POWER OF THE PAST FORCE OF THE FUTURE
COMMUNITY CARE NETWORK OF KANSAS | OCTOBER 5-7, 2022

The Power of Cognitive Rewiring

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THE POWER OF COGNITIVE REWIRING

CREATING LONG-LASTING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE, RESILIENCY AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

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Community Care Network of Kansas
October 5, 2022
TO LIVE MORE OPTIMALLY
Restore, Recover, Return to Regulation

≡

Avoid Disorder, Discomfort, Dysregulation
1. Cognitive Emotional Behavioral Model
   (Evolution, Development, Environment)

2. Brain Wiring and Rewiring
   (Intentional Neuroplasticity)

3. Cognitive Reframing Approach
1. Think
2. Feel
3. Do
1. Detect Information
   • Senses
   • Interoception

2. Process Information
   • Cognition
   • Attention, memory, language, problem solving
THE HUMAN BRAIN LOVES A STORY

We interpret

We assign meaning

We form beliefs
What We Believe

Pleasant
- Joyful
- Inspired
- Calm
- Confident
- Loving
- Excited
- Grateful
- Positive

How We Feel

Unpleasant
- Stressed
- Insecure
- Angry
- Ashamed
- Guilty
- Judgmental
- Dread
- Sad

What We Do

Wanted
- Productive

Unwanted
- Procrastinate

It doesn't have to be perfect

It must be perfect
EMPOWERING!

Can’t Control:
- Our Thoughts
- Other’s Thoughts, Feelings, Behavior
- External Events

CAN Control:
- Our Beliefs (starting point)
- Our Emotions & Behavior (outcome)
What We Believe

How We Feel

What We Do
NEURAL CHAINS

Neural networks formed by:

Repetition = Increased Myelination
Fast, Powerful, Automatic
Don’t Go Away (exp. Illness/injury)
DEPERSONALIZING

Electrochemical Events ≠ Identity
Character Traits

Cognitive behavior chains: learned associations

Chains becomes automatic with repetition
Forming new networks

Intentional Neuroplasticity

• Override automatic suboptimal chains
  1. Awareness
  2. New Associations
  3. Repetition (myelination)
SUBOPTIMAL CHAINS

What We Believe → How We Feel → What We Do

SUBOPTIMAL "FAULTY" BELIEFS
FAULTY BELIEFS ARE INFLUENCED BY:

- Evolution
- Development
- Early Environment
EVOLUTION = SURVIVAL

• Threat Lens
• Negative Bias
• Control and Predict
• Attachment/Approval
• Being “Right” > Happy
THREAT AND MEMORY
DEVELOPMENT
(THE CHILD BRAIN)
Cortex
Reasoning, Language, Inhibition, Rational, Perspective Taking

Limbic
Emotional Reactivity, Attachment, Motivation (Fear/Reward)

Brainstem
Core Physiology/Survival (Reflexes, Sensory/Motor, BP Appetite, Sleep, Heart Rate, Temp)
CHILD BRAIN

- Threat
- Irrational
- Emotional
- Attachment
- Approval
- Ego-centric
- Non-Verbal
- Dysregulation
REPETITION = MYELIN = FASTER = STRONGER = AUTOMATIC
EARLY ENVIRONMENT
DYSREGULATION  ➔  REGULATION

Consistent
• Core Physiology
• Emotions
  • Attachment, Approval

Internalize over time

Inconsistent
• Adverse Childhood Events
• Emotional Invalidation$^{13}$
Dysregulation

Subtle and Without Malice

Hard-wired | Nonverbal | Problem Solving | Immediate Reframing

Dysregulation

SEPARATING INTENT FROM IMPACT
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVALIDATING</th>
<th>VALIDATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just want you to be happy.</td>
<td>That stinks!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t be upset.</td>
<td>I get it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I bet they didn’t mean it that way.</td>
<td>I can see that you’re really upset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just let it go.</td>
<td>How can I best support you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why don’t you do _____ then?</td>
<td>What would be helpful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least it’s not [something worse].</td>
<td>That must’ve been so hard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Faulty Beliefs

