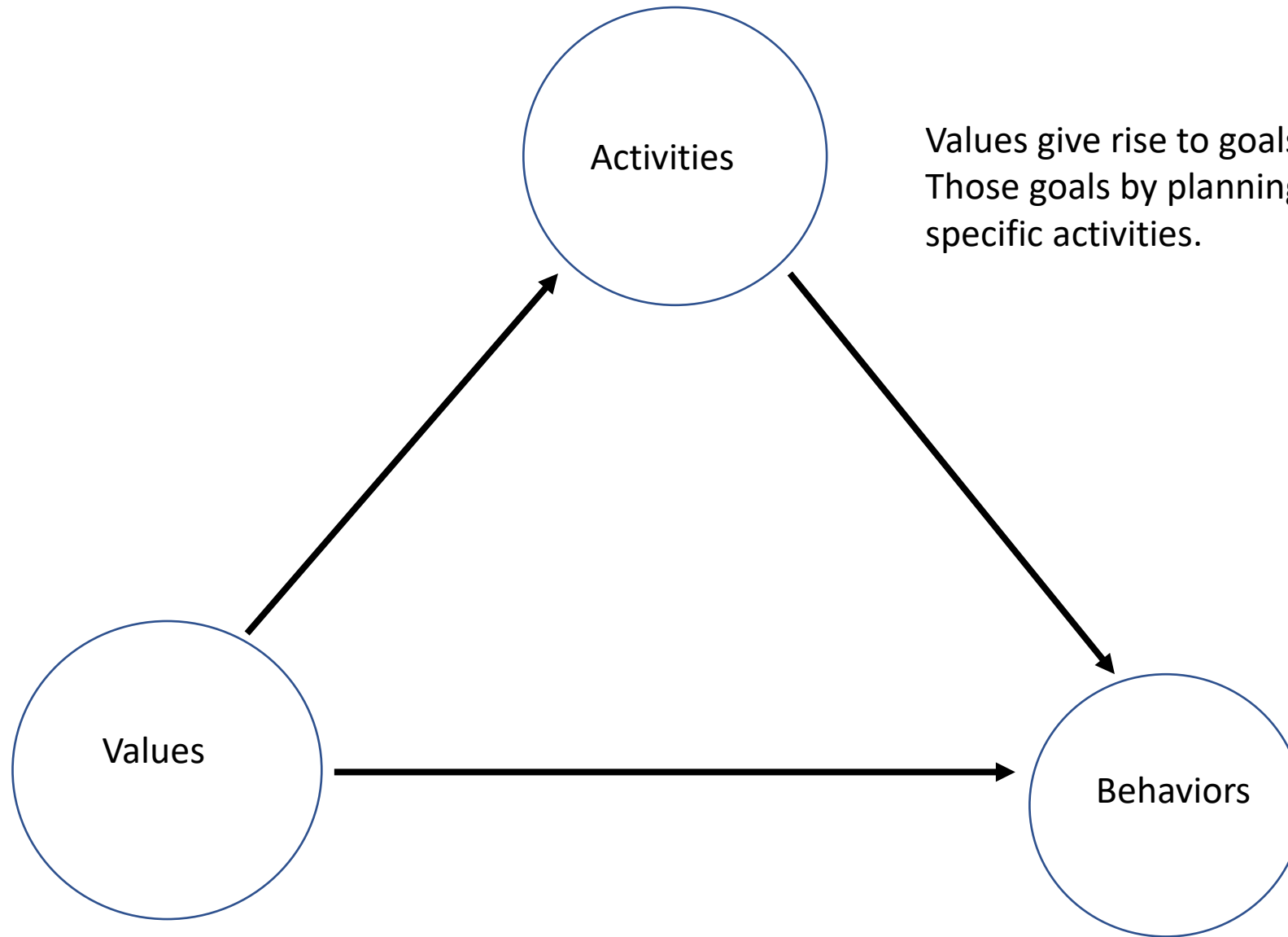


Understanding And Coping With Anxiety

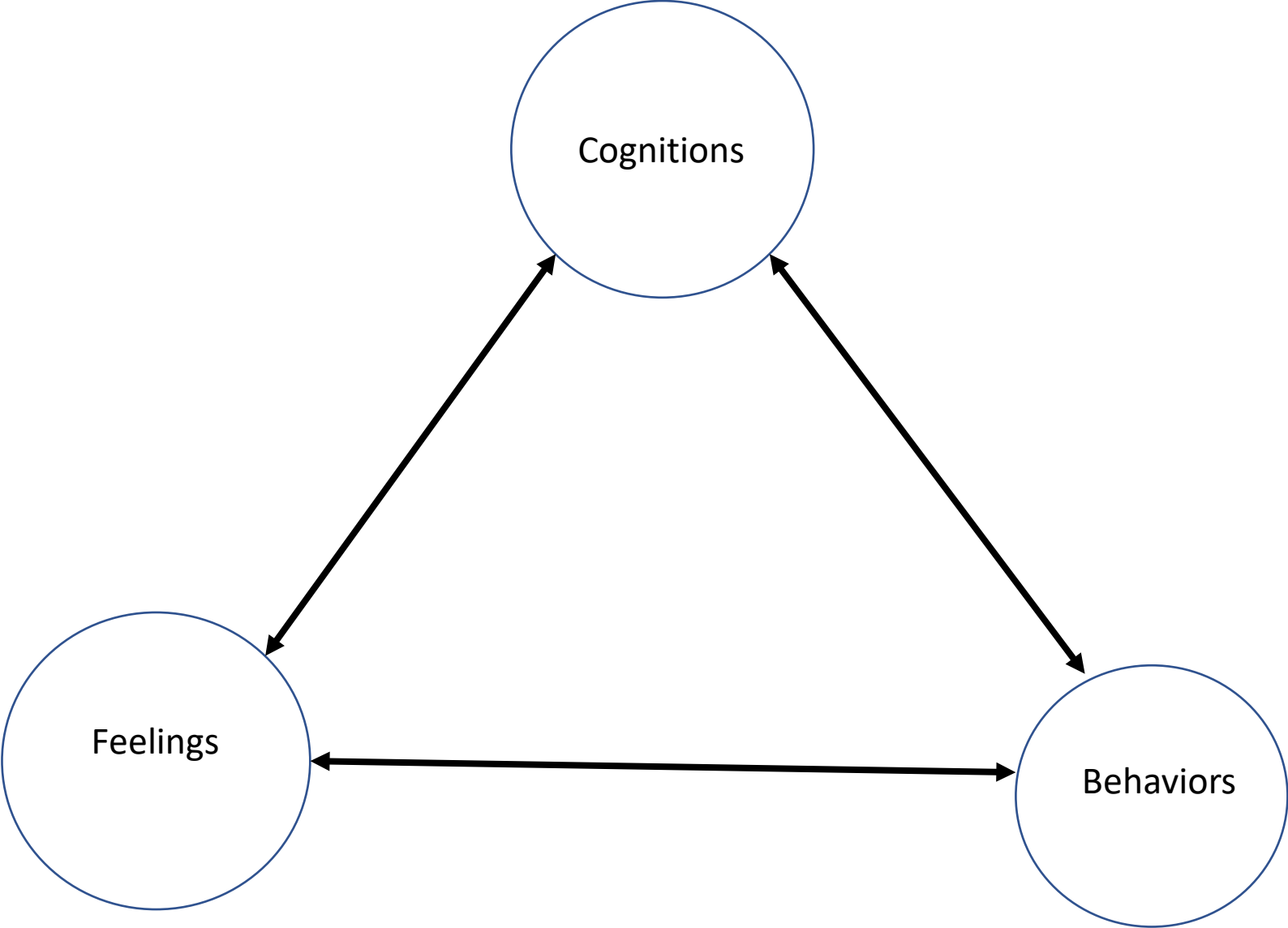
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Ideas



Values give rise to goals, and we reach Those goals by planning and completing specific activities.

Values, Activities, Goals

- Goals – What we want or something to achieve or overcome.
- Values are ways of being or things that are important to us
- Activities – the things we do
 - Compare whether you engage in activities that match your goals;
 - What gets in the way of taking action?
 - In the case of Social Anxiety – fear or anxiety might prevent one from taking certain actions
- Later we will discuss behavioral activation
- Depression may get in the way of motivation
- Consider ACT Value Card Set –
https://brucewhealton.com/support_docs/ACT_ValuesCardSort.pdf



The Role of Thoughts

- It isn't the triggering or activating event that caused a feeling.
- Our thoughts and beliefs about the event create feelings.
- Thoughts are sometimes not immediately evident, they don't announce themselves
- Perhaps we can think of the thoughts we are having as subconscious or not immediately conscious to us.

How to recognize Automatic Negative Thoughts

- You suddenly notice a shift toward negative emotions
- You can't shake a negative feeling
- You are struggling to act in a way that would help you reach your goals
 - E.g., Avoidance of an action or behavior – we feel it is too far outside our comfort level.
 - Maybe you want to make more friends and connections, but you are nervous about going out somewhere or attending an event like a support group.

Cognitive Distortions

- Personalization: You see yourself as more involved in negative events than you really are.
- All-Or-Nothing Thinking: You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect you see yourself as a total failure.
- Overgeneralization: You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
- Mental filter: You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that colors the entire beaker of water.

Cognitive Distortions Cont.

- Disqualifying The Positive: You reject positive experiences by insisting they “don’t count” for some reason. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by everyday experiences.
