

- WESTERN CANADA MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT -

# IMPROVING SKILLS & COMPETENCIES FOR MENTAL HEALTH & EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023 – FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2023

Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre

1316 33 St NE, T2A 6B6, Calgary, AB

JEFF RIGGENBACH, PH.D.

## WORKSHOP #9

CBT Strategies that Really Work With Students in the Classroom

Day One | 12:45pm – 4:00pm



JEFF RIGGENBACH  
PH.D.

Jeff Rigenbach, Ph.D. is a best-selling and award winning author who has earned a reputation as an international expert in CBT and personality disorders. Over the past 20 years he has developed and overseen CBT-based treatment programs for Mood disorders, anxiety disorders, addictive behaviour disorders and Personality Disorders at two different psychiatric hospitals and clinics serving over 3,000 clients at multiple levels of care. Dr. Rigenbach trained at the Beck Institute of Cognitive Therapy and Research in Philadelphia, is a Diplomat of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy and a certified cognitive therapist.

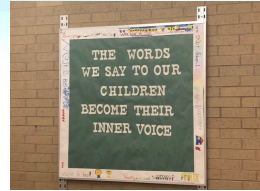


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# CBT Strategies that Really Work in the Classroom!

Prepared for:  
The Western Canada Health Summit  
May 25, 2023



Jeff Riggensbach, PhD

## Agenda

- Unconditional Positive Regard and the Student-Educator Relationship
- Stinkin' Thinkin' - Cognitive Distortions in the Classroom
- Stressed out and Anxious Students
- Sadness and Depressed Students
- Angry and Defiant Students
- Educator Self Care and Managing Emotions in the Classroom

## Getting Started

"Students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care"

## Getting Started

- **Ways of Expressing Care for/about Students**

- Learn their Names!
- Learn what's important to them
- Validate

## Education to CBT Model

HE MADE ME DO IT!

Events → Thoughts → Feelings → Actions → Results

## Education to CBT Model

Common student misbehaviors you see in the classroom or at your school?

## CBT Strategies in the Classroom: Thinking Errors!



### Thinking Errors!

**1. Rationalization.** In an attempt to protect yourself from hurt feelings, you create excuses for events in life that don't go your way or for poor choices you make. We might call these *permission-giving statements* that give ourselves or someone else permission to do something that is in some way unhealthy.

**2. Overgeneralization.** You categorize different people, places, and entities based on your own experiences with each particular thing. For example, if you have been treated poorly by men in the past, "all men are mean," or if your first wife cheated on you, "all women are unfaithful." By overgeneralizing, you miss out on experiences that don't fit your particular stereotype. This is the distortion on which all of those "isms" (e.g., racism, sexism) are based.

## Thinking Errors!

**3. All-or-nothing thinking.** This refers to a tendency to see things in black and white categories with no consideration for gray. You see yourself, others, and often the whole world in only positive or negative extremes rather than considering that each may instead have both positive and negative aspects. For example, if your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure. If you catch yourself using extreme language (best ever, worst, love, hate, always, never), this is a red flag that you may be engaging in all-or-nothing thinking. Extreme thinking leads to intense feelings and an inability to see a “middle ground” perspective or feel proportionate moods.

**4. Discounting the positive.** You reject positive experiences by insisting that they “don’t count” for some reason or another. In this way, you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences, character, attributes, and behavior. The terms *mental filter* and *selective abstraction* basically describe the same process.

## Thinking Errors!

**5. Fortune telling.** You anticipate that things will turn out badly and feel convinced that your prediction is already an established fact based on your experiences from the past. Predicting a negative outcome before any outcome occurs leads to anxiety.

**6. Mind reading.** Rather than predicting future events, engaging in this distortion involves predicting that you know what someone else is thinking when in reality you don’t. This distortion commonly occurs in communication problems between romantic partners.

**9. Magnification.** You exaggerate the importance of things, blowing them way out of proportion. Often, this takes the form of fortune telling and/or mind reading to an extreme. This way of thinking may also be referred to as *catastrophizing* or *awfulizing*.

