



POWIAT TARNOWSKI

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY AND HIPPO THERAPY - POSSIBILITIES OF A COMMON PATH

Magdalena Pikul

Therapeutic and Sports Stable

**at the Special Educational and Care Center in
Wierzchosławice-Dwudniaki (Poland)**



PLAN

- ❑ what is and what is not a psychotherapy
- ❑ Theoretical background: underlying mechanisms of psychological benefits of Equine Assisted Interventions - EAI
- ❑ Some information about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy – CBT
- ❑ How can it work in EAI:
 - Modification of thinking
 - Behavioral activation
 - Experience of pleasure, rewards
 - Mindfulness, being here and now
 - Regulation of emotions
- ❑ Conclusion



A DIFFICULT DISTINCTION BASED ON THE SITUATION IN POLAND

- ▣ Equine Assisted Psychotherapy
 - conducted by a psychotherapist (education, certificate, supervisions)
 - implementing a specific paradigm
 - serving a specific purpose
 - the presence of horses is due to conceptualization
 - ▣ Hippotherapy
 - conducted by a non-psychotherapist
 - complementing the process of psychotherapy
 - ▣ according to the recommendations of the psychotherapist
 - intervention with psychological benefits but not psychotherapy
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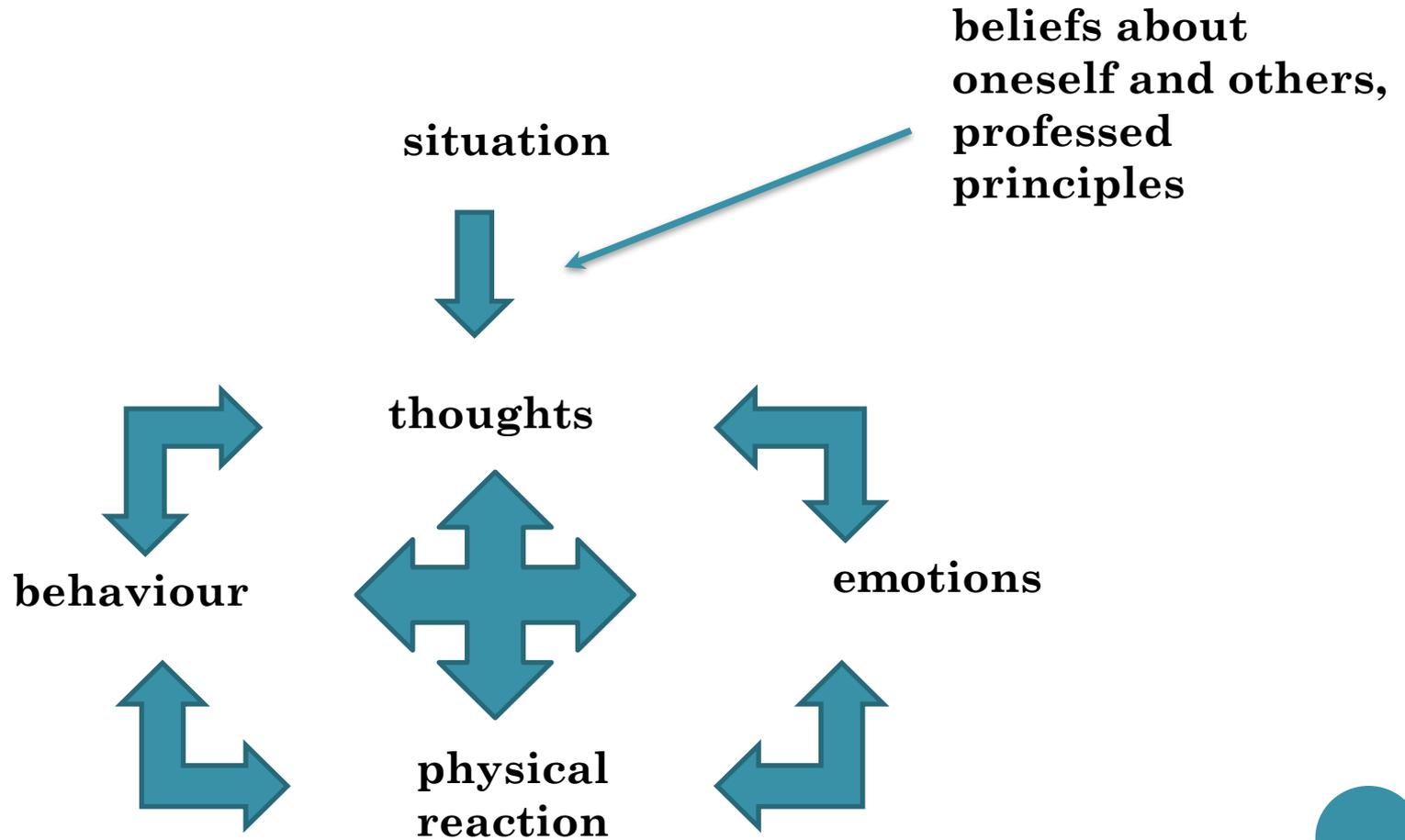
BASIC MECHANISMS

- WE KNOW EAI WORKS. BUT HOW?

