STUDY GUIDE AND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
TO ACCOMPANY VIDEOTAPE
“PSYCHOTHERAPY WITH THE EXPERTS”
FEATURING DONALD MEICHENBAUM

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COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

with

Donald Meichenbaum

Introduction

This video is one in a series portraying the leading theories of psychotherapy and their application. This series presents the predominant theories and how they are practiced. Each video in the series features a leading practitioner and educator in the field of counseling or psychotherapy. The series is unique in that it features real clients with real problems. During the course of the series these clients bring up a number of issues with the therapists.

A theory is a framework that helps us understand something or explains how something works. Just as there are many different people and personalities, there are different theories of understanding how people live and how change occurs, each with its own guidelines for understanding and procedures for operation. The primary differences between these theories are related to the relative importance each theory places on cognitive (thinking), behavioral (doing), and affective (feeling) factors. Each theory has devotees who think and act as the theory prescribes in order to help people change their lives. Certain theories explain certain phenomena better than others. The individual counselor or psychotherapist needs to develop his or her own approach to helping others with problems of an emotional, behavioral, or cognitive nature. Specific objectives in therapy include (1) removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms, (2) mediating disturbed patterns of behavior, and (3) promoting positive personality growth and development.

The video begins with a brief discussion with the practitioner concerning the theory. We then move to the actual counseling session. After the session,
Carlson discusses the session with Diane Kjos, and an audience made up of counselors, graduate students, and counselor educators.

Because the video series contains actual counseling interviews, professional integrity is required to protect the confidentiality of the clients who have courageously shared their personal lives with us.

Purpose

The series is designed for pre-professional training in graduate and undergraduate classes in counseling theory. Students will learn about the theory and watch a leading practitioner work with a client in a “first session” interview.

The series is also appropriate for workshops or individual study for the professional development of practicing counselors, social workers, clinical psychologists, or psychotherapists. Professionals will learn from the practitioner by gaining new ideas and insights which can be helpful in working with current or future clients.

How to Use the Video

1. As a **stand alone activity** for professional development or orientation to Cognitive-Behavior Therapy. If you are using the video this way, it might be helpful to first read about Cognitive-Behavior Therapy. See page 31 of this guide for a list of suggested readings. Or, you may wish to watch the video, read about the theory, and then watch the video a second time.

   As you watch the video, note the questions included on the enclosed test. This will help you identify key points related to this theory. If you wish continuing education credit, complete the test and submit it as directed.

2. As an **integral part of a course in counseling theory** with the textbook, student study guide, and instructor’s guide. The text by Jon Carlson and Diane
Kjos (1998), *Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon with accompanying *Study Guide to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, and *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, published by Allyn & Bacon of Needham Heights, Massachusetts, are coordinated with the videotapes and can assist in guiding the student through the learning process, including key concepts, application, and techniques.

3. As an **adjunct in classes** to demonstrate a practical application of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy or to demonstrate specific interventions and techniques. Guidelines and suggested discussion topics will be included in Carlson and Kjos (1998), *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

4. As a **basis for a series of class sections or a workshop** for either professional development or counselor education. You may choose to use all or parts of the video to support specific teaching objectives. Suggestions for scheduling, discussion questions, and other activities will be included in Carlson and Kjos (1998), *Instructor’s Guide to Introduction to Counseling and Psychotherapy*, Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

**Cognitive-Behavior Therapy with Donald Meichenbaum**

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., credited as being the founder of Cognitive Behavior Modification, is a professor of psychology at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada and has a private practice as a psychologist. Meichenbaum has written a number of books and lectures internationally. He is probably best known for his most current work in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In a 1982 survey published in *The American Psychologist*, he was voted one of the ten most influential psychotherapists in the world.
Learning Objectives

1. Identify theoretical concepts which are descriptive of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy.
2. Recognize specific interventions or techniques related to Cognitive-Behavior Therapy.
3. Describe the range of applications of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy.