- Jumping To Conclusions: You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definitive facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
 - Mind reading: You arbitrarily conclude that someone is negatively reacting to you, and you don’t bother to check this out.
 - The Fortune Teller Error: You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel that your prediction is already established fact.

Cognitive Distortions Cont.

- Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization: You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement) or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections).
- Emotional Reasoning: You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."
- Should Statements: You try to motivate yourself with should and shouldn't's, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.

Cognitive Distortions Cont.

- Labeling and Mislabeled: This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to them. "He's a moron." It could also lead to prejudice against a group. Mislabeled describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.

Three Column Technique for Changing Negative thoughts and beliefs

- Left Column: Write your actual thoughts that are going through your mind. Automatic thoughts or beliefs – about the situation, yourself, the world, other people.
- Middle Column: Identify which Cognitive Distortions are you using? This will likely be more than one.
- Challenges to the thoughts and beliefs. Try to come up with ways to challenge the belief, fear, or negative thought. Work toward developing positive affirmations about self and the world.
- https://brucewhealton.com/support_docs/ThreeColumnTechnique.pdf
- https://brucewhealton.com/support_docs/cognitive-distortions.pdf

From Thoughts to Beliefs – Downward Arrow Technique

- Best illustrated with an example.
- We find ourselves thinking “I hope I am not called upon” or we feel put on the spot.
- What is the fear and then if it comes true what does it mean – e.g., I might go blank or feel uncomfortable.
- What does that mean?
- Keep asking what does that mean if it is true?

Core Beliefs – Or Negative Schemas

- <https://www.attachmentproject.com/blog/early-maladaptive-schemas/>
- <http://schematherapist.com/18-schemas/>