

## CHAPTER 12

### THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

#### CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Representing Your Experience of the World
  - Schemas and Their Development
  - Effects of Schemas
  - Semantic Memory, Episodic Memory, Scripts, and Procedural Knowledge
  - Socially Relevant Schemas
  - Self-Schemas
  - Entity versus Incremental Schemas
  - Attribution
- Activation of Memories
  - Priming and the Use of Information
  - Nonconscious Influences on Behavior
- Connectionist Views of Mental Organization
  - Dual-Process Models
  - Explicit and Implicit Knowledge
- Broader Views on Cognition and Personality
  - Cognitive Person Variables
  - Personality as a Cognitive–Affective Processing System
- Assessment
  - Think-Aloud, Experience Sampling, and Self-Monitoring
  - Contextualized Assessment
- Problems in Behavior, and Behavior Change
  - Information-Processing Deficits
  - Depressive Self-Schemas
  - Cognitive Therapy
- The Cognitive Perspective: Problems and Prospects
- Summary

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

The cognitive orientation to personality considers how people attend to, process, organize, encode, store, and retrieve information. *Schemas* are mental organizations of information that develop over experience and are used to identify new events. Some think schemas organize around prototypes (best members); some say that schemas have fuzzy, or inexact, definitions. Schemas make new events easy to remember. They also provide default information to fill in the gaps of events. Schemas can represent concepts (in semantic memory) and events (in episodic memory). Each aspect of memory holds *exemplars* and *generalities*. Stereotypic event categories are called *scripts*.

*Social cognition* refers to cognitive processes bearing on stimuli relevant to social behavior. People develop schematic representations of many kinds of socially relevant categories. People also develop *self-schemas*, representations of themselves. The self-schema is more elaborate than other schemas, but it seems to follow the same principles. The self-schema may have several facets (e.g., possible selves). Some social schemas imply permanence (entity); some imply potential for change (incremental).

Many psychologists view *memory* as a vast set of content nodes, linked to each other by various associations. Activating one node in memory causes partial activation of related nodes (*priming*), causing that information to become more accessible. Priming can even happen outside awareness. Connectionist models view memory in terms of patterns in overall networks. A given pattern reflects the satisfaction of many constraints simultaneously. This view applies nicely to social perception and decision making. Some theorists believe there are two distinct kinds of thought processes: one quick, intuitive, and connectionist, the other slower, rational, and linear. Research on implicit attitudes suggests that people have knowledge at two levels, which may correspond to the two modes of thought processes.

Broad statements on cognitive views of personality emphasize the importance of people's schemas, encoding strategies, personal competencies, expectancies about how things are related in the world, values or incentives, and self-regulatory systems. People's behavior is seen as following *if...then* contingencies, in which the *if* describes a situation and the *then* describes a behavioral response. In this view, personality is a profile of these contingencies, forming a unique *behavioral signature* for each person.

Assessment from this viewpoint is the process of determining the person's cognitive tendencies and contents of consciousness. Cognitive assessment techniques include think-aloud procedures, thought sampling, and monitoring of the occurrence of particular categories of events. These procedures give a clearer idea of what sorts of thoughts are coming to mind in various kinds of situations, typically situations that are problematic. Also important is the idea that assessment be contextualized, to capture the person's *if...then* contingencies.

Problems in behavior can come from information-processing deficits (e.g., difficulty encoding, ineffective allocation of attention). Problems can also arise from development of negative self-schemas. In this view, depression results from various kinds of cognitive distortions, all of which cause events to seem more unpleasant or as having more negative implications than is actually true. *Cognitive therapy* involves, in part, attempting to get people to stop engaging in these cognitive distortions and to develop more adaptive views of the events that they experience. This may entail correcting automatic, intuitive processes through oversight from consciousness, effortful processes.