Abstract of Cognitive-Behavior Therapy Video

This video is approximately 114 minutes long and is divided into three parts:
Part II: An initial therapy session with Donald Meichenbaum and, in which Meichenbaum demonstrates Cognitive-Behavior Therapy with a woman whose father has a mental illness. (44 minutes).
Part III: Discussion of the therapy session with Jon Carlson, Diane Kjos, and a panel of human service professionals and graduate students (45 minutes).

Transcript

M1 Beverly. Is it okay if I call you Beverly?
CL1 Oh sure. That’s fine.
M2 First of all I want to start off by thanking you for coming in and agreeing to do this project. Perhaps we could begin by having you tell me a little bit about what brings you here; how I can be of help.
CL2 Well, I’ve been suffering some anxiety. I haven’t been able to sleep at night. My thoughts are going wild. Some nervousness and fears. Just on edge a lot and it’s interfering with, like, my schooling and things like that.
M3 Of these, where should we begin? Help me understand what you’re...
CL3 Well, I could tell you a little bit about probably the main cause of it and my history a little bit. My father is a manic depressive and he’s been that way since I was about 13 years old. We never had any kind of help or support during that time so we pretty much just lived with it, kept it within the family. I used to feel that it was my fault a lot; that he was the way he was. I blamed myself a lot. And he’s been off and on that way for most of his life since then and he has the cycles. I never really got to know who he was you know, as a father because he’s always been kind of a stranger to me. About a year and a half ago my mom passed away. She was his primary caretaker. She finally had to put him in a nursing home because it was just too much for her to handle. After she passed away, I had to become his power of attorney and take over everything, the responsibilities and become his caretaker. It’s been really hard because there’s apart of me that just can’t, doesn’t have all that love to do that, you know. I mean, it’s a mechanical thing I’m going through a lot of times. He’s still very abusive on the phone. He calls and tells me he’s going to cut me out of his will. There’s never any real appreciation. There’s never any thank yous and I’ve just got so much stress and...

My brother and sister are out of state and they’re pretty much staying that way; out of sight, out of mind.

M4 Are they younger or older?
CL4 They’re a couple years younger. I’m the oldest.

M5 So the burden, the responsibility...

CL5 Yeah, and it’s every day. I can never get away from it because there’s a lot of bills. His medical expenses are really...He’s had pneumonia. He almost died this year. It’s not, you know, I don’t mind, I was the only one who could take it over last year, this power of attorney and everything because I was the only one in state, but it’s caught up to me. Last year I don’t know if I was in shock so much that I was going through the motions. This year I’m feeling more emotional and I’m
really stressed and sometimes feel like I’m going to have a nervous breakdown. I just want to run away.

M6 What do you mean by on edge all the time?

CL6 Well, I’m on edge because of him. I haven’t dealt with a lot of his past. I’m afraid of him still. There were a lot of terrible things that happened when I was growing up with him. He threw things. He was real abusive verbally. He’s had a lot of sexual things going on. I guess a lot of bipolars have that. So I still have a lot of that fear for him even though he’s older and weaker and he’s in a wheel chair. I’m terrified he’s gonna get out and maybe come and get me. So there’s some much terror that just hasn’t been resolved. It all seems to be coming up now from that.

M7 Well, that’s quite a story.

CL7 Yeah, so...

M8 You’ve been through a lot and it still impacts on you now.

CL8 Yeah. It doesn’t ever seem to be getting any, like, better. It’s just something...I don’t know. It’s just day after day, I don’t see any resolution or anything, you know. I get hopeless about that sometimes.

M9 So not only do you have all the mixed feelings of caring for him...

CL9 Yes, I do. There’s a part of me that knows he’s my father and wants that love but I never hear it from him. I never hear anything about thank you...

M10 No appreciation.

CL10 ...or anything. And maybe I wanted to take care of him because I never got that and maybe I wanted to see if I could get that from him. But I still haven’t.

