

Key Strategies Training for Psychotherapy Students: Building a Bridge between Basic Microskills and Evidence-Based Practice

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Key Strategies Training

- A method for training new psychotherapists
- An introduction to **Psychotherapy Integration**
- Introduces graduate students to intervention strategies from research-supported treatments
- Builds on basic microskills training
(e.g., attending, observation, questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing, reflecting feelings)
- Teaches a method for making intentional choices about where to focus

Three Foundational Theories

- Cognitive Therapy (Beck)
- Emotion-Focused Therapy (Greenberg)
- Behavioral Therapy (Martell's Behavioral Activation)



KST Lesson Plan

1. Parallel Strategies for Exploration and Change
2. Exploring Thoughts: COG-1 – COG-4
3. Changing Thoughts: COG-5 – COG-8
4. Exploring Feelings: EFT-1 – EFT-4
5. Changing Feelings: EFT-5 – EFT-8
6. Exploring Actions: BHV-1 – BHV-4
7. Changing Actions: BHV-5 – BHV-8
8. Using a Multidimensional Survey to Choose a Focal Dimension


Lesson One

Parallel Strategies for Exploration and Change

Two Phases of Treatment

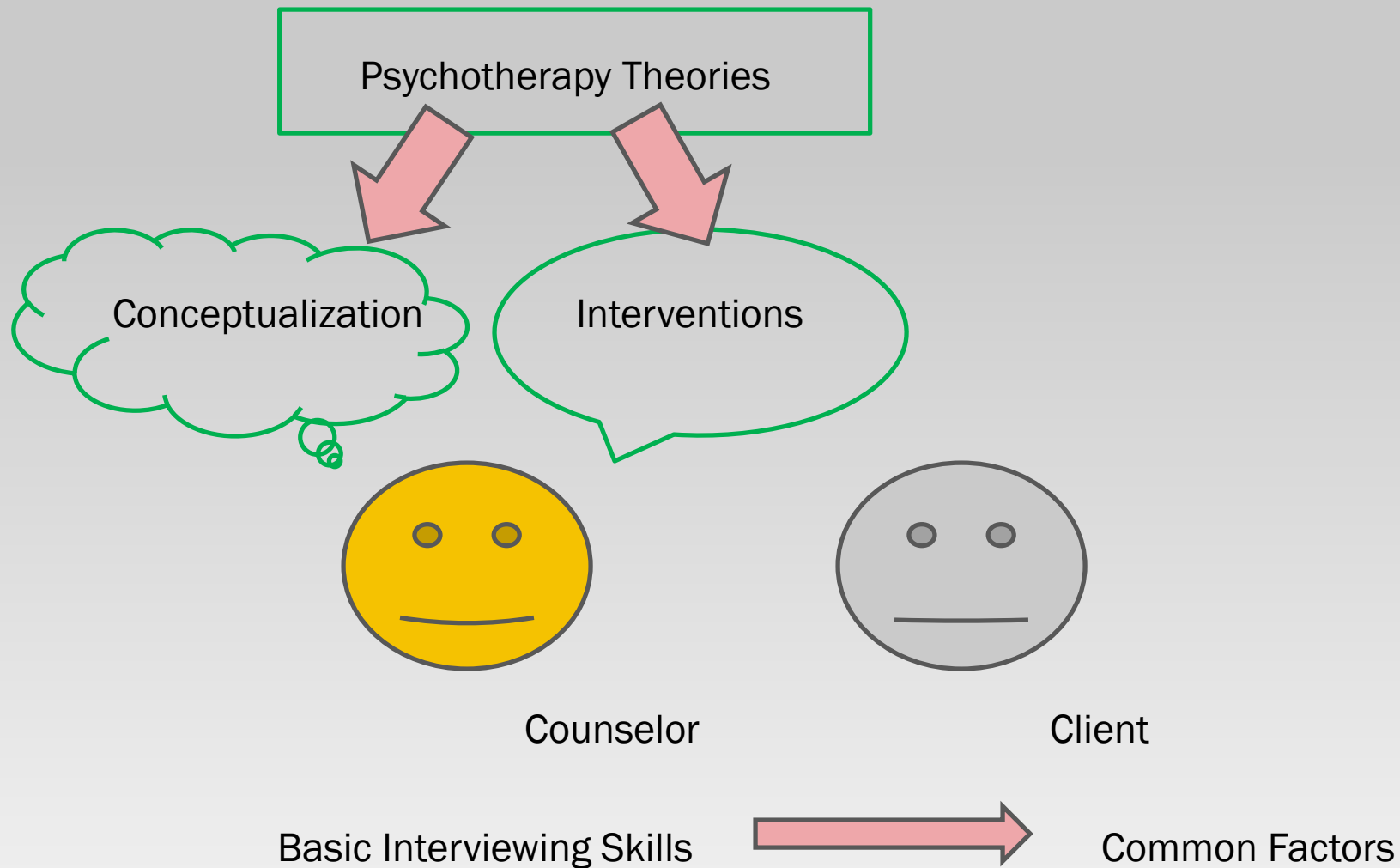
- Exploration
- Change

Bridging between Microskills and EBP

- *Key Strategies Training* (KIST) builds a bridge between basic microskills and evidence-based practice
 - After learning basic interviewing skills using a text like Allen Ivey's, Clara Hill's, or Gerard Egan's, students can learn 24 KST strategies drawn from empirically supported treatments
 - KST prepares trainees for implementing evidence-based practice in a structured yet flexible manner
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What is the relationship between basic interviewing skills and psychotherapy theories?

- New trainees often perceive a gap between basic interviewing skills and more complex psychotherapy theories
- This training module is designed to bridge this gap by introducing trainees to theory-based interventions
- Eight strategies will be introduced from each of three complementary psychotherapy theories



What is the relationship between basic interviewing skills and psychotherapy theories?

- Basic interviewing skills support common factors like a therapeutic relationship and an expectation for positive change
- Psychotherapy theories can guide both conceptualization and interventions
- *Key Strategies Training (KST)* provides a method for choosing which theories and strategies may be most useful for a particular client

An Integrative Foundation

- In the past, psychotherapists were encouraged to select one theory and practice it consistently
- More recently, integrationists have encouraged counselors to acquire a wider repertoire of skills and to select interventions based on the needs of individual clients
- It is challenging to balance the need for a solid foundation of knowledge and the desire to develop a wide repertoire of skills

An Integrative Foundation

- KST is a method for teaching new counselors a foundational set of 24 skills
- These skills can be implemented in a flexible manner based on the needs of individual clients
- KST teaches cognitive, emotion-focused, and behavioral strategies and a method for choosing where to focus first