## KEY TERMS

**Attribution:** The process of making a judgment about the cause (or causes) of an event.

**Automatic thoughts:** Self-related internal dialogue that often interferes with behavior.

**Behavioral signature:** The pattern of situation–behavior links the person has established over time and experience in some specific domain.

**Cognitive assessment:** Procedures used to assess cognitive processes, mental structures, and contents of consciousness.

**Cognitive restructuring or reframing:** The process of taking a different and more positive view of one's experience.

**Cognitive therapies:** Procedures aimed at reducing cognitive distortions and the resulting distress.

**Cognitive triad:** Negative patterns of thinking about the self, the world, and the future.

**Connectionism:** An approach to understanding cognition based on the metaphor of interconnected neurons.

**Default:** Something assumed to be true until one learns otherwise.

**Dual-process models:** Models assuming two different modes of cognition—one effortful, one automatic.

**Episodic memory:** Memory organized according to sequences of events.

**Exemplar:** A specific example of a category member.

**Fuzzy set:** A category defined by a set of attributes that aren't absolutely necessary for membership.

**Implicit knowledge:** Associations between things in memory that are not directly accessible.

**Mirror neurons:** Neurons that are active both when perceiving an action and when doing the action.

**Node:** An area of memory that stores some element of information.

**Possible self:** An image of oneself in the future (expected, desired, feared, etc.).

**Priming:** Activating an element in memory by using the information contained in it, leaving it partly activated.

**Procedural knowledge:** Knowledge about doing: engaging in specific behaviors and mental manipulations.

**Prototype:** The representation of a category in terms of a best member of the category.

**Schema:** An organization of knowledge in memory.

**Script:** A memory structure used to represent a highly stereotyped category of events.

**Self-complexity:** The degree to which one's self-schema is differentiated and compartmentalized.

**Self-schema:** The schematic representation of the self.

**Semantic memory:** Memory organized according to meaning.

**Social cognition:** Cognitive processes focusing on socially meaningful stimuli.

**Subliminal:** Occurring too fast to be consciously recognized.

## TEST ITEMS

### Multiple Choice

- (c/288) 1. One assumption of the cognitive perspective is that:
- a. all decisions are unconscious.
  - b. all decisions are conscious.
  - c. most decisions are unconscious, but some are conscious.
  - d. most decisions are conscious, but some are unconscious.
- (a/288) 2. Kelly viewed people as implicit:
- a. scientists.
  - b. artists.
  - c. altruists.
  - d. all of the above
- (b/288) 3. Aspects of cognitive psychology are strikingly similar to the ideas of:
- a. Abraham Maslow.
  - b. George Kelly.
  - c. Carl Rogers.
  - d. none of the above
- (a/288) 4. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ is a mental organization of information (i.e., a knowledge structure).
- a. schema
  - b. idiograph
  - c. prime
  - d. attribution
- (b/289) 5. The idealized best member of a category is its:
- a. object.
  - b. prototype.
  - c. schema.
  - d. fuzzy set.
- (c/289) 6. The "best member" or "most typical" example of a category is called a:
- a. central proposition.
  - b. dispositional attribution.
  - c. prototype.
  - d. schema.

- (b/289) 7. A(n) \_\_\_\_\_ refers to criteria that are important but not absolutely necessary to define a schema.
- exemplar
  - fuzzy set
  - prototype
  - none of the above
- (a/290) 8. One consequence of the use of a schema is:
- easier coding of new material.
  - improved memory for randomly selected details.
  - improved reading ability.
  - greater intelligence.
- (c/290) 9. Schema-based biases:
- are no longer thought to exist.
  - refer to the idea that it's easier to remember shocking information that clashes with our schemas.
  - can perpetuate themselves.
  - none of the above
- (a/290) 10. When a given schema is activated:
- people look for information relevant to that schema.
  - another schema can't be activated.
  - people have a more difficult time concentrating.
  - all of the above
- (a/290) 11. \_\_\_\_\_ is memory organized according to meaning, but \_\_\_\_\_ is memory for events.
- Semantic, episodic
  - Conceptual, descriptive
  - Semantic, declarative
  - Declarative, semantic
- (c/291) 12. \_\_\_\_\_ are schemas for a class of episodes.
- Prototypes
  - Episodic traces
  - Scripts
  - Fuzzy sets

