Metacognitive Training (MCT)

MCT 8 A – Mood

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Symptoms of depression?

???

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1. sadness, depressed mood

2. poor drive and motivation

3. low self-esteem, fear of being rejected

4. fears (e.g. regarding future)

5. sleep disturbances, pain

6. cognitive impairments (poor concentration and memory)

...

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Did I become like that?

Is it pre-determined whether we are happy or sad? Do our emotional states change over time?
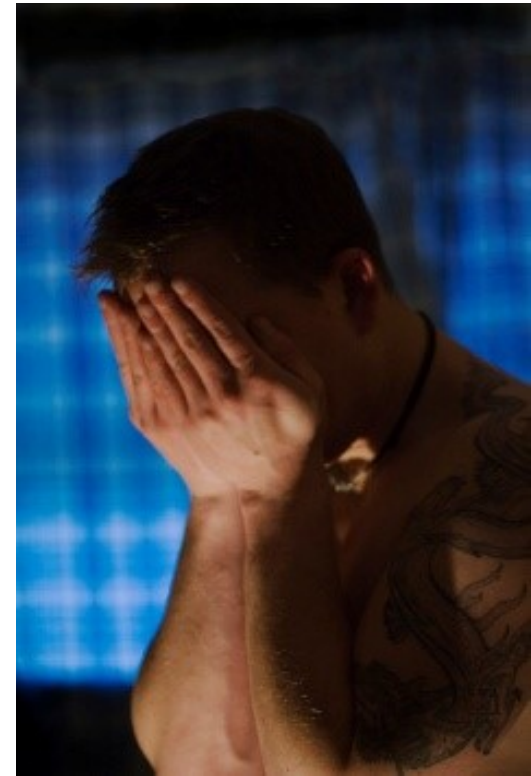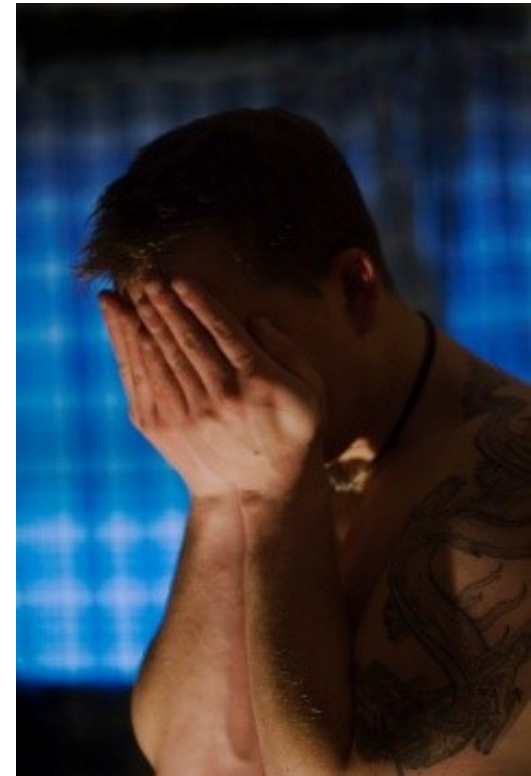
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"nature": There is evidence for a genetic predisposition of depressive thoughts and low self-esteem.
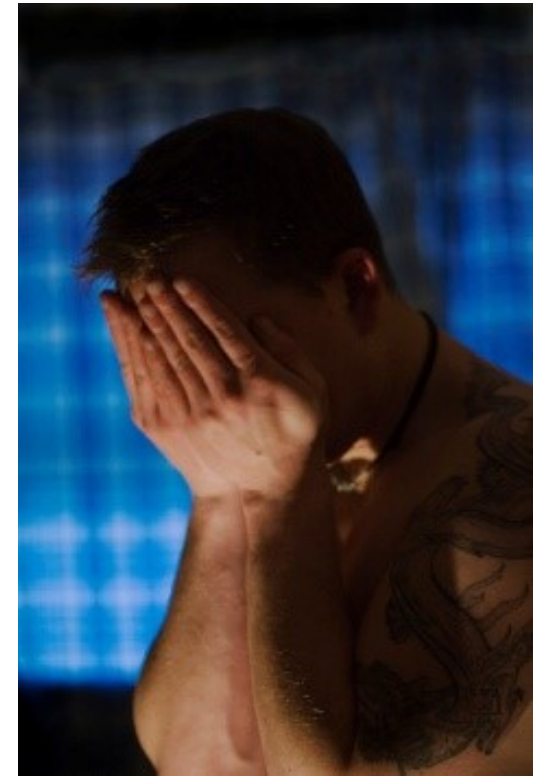
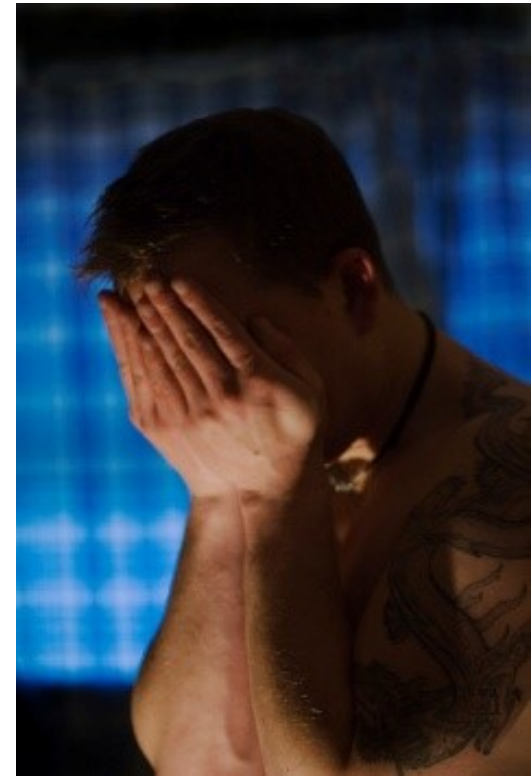"nurture": Critical and neglectful parents and traumatic life-events can promote a negative self-image.

