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Disclosures

Financial:

- Honorarium from The Medical SLP Collective for this presentation
- Mentor for The Medical SLP Collective

Non-financial:

- Owner, *The Sustainable Clinician*
- Owner, *Overland Speech and Swallowing Rehab*



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Sources

- To ensure that this presentation is up-to-date, information was collected from the the sources cited in August 2022.
- Therapy ideas and treatment suggestions were created by Mary Burns using the evidence presented here along with their clinical experience and expertise.
- The content of this presentation is based largely on clinical and practical experiences of the presenter. Although it does include some specific references to foundational literature, it is not intended to include a review of all current literature on the topics discussed.

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A Little About Me

- 8+ years in a variety of medical settings
- Veteran of burnout and mindset struggles
- Non-slp life? Camping, chasing my three dogs around, and adventuring in our retired fire truck



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Learning Outcomes

1. List 3 common thinking traps
2. Describe the impact of thinking traps on one's professional growth
3. Identify 3 strategies to avoid thinking traps

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What is a thinking trap?

- Cognitive distortion: faulty thinking, perception, or belief. This occurs in all people to a certain extent (APA, n.d).
- Illogical thinking processes (Beck, 1967)
- Influenced by several lines of work/research in the field of psychology and cognitive behavior.
 - Explanatory Style (Kame & Seligman, 1987)
 - Cognitive distortions (Beck, 1963)

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Common thinking traps

Mind Reading: "I know what other people are thinking"

- Situation: You asked a coworker to collaborate with you on a treatment and they quickly say no and walk away.
- Thinking Error: They must be irritated with me, or maybe they just don't think I have anything to offer.
- Reality: She was running to the bathroom and it had nothing to do with you!

All-or-nothing thinking: "Everything is black and white"

- Situation: You put in a request for a therapy purchase with your department and it is denied.
- Thinking Error: They don't value speech therapy and will say no to any request I make.
- Reality: The company is having a tough year financially and tightening the budget, I didn't provide enough info to make my case.

(Burns,1999)

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Common thinking traps

Filtered Thinking/ Mental Filter: "Negative feedback outweighs any good"

- Situation: I gave a presentation to 25 people. 20 reviews were great, but 5 were not.
- Thinking Error: I worked so hard but still got so many bad reviews. I'm discouraged.
- Reality: 80% of attendees loved the presentation! No presentation pleases everyone. This is a great result.

Fortune Telling: "Something bad is going to happen, I know it for sure"

- Situation: I plan on asking my employer for a special training and days off to take it.
- Thinking Error: I already know they are going to say no, even if I put together the perfect proposal.
- Reality: I cannot predict what will happen. There is no evidence to suggest they are going to say no. All I can do is my best.

(Burns,1999)

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Common thinking traps

Personalization: "Every negative event is related to me/caused by me"

- Situation: I asked a question during a staff meeting. The tone of the meeting seemed to change after.
- Thinking Error: I upset our supervisor with my question and he was mad for the rest of the meeting. It made everyone uncomfortable.
- Reality: The meeting was at 4pm on a Friday, everyone was tired, and I only felt the tone of the meeting changed after me because I wasn't completely happy with how I expressed myself.

Should Statements: "I should do this, I must do that"

- Situation: I have had such a hard week and am exhausted.
- Thinking Error: I should get 2 more hours of work done instead of resting.
- Reality: Exhaustion is human. I am human. I do better work when I am well rested.

(Burns,1999)

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Bust those traps

- Look for patterns in your thinking
 - Daily check ins, visual reminders, establish an accountability partner
- Examine the evidence (Jiménez, 2021)
 - Set aside your beliefs and take stock in what can be proven
- Use the ABC method (Ellis, 1957)
 - Adversity, belief, consequence

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Why this matters

- Identified as one of three mechanisms contributing to depression (Beck, 1967)
- Pessimism (pessimistic explanatory style) has been identified as a risk factor for physical illness (Peterson et. al, 1988)
- Experiencing cognitive distortions impacts job satisfaction and burnout (Fernandez et al., 2021)
- All of these factors may limit our drive to seek new professional opportunities, expand our skills, or push our boundaries to grow.

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