- (d/292) 13. Forming and using categories to represent socially meaningful stimuli is known as:
- a. episodic memory.
  - b. social intelligence.
  - c. procedural knowledge.
  - d. social cognition.
- (d/292) 14. People develop schematic representations of:
- a. situations.
  - b. individual people.
  - c. environments.
  - d. all of the above
- (a/292) 15. A self-schema:
- a. makes it easier to remember things consistent with it.
  - b. is small, simple, and efficient.
  - c. has fewer emotional elements and more intellectual elements than other schemas.
  - d. all of the above
- (d/292) 16. Self-schemas differ from other schemas in that they are:
- a. smaller and more restricted.
  - b. simpler.
  - c. used less frequently.
  - d. more likely to include emotional elements.
- (b/292) 17. People high in self-complexity:
- a. are more arrogant than those low in self-complexity.
  - b. have many distinctly different self-aspects.
  - c. rarely think about themselves.
  - d. all of the above
- (d/292) 18. Thinking of the self in a contextualized way:
- a. is very easy to do.
  - b. is very difficult to do.
  - c. can exacerbate emotional reactions to failure.
  - d. can dampen emotional reactions to failure.
- (a/293) 19. Possible selves:
- a. provide goals to work toward or to avoid.
  - b. do not include who you think you should be.
  - c. include who you could have become if you made different choices in the past.
  - d. all of the above

- (c/294) 20. People with an entity view of ability:
- a. are unaffected if they do not do well.
  - b. try to figure out why they have not done well.
  - c. want to quit if they do not do well.
  - d. see their actions as extending their ability.
- (c/294) 21. Attribution is something that people:
- a. do only when something is difficult to understand.
  - b. do only when angry about an event.
  - c. always do spontaneously and without awareness.
  - d. do spontaneously and without awareness when alert, but with effort when fatigued.
- (a/294) 22. The process of judging the cause of an event is called:
- a. attribution.
  - b. construal.
  - c. primary appraisal.
  - d. secondary appraisal.
- (b/294) 23. People tend to interpret their own failures as being caused by:
- a. personality.
  - b. relatively unstable factors.
  - c. poor ability.
  - d. none of the above
- (c/294) 24. People are likely to attribute their success to \_\_\_\_\_ causes.
- a. external and stable
  - b. external and unstable
  - c. internal and stable
  - d. internal and unstable
- (b/294) 25. Perceiving stable and permanent reasons for one's bad outcomes is thought to lead to:
- a. false attributions.
  - b. depression.
  - c. violence.
  - d. lower self-complexity.

- (c/295) 26. In the context of memory, a node refers to:
- the quantity of information a person can recall in a given time.
  - a physical structure within the human nervous system.
  - an area of stored information.
  - an area of the brain that is always active.
- (a/295) 27. When a memory node is activated in memory:
- the information in it appears in conscious memory.
  - related nodes become inactive.
  - information in related nodes cannot be brought to consciousness.
  - all of the above
- (a/296) 28. In an initial phase of a task, the activation of certain information from memory is known as:
- priming.
  - programming.
  - information action inferences.
  - arbitrary inferences.
- (a/296) 29. According to research by Srull and Wyer, subjects are more likely to perceive hostility in ambiguous behavior if they:
- first read words dealing with hostility and aggression.
  - first read words dealing with the benefits of "turning the other cheek."
  - were first mildly shocked.
  - first read a biography of the person doing the behavior.
- (c/297) 30. Which of the following is true of how information influences what happens next?
- The information must be processed consciously in order to have an influence.
  - The person must know about and want the information to influence what happens next.
  - The information need not reach consciousness in order to have an influence.
  - The information must be correct in order to have an influence.
- (a/299) 31. The metaphor for cognitive processes used by connectionists is based on:
- the nervous system.
  - computers.
  - electrical grids.
  - the entire human body.