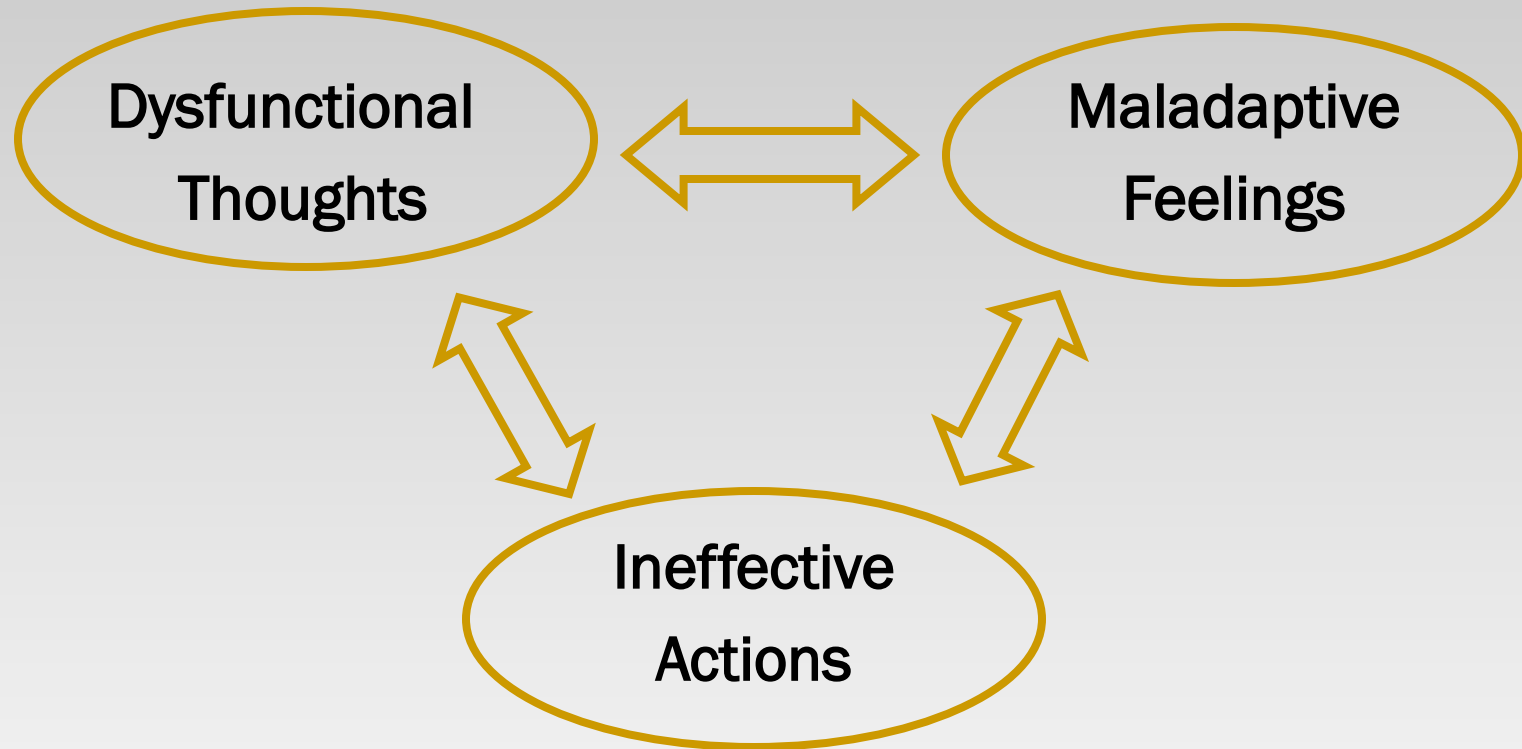
What are Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions?

Thoughts or beliefs are cognitive processes that help people perceive, interpret, and assign meaning

Feelings or emotions are affective responses that may be associated with physical sensations

Actions are observable behaviors that involve the brain's control of motor activity

Maladaptive thoughts, actions, and feelings are highly interactive



Maladaptive Interactions

- **Maladaptive Feelings** like hopelessness are often associated with...
- **Dysfunctional Thoughts** like “I’m a loser; no one would want to date me,” and...
- **Ineffective Actions** like social isolation and withdrawal.

Adaptive Interactions

- **Adaptive Feelings**—like hope and a desire to overcome loneliness—are more likely to be associated with...
- **Functional Thoughts** like “Maybe I’ll meet someone nice at the party,” and...
- **Effective Actions** associated with overcoming fears and talking to new people in a social setting.