BUT: depressive thinking structures can be changed. Depression is not an irreversible fate!

Why are we doing this?

Many people with mental health problems have thinking distortions that may lead to depression.

These thinking distortions can be changed through intensive and continuous training.

Psychosis & Depression
Effects of psychosis on self-esteem

👎 Negative effects of psychosis on mood	👍 *Short-term* positive effects of psychosis on mood
???	???
???	???
???	???

Psychosis & Depression
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Negative effects of psychosis on mood	*Short-term* positive effects of psychosis on mood
During psychosis: experiencing constant threat	???
During psychosis: hearing harassing and insulting voices	???
After psychosis: feelings of shame, future seems shattered	???

Psychosis & Depression
Effects of psychosis on self-esteem

Negative effects of psychosis on mood	*Short-term* positive effects of psychosis on mood
During psychosis: experiencing constant threat	During psychosis: rush, excitement, "something happening at last"
During psychosis: hearing harassing and insulting voices	During psychosis: hearing voices that flatter you
After psychosis: feelings of shame, future seems shattered	During delusions (of grandeur): feeling of power, talent, importance (mighty enemies) and destiny

Psychosis & Depression
Effects of psychosis on self-esteem

The *short-term positive effects* of psychosis on self-esteem are generally washed out by the *long-term negative consequences* of psychosis.

Examples:

- debts: when a person with psychosis falsely believed he/she is rich or famous

- loneliness: some friends may have turned their backs on the person

- work situation: loss of work because of inappropriate behavior at the office

It is very dangerous to stop taking medication without medical advice in order to revisit the threatening yet exciting world of psychosis, particularly as fear is often predominant during psychosis!