- (b/299) 32. The parallel distributed processing approach is also known as:
- a. neuronal processing.
  - b. connectionism.
  - c. constraint satisfaction.
  - d. all of the above
- (b/301) 33. Seymour Epstein's cognitive-experiential self-theory assumes that there is/are \_\_\_\_\_ systems through which we perceive reality.
- a. one
  - b. two
  - c. three
  - d. four
- (c/302) 34. Metcalfe and Mischel developed a dual process theory that proposes \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ systems.
- a. rational, irrational
  - b. controlled, uncontrolled
  - c. hot, cold
  - d. careful, careless
- (c/302  
Box12.3) 35. The cognitive perspective explains the process of delaying gratification in terms of:
- a. ego resiliency.
  - b. reward structure.
  - c. people's mental strategies.
  - d. ego control.
- (b/303) 36. Dual-process researchers talk about people having:
- a. automatic and implicit knowledge.
  - b. implicit and explicit knowledge.
  - c. certain and uncertain knowledge.
  - d. all of the above
- (d/304) 37. Which of the following statements is true regarding the cognitive view of personality?
- a. The approach is very fragmented.
  - b. The approach concerns specific mental processes that underlie personality.
  - c. Research in this approach tends to be tightly focused on particular issues.
  - d. all of the above

- (c/305) 38. Which of the following statements about Mischel's notion of competencies is NOT true?
- a. Competencies are the skills people develop over their lifetimes.
  - b. Competencies include social skills.
  - c. Competencies represent static knowledge.
  - d. People's competencies are influenced by their experiences.
- (b/305) 39. According to Mischel, knowledge that a particular act typically leads to a particular outcome is termed a:
- a. contingency expectancy.
  - b. behavior-outcome expectancy.
  - c. reward-expectancy.
  - d. none of the above
- (c/307) 40. To assess the cognitions and emotions that accompany a wide range of naturally-occurring events, the best cognitive assessment technique would be:
- a. think-aloud protocols.
  - b. retrospective thought listing.
  - c. experience sampling.
  - d. reconstructive thought protocols.
- (a/308) 41. Assessment of how often behaviors occur in response to specific situations is called:
- a. contextualized assessment.
  - b. situational assessment.
  - c. cognitive assessment.
  - d. multi-observation assessment.
- (b/310) 42. \_\_\_\_\_ interfere with behavior by creating a cycle of negativity based on schemas.
- a. Arbitrary inferences
  - b. Automatic thoughts
  - c. Expectancy judgments
  - d. Faulty schemas
- (a/310) 43. Beck argues that depressed people:
- a. overgeneralize from negative events.
  - b. engage in too little automatic thinking.
  - c. fail to anticipate bad outcomes.
  - d. all of the above

- (a/310) 44. According to Beck, depressed individuals engage in cognitive distortions, including:
- a. overgeneralization.
  - b. non-arbitrary inferencing.
  - c. cognitive reframing.
  - d. all of the above
- (c/311) 45. One goal of cognitive therapy is to:
- a. encourage clients to free-associate.
  - b. aid the client in logical decision making.
  - c. develop more controlled, less automatic, cognitive processing.
  - d. institute automatic acts that occur without inducing anxiety.
- (a/311) 46. In Beck's view of therapy, people should:
- a. discard faulty schemas and build new ones.
  - b. try to add new preconceptions rather than discarding old ones.
  - c. engage in more automatic thinking and less controlled thinking.
  - d. try to reduce the complexity of their self-schemas.
- (b/311) 47. Which of the following criticisms has been leveled at the cognitive approach to personality?
- a. It has generated very little empirical research.
  - b. It is an attempt to graft an area of psychology where it does not belong.
  - c. It is too rooted in Freud's psychoanalytic theory.
  - d. all of the above