M11 We’re going to come back to all of the stresses that you’re dealing with and what you’ve been through. I am kind of also curious about the other parts of your life, you know, in terms of who you could share this with, who do you turn to, how, what the rest of your...
CL11  I have a few friends at school that I can talk to. My husband, I talk to him a lot. I try to talk to my sister and brother about it but they seem to be thinking that, they’re not there to see the everyday, to deal with the everyday stuff - the phone calls from him and everything. And so they think that I’m just not doing my job. Not being the daughter or something, you know. The responsible one, and I’m just tired of being that responsible person. But I don’t have all that...I’ve tried to look for some support groups and things and I’m trying to get into some therapy and stuff, but...

M12  And tell me a little bit, if you feel comfortable, about the whole business with your husband. How does that...

CL12  Well, he’s real good and he’s real understanding. He’s been through a lot of it, he’s almost been a replacement for my brother and sister. He comes out and deals with my dad. He’s heard a lot of the stuff. He’s dealt with my dad, some of that abuse. And then I feel bad because I don’t think it’s right that he has to be burdened with it too. And that’s where I’m at lately. I’m feeling really bad about burdening the people around me that shouldn’t have to go through that.

M13  And in working with him or with others, what kinds of solutions, if any, what kinds of things have you been able to bring on to cope with all of this? Give me a sense of where you’re at in terms of...

CL13  Well, I tried to do everything I could for my father when he requested things, but I was just getting beat up by him. Nothing I did was ever right or anything, or appreciated. So lately, I’ve been distancing myself from him. When the phone rings I don’t answer it. He’s getting more and more aggravated because of it. I’m thinking maybe if I just don’t be so accessible to him maybe he will stop it, but because he’s mentally ill, you know, he forgets a lot of things I’ve said.

M14  So when he calls and is demanding and abusive, can you remind yourself that he’s mentally ill? That this is the illness speaking?
CL14 You know, I have a hard time with that and I don’t know why. I mean, I think when I was growing up my mother used to say, couldn’t believe that he was always that way. She used to say that he was putting on an act.
M15 Umhmmm.
CL15 So I think there’s that voice, I still hear that and I wonder about that myself and I can’t separate...because I never know who he really is. I don’t know who, if he was ever normal. So I fight that. I do go back and forth between yes, he’s my father and I need to care for him and yet he’s a stranger, too.
M16 Tell me what it was like to grow up there during that whole period.
CL16 I was very lonely. I really shut down. I was always in fear. I didn’t feel like I could reach out to anybody. My mother worked a lot and he wasn’t working so he was home a lot, so we would have to deal with him - my sister, my brother and myself. Or call her up and tell her different things, or she’d call home and check...
M17 And you were the oldest?
CL17 I was the oldest, umhm.
M18 So did the responsibility, more of the responsibility fall on your shoulders then too?
CL18 It’s possible because I stayed home longer than the other kids. They left at about 20 and I stayed for a while longer thinking I could help out, help my mother, I think. Try to be supportive. And it was never...I started doing things for her that she wanted done, like I’d take clothes to him at the mental hospital, things she didn’t want to do. Called the police a couple times.
M19 You used the, you mentioned something before and talk about it only if you feel comfortable. You said something about his sexual behavior.
CL19 Yes, the way he would talk. He had magazines around that were like, he’d just leave laying around. One time I was in the room and he came in the room and he shut the door with me in there and I don’t think anything happened but I always
wonder - I go back sometimes and I just start thinking, you start wondering how, if there was something really traumatic that really might have happened. But my mom came in and hit the door so hard I guess, she almost broke the door down and nothing happened, I don’t think, but it was so frightening.

M20 How old were you then?
CL20 About 15 or so, 14.
M21 And how old are you now?
CL21 44?
M22 Umhm. And did you, as you think back on it, did you feel threatened? What was going on then?
CL22 Um, I was always afraid, yeah. I was always on edge. I never relaxed, I don’t think. I was always waiting, because he was manic, you’re always watching to see what his moods are going to be cause you know, it just kept getting worse and worse. And my mom never wanted to get help really until it was so bad. So we watched it get worse and worse and...