- Threat
- Negativity
- Memory

Development

- "The Child Brain"
- Emotional
- Irrational
- Egocentric

Environment

- Dysregulation
- Invalidation
- Approval

Myelin

- Ingrained
- Automatic
- Unconscious

"Faulty Beliefs"
Embedded Assumptions
1. Ourselves
2. Others
3. The World

Lens, Template, Filter
• Dictates Processing
• Determines Meaning

WHAT WE BELIEVE, WE SEE
CORE BELIEFS

- Ingrained
- Fast
- Unpredictable
- Powerful
- Stress
- Automatic
- Dysregulation
- Invalidation
### CORE BELIEF CATEGORIES

1. **Deficient/Defective**
   - I’m not enough. There is something wrong with me.

2. **Unlovable/Unworthy**
   - Because I am deficient /defective I am unlovable.

3. **Unsafe/Vulnerable**
   - The world is dangerous. Something bad is going to happen.

4. **Responsibility/Control**
   - I am responsible for others. It’s all up to me. I’m in control.

5. **Resigned/Hopeless**
   - Nothing will change. What’s the point? I will never feel better.

6. **Superiority**
   - I am different, unique, better than. I know what’s best for others.
What We Believe

Irrational
Threat
Negative
Stress

How We Feel

Invalidation
Ego-centric
Stress

Unpleasant

Unwanted

Stressed
Insecure
Angry
Ashamed
Guilty
Judgmental
Dread
Sad

Chronic Stress
Vulnerability
Dysregulation
Effortful
Unmotivated
BUILDING RESILIENCE

COGNITIVE REWIRING
## COGNITIVE REWIRING (REFRAMING)
### 5-STEP PROCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Faulty Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine</td>
<td>Impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Faulty Belief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-Examine</td>
<td>Impact Without Faulty Belief</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 QUESTIONS

Identify: What am I making this mean?
Investigate: Where does this come from?
Examine: What is it doing to me?
Challenge: How is it not true?
Re-examine: How am I better off without it?
STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE FAULTY BELIEF

“What am I making this mean?”

Work backwards from emotion or behavior

Faulty Belief?

Guilty Stressed Overwhelm

Can’t Say No: Overcommit Make Excuse
Faulty Belief(s):

• Saying “No” means I’m letting someone down.
• I’m responsible for other people’s emotions.
• Disappointing others means I’m a bad person.
  (unreliable, irresponsible, uncaring, unworthy)
• Self-care is selfish.
• Other people should appreciate what I do.
• Other people can’t do it as well as I can.
STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING FAULTY BELIEFS

Unconscious, Reflexive, Automatic, Fast, Ingrained

• Mindfulness/Meditation
• Journaling:
  • Child-Mind Journaling
  • What do I want/not want others to think about me?
  • What do I think I need/want to make me happy?
• Robot Play-by-Play
STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING FAULTY BELIEFS

• Useful Prompts:
  • Am I Chasing the “A’s?”
    • Approval, Affection, Appreciation, Love, Acknowledgment, Adoration
  • Where Am I Right Now?
    • Future, Past, Someone’s Mind?
  • Am I Judging Someone? Am I Judging Myself?
  • Am I Saying Should/Shouldn’t?
  • Am I Feeling Guilty or Ashamed?
STEP 2: INVESTIGATE THE ORIGIN OF THE BELIEF

“Where does this belief come from?”

Evolution
- Threat
- Control

Development
- Child Brain
- Immature
- Egocentric
- Irrational

Environment
- Attachment
- Approval
- Validation
**STEP 3:**
**EXAMINE THE IMPACT OF THE BELIEF**

"What is this belief doing to me?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>How do I feel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>How do I treat others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>How do I treat myself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>How do I act in the world?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Beliefs</td>
<td>Other evidence I’m collecting?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“What is this belief doing to me?”

