

Welcome to

Metacognitive Training – Silver



Metacognitive Training

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Cognition: derived from Latin, means "thinking"



Metacognitive Training

Meta: derived from Greek, means "about"

Cognition: derived from Latin, means "thinking"

Metacognition: "Thinking about thinking"

Metacognitive Training



Metacognitive Training



Bird's-eye View



Why Metacognitive Training?

- Many individuals with depression have suffered from their symptoms for a long time and have already tried many things to feel better.
- Often a number of factors contribute to the development of depression – some of these factors are modifiable and others are not.
- MCT-Silver provides strategies and information that can help you reduce your symptoms.

Why Metacognitive Training?

- Of course your symptoms won't disappear in an instant just because of a single exercise or session – it takes time and practice!
- In addition, you are ultimately your own specialist. You already have a lot of experience with what helps or doesn't help you.
- We encourage you to try the exercises – even if they seem strange or "too simple" at first.



Rumination and Social Withdrawal

Rumination or Worry



Rumination or Worry

- Many people with depression complain of endless ruminating, brooding and worrying.



Rumination or Worry

- Many people with depression complain of endless ruminating, brooding and worrying.

Are you familiar with brooding and worry?

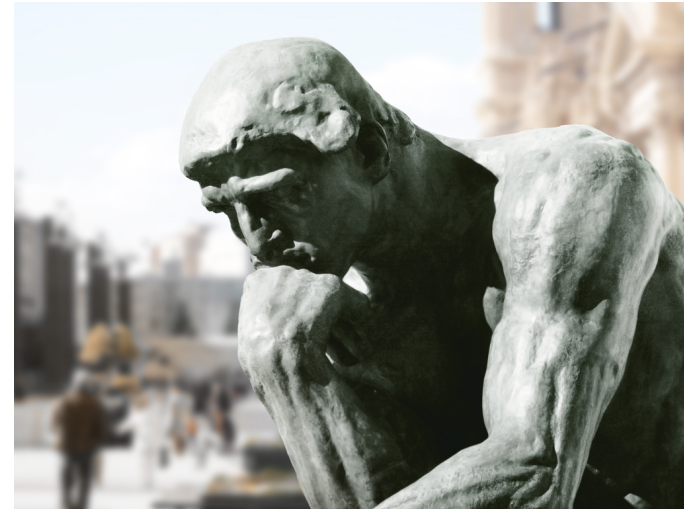


Can ruminating help ...



Can ruminating help ...

- ... solve problems?



Can ruminating help ...

- ... solve problems?
- ... avoid problems in the future?



Can ruminating help ...

- ... solve problems?
- ... avoid problems in the future?
- ... organize your thinking?



Rumination or Worry

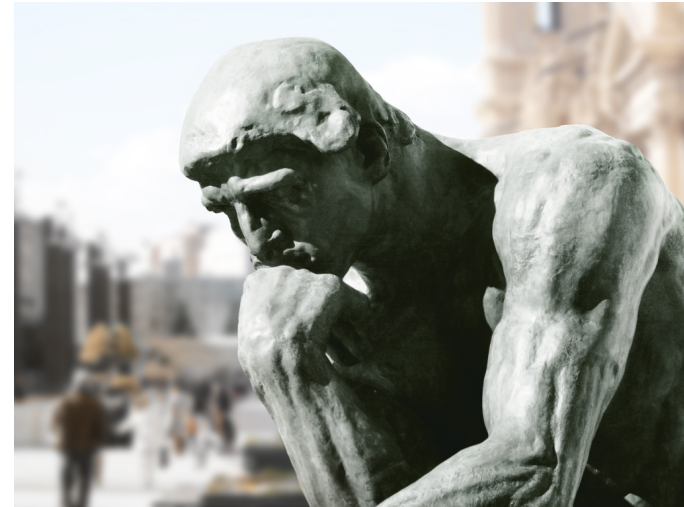
How can you recognize rumination? How is rumination different from contemplation or planning?



Rumination or Worry

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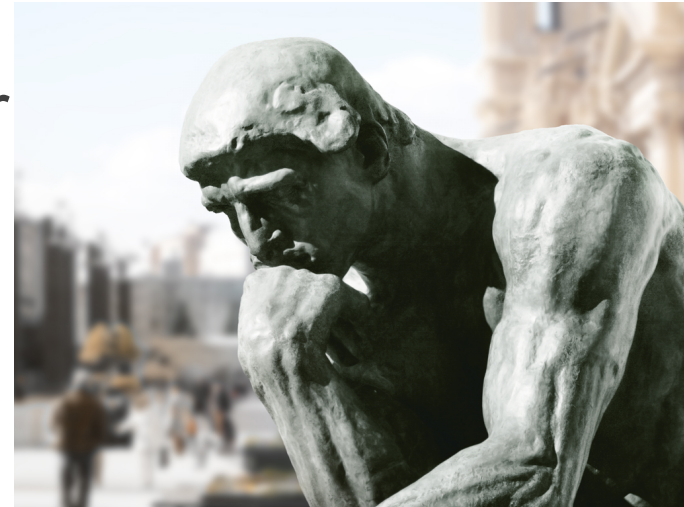
- **Thoughts are circular:** It is hard to find an end. The thoughts are self-destructive instead of helpful. A solution is rarely found!