M23 Was he aggressive with people in the home? Did he hit people?
CL23 In the home, where he’s at now?
M24 With the family?
CL24 Yeah, a couple times he slapped my brother. He threw things and I think he hit my mom once, maybe threw her down.
M25 And towards you?
CL25 Not that I remember, just very loud and screaming and stuff. But I never knew if he was going to. I was so scared I never knew what he would do next, so I always lived in fear.
M26 And are there other kinds of incidents that you remember during that time?
CL26 Well, there are just so many things. I mean, it just kind of was a blur, you know. It’s hard to separate...
M27 One right after another?
CL27 Yeah, it was like, yeah, they never seemed to ease up. He would go the other way. Then he would get real withdrawn and then he would shut himself off from everybody too that way. So then you’d have the opposite, that he would become very remote.

M28 And what do you think lingers from that? What has been the impact on you of all of that kind of experience?
CL28 I don’t know. I try to think of the good times and that’s what sometimes my thoughts are because I want to hold on that he’s not all that bad. When I was very young, I remember those good times and I guess I do that because I just don’t want him to think that he’s so terrible.
M29 Umhm. So you’ve got to remind yourself of the good times.
CL29 Yes. But now it’s getting harder and harder to do that. Now I’m just, I’ve almost put up a wall again, I think.

M30 I’m curious, what impact this has had on you in other areas besides just dealing with your dad. How does this effect you in other ways, all of that?
CL30 Well, for a long time I had a real problem with authority figures, and males. I could never have a relationship. They were just very shallow, you know. I was afraid to show my feelings, I think. I also, I’ve been told I’m pretty smart, but I kept that real quiet and I played dumb. I’m not sure why I did that. I guess he criticized me a lot and he was real sarcastic with me.
M31 And when you grow up with that kind of criticism, growing up with being afraid and having to be vigilant... I wonder what impact does it have, what goes on from the constant exposure to that criticism.
CL31 I’m afraid to open up sometimes, I think. I’m afraid to trust people. I’m just starting to get better at that but for a long time I was just really, just didn’t even want to try to reach out to people at all. So...because I was afraid they’d hurt
me I guess. Or criticize me.

M32 As a result of all of that exposure to criticism, do you ever get a sense that you’ve become your own critic in any way? I mean, does that concept...

CL32 Yeah, my voice, my head’s always say...

M33 Tell me about your head, when you say that.

CL33 Well, I can’t accept a compliment, really. I always have to twist it around and say “No, no, no,” you know. Either it’s that or I just don’t believe that people are being sincere, or something.

M34 Umhm.

CL34 So, I guess there’s some negativity there. That I’m not good enough, you know. I do well in school but it still doesn’t seem like it’s good enough. What’s the use, you know, when I am doing good.

M35 And does being your own critic show up in other places besides taking compliments and hiding your own intelligence and...?

C35 I don’t know. It probably is, in some way, always there in the back of my mind. Sometimes, it’s just not as...I don’t notice it as much. Maybe it’s a habit.

M36 I have a notion and I’d like to run it by you and see how it sounds to you and that is I wonder if, when it comes to caring for your dad, if you’re a critic of yourself there as well.

CL36 Probably, because it’s not working out. I’m not getting any closer with him. Nothing has changed. Some kind of a failure, yeah, I guess.

M37 So what’s the picture? I mean, give me the sense of if you were dealing with him and you weren’t criticizing you, I mean what would that look like? What do you think you should be...what kinds of feelings do you think you should be having when you’re dealing with your dad?

CL37 I should be happy with myself. I don’t know because I’ve never really had those.
M38 Right.

CL38 I don’t even know how it feels. Because I never learned it.

M39 Given what you’ve experienced with him over the years, given the lack of appreciation, given the absence of support from your siblings, if you didn’t have mixed feelings, some ambivalence about caring for him, I would be deeply concerned. I mean, you’re still getting the criticism from him, even though you’re doing a lot.

