

A Three Day International Workshop on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

(7th to 9th December, 2015)

This report explains the three day International Workshop on Cognitive Behavior Therapy organised by the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, Shrimati Indira Gandhi College, Tiruchirappalli, and the Department of Social Work, and Srimad Andavan Arts and Science College, Tiruchirappalli which took place from 7th to 9th December, 2015 at the BUTP Seminar Hall of Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli. The Workshop was attended by 100 participants - MSW students, Scholars, and faculty. The workshop topic specified to cognitive behavior therapy.

The Workshop began with the inaugural function. Dr. D. Nirmala, Organising Secretary of the Workshop welcomed the gathering, sketched out the objectives of the Workshop and introduced the chief guests. Dr. S. Gurudoss, Adult Mental Health Practitioner, Queensland Health, Australia inaugurated the workshop. In his inaugural address, he said, “there are various techniques and skills to study human behaviour, especially CBT which is turning out to be a popular approach. CBT is more relevant to Social Work practice. It is a self help process that enables human beings to help themselves in Social Work profession. Social Work profession has already incorporated economics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Now, Social Work is integrating CBT. It has two benefits; apart from helping the client, it also brings changes among the professionals as a self help process”. The Workshop was presided over by Dr. D. Muthuramakrishnan, Syndicate member, Bharathidasan University. He praised the Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University for achieving Special Assistance Programme (SAP) for Departmental Research Support this year from the University Grants Commission (UGC) worth rupees 86 lakh. He went on talk about the importance of maintaining mental health. He stated that, “Polluted human minds lead to social disorganisation. Workshops such as CBT enhance psycho social aspects of human behaviour. It helps the students to enrich their knowledge on counselling skills”. Dr. V. Sethuramalingam, Professor and Head, Coordinator of the Workshop then delivered vote of thanks.

After the tea break, the session was handled by Dr.S. Gurudoss, Adult Mental health Practitioner, Queensland Health, Australia. He started the session with questions. Why counselling? What are all the social changes & values you expect from society? The changes in values, life styles, education, social legislation, and political conditions changes the lives of individuals. Human problems can be diagnosed by understanding or knowing and asking who, what, where, why, when, and how. He said mental health, mental illness, diagnosis, problem solving, and basic principles of case work form the basis for understanding human problems and psychology. He pointed out four psychological approaches. Psycho analytic approach was explained in detail.

In the afternoon session, he explained behaviouristic, humanistic, and eclectic approach. In behaviouristic approach, learning must be acceptable, desirable, and healthy behaviour and unlearn undesirable behaviour. In humanistic approach, identification and acceptance of inherent human potential and Maslow's hierarchy of needs was explained. Eclectic approach is convenient and highly individualistic. He introduced logo therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy. He explained in detail about the history of CBT and ABC analysis.

The second day was started with recap of the first day. The recap was done by Mr. Thomas Alva Edison of II MSW. Then the session was handled by Dr.S. Gurudoss, Adult Mental health Practitioner, Queensland Health, Australia. He taught CBT in detail. He said that current approach of CBT differs from the psychoanalytic approach because it is not reacted to unconscious conflicts. CBT was introduced by Albert Ellis's REBT, Glasser's Reality therapy, and Berne's Transactional analysis and Beck's Cognitive therapy. CBT is an offshoot of REBT and CT. He insisted that CBT is a self-help process. CBT is also different from other models and based on formulation by examining predisposing factors, precipitating factors, and protective factors. CBT is not about past but here and now and it needs homework. He came up with five parts of CBT that is life situation/ environment, automatic thoughts, moods, physical reaction, and behaviour. He explained each part in detail.

After the tea break, the participants were asked to form five groups. They asked to take one life situation and discussed about the remaining four parts of the CBT. Five life situations were selected by the students. They were i) viva Voce, ii) loss of friendship, iii) disaster (flood), iv) failure in examination and v) financial crisis. One member of each group represented the discussion. Dr.S. Gurudoss appreciated the participants and reflected on the discussion.

In the afternoon session, he asked the students to discuss the same life situation with desirable thoughts. Then the participants had discussion about the same with desirable thoughts. He explained that CBT is about desirable and undesirable thoughts due to life situation. Life situation cannot be changed. But thoughts have to be changed as desirable. Then the circle continues like moods, physical reaction and behaviour. He also insisted that CBT is not positive thinking but it is pathway to positive thinking. He explained in detail about basic principles of CBT, three levels of thinking, anatomy of thoughts, and three levels of beliefs.

The third day was started with a recap of the second day. The recap was done by Mr. Mohan raj of I MSW. Then Dr.S. Gurudoss refreshed concepts such as basic principles of CBT, three levels of thinking, anatomy of thoughts, and three levels of beliefs. He explained that the formulation and conceptualisation of CBT can be driven by examining Mental State Examination, predisposing factor, precipitating factor, and protective factors of a client. He insisted that Behaviour Therapy is trying to modify the maladaptive behaviour of a client, but cognitive behaviour therapy changes unhelpful thoughts into helpful thoughts that bring changes in the behaviour of a client. Unhelpful thoughts can be identified by detecting and disputing thoughts of a client. He explained in detail about thought distortion, inferential distortion, and balanced thought. He pointed out the similarities between CBT and Social Work and structure of CBT.

Chocolates were distributed to the participants and they were asked about the colour, size, taste, and manufacturer. Some of the participants tried to answer. Meanwhile he said that most of us tasted the chocolate without mindfulness. Then he explained in detail about mindfulness and its five stages. After the tea break the valedictory function began. Ms. Sherin Sophia, Head, Department of Social work, Srimati Indira Gandhi College, Trichy welcomed the gathering. It was followed by the three day report read by Mr. Sangeeth, a Ist MSW student. Dr.S.Gurudoss, Adult Mental health Practitioner, Queensland Health, Australia rendered the valedictory address. He asked the participants to do each and every activity with mindfulness. From the participants, four of them gave their feedback on the Workshop. Certificates were distributed to all the participants. Dr. A. Arun Prakash, Assistant Professor, Srimad Andavan Arts and Science College delivered the vote of thanks. The valedictory function ended with National Anthem.