#### True and False

- (F/288) 1. The cognitive self-regulation perspective suggests that all decisions are made consciously.
- (T/288) 2. Although the cognitive perspective gained full force in the 1970s, many of its themes were foreshadowed by George Kelly's work.
- (T/288) 3. Cognitive theorists view people as implicit scientists who try to predict the world.
- (F/289) 4. Schemas are quite general and do not contain information about specific cases.
- (F/289) 5. Exemplars are the idealized best members of categories.
- (T/289) 6. Prototypes may be viewed either as actual "best members" of categories or as idealized "best members" of categories.
- (F/289) 7. Some theories state that schemas do not have an organizing quality.

- (T/290) 8. In the absence of a schema, an event would be nothing more than a series of random occurrences with no integrated meaning.
- (F/290) 9. Schema-based biases are self-limiting rather than self-perpetuating.
- (T/290) 10. People are more likely to remember information that confirms rather than violates expectations.
- (F/290) 11. Semantic memory is memory for events or “episodes.”
- (T/291) 12. Scripts are prototypes of event categories.
- (T/291) 13. When a person experiences enough events of a given type, they tend to form scripts.
- (F/291) 14. Procedural knowledge is easier to verbalize than episodic memory.
- (T/292) 15. Social cognition refers to the notion that people form categories of (among other things) types of people and social situations.
- (F/292) 16. The term *social cognition* is used to refer to problem-solving that occurs in groups.
- (F/292) 17. Self-schemas can twist perception of incoming information to fit with our self-concept, but cannot alter past memories to fit with our self concept.
- (T/292) 18. Self-schemas may only seem different from other schemas because they are so well-developed.
- (F/292) 19. High self-complexity can be problematic in that it fosters spilling over of failures from one life domain to another.
- (F/293) 20. Possible selves include selves a person would like to become and selves they expect to become, but do not include selves they are afraid of becoming.
- (T/294) 21. People with an entity view of ability see task performance as a means of proving their ability.
- (F/294) 22. People with an incremental view of ability attend to cues of consistency.
- (T/294) 23. The process of judging the cause of an event is called attribution.
- (F/294) 24. The two dimensions of attributions identified by Weiner are *stability* and *globality*.
- (T/295) 25. Nodes are linked by both semantic relationships and by episodic relationships.
- (F/296) 26. Participants primed with hostility were more likely to rate an ambiguous person as hostile, but no differently on other evaluative terms.

- (F/297) 27. Although primes can make information temporarily more accessible, all people generally have the same categories accessible in the absence of priming.
- (F/297) 28. Primes must be processed consciously in order to have effects on perception or behavior.
- (T/298 Box12.2) 29. According to research by Pelham and colleagues, men named *Jack* are more likely to live in Jacksonville than would be predicted by chance.
- (T/299) 30. Connectionists use the metaphor of neuronal processes to explain cognitive functioning.
- (T/299) 31. Connectionism is another term for parallel distributed processing.
- (F/299) 32. In connectionism, activation is excitatory and not inhibitory.
- (F/301) 33. Epstein's cognitive-experiential self-theory describes three modes of thought.
- (T/302 Box12.3) 34. The cognitive point of view suggests that mental strategies play an important role in determining whether an individual is able to delay gratification.
- (F/302) 35. Metcalfe and Mischel proposed two cognitive systems: an irrational system and a rational system.
- (F/302) 36. Controlled and automatic attribution processes are managed by the same part of the brain.
- (T/303) 37. Measures of implicit self-esteem do not correlate well with explicit measures of self-esteem.
- (T/303) 38. Children may have negative attitudes about minorities as early as 6 years of age.
- (F/304 Box12.4) 39. Mischel largely rejected the ideas of his mentors, George Kelly and Julian Rotter.
- (F/304) 40. Automatic tendencies are able to overcome implicit stereotypes.
- (T/305) 41. Knowledge that particular acts typically lead to particular outcomes is termed *behavior-outcome expectancy*.
- (F/306) 42. Mischel's most recent work has placed less emphasis on the role of emotion than did his earliest work.
- (T/306) 43. According to Mischel, you need to know how a person construes the situation and the person's *if...then* profile if you want to accurately predict his or her behavior.
- (F/307) 44. Neurons that are active when an organism does an action and also when the organism sees the same action being done are called *mimicry neurons*.