Working Interactively

- A counselor can work interactively with thoughts, actions, and feelings to promote multidimensional adaptation and change.
- Different points of clinical leverage can be used with different clients or in response to different situations with the same client

Key Strategies

- Key strategies are skills or techniques that counselors use with clients to work toward therapeutic goals
- Strategy markers indicate when a particular strategy may be useful
- Expected consequences describe the likely outcome of using a specific strategy
- Key strategies are more complex combinations of basic microskills like open questions, paraphrasing, reflecting, and focusing

Parallel Strategies for Exploration and Change

Two Phases of Treatment

- Exploration – understanding thoughts, feelings, or actions and the way they contribute to psychological distress
- Change – helping clients embrace more adaptive thoughts, feelings, or actions

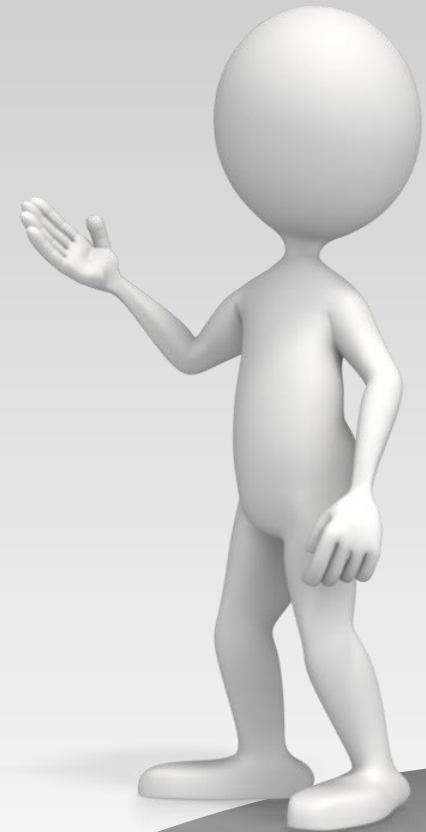
Intervention Processes for the Exploration Phase

1. Focusing on a Specific Dimension
2. Understanding Context and Function
3. Analyzing Adaptive Value
4. Discovering Patterns Outside of Awareness



Intervention Processes for the Change (or Transformation) Phase

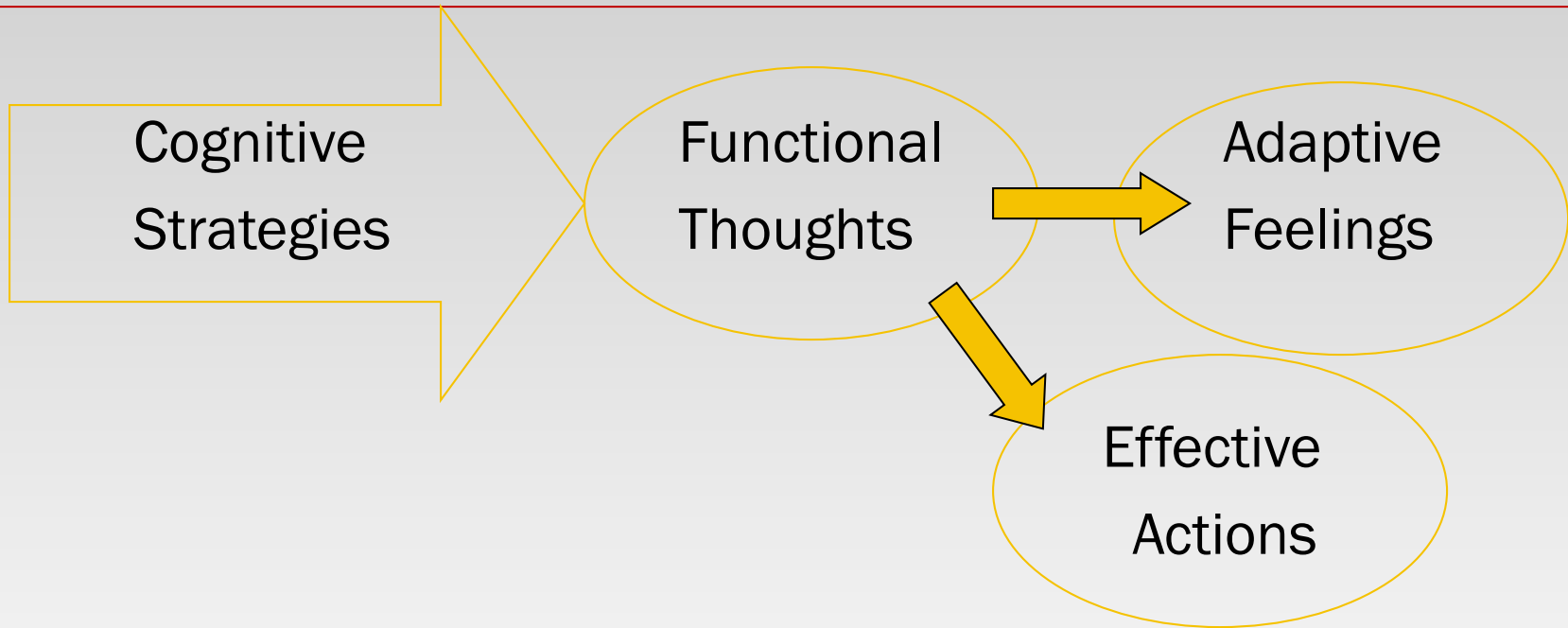
- 5. Experimenting
- 6. Modifying
- 7. Generalizing and Consolidating
- 8. Assessing Change and Impact



