

Aaron Beck's cognitive theory

introduction :

Aaron Temkin Beck (July 18, 1921 – November 1, 2021) was an American psychiatrist who was a professor in the department of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania. He is regarded as the father of cognitive therapy and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). His pioneering methods are widely used in the treatment of clinical depression and various anxiety disorders. Beck also developed self-report measures for depression and anxiety, notably the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), which became one of the most widely used instruments for measuring the severity of depression. In 1994 he and his daughter, psychologist Judith S. Beck, founded the nonprofit Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy, which provides CBT treatment and training, as well as research. Beck served as President Emeritus of the organization up until his death.

Beck was noted for his writings on psychotherapy, psychopathology, suicide, and psychometrics. He published more than 600 professional journal articles, and authored or co-authored 25 books. He was named one of the "Americans in history who shaped the face of American psychiatry", and one of the "five most influential psychotherapists of all time" by The American Psychologist in July 1989. His work at the University of Pennsylvania inspired Martin Seligman to refine his own cognitive techniques and later work on learned helplessness.

1- Cognitive théory of beck's:

Working with depressed patients, Beck found that they experienced streams of negative thoughts that seemed to arise spontaneously. He termed these cognitions "automatic thoughts", and discovered that their content fell into three categories: negative ideas about oneself, the world, and the future. He stated that such cognitions were interrelated as the cognitive triad. Limited time spent reflecting on automatic thoughts would lead patients to treat them as valid.

Beck began helping patients identify and evaluate these thoughts and found that by doing so, patients were able to think more realistically, which led them to feel

better emotionally and behave more functionally. He developed key ideas in CBT, explaining that different disorders were associated with different types of distorted thinking. Distorted thinking has a negative effect on a person's behavior no matter what type of disorder they had, he found; Beck explained that successful interventions will educate a person to understand and become aware of their distorted thinking, and how to challenge its effects. He discovered that frequent negative automatic thoughts reveal a person's core beliefs. He explained that core beliefs are formed over lifelong experiences; we "feel" these beliefs to be true.

Since that time, Beck and his colleagues worldwide have researched the efficacy of this form of psychotherapy in treating a wide variety of disorders including depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, drug abuse, anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and many other medical conditions with psychological components. Cognitive therapy has also been applied with success to individuals with schizophrenia. He also focused on cognitive therapy for schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, and for patients who have had recurrent suicide attempts.

Beck's recent research on the treatment of schizophrenia has suggested that patients once believed to be non-responsive to treatment are amenable to positive change. Even the most severe presentations of the illness, such as those involving long periods of hospitalization, bizarre behavior, poor personal hygiene, self-injury, and aggressiveness, can respond positively to a modified version of cognitive behavioral treatment.

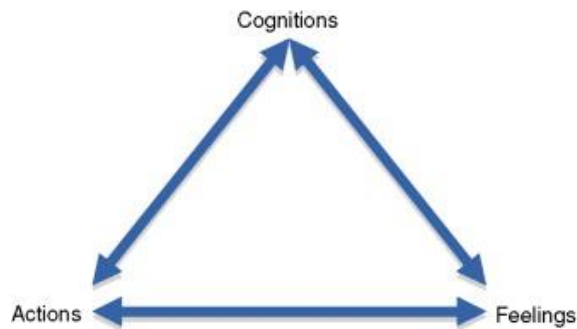
Although Beck's approach has sometimes been criticized as too mechanistic, modern CBT stresses the importance of a warm and encouraging therapeutic relationship and tailoring treatment to the specific challenges of each individual. Beck's work was presented as a far more scientific and experimentally-based development than psychoanalysis (while being less reductive than behaviorism),

Beck's key principles were not necessarily based on the general findings and models of cognitive psychology or neuroscience developing at that time but were derived from personal clinical observations and interpretations in his therapy office. And although there have been many cognitive models developed for different mental disorders and hundreds of outcome studies on the effectiveness of CBT—relatively easy because of the narrow, time-limited and manual-based nature of the treatment—there has been much less focus on experimentally proving the supposedly active mechanisms; in some cases the predicted causal relationships have not been found, such as between dysfunctional attitudes and outcomes

2- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adolescents:

Beck's cognitive theory considers the subjective symptoms such as a negative view of self, world, and future defining features of depression. The model assumes that psychopathological states represent extreme or excessive forms of normal cognitive, emotional, and behavioral functioning. Additionally, the cognitive theory posits that anxiety and depression can be distinguished by their cognitive content, with thoughts of personal loss and failure specific to depression and cognitive content involving physical or psychological threat and danger specific to anxiety. Although initially conceptualized as a model relevant to anxiety and depression, the cognitive model is now applied to a wide range of disorders such as eating disorders.

A central tenet of the cognitive theory is that our thinking influences our emotional and behavioral experiences and vice versa. As is described later, when applied in therapy, there is an emphasis on working toward changing one's thoughts as a means to altering feelings and behaviors. The basic model depicting the interrelationships among thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is displayed in **Figure**



Cognitive theory has focused on thought processes that become habitual and automatic. These automatic thoughts are theorized to differ depending on the specific psychological problems a person is experiencing. How these thoughts become automatic is a matter of scientific study. Beck originally posited that individuals derive meaning from their experiences and, with time, rely on what he called cognitive schemas (i.e., hypothetical organizing structures of experience represented in thoughts) to provide meaning to experience. For example, someone with a history of limited close relationships may, over time, develop a schema like 'I am unlovable.' Schemas can constitute particular vulnerabilities to interpret certain types of experiences inaccurately. For instance, if a person believes they are unlovable, then they may interpret a colleague not inviting them to a party as further evidence of their unlovability rather than considering that the party was only for that person's family members or that they were actually invited but did not see the invitation.

Beck also developed the notion of the cognitive triad to describe how depressed adults tend to think about the world. The triad refers to thoughts about self, world, and future. In all the three instances, depressed individuals tend to have negative views. Thus, a depressed individual would tend to think they are a worthless person living in a futile and unforgiving world with a hopeless future. Beck's work also led to the identification of particular patterns of habitual and maladaptive thinking that he called errors of thought. These included the following:

-arbitrary inference: Where an individual quickly and on the basis of limited evidence, draws a conclusion. Example: That person did not smile at me. He hates me.

-selective abstraction: Where an individual focuses only on some of the available evidence to draw a conclusion. Example: My boss mentioned that my report needed some edits. He hated it.

-overgeneralization: Where an individual takes one negative event and assumes that it has meaning that pervades his/her whole life. Example: I missed that shot. I am never going to succeed in anything.