- (T/307) 45. Interviews, self-reports, and think-aloud protocols are all cognitive assessment techniques.
- (T/308) 46. Research by Csikszentmihalyi using thought sampling assessment techniques suggests that positive feelings tend to be tied to voluntary activities.
- (F/308) 47. Contextualized assessment reflects how often behaviors occur broadly rather than in specific situations.
- (F/309) 48. Being anxious heightens one's ability to process information.
- (F/310) 49. Beck used the term *cognitive triad* to refer to positive thought processes that could help alleviate depressive symptoms.
- (T/311) 50. Cognitive therapy techniques sometimes encourage people to do things they expect to have negative consequences.
- (T/311) 51. Even those who find the cognitive view provocative may acknowledge that this perspective needs to tie up some loose ends.
- (T/311) 52. Critics have suggested that the cognitive view is a misguided attempt to take a different part of psychology and apply it to personality, where it does not belong.

### Short Essay

(288) 1. What two assumptions underlie the cognitive perspective on personality?

(1) It is critical to understand how people manage the sensory information that surrounds them. In order to understand the bits of information people receive, they must integrate and organize these bits in some way.

(2) Life involves a chain of decisions, both conscious and (more commonly) nonconscious. These decisions, and the irregularities in implicit decisions, have important implications for personality.

(289-290) 2. What role do schemas play in recognizing and understanding new experiences?

New events are identified by matching their features to features in memory (schemas). If the features of the new stimulus resemble features of an existing schema, the new stimulus is identifiable. Each perception, or interpretation, is based partly on incoming information and partly on what is already in memory.

(290) 3. Identify three effects of schemas.

(1) Schemas make it easier to code new information in memory.

(2) Schemas provide additional information, or default information, to help you better understand the information you are getting from the environment.

(3) Schemas direct your attention by suggesting where to look for information and what to attend to.

(291) 4. What are the differences between episodic memory and semantic memory?

SEMANTIC MEMORY: Memory organized according to meaning; a set of categories of objects and concepts.

EPISODIC MEMORY: Memory for events, or "episodes." The elements of an event you experienced are strung together as they happened.

(293-294) 5. Contrast how a person who has an *entity* view of ability views task performance with how a person with an *incremental* view of ability views task performance.

People with an entity view of ability construe task performance as having the goal of proving their ability. In contrast, people with an incremental view of ability tend to see their actions as having the goal of extending their ability.

(295) 6. Briefly describe partial activation, including some discussion of its effects.

A memory node is activated, and its information comes to conscious awareness. Meanwhile, a partial activation spreads to nodes related to the original one; the closer and stronger the relation between nodes, the greater the spread of activation. Partial activation makes it easier for related areas to come all the way to consciousness, to be fully activated.

(301) 7. What were Epstein's two modes of processing from his cognitive-experiential self-theory? How are they different?

(1) Rational system: operates consciously, follows logical rules, and is fairly slow.

(2) Experiential system: relies on shortcuts, operates automatically, and mostly outside of conscious awareness.

These two systems work jointly and are differentially activated depending upon context.

(304-305) 8. Identify three of Mischel's "cognitive social learning person variables" and briefly describe them.