Cognitive Strategies

- Cognitive psychotherapy focuses on thoughts and uses these cognitions as a point of clinical leverage to encourage multidimensional change.
- Cognitive strategies encourage **functional thoughts** that are rational, evidence-based, and promote effective adaptation to the environment.

Cognitive interventions are designed to have a primary impact on thoughts and a secondary impact on actions and feelings



Exploring Thoughts

COG-1. Focusing on thoughts related to clients' presenting concerns

COG-2. Understanding the way automatic thoughts mediate clients' experiences and impact mood

COG-3. Analyzing thoughts in order to determine if they are functional or dysfunctional

COG-4. Discovering underlying core beliefs and assumptions that shape current thinking

Changing Thoughts

COG-5. Experimenting with thoughts to evaluate accuracy and test alternatives

COG-6. Modifying beliefs and identifying more functional thoughts

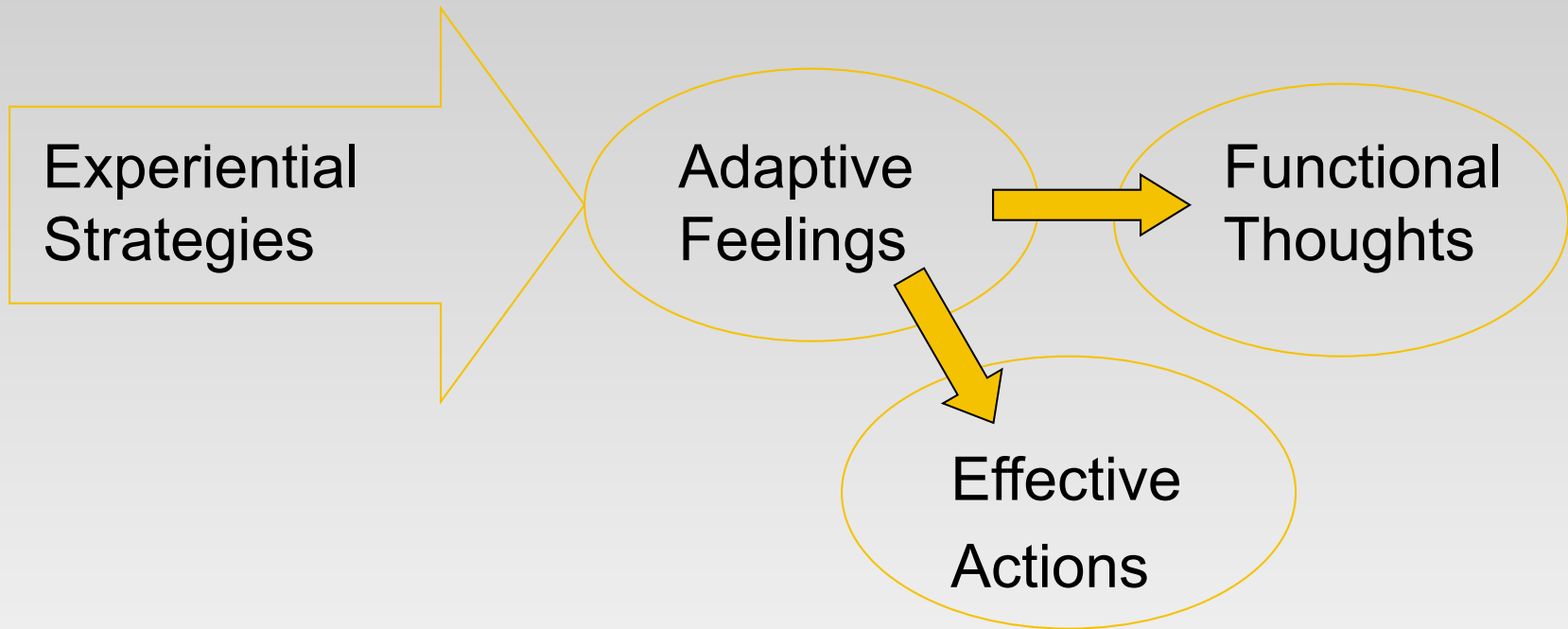
COG-7. Reinforcing functional thoughts and putting these beliefs into practice

COG-8. Assessing cognitive change, looking at multidimensional impact, and considering a shift in focus

Emotion-Focused Strategies

- Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT) uses feelings as a point of clinical leverage to encourage multidimensional change.
- EFT strategies encourage adaptive feelings, explore personal experiences, and promote awareness and growth.
- **Adaptive feelings** help people evaluate situations, organize for effective action, and match situations in a proportional manner.

Emotion-focused interventions are designed to have a primary impact on feelings and a secondary impact on thoughts and actions.



Exploring Feelings

EFT-1. Focusing on feelings related to clients' presenting concerns

EFT-2. Understanding the context and function of specific feelings

EFT-3. Analyzing feelings to determine if they are adaptive or maladaptive

EFT-4. Discovering unexplored emotional experiences that may be outside of awareness

Changing (or Transforming) Feelings

EFT-5. Experimenting with new feelings and helping clients overcome emotional blocks

EFT-6. Generating adaptive feelings as an alternative to problematic emotional patterns

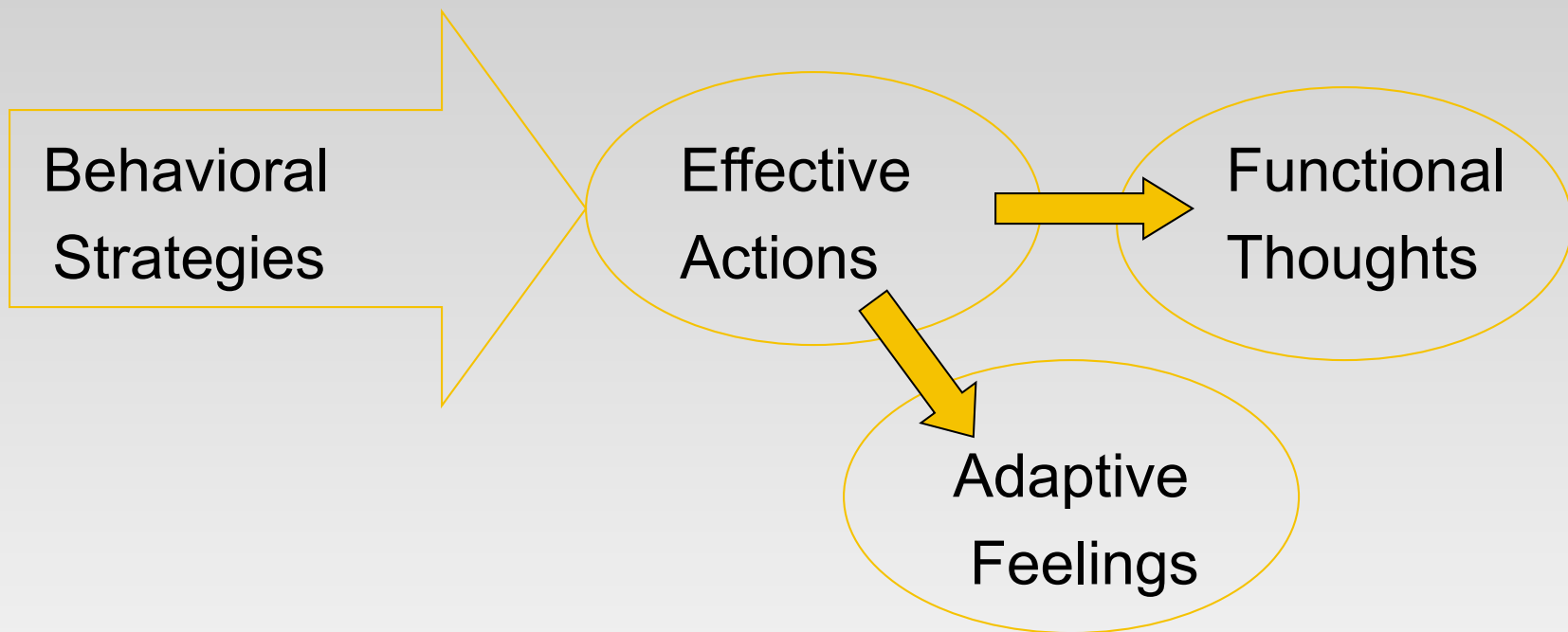
EFT-7. Reflecting on emotional responses to consolidate meaning

EFT-8. Assessing emotional change, looking at multidimensional impact, and considering a shift in focus

Behavioral Strategies

- Behavioral psychotherapy focuses on actions and uses these behaviors as a point of clinical leverage to encourage multidimensional change.
- Behavioral strategies support effective actions or reduce maladaptive conditioned responses.
- **Effective actions** help people meet their needs, attain their goals, or avoid undesirable consequences.

Behavioral interventions are designed to have a primary impact on actions and a secondary impact on thoughts and feelings.



Exploring Actions

BHV-1. Focusing on actions related to clients' presenting concerns

BHV-2. Understanding the triggers, functions, and impact of specific actions

BHV-3. Analyzing actions to determine if they are effective or ineffective

BHV-4. Discovering patterns of reinforcement that shape current actions

Changing Actions

BHV-5. Experimenting with new actions and observing results

BHV-6. Improving skills through training and behavioral rehearsal

BHV-7. Generalizing effective actions to new environments outside of psychotherapy

BHV-8. Assessing behavioral change, looking at multidimensional impact, and considering a shift in focus

Personal Preferences

- Most counselors or psychotherapists have a tendency to focus on one dimension more than others
- Do you tend to focus more on clients' thoughts, feelings, or actions?
- Which of these dimensions do you focus on the least?
- KST provides a method for exploring clients' needs and adapting interventions to the client rather than relying on the preferences of the psychotherapist

Psychotherapy Integration

- **Key Strategies Training** will give you an introduction to cognitive, emotion-focused, and behavioral psychotherapy
- Over time, you may also want to learn about other theories that describe external contexts and internal influences that influences thoughts, feelings, and actions
- **Training in Unified Psychotherapy** (TUP) builds on KST and provides more comprehensive training.