CL39 I feel really bad, in a way, because I feel like he lost his wife too, you know, and I lost my mother. And I feel bad that he’s lonely, you know. And that’s where I struggle because I would really like to be with him and talk to him and just bond or something, you know. And talk about what we’ve been through our loss, the loss and we can’t even do that. And so there’s like, I don’t know how to communicate with him, I can’t.

M40 This is our only session together, okay. And if we had subsequent sessions, let me give you a sense of where we’d go and get your reactions to this. Okay one thing that I would explore with you is the stress you’re experiencing with your dad and these other areas of your life and how you can, perhaps, cope with that more effectively—whether there’s anything you could do with the siblings, whether there’s a way that you could share feelings so it isn’t a burden to your husband, the way in which you might be able to bond with your dad, the way in which you could remember the good times and the mixed reactions. So a lot of what we would do is sort of here and now problem solving around that to find out what you’ve done and so forth.

CL40 Okay.

M41 And I would like you to make sure that your interactions with your dad are in form with your understanding of what a bipolar disorder is about, okay? You know, and understand what the biology of that event is, the mood swings, so that
you can better understand this. I mean, you’re a student and even though, on the one hand you’re emotionally attached to your dad, there’s another part that is the smarts that you talked about that could observe this and almost view his behavior through the prism of a scientist and saying look, there’s the mood swings, where it’s going, what’s the triggered look, how long...I mean, we can get you to understand a lot more and then make efforts and see if you can handle it. So that would be one area. Before I get to the other areas, let me, I suspect you’ve done some of that already.

CL41 Probably a lot more than you...I’ve probably focus a lot on the reading up on the bipolar, but it’s almost weird because it makes me feel so disattached to him. And what I want is the emotional, the love, you know. And I tended to enhance that.

M42 And my concern is that I don’t want you to have unrealistic expectations. Because, if you set your goal so high, so it may be small steps towards that attachment. It might be small moments of appreciation instead of saying look, he called and his is accepting. The other part that I would like to discuss with you, and maybe we can even take some time now, is the impact of all of that childhood experience. And I thought you were really quite insightful and articulate to talk about the way it showed up and impacting in terms of trusting, twisting compliments, hiding your smarts, having difficulty in relationship with others, trusting others. I’m curious how many of those things still go on and how we could, together, work on that.

CL42 Well, I think I just want to feel good about myself, you know, that I can do what I want to do and not have to feel like everything is him. But that’s where I get torn because you know, there’s this a little guilt comes in that I should, like, be there for him more but I have no energy left, you know, for him and when I focus so much on him I just don’t care about myself. And sometimes I just want to drop
out of life. And you know, like what’s the use? I just want to have more energy, I think, for me, you know?

M43 Tell me about this dropping out of life. What is that?

CL43 I just feel like hopping in a car and just driving away and leaving everything behind.

M44 Have you thought about hurting yourself or committing suicide, or anything like that? Or is it just...?

CL44 No, but I do get, you know, I can get depressed at times where I just don’t want to get up, you know I mean...Not lately or anything. More so when I was like in my early 30's I was going through some very depressed times.

M45 Are you concerned at times about being, having a similar kind of condition like your dad?

CL45 I’ve wondered about it. I don’t think I get that ecstatic high that he gets, but I get down to the lows sometimes.

M46 You can see yourself being depressed. Have you ever been on medication for the depression?

CL46 No.

M47 Have you seen anyone about...for the depression? In terms of therapy?

CL47 I’ve seen people for therapy but never, like, for the medication.

M48 No, no, I meant just to deal with the depression. Have you seen anyone to talk about that?

CL48 Yeah, I’ve talked to some therapists.

M49 Has that helped you?

CL49 Yeah, it’s basically been just like... It’s a release for me but I don’t; know if I’m looking for answers or something, you know, to how to get out of it. What I do is just talk that whole time and that person listens. So it’s a release.

