="center"><u>Temperament and Coping Skills</u></p> <p>--“What quality about yourself do you like (dislike) about yourself the most?”</p> <p>--“How would others describe you as a person?”</p> <p>--“Is there any characteristic/quality about yourself that could probably never be changed (or you don’t want to change)?”</p> <p>--“How do you cope with day-to-day stressors?”</p> <p>--“How do you handle situations that are out of your control?”</p>	



Table 8.3
Core Belief Flowchart Domain Questions Worksheet

<p><u>Contributing Socio-Cultural Factors</u></p> <p>--“How does your socio-cultural background (or race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, or immigration status) influence how you view and interact with the world?”</p> <p>--How does your socio-cultural background influence your self-concept?”</p> <p>--“Have you ever been treated differently (for better or worse) by others because of your socio-cultural background?”</p> <p>--Is there anything about your socio-cultural background (or how others respond) that is currently contributing to your current distress?”</p>	
<p><u>Relevant Activities or Life Accomplishments</u></p> <p>--“What personal accomplishments are you most proud of?”</p> <p>--“How do your interests/abilities reflect who you are as a person?”</p> <p>--“Is there any activity or life accomplishment that best defines how you see yourself?”</p> <p>--“How has your job (or schooling or education) influenced your view of the world and yourself?”</p> <p>--“Have you had any ‘life learning’ events or opportunities that have changed the way you approach life?”</p>	

+ Tracking Core Beliefs

- Similar to tracking negative automatic thoughts, ask patients to keep a record of any possible core beliefs (positive or negative) that come into their mind between sessions
 - They can also identify the category/lens, automatic thoughts, and cognitive distortions
- Developing awareness of core beliefs is something that needs much practice over time; it can become more natural over time
- **Core Beliefs Tracker**
 - Helps clients record core beliefs between sessions; can be reviewed in future sessions

Table 8.4
Core Beliefs Tracker

<u>Core Belief</u>	<u>Category and Lens</u>	<u>Automatic Thoughts</u>	<u>Cognitive Distortions?</u>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

References

Slides based on materials from:

- Volungis A. (2019). Cognitive – Behavioural Therapy Theory into Practice. Rowman & Littlefield, New York.
- <http://cbt4panic.org/behavioural-experiments-examples/>
- <https://understandingcbt.wordpress.com/2014/07/09/how-do-you-challenge-core-beliefs/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxditxbHsWg>