

# **Sabbatical Final Summary-Wendy Berg-Spring 2020**

## **Background**

It is with great pleasure that I submit this final sabbatical summary. Perhaps needless to say, Spring 2020 did not end up being the best-timed sabbatical as a novel Coronavirus sidelined my main plan to accumulate therapy hours for my license. Nonetheless, I accomplished more than I could have imagined under the circumstances and was able to create some good information to bring back to the Counseling department.

When I applied for sabbatical, it was my original goal to complete my hours in the Moorpark College Health Center, Counseling office. Unfortunately, they were not accepting anyone without extensive therapeutic experience, even as an intern. So I created my own experience at Sarah's house, a safehouse/pregnancy home for young women. I started my hours in February and in March, Covid-19 hit the U.S. and Sarah's house was not letting outsiders in during March/early April to try to contain the spread of the pandemic and to keep the residents safe. At that time, therapy interns were in flux and not allowed to continue hours virtually until further notice.. It wasn't until my sabbatical was over that virtual intern hours were once again allowed. That was the end of the hoped accumulation of hours.

The second part of my goal was to complete some of the therapy licensing exams. I was thankfully able to complete the required Law and Ethics exam toward my therapy license. I really wanted to make the most out of a bad situation, so I also registered for a semester-long Cognitive Behavioral Therapy course which I thought could be applied in Academic Advising quite nicely. I put together a PowerPoint presentation for the Counseling staff and will deliver this presentation at one of our upcoming meetings. I am putting a pared-down outline of the information I plan to share with our department below.

## **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy applied to Academic Advising**

### **What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?**

- Connection between how you think, feel and react
- It's not as ridged as people sometimes make it out to be. It's not just a matter of changing your thinking.
- Addressing beliefs and underlying issues are also critical
- Looking at the patterns of responding in your lifetime and learning how to change those patterns of response.

### **Why Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?**

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is the treatment of choice in the Western World for a range of different issues including many our students face such as anxiety and depression.
- It's cost-effective because it's about creating change; moving forward.
- It's about people learning skills so people relapse less frequently. It's fairly easy for students to learn the basic skills of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

### **However...**

- It's not a quick fix
- It takes hard work and time (still shorter than many forms of therapy)
- Those who engage in CBT must be willing to take a look at themselves and how they perceive the world—their patterns of thinking.
- Those who engage in CBT must be willing to step outside of their comfort zone (e.g. acting as if to increase confidence).

- It's helpful if the person likes to solve puzzles/problems because they are finding the connections between themselves and their beliefs and behaviors.

### **Structure of CBT**

- Establish a goal (short term, mid-term and long term goals)
- Measure starting position (scaling-0-10 toward goal)
- Identify problem thinking
- Identify problem beliefs
- Identify healthier thinking and beliefs
- Challenge problematic beliefs
- Develop alternative interpretations for problem thoughts and beliefs
- Identify problem behaviors and healthier behaviors to do instead
- Practice these behaviors (can use mental rehearsal first)
- Work at the desired changes, track and rate progress throughout

### **Best applications/Advantages to use CBT in Academic Advising**

- Can be used when a student is feeling "stuck"
- Helping students reach their aims or goals (thoughts and beliefs that will help them get there)
- It is structured and measurable so you can see if it's working.
- Thought records are easy to weave into an academic advising session
- SMART goals are easy to come up with together in an academic advising session
- Scaling can help student's to reframe a situation ("it can't get any worse" can be re-evaluated)
- Developing an action plan can help the student to move forward in an organized way and to evaluate forward momentum and "success"