M50 But have they talked to you about ways that you can cope with the
depression?
CL50 Not really.
M51 Notice it the way in which you often engage in “Shoulds” and the impact of the should?
CL51 Not too much. They usually just kind of repeat pretty much what I’ve said.
M52 Well, tell me about the “Shoulds”. Because you, you know, you should bond, you should have positive feelings towards him...
CL52 Right. I shouldn’t be feeling angry at my father.
M53 Right.CLR53 I should love him.
M54 Yeah, give me the list. Get it out.
CL54 I shouldn’t be depressed. I should be happy.
M55 Right. Come on.
CL55 I should love life. I should have all these friends. I should be out doing things. I shouldn’t be sitting home.
M56 I should have high energy. Come on. I should get ion the car and go.
CL56 Yeah, I should just be happy and have a smile on my face all the time.
M57 Right, right.
CL57 And get along with everybody and socialize with everybody and always be interacting with everybody and not shut myself out of the world.
M58 What do you make of that list?
CL58 There’s a lot.
M59 Right.
CL59 There’s a lot. And I know I hear those a lot. I say those a lot.
M60 You say those a lot to yourself. And when you say those things to yourself, how does that make you feel?
CL60 There’s something wrong with me. I get more depressed.
M61 And when you get more depressed, what happens?
Then I start thinking more of those thoughts.

And when you think more of those thoughts?

More depressed.

And when you get more depressed?

More thoughts.

So it’s just a vicious...

Once I start thinking it, the thoughts don’t stop and that’s why I have trouble at night, because I just go...one thought and the next thing I know my whole life....

Right, that’s the first thing that you said was you had difficulty sleeping, right?

Right.

And part of the difficulty sleeping is turning this CD on.

Right. And it just comes on. I’m relaxed and everything and I think I’m okay...an hour, I’m just freaking out.

So what can you do about that vicious cycle between the list of the “Shoulds” and the feelings and all?

I don’t know, just not think of them. Think good thoughts.

What else?

But I try. I try to do that.

No, no. What else?

It doesn’t work.

How about the possibility of saying I have a right to feel this way?

To feel bad?

No, to be angry

Oh, to be able to be angry, yeah.

I have a right.

That would be nice.
M73 I mean...
CL73 But then I would probably be really angry.
M74 Okay. Anger is good.
CL74 Yeah, I’ve always stuffed my anger.
M75 Tell me about the stuffing and the anger. What do you mean you stuff your anger?
CL75 I didn’t feel like it would ever do any good, so I just kept it all inside and just stuffed it when I was growing up. I feel like I would never win with him. He was more powerful.
M76 One of the techniques that sometimes used in therapy, and I don’t know if any of your other therapists have done it, is there’s a kind of strategy that’s sometimes used almost like an empty chair, it’s like a Gestalt thing, where you put your father and you tell him using this imaginable scene how you feel; what the anger is.
CL76 I could do that. I think I could do that. I’d be afraid probably.
M77 Well, try it. Imagine I can’t get out of the empty chair because of the camera or something. Imagine that he was here. What would you say to him? Try it.
CL77 I would just say you were never there for me and you expect me to be there for you now. You never loved me, you never wanted me. You just treated me like shit my whole life. All you’ve cared about is yourself, you’ve never cared about anybody else, you know. Your wife died because of the stress you put her through, and yet you’re always coming out smelling like a rose. And we’re always looking, you know...we’re always crap. And I just...I’m just tired of it. I’m just tired of the way you are, you know. And I think you’re hiding behind that illness sometimes, you know. Sometimes I think that’s a cop out and that’s why I can’t believe in the illness sometimes.
M78 And how does that make you feel? Tell him how it makes you feel.

CL78 It makes me feel good.

M79 To say that?

CL79 I don’t know. It’s hard to get to that anger.

M80 No, no. Stay with the anger. I want you to tell him, tell your dad just how angry you are. What was it like to grow up there when he closed the door. When your mother was banging on the door and you were in there. When you were being vigilant.