Among the possibilities, (1) Competencies: Active processes, based on acquired information, skills and problem-solving strategies, that can be applied to any situation a person confronts; (2) Encoding strategies and personal constructs: Includes the unique world view each person develops and the effects caused by schemas; (3) Expectancies: (a) stimulus-outcome expectancy is the anticipation that one event will follow another; (b) behavior-outcome expectancy is the knowledge that particular kinds of behavior are typically tied to particular kinds of outcome; (4) Subjective values: Incentives that stir a person into movement, that motivate use of knowledge of links between behavior and outcome; (5) Self-regulatory systems and plans: People have to set goals, make plans, and do the various things necessary to realize their plans.

(307-309) 9. Describe three methods of assessment used in the cognitive perspective.

(1) Think-aloud approaches in which participants say what they're thinking as they engage in a task such as problem-solving. (2) Experience sampling techniques in which people report what they're thinking and doing at various intervals (could be random intervals or pre-planned). (3) Event recording or self-monitoring, in which participants retrospectively report about behaviors, thoughts, or emotions they experienced at a particular time, as well as aspects of the context.



## TEST YOURSELF 12-1

Source: Neuberg, S. L., & Newsom, J. T. (1993). Personal need for structure: Individual differences in the desire for simple structure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **65**, 113-131.

Description of Scale: This 11-item scale assesses people's need to structure their environments into a simplified, more manageable form. Students are asked to indicate on a 6-point scale the extent to which they agree/disagree with each of the items. Two subscales can be derived from the measure. One assesses the extent to which people desire to establish structure in their everyday lives (e.g., "I enjoy having a clear and structured mode of life."), and the other assesses the manner in which people respond to a lack of structure (e.g., "I hate to be with people who are unpredictable.").

The authors of the scale refer to cognitive structures as abstract mental representations (such as schemas, prototypes, and scripts). People high in the need for structure are more likely to use simple, well-bounded representations of previous experiences. This results in more efficient characterization of new events and situations. Research has shown that the use of simple cognitive structures often underlies many psychological events, such as stereotyping and prejudice, affective extremity, and self-fulfilling prophecies.

## TEST YOURSELF 12-2

Source: Mahoney, M. J. (1977). Some applied issues in self-monitoring. In J. D. Cone & R. P. Hawkins (Eds.), *Behavioral assessment: New directions in clinical psychology*. New York: Brenner/Mazel.

Description of Device: This article describes how to present students with the opportunity to engage in self-monitoring of behavior, following techniques outlined by Mahoney (1977). There are no items to administer. Respondents are instructed to take a sheet of blank paper and divide it into 5 columns labeled Time of Day; Others Present?; Situation; Thoughts; and Resulting Feelings. Students think back over the past day and try to recall each instance during the day in which they experienced unpleasant feelings. For each instance that they recall, students write down (in the appropriate column) the approximate time it occurred, whether or not they were interacting with other people, what the situation was that they were involved in, what thoughts came to mind during the event, and what specific feelings occurred during the event. Once done, the students examine the episodes they have described to determine if there are any consistencies in the events evoking their unpleasant feelings.

These procedures are often used to assist people in identifying the situations in which they feel unpleasant emotions such as anxiety and depression. The same technique is used to help people to identify contexts in which they engage in behaviors that represent problems for them--behaviors such as overeating, smoking, or drinking alcohol.

The idea that lies behind the development of this technique is that actions and emotions are often cued in a subtle and automatic fashion by event qualities that the person might pay little attention to. If a systematic record can be kept, focusing on all instances in which the target behavior or emotion occurs, the person will be able to identify commonalities among the situations. Furthermore, it should become easier to identify those situations as they recur in the person's continuing experience. This, in turn, should make it easier to interrupt the automatic occurrence of the problem behavior or problem emotion. Self-monitoring may be seen as a way of helping the person get in touch with the overall construal that he or she unknowingly applies to a class of events. This knowledge may allow the person to bring different, more convenient, and more adaptive construals to bear.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

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