Rumination or Worry

How can you recognize rumination? How is rumination different from contemplation or planning?

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- **Content:** “Why?”, “Why me?”, “How would it be (or how could it have been) when...?” or “What if something horrible happens?”



Rumination or Worry

How can you recognize rumination? How is rumination different from contemplation or planning?

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- **Content:** “Why?”, “Why me?”, “How would it be (or how could it have been) when...?” or “What if something horrible happens?”
- Rumination is usually about situations/events from the past.



Rumination or Worry

How can you recognize rumination? How is rumination different from problem solving or planning?

- Thoughts are repetitive and have no end. They are not helpful.
- Content is usually about something that would it be (or how could it be) ... "What if something horrible happened?"
- Rumination is usually about situations/events from the past.

**Rumination
doesn't help!!**



What helps against rumination?



What helps against rumination?

Is it helpful to suppress negative thoughts?



Thought suppression

Try it out:

During the next minute, do not think of an elephant!



Does thought suppression work? No!



Does thought suppression work? No!



- Most of you probably immediately thought about an elephant and / or about something related to an elephant (i.e., zoo, safari, Africa, etc.).

Does thought suppression work? No!



- Most of you probably immediately thought about an elephant and / or about something related to an elephant (i.e., zoo, safari, Africa, etc.).
- The effect is even stronger when you try to actively suppress **unpleasant thoughts**, such as self-blame ("I'm a failure", etc.).

Conclusion

- Problematic strategy: “I am not allowed to have negative thoughts.”



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Conclusion

- Problematic strategy: “I am not allowed to have negative thoughts.”
- It is not possible to suppress unpleasant thoughts and attempting to do so can be frustrating.
- Consciously trying not to think about something can strengthen negative thoughts.



Instead: Search for inner space...



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- **A thought!** Not reality!
- An “experience” in your mind. Attempt to just register the thought, and not to judge it.



Instead:

Search for inner space...

For example, a place in your mind in which you can observe thoughts but not judge them.

View a thought for what it is:

- **A thought!** Not reality!
- An “experience” in your mind. Attempt to just register the thought, and not to judge it.
- Imagine that you are at a train station. Like thoughts, the trains will come and go – but, you do not board every train!



Exercise:

Search for inner space...

Observe your thoughts without intervening or judging them ("I'm an idiot, I'm ruminating again!"). Let your thoughts pass, like a train at a train station, clouds moving across the sky, or a leaf floating down a stream.

Breathing exercise ...



What did you do during the breathing exercise?

- Focused on your breath.



What did you do during the breathing exercise?

- Focused on your breath.
- You observed your breath without changing it.



What did you do during the breathing exercise?



- Focused on your breath.
- You observed your breath without changing it.
- You perceived your thoughts and feelings without judging them or intervening.

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In the next step, you could think about which “train” you would like to take. Which “leaf” would you like to pick up?

Social Withdrawal

How can you recognize it?

Social withdrawal can be different things...



Social Withdrawal

How can you recognize it?

Social withdrawal can be different things...

- Not leaving the house



Social Withdrawal

How can you recognize it?

Social withdrawal can be different things...

- Not leaving the house
- Avoiding family and friends (e.g., calling them less often)



Social Withdrawal

How can you recognize it?

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- Avoiding family and friends (e.g., calling them less often)
- Not actively participating in conversations



Social Withdrawal

How can you recognize it?

Social withdrawal can be different things...

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- Avoiding family and friends (e.g., calling them less often)
- Not actively participating in conversations

Do you do these things?



Social Withdrawal

Why does it happen?

In depressive phases...

- ... interacting with others can be stressful.



Social Withdrawal

Why does it happen?



In depressive phases...

- ... interacting with others can be stressful.
- ... people with depression often feel misunderstood by other people or unimportant ("They don't care about my problems.").

Social Withdrawal

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- ... interacting with others can be stressful.
- ... people with depression often feel misunderstood by other people or unimportant ("They don't care about my problems.").
- ... the drive to do things is reduced.

