Chain Analysis

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Disclaimer & Disclosure

- **Disclaimer:** The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs or the United States Government.

- **Disclosure:** I have no commercial relationships to disclose.
Behavioral chain analysis is a behavioral therapy tool.

- Crucial strategy in Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)
  - Most therapeutic errors arise from faulty assessment of the problem
- Can be applied to any treatment or interaction where understanding a problem and creating an effective intervention is the goal

Rizvi & Ritschel, 2014
Why do a behavioral chain analysis?

1. Understand what’s going on
2. Understand what’s needed to change – First step in problem solving
3. Validating – e.g., There’s a reason why I do this; I’m not just crazy.
4. Can decrease provider frustration, judgment, or irritation
Doing a chain can answer a number of different questions.

- What is the problem?
- What makes the problem more likely to happen?
- What is causing the problem?
- What is interfering with resolution of the problem?
- What tools or skills are available to help solve the problem?
- What is the client’s awareness of the problem?
When doing a chain, choose a specific instance of the problem behavior. Behavior includes thoughts, feelings, & actions.
When defining behavior, there are a number of characteristics to take into account.

- **Frequency**
- **Duration**
- **Intensity**
- **Topography**
Vulnerability factors

Promoting event

Links in the chain
  Actions
  Events
  Thoughts
  Emotions
  Physical sensations
  Urges

Problem behavior

Consequences - short and long term
Prevent Vulnerability

Vulnerability factors

Prompting event

Links in the chain
- Actions
- Events
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Physical sensations
- Urges

Problem behavior

Consequences - short and long term
Prevent Prompting Event

Vulnerability factors

Prompting event

Links in the chain
- Actions
- Events
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Physical sensations
- Urges

Problem behavior

Consequences - short and long term
Add Skills

Vulnerability factors

Prompting event

Links in the chain
- Actions
- Events
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Physical sensations
- Urges

Problem behavior

Consequences - short and long term
Change the Consequences

Vulnerability factors

Prompting event

Links in the chain
- Actions
- Events
- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Physical sensations
- Urges

Problem behavior

Consequences - short and long term
Change the Other Links

- Vulnerability factors
- Prompting event
- Links in the chain
  - Actions
  - Events
  - Thoughts
  - Emotions
  - Physical sensations
  - Urges
- Problem behavior
- Thought stopping
  - Urge surfing
  - Opposite action
- Consequences - short and long term
Let's Practice!
Chain analysis and insight aren’t sufficient for behavior change; also need solution analysis.

- Identify goals, needs, and desires
- Generate solutions
- Evaluate solutions & identify obstacles
- Choose a solution
- Troubleshoot the solution
You can use multiple chains to look at common links and to create a case formulation.

### Assessing Common Links in Chains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chain 1</th>
<th>Chain 2</th>
<th>Chain 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vulnerability Factors</td>
<td>Vulnerability Factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prompting Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thoughts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
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</table>
Choose the best “bang for the buck.” Model persistence and creativity.

- Do the most common links first
- Do the links closest to the problem behavior first
- Do the simple things first
How do I get started?

Orient to task
- Introduce task and rationale
- Rehearse what to do
- Commiserate about difficulty of the task

Offer support
- Be collaborative
- Ask questions
- Write out chain in session
- Fade out assistance over time

Pick a behavior
- Most recent
- Most severe
- One that is most easily remembered
The more detail and links in a chain, the more information you & the client have to work with.
Remember, this can be hard!

Validate! This involves effort for the client, can be very shame-provoking, and may be counter to a pattern of active passivity.

Stick with it! Therapists can get punished to abandon chain analysis – it is effortful and generally less reinforcing than other therapy tasks.

This can work with clients who don’t remember well or who have a common response of “I don’t know.”
It is possible to help a client get the gears of memory moving again.

- Offer prompts to set the stage & hypotheses for gaps
- Educate about memory
- Validate
It's QUESTION TIME!!
Resources
VA DBT SharePoint Site

VA DBT Email Lists

- **National DBT Distribution List** – updates about DBT in general, in the VA, and to let you know when new materials are available on the VA DBT SharePoint site.

- **DBT Forum Alerts** – alert you that a question has been posted in one of the DBT Forums.

- To join either or both, email me at sara.landes@va.gov
Please enter your questions in the Q&A box and be sure to include your email address.

The lines are muted to avoid background noise.
Welcome users of VHA TRAIN!
To obtain continuing education credit please return to www.vha.train.org after the lecture.
CEU Process for users of VHA TRAIN (non-VA)

Registration → Attendance → Posttest → Certificate

Register in TRAIN.

Listen to the lecture and download the slides from the “Files” pod.

Return to TRAIN for posttest and evaluation.

Follow the directions to print certificate.
CEU Process (for VA employees)

1. Registration
   - Register in TMS. (See link under “Web Links” on right here if you have not registered.)

2. Attendance
   - Return to TMS and listen to the lecture. Download the slides & brochure from the “Files” pod.

3. Posttest
   - Complete the posttest in TMS within 14 days after the lecture.

4. Evaluation
   - After 15 days, return to TMS to complete evaluation which is now in your “To Do” list under Surveys.

5. Certificate
   - Print certificate from the “Completed Work” section of TMS.

Contact Information:
(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov
**PTSD Consultation Program**
FOR PROVIDERS WHO TREAT VETERANS

**(866) 948-7880 or PTSDconsult@va.gov**

**UPCOMING TOPICS**

SAVE THE DATE: Third Wednesday of the Month from 2-3PM (ET)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>Effective Pharmacotherapy for PTSD</td>
<td>Matthew Jeffreys, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Evidence-Based Couple Therapy for PTSD</td>
<td>Candice Monson, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 17</td>
<td>Shared Decision-Making for PTSD</td>
<td>Juliette Harik, PhD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21</td>
<td>PTSD: From Neurobiology to Treatment</td>
<td>John Krystal, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 19</td>
<td>Treating Anger and Aggression in Populations with PTSD</td>
<td>Leslie Morland, PhD</td>
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