CL80 It just felt awful, you know. I was just so lonely and so scared and you just shut me out, you know. You just didn’t care and you didn’t care what you did to anybody. You didn’t care if we were crying or if we were screaming. You just didn’t care. You just kept it up. More and more, you know. And it was just like...I just felt like you did it on purpose sometimes. Like that was really who you were. That you just were a mean person. You still are. You’re not changing. You want everybody to feel sorry for you and you don’t care about anybody else and it’s like...and if nobody does what you want you just cut them off. And I’ve just had it. I’m just tired. I’ve tried to be somebody for you...a daughter or something and I just can’t even see you as being my father. There is no father there. You just hurt me my whole life.

M81 And am I still hurting you?

CL81 Yes, you still are.

M82 Tell me about the hurt that you’re now feeling.

CL82 I don’t know. You just treat me like I’m a stranger, like I’m not your daughter.

M83 And how does that make you feel?

CL83 It just makes me feel like you’re using me or something, you know? That you never cared and you never will. I thought you would care. I thought you
would change. It looks like you’re never going to and I’m just tired of trying.

M84 So if I’m not going to change, your dad, tell me how you’re going to change.

CL84 Well, I just feel like I’m just kind of like right now, I’m just running...just cutting myself off from...I’m tired of doing for you and you’re not doing anything back. I don’t know if it’s always got to be a give and take, but it’s always been a give for me to you. So I just feel like I have to give it back to myself for a while.

M85 And tell me what it means to give it back to yourself.

CL85 Just loving myself.

M86 And how would that show up? What would you have to do to love yourself?

CL86 Just be happy with who I am. Accept myself the way I am and not feel like I have to change for anybody.

M87 How can you go about being happy with yourself? How can you accept yourself? What’s involved in doing that?

CL87 I don’t know, like don’t have to worry about what anybody else thinks. Just not feel like I have to be a certain person for other people I think. Just be free and not have to...not have any expectations from anybody. I feel like I’ve always had to live up to everybody all the time.

M88 And are you saying now?

CL88 I’m feeling better about that. I feel like I’m more focused on myself, you know. I’m trying to love myself more, but I’m just feeling so much more emotions that I don’t think I ever felt when I was growing up and I think that’s why I’m having such a hard time now.

M89 And allowing yourself, giving yourself permission to feel those emotions, is that part of the growth process? Is that part of the healing process?

CL89 It just is so hard, though. They’re so intense. I get so scared of them
sometimes. It’s...you know, I know you could drink or something, you know. Some days I wonder if that wouldn’t be such a good idea, you know. Because I didn’t realize how intense emotions can be and why people try to escape them. It’s hard. So, that’s why I don’t sleep at night. I’m just feeling so much.

M90 I wondered if it would be helpful for you to find someone you were comfortable with in therapy to help them join you in the journey of going through these emotions. I think you’re absolutely right, that there is a great welling up of these emotions that you’ve had, and that it’s painful to deal with.

CL90 Very painful.

M91 But that there’s some value in doing so. Would someone who’s understanding and supportive, who’s nonjudgmental, so that you could put into words those feelings? I would really encourage you to allow yourself to find someone. Not only someone who will just listen and allow you to talk but that will help you focus in on that. Does that make...?

CL91 Yeah, I guess I’ve been struggling with that because I don’t know if I need, because you know, the therapies and stuff like that, I don’t know what...I need to trust somebody but I also do need help to get through that because I’m afraid to be alone with that stuff sometimes now.

M92 And sometimes it’s harder to just do it all in your own head because when you do it in your own head, there’s another part to the CD that comes out. And that is the long list of “Shoulds”. If you were in the business of accepting yourself, you gotta let the “Shoulds” go.

CL92 They’ve been with me a long time, you know.

M93 I mean, you can be more selective in which ones you want to keep operating, okay?

CL93 I know, but I don’t know how to get the other ones.

M94 If you deal with the feelings, okay? You have such a long way. She said
one of the things about caring for yourself is that you have to accept yourself. Well you can’t accept yourself on the one hand and have an armful of “Shoulds” on the other.

CL94 Yeah, it’s a burden. It hurts sometimes.

M95 It hurts.

CL95 Yeah. It’s such a weight for me.

M96 You have been criticized long enough that you don’t have to continue the process. Okay? So when you catch yourself criticizing...you say oh, dad said that one already, okay? I’ve done this one, been there, done it, okay?