Social Withdrawal

Why does it happen?



In depressive phases...

- ... interacting with others can be stressful.
- ... people with depression often feel misunderstood by other people or unimportant ("They don't care about my problems.").
- ... the drive to do things is reduced.
- ... physical limitations or medical illness can make it especially hard to maintain social contact.

Social Withdrawal

Are there other reasons for it?



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- After the death of a loved one or close friend, survivors can feel lonely.
- Of course, they still have a need for social contact, but it can be difficult to come into contact with others.
- Especially when they are still grieving the deceased person or need to build a new social network after the loss.

Social Withdrawal

How is it for you?



Are you familiar with social withdrawal? How do you manage to interact socially with others and maintain relationships?

Consequences of social withdrawal



Now consider – what are the possible consequences of social withdrawal?

Consequences of social withdrawal

Negative consequences:



Consequences of social withdrawal



Negative consequences:

- Loneliness

Consequences of social withdrawal



Negative consequences:

- Loneliness
- Fewer (new) experiences ➡ Boredom

Consequences of social withdrawal



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- Fewer (new) experiences ➡ Boredom
- More time for ruminating (“vicious cycle”)

Consequences of social withdrawal



Negative consequences:

- Loneliness
- Fewer (new) experiences ➡ Boredom
- More time for ruminating (“vicious cycle”)
- Possibly even conflicts or misunderstandings with friends or family members if they think that you are hiding something from them or that you no longer are interested in a relationship with them.

Consequences of social withdrawal

Positive consequences:



Consequences of social withdrawal

Positive consequences:

Are there positive consequences?



Consequences of social withdrawal



Positive consequences:

Are there positive consequences?

- The opportunity to take a break

Consequences of social withdrawal



Positive consequences:

Are there positive consequences?

- The opportunity to take a break
- Possibly a feeling of safety (you can stay in your comfort zone)

Consequences of social withdrawal



Positive consequences:

Are there positive consequences?

- The opportunity to take a break
- Possibly a feeling of safety (you can stay in your comfort zone)
- Avoidance of rejection or other feared negative events (but also possibly positive experiences!)

Social Withdrawal



How can I build my social contacts?

Individuals with depression sometimes have negative assumptions that can make social withdrawal even worse.

Situation	Unhelpful thought	More helpful thought
You're thinking about participating in a card playing group.		

Social Withdrawal



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Social Withdrawal



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Individuals with depression sometimes have negative assumptions that can make social withdrawal even worse.

Situation	Unhelpful thought	More helpful thought
You're thinking about participating in a card playing group.	"The group members have probably known each other a long time. I am going to be an outsider."	"Maybe the group members will be happy to have someone new join, especially when they already know each other well. I can try it out once and then decide whether I want to go again."

Positive Activities

Additionally, participation in positive activities usually leads to improved mood.

Example: Taking a walk through the park every week with a friend.



Positive Activities

- Unhelpful thought: “Taking a walk through the park is no great achievement.”



Positive Activities

- Unhelpful thought: “Taking a walk through the park is no great achievement.”
- This isn't about achievement! Instead, choose activities you enjoy – that's the best way to go about it, because “every journey begins with a single step”!

What positive activities would you like to do?





Learning Points

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- Rumination and worry do not help to solve or avoid problems, and rather make negative thoughts or feelings worse.



Learning Points

- Certain behaviors (i.e., social withdrawal) strengthen rather than reduce depression!
- There are many different factors that contribute to social withdrawal (e.g., loss of relationships, physical limitations).
- Rumination and worry do not help to solve or avoid problems, and rather make negative thoughts or feelings worse.
- Attempts to suppress negative thoughts make them stronger. Therefore, this strategy is not helpful.



Learning Points

- Practice noticing thoughts without judging them (breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, Tai Chi, etc.). Remember, you do not have to board every train! It is OK to let some (thoughts) pass.



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- Especially during depressive phases, it is important to maintain contact with important others and to continue to participate in activities (small steps).



Learning Points

- Practice noticing thoughts without judging them (breathing exercises, relaxation exercises, Tai Chi, etc.). Remember, you do not have to board every train! It is OK to let some (thoughts) pass.
- Especially during depressive phases, it is important to maintain contact with important others and to continue to participate in activities (small steps).
- Try to consciously notice the negative assumptions you make – and to overcome them!



Learning Points

- Think about your interests. What else can you do that you enjoy? Even if you are no longer physically able to engage in strenuous physical activities (e.g., going to a weekly jogging group), there is usually a similar, more suitable alternative (e.g., joining a walking group or fitness course).



Thanks for your attention!

Trainers: handout worksheets!

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