

Problem-specific competences describe the knowledge and skills needed when applying CBT principles to specific conditions.

They are not a 'stand-alone' description of competences, and should be read as part of the CBT competence framework.

Effective delivery of problem-specific competences depends on their integration with the knowledge and skills set out in the other domains of the CBT competence framework.

Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) **Combined self-control desensitisation and cognitive therapy** **Borkovec model**

N.B. This therapy has been delivered as separate components
as well as a combination treatment

Sources:

Borkovec, T.D., & Sharpless, B. (2004). Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Bringing Cognitive Behavioral Therapy into the Valued Present. In S. Hayes, V. Follette, & M. Linehan (Eds.), *New directions in behavior therapy*, pp. 209-242. New York: Guilford Press.

Bernstein, D.A., Borkovec, T.D., & Hazlett-Stevens, H. (2000). *New directions in progressive relaxation training: A guidebook for helping professionals*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers

Borkovec, T.D. Protocol manuals:

Combined self-control desensitisation and cognitive therapy manual

Applied relaxation and self-control desensitisation

Basic CBT competences

An ability to establish and employ a collaborative relationship throughout all aspects of the therapy

An ability to structure sessions by agreeing and keeping to a joint agenda for each session

An ability to select, use and review session-by-session measures to guide intervention, as well as monitoring the outcome of therapy
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An ability to ensure that each session concludes with a summary of the session, including any agreed homework tasks

Problem specific competences

Knowledge

An ability to be aware of and draw on knowledge of the SCD and CT models for the treatment of GAD

An ability to be aware of and apply knowledge of the over-arching aim of the techniques associated with the model, in particular to help clients to learn to focus attention onto the present moment
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Explaining the rationale for SCD

An ability to explain the client the contribution of internal and external cues to the experience of anxiety (a spiral of interactions among thoughts, images, feelings, behaviours and somatic reactions)
An ability to explain the way in which reactions to cues associated with worry become habitual and strengthened over time
An ability to explain the rationale for learning to detecting internal and external cues at as early stage as possible using self-monitoring (specifically that this weakens habitual responses and reduce the probability that anxiety will be triggered by internal and external cues, and creates a new set of associations)

Explaining the rationale for CT

An ability to explain the rationale for CT, specifically the relationship between anxiety, perception of threat and perception of coping in the face of threat
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Explaining rationale for combined SCD and CT

An ability to explain the rationale for combined SCD and CT

Exploring treatment credibility

An ability to respect client's views about the credibility of the rationale, and to help them test out the validity of the model using the various components of therapy
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Self control desensitisation (SCD) component (Self monitoring and early cue detection and applied relaxation)

Self-monitoring

An ability to explain self-monitoring procedures, including 'checking-in' on a regular basis, in new situations and in response to any increase in anxiety
An ability to help the client learn about self-monitoring techniques through in-session practice, using imagery to recall recent anxious experiences, with the aim of helping the client to identify and specify in detail the sequence of relevant internal and cues
An ability to help clients identify cues that indicate increasing anxiety and which can be used as prompts to self-monitoring
An ability to help the client plan to check anxious experiences on a regular and frequent basis, and regularly to review this with the client in sessions

Using relaxation in response to cues of anxiety or worry

An ability to teach progressive and applied relaxation, with the aim of helping the client manage incipient anxiety cues as well as to develop a more relaxed lifestyle
An ability to teach additional relaxation techniques (such as diaphragmatic breathing and meditational techniques)
An ability to help the client combine self-monitoring and relaxation techniques within therapy sessions
An ability to help clients plan for daily practice

In-session systematic practice

An ability to work with the client to develop a hierarchy for self-control desensitisation
An ability to grasp the thematic issues as well as the specific cues which trigger the client's anxiety
An ability to help the client learn how to use imaginal rehearsal of anxiety-provoking situations, in combination with relaxation (self-control desensitisation)
An ability to help clients pace the cues used for desensitisation, based on their progress
An ability to help clients plan daily practice, ensuring that this includes both new and past assignments, and to review the outcome of these assignments in subsequent sessions

In-vivo (real-life) systematic practice

An ability to help the client assess the effects of imaginal desensitisation by undertaking in-vivo practice combined with applied relaxation
An ability to help the client employ alternative relaxation techniques, matching technique to client feedback about their effectiveness
An ability to plan and to review homework assignments including real-life practice, including the use of daily diaries

Shifting attentional focus

An ability to help clients practice refocusing attention from worry about future events to a focus on the present (through practicing focusing on current events, tasks they are undertaking, or features of the environment they are in)

Cognitive component

Monitoring and identifying cognitions

An ability to help the client become more aware automatic thoughts, using a range of methods (e.g. imagery, reliving, discussion) to specify their content
An ability to help the client maintain a diary of anxiety-arousing cognitions and self-statements

Challenging automatic thoughts and beliefs

An ability to explain the nature of automatic thoughts
An ability to help the client to test automatic thoughts
An ability to help the client identify different thinking biases that contribute to their worry (e.g. filtering, polarised thinking, overgeneralisation, 'mind-reading', catastrophisation, personalisation, seeing self as helpless or seeing self as omnipotently responsible)
An ability to help clients treat their thoughts and beliefs as hypotheses rather than facts, and to appraise them using discussion which enables them to consider the influence of thinking biases and to examine evidence for their beliefs

An ability to help the client develop and generate alternative thoughts and beliefs in response to anxiety provoking or worrying situations, and to plan relevant homework assignments
An ability to help the client appraise worries using decatastrophisation techniques (to identify the specific feared consequences of an event or worry, to appraise them in the context of thinking biases, and the capacity of the client to manage these consequences)
An ability to help the client reappraise worries or events experienced as potentially catastrophic using a 'counter-catastrophic' method which explicitly asks clients to consider (and weigh the probability of) the best as well as the worst anticipated outcomes
An ability to help the client construct behavioural experiments in order to test hypotheses and attributions based on anxiety-provoking thoughts or beliefs (including beliefs that worry makes feared outcomes less likely or aids coping)
An ability to help the client identify any underlying (deeper) beliefs, converting beliefs into statements which are amenable to appraisal
An ability to help clients plan regular homework practice of the various methods for challenging automatic thoughts and beliefs

Consolidation of learning

An ability to ensure that sessions include extensive opportunity for demonstration and practice of SCD and cognitive techniques
An ability to detect and draw attention to shifts in affect to cue clients to practice intervention techniques within the session, and as treatment progresses to apply both SCD and CT techniques at these points
An ability to help the client implement daily "worry-free" periods (involving self-monitoring and refocus attention, learning to postpone worry to a designated 'worry period', and to apply problem solving and CT techniques to worries which arise during this time)
An ability to help clients maintain a "worry outcome" diary in order refocus attention on actual rather than feared outcomes, and on the use of coping strategies for managing less positive outcomes

Metacompetences

An ability to introduce and implement the components of the programme in a manner which is flexible and which is responsive to the issues the client raises, but which also ensures that all components are included
An ability to model the same flexibility that clients should learn from the programme itself, demonstrated through by a willingness to structure session content in relation to client need and progress, especially in response to difficulties or concerns the client presents in following or complying with the programme