



Emotion Regulation Framework for Treating Depression and Anxiety

Presented by

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Overview Despite the success of cognitive behavioral therapies (CBT), a sizable subgroup of patients fails to achieve an acute and enduring treatment response. Patients with “distress disorders” (including generalized anxiety disorder & major depressive disorder, especially when they co-occur) and individuals in distressing contexts (i.e., COVID-19 pandemic, familial caregiving), fail to make sufficient treatment gains thereby prolonging their deficits in life functioning and satisfaction. Using this hypothesized profile as a framework, Emotion Regulation Therapy (ERT) integrates principles from traditional and contemporary CBT with basic and translational findings from affective science to offer a blueprint for improving clinical response by focusing on the motivational responses and corresponding regulatory characteristics of individuals with distress disorders.

This program will begin by offering a concise overview of ERT findings from our 9 published and on-going clinical trial both in terms of clinical improvement as well as findings supporting the neurobehavioral model undergirding ERT. Attendees will also receive an introduction to the ERT approach to case formulation and the treatment principles developed and utilize. Attendees will learn to help clients to 1) expand their understanding of anxiety and depression using a motivational and emotion regulation perspective; 2) cultivate mindful awareness and acceptance of sensations, bodily responses, and conflicting emotions; 3) develop emotion regulation skills that promote a distanced and reframed meta-cognitive perspective; 4) apply these skills during emotion-based exposure to meaningful behavioral actions and associated internal conflicts to taking these actions; and 5) build a plan to maintain gains and take bolder action despite the ending of the therapeutic relationship.

Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- Describe one’s understanding of the role of dysfunctional self-referential processing in treatment resistant presentations of anxiety and depression
- Describe how a motivational and emotion regulation perspective can be utilized to improve understanding and treatment of these refractory cases
- Demonstrate familiarity with attention regulation skills to promote flexible shifting and sustaining of awareness on emotional responses.
- Demonstrate familiarity with meta-cognitive regulation skills to promote a distanced, decentred, and reframed perspective on emotions
- Identify how these skills can be used during emotion-based exposure to meaningful behavioural actions and associated internal conflicts to taking these actions

Foundations of ERT Model and Approach (1:29)

- Beginning Therapy
- Identifying Emotions and Motivations
- “Catch Yourself Reacting”
- Counteractive Imagery Exposure (“Do-Over”)

Phase I: Regulation Skills Training (1:32)

- Attentional Regulation Skills
- Metacognitive Regulation Skills

- **Structuring PAP Session Three**

Phase II: Experiential Exposure to Promote Context Engagement (1:30)

- Values Delineation
- Proactive Imagery Exposure (“Do It”)
- Conflicting Voices Task

Ending Therapy (1:29)

- Discussion

Dr. Doug las Mennin has developed an active program of research in clinical trials and basic research into the nature of chronic and recurring bouts of anxiety and mood disorders, particularly worry, stress, and depression. He has developed Emotion Regulation Therapy (ERT), which is an integrative mind-body psychotherapy that draws from contemporary approaches as well as affect science and neuroscience. Dr. Mennin’s work on ERT has demonstrated considerable positive outcomes as well as identified a number of cognitive, physiological, and neural mechanisms that may help explain how the therapy is effective.

Dr. David M. Fresco is Professor of Psychiatry and Research Professor at the Institute for Social Research (ISR). His program of research adopts an affective neuroscience perspective to conduct basic, translational, and treatment studies of anxiety and mood disorders, particularly distress disorders (e.g., major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder) incorporating methodologies including functional neuroimaging (fMRI & EEG), peripheral psychophysiology, and serum markers.

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