What are characteristic thoughts and thinking styles of people with depression and low self-esteem?
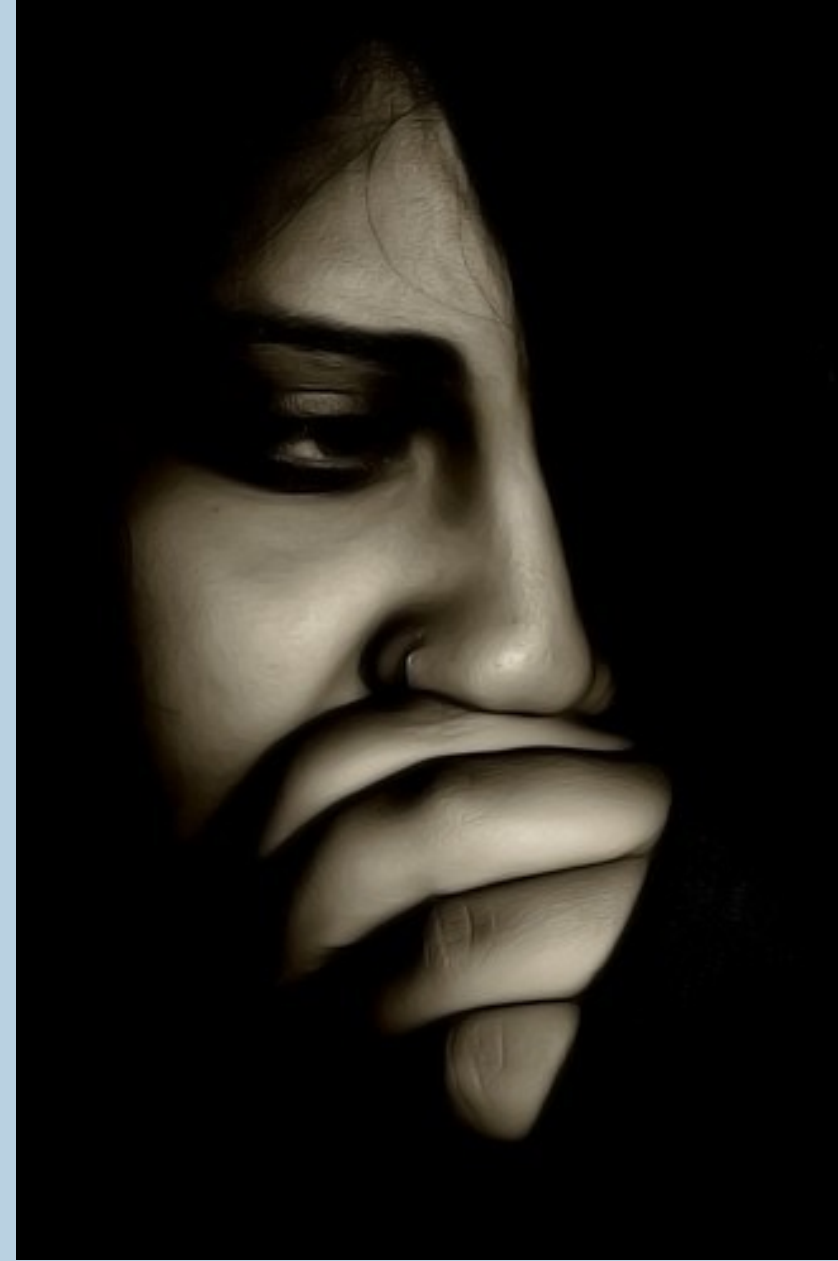
1. Exaggerated generalization
What would be a more realistic and helpful evaluation?

Event	*False generalization* Positive/constructive evaluation
You have used a foreign word improperly; you do not understand a book.	*"I'm stupid!"* ???
Failed exam.	*"I'm a loser!"* ???
You are criticized in a discussion.	*"I'm worthless!"* ???

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Allow errors: Nobody's perfect! If you stutter from time to time, this does not mean that you cannot express yourself. If you occasionally make a mistake, this does not mean you are sloppy.

Instead: do not generalize from one imperfection to everything!

Every human is complex – like a mosaic: we are made up of many small parts that are both good and bad.

Moreover, there are very different ways to define human characteristics:

What is attractiveness? Inner or outer beauty, a perfect body???

What is success? Career, many friends, being content with oneself and one's life???
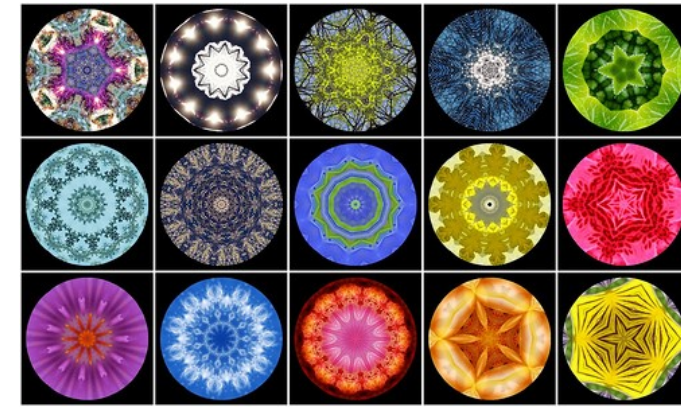
2. Selective perception
What would be a more realistic and helpful evaluation?

Event	Selective appraisal	Holistic evaluation
A good friend does not come to your birthday party.	Disappointment	???
People are standing together. They are looking in your direction.	"They are laughing at me."	???

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A good friend does not come to your birthday party.	Disappointment	Great party, other people came and really enjoyed the evening
People are standing together. They are looking in your direction.	"They are laughing at me."	They are only looking at me by chance or they mistake me for someone else

"Mind-reading": Avoid over-interpreting other peoples' behavior. There can be many explanations to a situation!

3. Applying your own standards as the ultimate measurement

There is a difference between how I judge myself and how others judge me!

