ANXIETY DISORDERS: OCD – COGNITIVE THEORIES & TREATMENT

COGNITIVISTS BELIEVE THAT OCD IS THE RESULT OF FAULTY AND **IRRATIONAL THINKING** PROCESSES.

WHY?

COGNITIVISTS BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE ARE INFORMATION PROCESSORS, A BIT LIKE **COMPUTERS**. EMOTION AND BEHAVIOUR ARE THE RESULT OF HOW PEOPLE **PROCESS INFORMATION** IN THE MIND.

TREATING OCD REQUIRES THE PATIENT TO **ALTER THE THINKING PROCESSES** THAT UNDERLIE THEIR SYMPTOMS

HOW?

OCD STARTS WITH **ANXIETY-PROVOKING THOUGHTS**. IN RESPONSE THE PERSON DOES THINGS TO REDUCE THEIR ANXIETY LEVELS.

OCD PATIENTS TEND TO BE **PERFECTIONISTS**. THE THOUGHT OF DOING SOMETHING 'BAD' TENDS TO MAKE THEM ANXIOUS.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING INVOLVES QUESTIONING THE CLIENT TO HELP THEM UNCOVER THE HIDDEN ASSUMPTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR ANXIETY.

TWO IMPORTANT PROCESSES

THEY TRY TO **SUPPRESS** THE BAD THOUGHTS BY DELIBERATELY NOT THINKING ABOUT THEM.

PARADOXICALLY, THIS MAKES THE BAD THOUGHTS MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR, RESULTING IN THE **OBSESSION**.

IN **HABITUATION TRAINING** THE CLIENT DELIBERATELY THINKS OF THEIR OBSESSION TO HELP THEM LEARN TO STOP TRYING TO SUPPRESS IT.

THEY DO THINGS THEY BELIEVE **WILL REDUCE THEIR ANXIETY** (E.G. WASHING THEIR HANDS IF THE THOUGHTS ARE ABOUT DIRT.

THE SHORT TERM REDUCTION IN ANXIETY MAKES THE **COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOUR** MORE LIKELY TO RECUR.

IN **REALITY TESTING** THE CLIENT DELIBERATELY DOESN'T DO THEIR COMPULSION TO PROVE TO THEMSELVES THAT NOTHING BAD HAPPENS AS A RESULT.

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