## Thinking Errors!

**7. Should statements.** You place false or unrealistic expectations on yourself or others, thereby setting yourself up to feel angry, guilty, or disappointed. Words and phrases such as *ought to*, *must*, *has to*, *needs to*, and *supposed to* are indicative of “should” thinking.

## Thinking Errors!

**8. Emotional reasoning.** You assume that your negative feelings reflect the way things really are. “I feel it, therefore it must be true.”

**10. Personalization.** You see yourself as the cause of some external negative event for which, in fact, you were not primarily responsible. You make something about you that is not about you and get your feelings hurt.

## General Strategies

1. Stay Calm!
2. Speak their language! (Teach to all personality styles)
3. Choose Your Battles
4. Set clear expectations DAY ONE!
5. Attack the problem, not the person!

## CBT Strategies that Really Work in the Classroom!





## Stressed Out and Anxious Students!



## CBT in Classroom Settings: Where Does Anxiety Come From?

$$\text{Anxiety} = \text{Risk} / \text{Resources}$$

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Anxious Students

Anxiety  
Tools

## CBT in Classroom Settings: How Anxiety Shows Up

- Social anxiety
- Test anxiety
- Performance anxiety
- Perfectionism
- Avoiding work
- Others???

## CBT in Classroom Settings: How Anxiety Shows Up

Type of Anxiety

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Social anxiety

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## **CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!**



## **CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!**

## CBT in Classroom Settings: How Anger Shows Up

- Yelling/Outbursts
- Arguing/Talking Back
- Demanding
- Blaming
- Threatening/Aggression/Fighting
- Profanity

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Yelling/Outbursts

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students

### Awareness Exercises!

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Arguing/Talking Back



## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Demanding

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Blaming

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students

**Responsibility Pie!**

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Threatening/  
Aggression/  
Fighting

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Angry/Defiant Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Profanity

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!



## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

- Isolating
- Not doing work
- Sleep in Class
- Negative Attitude

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Isolating

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

### Self-Esteem Strategies

- “Shout outs” - Practice Receiving
- “Hot Seat”
- Reward Students for Complimenting each other

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

### Behavior

### Thoughts Fueling

### Strategies

- Not completing Work

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Not paying attention/  
Sleeping in class

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

Behavior

Thoughts Fueling

Strategies

- Negative Attitude

## CBT in Classroom Settings: Sad/Withdrawn Students!

### Negative Attitude Strategies

- Gratitude
- “Comedy Hour”
- Instill Hope
- Best part of your day

## Tips for Educator Self-care!

## **CBT Strategies in the Classroom: Tips for Educator Self-Care**

### Reasons Self-Care is Important

- Prevents Burnout
- Decreases Vulnerability to Negative Emotions
- Decreased Stress is Associated with Decreased Physical Health Problems

## **CBT Strategies in the Classroom: 21 Tips for Educator Self-Care!**

1. Pursue Purpose
2. Get a Life!
3. Get Down!
4. Get Personal
5. Learn to Say NO!
6. From Defense to Offense
7. Maintain Margin



## CBT Strategies in the Classroom: 21 Tips for Educator Self-Care!

- 8. Eat Breakfast!
- 9. Healthy Diet
- 10. Sleep Schedule
- 11. Exercise
- 12. Spiritual
- 13. Music
- 14. Family Matters

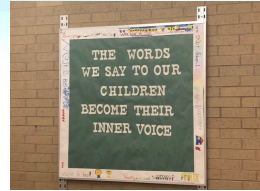
## CBT Strategies in the Classroom: 21 Tips for Educator Self-Care!

*In Class OR Out*

- 15. Build exercise in
- 16. Build Values in
- 17. Self Time-Out
- 18. "Student Assistance Program"
- 19. Re-prioritize?
- 20. Challenge Thoughts
- 21. Breathe!

# CBT Strategies that Really Work in the Classroom!

**Thank You!!!**



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