- If I consider myself worthless, ugly etc., others do not necessarily share this view.

- There are often multiple opinions/judgments/preferences. Others may not agree with my understanding of intelligence or looks, etc.

4. Denial of positive feedback, but uncritical acceptance of negative feedback!

What would be a more realistic and helpful evaluation?

Event	*Depressive evaluation* Positive/constructive evaluation
You receive compliments for your performance.	*"That person only tries to flatter me … he/she is dishonest.";* *"Only he/she thinks that way …"* ???
You are criticized!	*"I've been exposed, I am worthless …"* ???

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	"The other person might have had a bad day."; "Can I benefit from the feedback?"

5. "All-or-Nothing-Thinking"/Catastrophic thinking
What could be a more realistic and helpful evaluation?

Event	*Depressive appraisal* Positive/constructive evaluation
You discover a dark spot on your skin.	*"I am getting cancer, I'm going to die."* ???

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Event	*Depressive appraisal* Positive/constructive evaluation
You discover a dark spot on your skin.	*"I am getting cancer, I'm going to die."* Ask others or consult a doctor

6. Suppression of negative thoughts
What would be a more realistic evaluation?

Event	*Problematic evaluation* Positive/constructive evaluation
You have recurrent negative thoughts (e.g. "You are worthless", "Loser", "Wow, you are stupid").	*"I mustn't think those negative thoughts" … but this does not work (→ see next exercise).* ???

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You have recurrent negative thoughts (e.g. "You are worthless", "Loser", "Wow, you are stupid").	*"I mustn't think those negative thoughts" … but this does not work (→ see next exercise).* Ask yourself whether the thoughts are justified. What contradicts these thoughts? Distract yourself by pursuing pleasant activities!

6. Suppression of negative thoughts
Exercise

It is not possible to deliberately suppress upsetting thoughts.

Trying not to think of something leads to thinking about it more.

Try it!
Do not think of an elephant in the next minute!

6. Suppression of negative thoughts
Does it work? No!

Most of you probably thought of an elephant and/or of something which has to do with an elephant (e.g. zoo, safari, Africa etc.).

This effect grows even stronger if one tries to deliberately suppress upsetting thoughts ("I am a loser" etc.). These thoughts can then become so strong that they seem strange or out of one's control!

Instead:

If you are bothered by strong negative thoughts, do not try to actively suppress them (this only increases them), but observe the inner events without intervening – like a visitor in a zoo who is observing a dangerous animal from a safe distance.

The thoughts will almost automatically calm down.

7. Further distortions of thinking

Comparison with other people:

- Do not compare yourself too much with others!

- There will always be people who are more attractive, more successful, and more popular. However, if you look at these "lucky devils" closely, you will recognize that even these people have their weaknesses and problems.

Absolute demands:

- **Do not** place too high demands on yourself such as:

  "I must always look good"

  "I must always appear smart"

  "I must always be most entertaining"

Optional: Videoclip

Video clip presentations that address today's topic are available at the following web site:

http://www.uke.de/mct_videos

After the video, you may discuss how it is related to today's topic.

[for trainers:

Some movie clips contain language that may not be appropriate for all audiences and across all cultures. Please carefully pre-screen videos before showing]

Be aware of your strengths

- Instead of focusing on your weaknesses, emphasize your strengths.

- Every human being has strengths that he or she can take pride in and are not shared by everyone
  ... these do not have to be world records or famous inventions

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1. Think about your own strengths.

   What abilities do I have? What have I received compliments for in the past?

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3. Write it down!

   Read this regularly and expand. In case of a crisis, go back to these memories

   (e.g. when you think you are worthless).

   e.g. Write down things that went well, or compliments you received …

Tips to improve depressed mood/low self-esteem

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- Accept compliments and write them down to use them as resources when times are tough.

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- Listen to your favourite music.

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- In case of severe depressive symptoms contact a general practitioner, psychologist or psychiatrist.

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- Sense of destiny (to fulfill a mission, to be important)

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Example: Bill feels persecuted by the secret service. On his commute to work, the same man enters his train compartment three days in a row.

Feelings: Fear and threat. But also: "If they make such a big deal out of it, I am probably some kind of James Bond and the other side may want to hire me."

But: It is only coincidental! Probably, both men just happened to enter the same train compartment on their daily routine.

Thank you for your attention!

for trainers:

Please hand out worksheets. Introduce our app COGITO (download free of charge).

www.uke.de/mct_app

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furryscaly	flickr	Fierce	CC	Leopard behind fence/ Leopard hinter Zaun
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