CL96 Okay.

M97 No that’s not going to be easy because the feelings will come back.

CL97 The feelings are so connected to my thoughts. That’s what happens. The feelings just come out and...

M98 They’re two sides of the same coin. And there’s a real need for you to continue what you are doing here. I mean, just sitting in this chair, I could feel the emotions that were...

CL98 They’re just like so overwhelming like all the time, you know, and I have to like always put on some kind of a face or something, you know? To everybody. That’s what’s so hard, you know, like in school and stuff.

M99 In therapy, if I were seeing you, there’s no need to put on a face. That’s what therapy is about. I can see the welling of the tears.

CL99 How can I help, like at night? I mean, how can I change my thoughts, or how can I go to sleep?

M100 Well, I mean, there are certain strategies that have been used. One of the strategies that some people have found helpful is that when they are lying in bed and they see themselves ruminating in this fashion, they get out of the bed so that in your room, or in another room so you don’t disturb anyone, you have a chair
that’s called the critic’s chair, okay?
CL100 Okay.
M101 So if you’re lying in bed and you find yourself criticizing yourself, going through this vicious cycle, you need to get out and go in and sit in the critic’s chair.
CL101 Oh, okay.
M102 Okay?
CL102 Okay.
M103 I mean, that may sound crazy and the chair shouldn’t be all that comfortable. But if you lie in bed and just ruminate, then the whole bed and everything...and then you’re going to disturb your partner...you’re going to feel badly about that.
CL103 Right.
M104 so...You can call it the critic’s chair so that you can start to bring this under some kind of better control. That’s one kind of way. The second kind of way is to recognize the feelings that are going with it and give yourself permission to share that. And to understand that you have every right to have those negative emotions. It’s only when you’re fighting the emotion of being angry at your dad and when you try to stop something, what happens? You just think about it more.
CL104 That’s what happens. Every time I try to change my thoughts to good thoughts, it just keeps coming back.
M105 So that’s a second strategy. The second strategy is to catch that vicious cycle and to start to do certain kinds of things about it.
CL105 Okay.
M106 If we were going to see each other, continue, there are a number of specific behavioral things that you can do to handle that. We have a few minutes left, so let me give you a summary and then get your reactions to this.
CL106  Okay.

M107  First of all, I want to thank you because you have reminded me and those who watch the film about what is the impact on children of people who grow up in homes when there’s severe mental illness and what lingers from that. And the portion of the tape that we didn’t get to in terms of your story is what you’ve been able to accomplish in spite of growing up in that home, in terms of your marriage, in terms of your smarts, in terms of your schooling and I would want to explore how you were able to accomplish all that you did and have the courage to make this tape in spite of that. And that’s the portion that we didn’t get to. Let me get your reactions to how...

CL107  I felt good. I felt real emotional. I mean, I didn’t think I would feel emotional because I was thinking it would be self cognitive type thinking and it would be rational and stuff, but I was able to feel real emotional. And I felt real safe with you.

M108  That’s important.

CL108  And I didn’t know how I would feel with a male person because I’ve got a real problem with that. I was thinking about that before I got here. Trusting authorities, especially males. So that was good. I’m glad that I was able to deal with that. It’s kind of a breakthrough I think. And just to tell my story was good.

M109  And how did this role playing with the dad kind of thing, how did that...

CL109  It was kind of scary but I probably have a lot more inside. I could have really probably really... I was holding back, I think. But it was a start, I think and I think that maybe if I keep trying it with just a totally empty chair, I think I need to do that. I’m afraid of it. I’m afraid of my emotions.

M110  Absolutely.

CL110  I’m really afraid because I know...

M111  And the more you work to fight that fear, the more difficulties you have.
It’s important for you to recognize, because I know you’re a student, that cognitive behavior modification is as much preoccupied with your feelings as it is with your thoughts and the connection of the two. I want to thank you.

CL111 Well, thank you too.

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Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy - [http://www.aabt.org/](http://www.aabt.org/)