- ❑ Being with a horse
 - Human-horse relationship according to Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969)
- ❑ Acting with a horse
 - meeting basic human needs: competence and autonomy (Deci and Ryan, 1985)
- ❑ Suitable conditions for the interaction between
 - ❑ Thoughts
 - ❑ Emotions
 - ❑ physical symptoms
 - ❑ behaviors
- multidirectional dependence of these 4 areas (basics of the CBT approach – Ellis Model (1957))



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY - CBT



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

- ❑ a change in one element of the model helps achieve a change in others
 - ❑ change in thinking leads to changes in
 - emotions (e.g. reduction of sadness in depression),
 - behavior (e.g. to stop avoiding something in anxiety disorders)
 - ❑ identification and modification of automatic thoughts, rules, beliefs
 - ❑ regulation of emotions
 - ❑ working with behavior, habits: e.g. systematic desensitization, activation
 - ❑ working with the body: e.g. relaxation techniques, developing awareness of what is happening in the body
 - ❑ focus on the present in contrast to
 - Worrying about future in anxiety disorders
 - analyzing the past (ruminating) in depression
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**How can it work
in EAI?**



MODIFICATION OF THINKING

- ❑ what we think influences how we feel
 - 'I am hopeless' □ sadness
 - 'I did a lot' □ satisfaction
- ❑ thoughts are often automatic, sometimes untrue or maladaptive
- ❑ How to work in CBT - cognitive restructuring
- ❑ EAI:
 - **new beliefs** based on new experiences
 - ❑ in relationships (I am important, I am approved, worthy of love)
 - ❑ in actions (I can do a lot, I can cooperate with a huge, powerful animal, horse listens to me)



BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION

- ❑ mental disorders may be accompanied by a decrease in activity
- ❑ in the treatment of depression - behavioral activation
- ❑ activation
 - change of thinking (e.g. 'I am able to do that', 'I am able to be active')
 - experience of pleasure
 - motivation
- ❑ goals depending on the severity of the disorder!
- ❑ for some patients a visit to the stables and EAI are possible
- ❑ as a result:
 - it is possible to draw conclusions: 'the activity is enjoyable', 'I am able to do something'
 - cooperation with the horse □ efficacy □ motivation for further actions
 - physical activity itself may be associated with a reduction in the level of unpleasant emotions and better physical well-being (Guszkowska, 2013)

EXPERIENCE OF PLEASURE, REWARDS

- ❑ those suffering from mental disorders have few opportunities to experience pleasure
- ❑ the relationship between depression and reduced access to positive reinforcement (Lewinsohn et al., 1980).
- ❑ the problem of many adults: losing the child's attitude to pleasure, being guided mainly by the thought of duty
- ❑ EAIs can be a source of pleasure and an opportunity for activities focused more on needs than duties
- ❑ contact with horses is pleasant, learning new skills is rewarding
- ❑ people have different needs for stimulation, sensations, different previous animal experiences. We need to remember that pleasure may mean something different to everyone.



MINDFULNESS, BEING HERE AND NOW

- ❓ In disorders, focus on the future (worry) and the past (rumination)
- ❓ CBT - focus on the present
- ❓ mindfulness
 - a state of mind in which the individual draws attention to himself, the present moment, and his surroundings in a non-judgmental way (Bishop et al., 2004)
 - directing your attention to what you are doing right now (Teasdale et al., 2016)
 - it is the opposite of worry and rumination
- ❓ EAI:
 - calming down thoughts related to problems and concentrating on the horse (Pikul i Tokarz, 2011)
 - Safe cooperation with a horse requiring total commitment and attention from a human
 - horses are an interesting, attention-grabbing stimuli
 - horses affect many human senses and engage patients cognitively (temperature, texture of the coat, kinesthetic sensations, beauty)
 - the presence of horses can facilitate the acquisition of skills related to mindfulness and concentrating on the present, which helps to stop worrying and ruminating

REGULATION OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ modification of thinking
 - change in the cognitive assessment of the stimulus (threatening □ safe)
 - identification and modification of beliefs about emotions (some patients think: ‘I’ll go crazy with this fear’, ‘I shouldn’t be sad’)
- ❑ limiting the strategy of avoiding emotions
- ❑ relaxation, breathing exercises
- ❑ acceptance of emotions
- ❑ **normalization**: variety of experiences, both people and animals can have better or worse days and that's ok

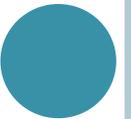


REGULATION OF EMOTIONS

- ❑ the variety of feelings experienced in the relationship with the horse (pleasant and unpleasant)
 - numerous opportunities to become aware of emotions, to see the mechanisms of their formation and to observe their course
- ❑ an opportunity to be exposed to anxiety-generating stimuli
- ❑ an opportunity to work on tolerating the feeling of uncertainty and accepting the lack of full control (OCPD)
- ❑ horses react to human emotions □ human develops strategies to regulate emotions
- ❑ the attachment relationship with a horse reduces mood disturbances and situational anxiety (Pikul, 2016)
 - Getting involved in relational behaviours we can reduce negative effects of trait anxiety
 - both effects (positive effect of relationship and negative effect of trait) are on a similar level



Conclusion



SO WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF A COMMON PATH OF HIPPO THERAPY AND CBT PSYCHOTHERAPY?

- ❑ Horse Assisted CBT:
 - conducted on the basis of a specific paradigm by a psychotherapist
 - who, because of conceptualization, decides to enrich his work with activities with horses.
- ❑ Activities conducted by a hippotherapist or a riding instructor in cooperation with a psychotherapist, in accordance with his recommendations.
- ❑ It would be beneficial for hippotherapists working on other goals (e.g. related to physical improvement) to possess knowledge about mental functions and, based on it, influence the motivation and general well-being of the patient.



SO WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES OF A COMMON PATH OF HIPPO THERAPY AND CBT PSYCHOTHERAPY?

- ❑ All these interventions
 - need reliable research to verify their effectiveness.
 - they should be used by people who understand the need to adapt the methods of intervention to a particular patient and circumstances.
- ❑ additional possibility of a common path is using the theoretical and empirical background of CBT as a source of knowledge helpful in explaining the phenomena observed in hippotherapy.



Thank you for your attention



magdalena_pikul@poczta.fm