What We Believe → How We Feel → What We Do

Unpleasant:
- Stressed
- Insecure
- Angry
- Ashamed
- Guilty
- Judgmental
- Dread
- Sad

Unwanted:
- Effortful
- Avoiding
“SAYING NO MEANS I’M LETTING SOMEONE DOWN”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Guilty, Ashamed, Obligated, Resentful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Dishonest, Critical if not appreciated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Overextend, Ignore needs, Collapse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Say yes when I mean no, Make excuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Beliefs</td>
<td>“I’m responsible for others’ feelings”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### “I’m Responsible for Others’ Emotions”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Stressed, Burdened, Guilty, Resentful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Problem solve, Invalidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Overeat, Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Isolate because relationships = work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Beliefs</td>
<td>“Self-care is selfish”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 4: CHALLENGE THE FAULTY BELIEF
COLLECTING ALTERNATIVE EVIDENCE

“How is this belief **NOT** true?”

• How is it **not** true?
• How is the opposite true?
• What other explanations could be true or truer?
• How is it true about me? How do I do that to them?
• How am I better off?
• Can I truly know what others are thinking, feeling?
• How is this belief **not** serving me? (Step 3)
How is this **not** true/opposite true?

• I’m modeling self-care to others.
• I’m trusting that they can do it.

How is it true about myself?

• I let **myself** down when I overextend by struggling.
• I act out of resentment, outside of my own integrity.

Even if “true,” how am I better off?

• Don’t need people in my life who tell that story.
"OTHER PEOPLE SHOULD APPRECIATE WHAT I DO"

• What’s the reality?
• I should appreciate what I do.
• I should appreciate what others do.

“OTHER PEOPLE CAN’T DO IT AS WELL AS I CAN”

• How do they?
STEP 5: RE-EXAMINE THE IMPACT WITHOUT THE BELIEF

“How am I better off without this belief?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>How do I feel?</td>
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<td>Other evidence I’m collecting?</td>
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</table>
**“SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Relief, Joy, Positive, Energized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Connected, Authentic, Not Resentful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>Self-care, have time for things I love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Bandwidth to show up for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Beliefs</td>
<td>I’m worthy, caring, loving, responsible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resilience

What We Believe

+

Pleasant
Joyful  Inspired
Calm  Confident
Loving  Excited
Grateful  Positive

Wanted
Engage

What We Do

“How am I better off without this belief?”
1. Awareness
   • Step 1: Belief Identification
   • Step 2: Investigation of belief origin
   • Step 3: Examination of belief’s impact

2. New Associations
   • Step 4: Challenging suboptimal beliefs
   • Step 5: Re-examining impact

3. Repetition
Decreased Emotionality, Anxiety
- Limbic activity, volume (Amygdala, Cingulate)\textsuperscript{9,10,12,15,17,19}

Increased Thoughtfulness
- Prefrontal cortex activity, volume (Dorsolateral)\textsuperscript{9,10,12,15,17,19}

Depression,\textsuperscript{6,7,11,14,18} Anxiety Disorders,\textsuperscript{8,14,17} PTSD,\textsuperscript{16} OCD,\textsuperscript{14} Social Anxiety\textsuperscript{15,19}
Must be Regulated

• Physiologically:
  • Sleep, Diet, Exercise, Meditation, Wellness

• Emotionally:
  • Feel the feels and experience moving through

• Dysregulation ➔ Regulation
Too strongly attached to the belief

- Having a hard time challenging it
- “Yah, but”
- Emphasize Validation > Reframing

Patience and Forgiveness
Repetition, Repetition, Repetition
1. What we believe determines what we feel, which influences how we behave. (Unidirectional model)

2. Evolutionary, developmental and early environmental influences can lead to suboptimal wiring (Faulty “Core” Beliefs).

3. Faulty neural chains become powerful, fast and automatic.
4. Faulty beliefs sabotage sustained behavioral change, threaten resiliency, hamper well-being.

5. Intentional Neuroplasticity builds resiliency by:
   1) Increasing **awareness** of faulty beliefs
   2) Forming **new associations** that improve mental well-being
   3) Building automaticity through **repetition** to sustain long-lasting change
6. The 5-step Reframing Process:

1) Identify faulty belief
2) Investigate the origin
3) Examine its impact
4) Challenge the faulty belief
5) Re-Examine the impact without it

7. Cognitive reframing can improve mood, decrease stress and improve overall life satisfaction.\textsuperscript{3,4,5,6,7,11}
What am I making this mean?

What story am I telling?

What am I believing right now?
QUESTIONS?
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Podcast: The Process Podcast on Spotify
REFERENCES

REFERENCES (CONT.)


